

# VIETNAM WAR HERO 'HAL' MOORE DIES AT AGE 94

ARMY NEWS SERVICE



LTG (Retired) Harold "Hal" Gregory Moore, co-author of the book *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*, died on 10 February at his home in Auburn, AL. He was 94 years old.

Moore's book about the exploits of his battalion in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley during the Vietnam War — co-written with journalist Joseph L. Galloway — was adapted into a 2002 Hollywood film in which Moore was portrayed by actor Mel Gibson.

Moore graduated from West Point in June 1945 and entered the Infantry branch as a second lieutenant just three months before the end of World War II. While Moore was unable to serve in that conflict, he went on to serve in both the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Moore's heroism during the Battle of Ia Drang earned him the Distinguished Service Cross. At the time of the battle, Moore served as commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

His unit was dropped by helicopter into the Ia Drang Valley on 14 November 1965 in one of the first major battles between U.S. and North Vietnamese regulars. During the battle, 234 Americans were killed and another 250 were wounded. Estimates of the North Vietnamese killed range between 600 and 1,200, depending on sources.

## **Distinguished Service Cross Citation**

During the period 14-16 November 1965, then LTC Moore, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), was participating with his unit in a vital search and destroy operation in the Ia Drang Valley, Republic of Vietnam. Upon entering the landing zone with the first rifle company, Moore personally commenced the firefight to gain control of the zone by placing accurate fire upon the Viet Cong from an exposed position in his hovering helicopter.

Throughout the initial assault phase, Moore repeatedly exposed himself to intense hostile fire to ensure the proper and expedient deployment of friendly troops. By his constant movement and repeated exposure to this insurgent fire, Moore set the standard for his combat troops by a courageous display of leadership by example, which characterized all his actions throughout the long and deadly battle. Inspired by his constant presence and active participation against an overwhelming enemy, the friendly forces solidified their perimeter defenses and repulsed numerous enemy assaults.

On 15 Nov. 1965, the embattled battalion was again attacked by a three-pronged insurgent assault aimed at surrounding and destroying the friendly forces in one great advance. With great skill and foresight, Moore moved from position to position, directing accurate fire and giving moral support to the defending forces. By his successful predictions of insurgent attack plans, he was able to thwart all their efforts by directing barrages of small arms, mortar, and artillery fire in conjunction with devastating air strikes against Viet Cong positions and attack zones.

As the grueling battle continued into the third day, another large Viet Cong strike was repulsed through Moore's ability to shift men and firepower at a moment's notice against the savage, last-ditch efforts of the insurgents to break through the friendly positions. Moore's battalion, inspired by his superb leadership, combat participation, and moral support, finally decimate the well trained and numerically superior Viet Cong force so decidedly that they withdrew in defeat, leaving over 800 of their dead on the battlefield, and resulting in a great victory for the 1st Battalion.