

# PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

*more than a library...it's an experience*

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## **"MEDAL OF HONOR WITH ED TRACY" WELCOMES DONALD E. BALLARD, U.S. NAVY, VIETNAM**

**CHICAGO, IL** – When the first grenade landed near them, "Doc" Ballard was able to grab it and throw it away. But when the second came, he knew he didn't have enough time, and he knew his patients would be killed by the blast. So he threw himself on the grenade, and waited for the explosion that would take his life.

The Pritzker Military Library is proud to welcome Medal of Honor recipient Donald E. Ballard for an interview with Ed Tracy on Thursday, May 21, 2009. This event is free and open to the public. The presentation and live webcast will begin at 6:00 p.m., preceded by a reception for Library members at 5:00 p.m. It will also be recorded for later broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20.

On May 16, 1968, Ballard was serving as a Navy Hospital Corpsman with a Marine company in Quang Tri, the northernmost province of South Vietnam. It was a sweltering day, and Ballard had just finished treating two Marines for heat exhaustion when his company was ambushed by a unit from the North Vietnamese Army. Ballard rushed into the area with the worst fighting and began giving aid to several wounded Marines, many of whom were hurt too badly to move.

Before serving in the field, a Hospital Corpsman takes a pledge that states he "will not knowingly permit harm to come to any patient." In the moment that grenade landed near his patients, that oath proved to be more than mere words for Donald Ballard – they were his most powerful instinct. But the explosion never came. The grenade had a defective fuse, and after adjusting his physical position to keep the patients shielded, Ballard was able to safely throw it away. Only then, in mid-air, did the grenade explode – harmlessly.

Donald Ballard received the Navy Medal of Honor on May 14, 1970 in Washington, D.C. He left the Navy to enlist in Army officer candidate school, having declined a direct commission from General William Westmoreland. With over three decades of service in the Army National Guard, Ballard rose through the ranks from ambulance platoon leader to colonel, and was inducted into the National Guard Hall of Fame in 2001. He currently serves as Special Assistant to the Adjutant General, making him one of only three Medal of Honor recipients on active service in the United States today.

Seating for this event is limited, so reservations are recommended. Call 312.587.0234 or email [events@pritzkermilitarylibrary.net](mailto:events@pritzkermilitarylibrary.net).

Now in its sixth year, *Medal of Honor with Ed Tracy* has featured more than 25 interviews with recipients of America's highest award for valor in combat. The 2009 season features monthly interviews with Medal recipients, leading up to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Convention in Chicago from September 15-19, 2009.

Education professionals in Chicago may earn a Continuing Professional Development Unit (CPDU) for attendance at this event.

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## About the Pritzker Military Library

The Pritzker Military Library is a non-partisan, non-profit research institution located at 610 North Fairbanks Court in the Streeterville neighborhood of Chicago, near the Magnificent Mile. Admission is free and open to the public, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and also for scheduled evening events.

The mission of the Pritzker Military Library is to acquire and maintain an accessible collection of materials and develop appropriate programs focusing on the Citizen Soldier in the preservation of democracy. The 5,000 sq. ft. facility features a collection of books and films on subjects covering the full spectrum of American military history, along with vintage posters, photographs, medals, uniforms, and other artifacts from private donors and the collection of the Library's founder, COL (IL) James N. Pritzker, ARNG (Ret.).

Since opening in October 2003, the Pritzker Military Library has produced over 200 programs including events with award-winning authors, interviews with Medal of Honor recipients, and *Front & Center with John Callaway*, the Library's Emmy-nominated flagship program on public affairs. All programs are presented free of charge in front of a live audience, webcast live and archived on the Internet, and recorded for later broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20, a PBS affiliate. Programs are also available as audio podcasts on the Library website and at iTunes.

To learn more, please visit [pritzkermilitarylibrary.org](http://pritzkermilitarylibrary.org).

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