



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

JUL 19 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF  
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Review of Medals of Honor Awarded for Actions Related to the Engagement at  
Wounded Knee Creek, on December 29, 1890

I direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) to convene a Special Review Panel (SRP) which, at a minimum, will consist of five experts, two of whom will be from the Department of the Interior (DOI), to conduct a review of each Medal of Honor (MOH) awarded to an Army Soldier for actions related to the engagement at Wounded Knee Creek (WKC), South Dakota (SD), on December 29, 1890. The scope of the SRP's review is limited to reviewing each WKC MOH awardee's individual actions during this specific engagement on or about December 29, 1890, at WKC, SD. The SRP may consider the context of the overall engagement as appropriate, including as necessary to understand each WKC MOH recipient's individual actions. The USD(P&R) is hereby delegated authority to facilitate administration of the review, including tasking other DoD organizations on my behalf regarding this matter and acting as DoD's liaison with the Domestic Policy Council and DOI.

A review of the WKC MOHs is warranted based on a range of factors, including the findings reflected in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, which encouraged a review of the WKC MOHs.

The SRP will report to me, through the USD(P&R). Washington Headquarters Services will provide administrative support.

The Secretary of the Army will provide, not later than July 26, 2024, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)) with historical records associated with the engagement of WKC, including, but not limited to:

- For the 20 Soldiers whose MOH citations indicate the medal was awarded for actions related to the engagement of WKC on December 29, 1890 (list attached), all documents associated with the award recommendation and final award and each Soldier's personnel file.
- Copies of any Army reports or investigations into the actions at WKC.
- Any other known historical documents salient to the engagement at WKC.

The Secretary of the Army will provide support to the SRP in the form of document retrieval, answering requests for information regarding the engagement at WKC, and otherwise providing SRP members information necessary for the conduct of the review.

The USD(P&R) will request from the DOI all historical documents and records in its possession associated with the engagement of WKC not later than July 26, 2024.

The SRP will review each WKC MOH award individually to ensure no Soldier was recognized for conduct that did not merit recognition under the standards applicable at the time. In conducting its review, the SRP will use:

- The MOH award standards and applicable laws and regulations in effect on December 29, 1890; the SRP will assess whether conduct demonstrated any disqualifying actions, such as: intentionally directing an attack against a non-combatant or an individual who has surrendered in good faith, murder or rape of a prisoner, or engaging in any other act demonstrating immorality; and
- Available historical records on the engagement of WKC and associated MOHs awarded, including U.S. Army investigations and reports, original MOH award files, official military personnel records, records of interviews of witnesses at the event, and any other relevant historical documents the SRP deems appropriate.

The SRP will provide a written report to me, through the USD(P&R) within 90 days of convening, but not later than October 15, 2024, that includes a retain or rescind recommendation for each WKC MOH awarded. Each recommendation will include a rationale. Substantiating documents, where such records are available, will be provided for all recommendations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray P. ...".

Attachment:  
As stated

List of Soldiers Whose Medal of Honor Citations Indicate Award Was for Actions Related to the  
Engagement at Wounded Knee Creek

Name	Rank	Date of Action	PLACE	Unit
AUSTIN, WILLIAM G.	SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> While the Indians were concealed in a ravine, assisted men on the skirmish line, directing their fire, etc., and using every effort to dislodge the enemy. (Date of issue: 27 June 1891)				
CLANCY, JOHN E.	MUSICIAN	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 1ST U.S. ARTILLERY
<b>Citation:</b> Twice voluntarily rescued wounded comrades under fire of the enemy. (Date of issue: 23 January 1892)				
FEASTER, MOSHEIM	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Extraordinary gallantry. (Date of issue: 23 June 1891)				
GARLINGTON, ERNEST A	FIRST LIEUTENANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Distinguished gallantry. (Date of issue: 26 September 1893)				
GRESHAM, JOHN C.	FIRST LIEUTENANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Voluntarily led a party into a ravine to dislodge Sioux Indians concealed therein. He was wounded during this action. (Date of issue: 26 March 1895)				
HAMILTON, MATTHEW H.	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO G 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Bravery in action. (Date of issue: 25 May 1891)				
HARTZOG, JOSHUA B.	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 1ST U.S. ARTILLERY
<b>Citation:</b> Went to the rescue of the commanding officer who had fallen severely wounded, picked him up, and carried him out of range of the hostile guns. (Date of issue: 24 March 1891)				
HAWTHORNE, HARRY L.	SECOND LIEUTENANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	2D U.S. ARTILLERY
<b>Citation:</b> Distinguished conduct in battle with hostile Indians. (Date of issue: 11 October 1892)				
HILLOCK, MARVIN C.	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO B 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Distinguished bravery. (Date of issue: 16 April 1891)				
HOBDAY, GEORGE	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO A 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Conspicuous and gallant conduct in battle. (Date of issue: 23 June 1891)				
JETTER, BERNHARD	SERGEANT	Dec 1890	At Sioux campaign	CO K 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Distinguished bravery. (Date of issue: 24 April 1891)				
LOYD, GEORGE	SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO I 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Bravery, especially after having been severely wounded through the lung. (Date of issue: 16 April 1891)				
MCMILLAN, ALBERT W.	SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> While engaged with Indians concealed in a ravine, he assisted the men on the skirmish line, directed their fire, encouraged them by example, and used every effort to dislodge the enemy. (Date of issue: 23 June 1891)				
SULLIVAN, THOMAS	PRIVATE	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Conspicuous bravery in action against Indians concealed in a ravine. (Date of issue: 17 December 1891)				
TOY, FREDERICK E.	FIRST SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO G 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Bravery. (Date of issue: 26 May 1891)				
TRAUTMAN, JACOB	FIRST SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO I 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Killed a hostile Indian at close quarters, and, although entitled to retirement from service, remained to the close of the campaign. (Date of issue: 27 March 1891)				
VARNUM, CHARLES A.	CAPTAIN	30 DEC 1890	White Clay Creek, SD	CO B 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> While executing an order to withdraw, seeing that a continuance of the movement would expose another troop of his regiment to being cut off and surrounded, he disregarded orders to retire, placed himself in front of his men, led a charge upon the advancing Indians, regained a commanding position that had just been vacated, and thus insured a safe withdrawal of both detachments without further loss. (Date of issue: 22 September 1897)				

List of Soldiers Whose Medal of Honor Citations Indicate Award Was for Actions Related to the  
Engagement at Wounded Knee Creek

WARD, JAMES	SERGEANT	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO B 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Continued to fight after being severely wounded. (Date of issue: 16 April 1891)				
WELNERT, PAUL H.	CORPORAL	29 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek, SD	CO E 1ST U.S. ARTILLERY
<b>Citation:</b> Taking the place of his commanding officer who had fallen severely wounded, he gallantly served his piece, after each fire advancing it to a better position. (Date of issue: 24 March 1891)				
ZIEGNER, HERMANN	PRIVATE	29-30 Dec 1890	Wounded Knee Creek and White Clay Creek, SD	CO E 7TH U.S. CALVARY
<b>Citation:</b> Conspicuous bravery. (Date of issue: 23 June 1891)				

Note: This list is based on language in MOH citations from the U.S. Army Medal of Honor Website (<https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/citations3.html#C>), which may not be accurate in all cases.