



The United States Army Engineer Regiment

presents the

de Fleury Medal



AS THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS implemented the U.S. Army Regimental system, the senior Engineer leadership sought a method for the Corps of Engineers to honor and recognize those individuals who have provided significant contributions to Army Engineering.

The Army Regimental System was developed to emphasize the history, customs, and traditions of the branches. MG Daniel R. Schroeder, then Commanding General of Fort Leonard Wood and Engineer School Commandant, searched for an award that would tie in the Army Corps of Engineers with the beginnings of the nation.

In 1777, a French Engineer volunteered to serve with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain. Francois Louis Tessedre de Fleury was born in St. Hippolyte, France, in 1749, was trained as an engineer, and served in the French Army during the Corsican campaign.

The Continental Congress appointed de Fleury a captain of engineers, and he quickly proved himself. Wounded at the battles of Fort Mifflin and Brandywine (where his horse was shot out from under him), he soon became LTC de Fleury.

But it was in the desperate battle at Stony Point, NY, in 1779 that de Fleury's courage under fire won him the accolades of the U.S. Congress.

In June 1779, two small American forts were being established on the Hudson River — at Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, about 30 miles north from Manhattan Island. A large British force easily captured both sites. The enemy began building a strong defensive perimeter around Stony Point.

Stony Point was actually a peninsula, jutting nearly half a mile into the Hudson, tipped with rocky crags that shot up 150 feet above the river. On the landward side was swamp that flooded at high tide, sinking a causeway running to the shore under two feet of water and making the Point an island.

The formidable defense included several batteries partially connected by trenches, log and earth redoubts around the main fort, and a double abatis. It was called "Little Gibraltar."

GEN George Washington was disturbed by the capture of the two forts. British occupation gave them control of a vital segment of the river and rerouted American communications, supplies, and troops moving between New England and the other colonies. Worse, GEN Washington was convinced the enemy was preparing to strike West Point, less than 15 miles upriver.

American reinforcements were quickly moved into position north of Stony Point, but Washington thought there was no hope of recapture. A recently formed light infantry Corps led by the daring BG "Mad" Anthony Wayne, consisted of hand-picked combat veterans. The

Corps was made up of four regiments, of about 340 men each. COL Christian “Old Denmark” Febiger headed the 1st Regiment with de Fleury as second in command.

On July 15, the Corps, except for a small diversionary force, unloaded weapons and turned in their ammunition. Secrecy was so tight the troops did not know they were going to attempt to recapture Stony Point. For such a risky assault, surprise was vital; and the attack was to take place in total darkness. Fixed bayonets and hand-to-hand combat were the orders of the day. Wayne’s column had no sooner sloshed into the waist-deep water before a British picket sent up an alarm. During the fierce fighting, Wayne and Febiger both suffered stunning head wounds.

The Continentals scrambled up the rocky slope with de Fleury in the lead. First over the wall, de Fleury was followed by a wave of American bayonets. Rushing to the flagpole, de Fleury cut the British colors from their staff.

In addition to the recapture of Stony Point, the defeat of the British fired the Americans’ determination and lifted their morale. And it showed the enemy that the colonies had an able fighting force.

So it was that on October 1, 1779, de Fleury stood before the Continental Congress to be praised for his valor at Stony Point by the men who had penned the Declaration of Independence and who would later sign the Constitution. For his intrepid behavior, the Continental Congress ordered that a medal be struck in his honor.

The Engineer Regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by the man for whom it was struck — values of special meaning to Engineer soldiers. It is understood that the de Fleury Medal was the first Congressional Medal struck, if not the first medal authorized.

On the obverse of the medal is the Latin inscription, translated as: “A MEMORIAL AND REWARD FOR COURAGE AND BOLDNESS.” In the center appears the image of a helmeted soldier standing amidst the ruins of a fort, holding in his right hand an unsheathed sword, and in his left the staff of the enemy’s flag, which he tramples underfoot.

