

# NAVY NEWS RELEASE



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HOSPITAL CORPSMAN AWARDED SILVER STAR  
By Navy Journalist Third Class  
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Release Number 29-69  
February 14, 1969

"You cannot imagine the yellow flames. The sky was filled with fragments," said Navy Hospital Corpsman Third Class Douglas L. Wean as he began to describe the events leading to his earning the Silver Star Medal, the nation's fourth highest heroism medal.

Wean, the 20-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles R. Wean Sr., 206 N. Wesley, Mount Morris, was awarded the Silver Star Medal in a ceremony February 14 at the Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Ill.

Vice Admiral George M. Davis, Chief, Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, and Navy Surgeon General, made the presentation.

Hospital Corpsman Wean received the medal for his heroism when he saved the lives of two Marines September 19, 1968, during a North Vietnamese artillery attack on a Marine position in Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam.

Wean was with a unit of the Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade occupying an artillery fire support position near a rock formation called "the Rockpile" about six miles south of the North Vietnamese border.

As the unit's only corpsman, he <sup>was passing</sup> out salt and malaria tablets to the unit's 45 men [REDACTED] when a North Vietnamese artillery round smashed into the camp.

"It was between 9:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.," Wean recalled, "The rocket scored a direct hit on the powder storage bunker in the center of camp. The explosion and shock were so intense I was thrown off a storage can I was sitting on."

The powder storage area contained the ammunition for three Marine artillery pieces, hand grenades and .50 calibre rounds. When the first enemy round struck the bunker, the ammunition exploded into yellow flames and smoke, and fragments.

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HOSPITAL CORPSMAN AWARD SILVER STAR  
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"You cannot imagine the yellow flames. The sky was filled with fragments," he said. "I ran back away from the explosions and sheltered myself in a gully, but then I heard the injured Marines calling for a corpsman."

Wean's Silver Star Medal citation describes what he did when he left his position of safety and risked his life for the lives of the others.

The corpsman ". . . rushed across the fire-swept terrain to the side of a wounded comrade. Ignoring the fragmentation of exploding ordnance and the enemy rounds impacting near him, he shielded the injured Marine with his own body while calmly administering aid to the casualty," the citation stated.

It continued, "When the wounded man was evacuated to the battalion aid station Petty Officer Wean fearlessly moved to another wounded comrade and skillfully treated the man's wounds, until he was extracted from the hazardous area."

By his courage, determination and devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger, Wean "upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the U.S. Naval Service," the citation emphasized.

Wean received a minor wound for which he received the Purple Heart when a fragment struck him. He treated himself.

After almost six months of duty in South Vietnam, Wean left Southeast Asia November 14, 1968. He joined the staff of the Great Lakes Naval Hospital January 7, where he works in the physical examination section.

"What were my thoughts about what I did out there? It was just the natural thing to do," he said, his face flushing slightly. "The Marines would have done the same for me."

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