

# warrior stories: Combat experiences defy reason

No glory sought, we had a purpose

By Mike Mackay  
Special to the News-Sentinel

**NOV. 12** — They said it was a once-in-a-lifetime event. "Warrior Stories," the Medal of Honor Convention, was held in Knoxville on Friday. It was held in conjunction with the Medal of Honor Convention, being held this week in Knoxville. Petry had his right hand in a cast in Afghanistan.



MEDAL OF HONOR

William (Bill) was part of the world's Medal of Honor recipients in Knoxville. William, now 82, grew up in a small town in Kentucky. He joined the Marine Corps in 1960 after the founding of West Point and the entry of the U.S. into World War II. "I didn't know anything about the Marines, but I was told something was going to make my freedom easy," William said. "I said, 'That's not going to happen, so I went into the Marine Corps to protect my freedom.'

— don't give me freedom's an option." In 20 before even another Marine had the change of his company up a heavily fortified mountain ridge near Fong 925. — Bill was single-handedly killed at least 12 enemy soldiers in close-range combat and made arrangements to ensure that and returned to the States. "I think a soldier should be when a soldier is needed," said the 82-year-old, who had two brothers who were killed in action in Korea and Vietnam. — Bill was shot during a battle night before leaving the 1st Marine for a long. "I could feel bullets going through my clothes, but I was never hit," he recalled. "People asked me how I survived. I guess I just wanted the hell out of there."



Medal of Honor recipient Larry Petry takes questions from students during a visit to Sacred Heart Cathedral School on Friday. The visit was in conjunction with the Medal of Honor Convention, being held this week in Knoxville. Petry had his right hand in a cast in Afghanistan.

**MEDAL**  
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Warrior stories of honor recipients cause excitement at Sacred Heart

students proceeded to the gymnasium, where members of the Air National Guard Band and the Knoxville Eagle's Flight Team (United States Marine Corps) welcomed them with military honors. Members of the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "The Army and Air Force March One." The ceremony was held in the gymnasium and featured the recipients as they arrived. Principal Sarah Trent welcomed the distinguished guests. Trent, dressed in parachute cord, was scheduled to parachute into the arena but was unable due to unfavorable weather conditions. "That's why I am still wearing this suit," Trent said to the crowd. Petry and Carter addressed the crowd, speaking about the beauty of Knoxville from the viewpoint of the helicopter. "To be above Knoxville and actually capture its beauty from the sky was amazing," Petry said. "I myself, took pictures the whole time," added Carter. In a conversation moderated by John Becker of WRBQ-TV, the Medal of Honor recipients spoke to the students about receiving the Medal of Honor in the presence of President Barack Obama and the national media. "Most of the time I was thinking, 'Wiggle my toes, bend my knees, do not pee out,'" Carter said. "The ceremony was epic because I got to share it with the people I love." The two spoke to the students about the importance of faith, freedom and

freedom. They also shared stories about their personal experiences and challenged the students to live better lives. Both Carter and Petry are not necessarily soldiers or athletes, but everyday people like their peers and family members. "Taking advantage of your freedom is basically just walking down the street," Carter said. "Every day that you come to school, every day that you have the safety of your parents driving to work, or the fact that you have paper and pencils at your school, you're actually taking advantage of your freedom." Petry and Carter are familiar with the sacrifices made to protect the freedoms afforded to American citizens. Both were injured in combat missions in Afghanistan. Petry was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2012 for his efforts during a combat mission in Afghanistan in 2008. During the mission he was shot in both legs. When an enemy grenade landed near Petry and two fellow soldiers, he lunged for it and threw it. The act saved Petry's life and the lives of his fellow soldiers. He, however, lost his hand and part of his arm. Carter received his medal in 2007 for his actions in 2005 in Afghanistan. According to official Army records, Carter's infantry division came under heavy fire from an estimated 300 soldiers. Carter was injured within the



Medal of Honor recipient Maj. Gen. James Everett Livingston, right, answers questions for Joshua Woodard, a seventh-grade Marine Middle school student, on Friday. Livingston, who was awarded the nation's highest military honor for his actions in the Vietnam War, was among several medal recipients to visit local schools.

one half-hour of combat. His efforts during several hours of combat helped saved the lives of his fellow soldiers and helped his division hold its position. The pair reminded students to be thankful for what they have as Americans and to remember how those things were obtained. "Freedom is like your driver's license. If you don't take care of it, it can be taken away from you," Petry said. Although recipients were also held Friday to give the public a chance to meet Medal of Honor recipients face-to-face. The convention will conclude today with the Patriot Award Gala at the Knoxville Convention Center Ballroom.



Medal of Honor holder Maj. Gen. James Everett Livingston, retired from the United States Marine Corps, talks with Marine Middle school student Joshua Woodard on Friday. Livingston was awarded the United States' highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, for heroic actions in 1968 during the Vietnam War.