On the reverse, again in Latin: “FORTIFICATIONS, MARSHES, ENEMIES OVERCOME.” In the center, the fortress at Stony Point is depicted with both turrets and a flag flying. At the base of the hill are two shore batteries, one that is firing at one of six vessels on the Hudson River. Beneath the fort is the legend: “STONY POINT CARRIED BY STORM, JULY 15, 1779.”

The Engineer Regiment makes four award levels of the de Fleury Medal. The STEEL Medal is awarded to junior soldiers and civilians within the Engineer Regiment. The BRONZE Medal may be presented to an individual who has rendered significant service or support to an element of the Engineer Regiment. The SILVER Medal may only be awarded to an individual who has rendered outstanding and significant support or service to the Engineer Regiment.

The United States Army Chief of Engineers awards the GOLD Medal each year to an individual (or individuals) whose contributions to the Army Engineer Regiment exemplify boldness, courage, and commitment to a strong national defense. Starting in 2011, two awards are made annually: one to an individual “outside the Regiment” and of national prominence and one to an individual “inside the Regiment.”

Presentation of the de Fleury Medal to those individuals meeting established criteria was started by the Engineer Regiment as the move of the Engineer School from Fort Belvoir, VA, to Fort Leonard Wood, MO, was completed in 1989. The GOLD Medal presentation is the highlight of the annual Engineer Regimental Dinner held at Fort Leonard Wood each spring.

GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENTS

- 1989 — **THE HONORABLE JOHN O. MARSH, JR.**
Secretary of the Army
- 1990 — **THE HONORABLE ROBERT W. PAGE**
*Assistant Secretary of the Army
for Civil Works*
- 1991 — **GEN MAXWELL R. THURMAN**
USA Retired
- 1992 — **GEN ANDREW J. GOODPASTER**
USA Retired
- 1993 — **LTG EMERSON C. ITSCHNER**
USA Retired
- 1994 — **MR. JOHN B. MAHAFFEY**
Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army
- 1995 — **LTG FREDERICK J. CLARKE**
USA Retired
- 1996 — **SMA LEON L. VAN AUTREVE**
USA Retired
- 1997 — **LTG JOHN W. MORRIS**
USA Retired
- 1998 — **MR. ALLEN M. CARTON**
- 1999 — **THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON**
Congressman, State of Missouri
- 2000 — **LTG JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.**
USA Retired
CSM ROBERT W. ELKEY
Posthumous
- 2001 — **LTG MAX W. NOAH**
USA Retired
COL CLAUDE L. ROBERTS, JR.
Posthumous
- 2002 — **MG RICHARD S. KEM**
USA Retired
- 2003 — **THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. INOUYE**
Senator, State of Hawaii
- 2004 — **COL EDWARD C. GIBSON**
USA Retired
- 2005 — **LTG DANIEL R. SCHROEDER**
USA Retired
- 2006 — **MG JOHN G. WAGGENER**
USA Retired
SFC PAUL RAY SMITH
Posthumous
- 2007 — **LTG ELVIN R. "VALD" HEIBERG III**
USA Retired
- 2008 — **LTG ROBERT B. FLOWERS**
USA Retired
- 2009 — **LTG HENRY J. HATCH**
MR. KISUK (CHARLIE) CHEUNG
Posthumous
- 2010 — **DR. LEWIS E. LINK, Ph.D.**
- 2011 — **COL CARL F. BASWELL**
USA Retired
GEN ERIC SHENSEKI
USA Retired
- 2012 — **GEN DAVID H. PETRAEUS**
USA Retired
COL JOHN M. MORGAN
USA Retired
- 2013 — **THE HONORABLE ROBERT M. GATES**
Secretary of Defense
CSM JULIUS NUTTER
USA Retired
- 2014 — **FRANK M. WEINBERG**
MG MERDITH W. B. "BO" TEMPLE
USA Retired
- 2015 — **LTG ROBERT L. VAN ANTWERP, JR.**
USA Retired
BG GERALD E. GALLOWAY, JR.
USA Retired
- 2016 — **ROBERT W. BURKHARDT**
SES Retired
THE HONORABLE ROBERT K. DAWSON
COL JACK O'NEILL
USA Retired