



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ERICA JEFFRIES • DIRECTOR

NEWS

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Medal of Honor Recipient to be Keynote Speaker at Illinois State Fair Veterans & Gold Star Family Day Spc.5 James C. McCloughan will speak on August 13, 2017

(Springfield)...The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) announced today that Medal of Honor recipient, Spc. 5 James C. McCloughan will be the keynote speaker during the Main Program of the Veterans & Gold Star Family Day Event on Sunday, August 13th at 12 Noon. President Donald Trump presented the Medal of Honor to Mr. McCloughan at the White House on Monday, July 31, 2017 "We are thrilled to have Mr. McCloughan speak to our Illinois Heroes, many of whom served in the same Division with him in Vietnam," said Erica Jeffries, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. This will be Mr. McCloughan's first speaking engagement in Illinois since receiving the Medal of Honor.

McCloughan's valorous actions occurred during 48 hours of intense fighting against enemy forces on Nui Yon Hill near Tam Kỳ, South Vietnam, May 13 to 15, 1969. The combat medic was serving with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 196th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division.

A private first class at the time, McCloughan voluntarily risked his life to rescue wounded and disoriented personnel. Despite being personally wounded by shrapnel and small-arms fire, McCloughan refused medical evacuation. Instead, he opted to stay with his unit, where he continued to brave enemy fire so that he could rescue, treat and defend his wounded comrades.

McCloughan graduated in June 1968 from Olivet College in Michigan, with a degree in sociology and a teaching certificate. He received an offer to teach and coach football at South Haven High School in South Haven, Michigan -- the town where he was born. A short time later, he received a draft notice. He entered the Army, Aug. 29, 1968. His teaching and coaching plans were put on hold while he served his two-year enlistment.

In 1970, he returned home and was re-accepted at South Haven High School, where for 40 years he taught psychology, sociology and geography. He also coached football, wrestling, and baseball.

McCloughan was inducted into the Michigan High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame, Michigan High School Football Association Coaches Hall of Fame, the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame and the Olivet College Athletic Hall of Fame.

Now 71 and retired, McCloughan said that during his time teaching and coaching, he never talked about his Vietnam experiences. He said many of those experiences were very painful and he has only recently opened up about them.

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The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, a state agency is dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive. We do this by helping veterans navigate the complex veteran support system and assisting them in obtaining benefits; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans at our four Veterans' Homes; and by working with other government agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, employment, and other challenges.