

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rachel Campbell
(310) 732-3498

RETIRED L.A. PORT POLICE OFFICER AWARDED PURPLE HEART NEARLY 40 YEARS AFTER SERVING IN VIETNAM



425 S. Palos Verdes Street

San Pedro, CA 90731

Tel: 310/732-3508

After 5:00 p.m.:

310/732-3500

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – Retired Los Angeles Port Police Officer and former United States Marine Harry E. Hunold was presented with The Purple Heart Medal of Valor at the September 20 meeting of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners. Commission President S. David Freeman presented Hunold with the distinguished honor, which was awarded to him for combat injuries sustained 38 years ago, while serving his country in Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

As a young Marine serving in "Operation Pegasus" in March 1968, Hunold was assigned to a mine-sweeping convoy that routinely cleared routes to and from the base, providing security for the infantry. During one of these trips, the vehicle Hunold was riding in was ambushed by machine gun rockets and mortar rounds, which resulted in him being blown out of the vehicle and thrown into a drainage ditch. He landed on his ankles, causing serious injuries to both ankles.

Realizing there was a shortage of medical transport helicopters, Hunold, although wounded, volunteered to stay with his platoon a few additional days to complete the convoy rather than receive immediate medical attention. His platoon leader recommended that he receive recognition for his "unselfish act of valor, his determination to help with fellow Marines and see his job through, in the face of serious injuries."

The Purple Heart is a U.S. military decoration awarded in the name of the President of the United States to those who have been wounded or killed while serving on or after April 5, 1917, with the U.S. military.

Hunold, a former San Pedro resident, served as a Los Angeles Port Police Officer from August 1985 to August 2001. Since his retirement, he has worked for the Port part-time as a Sergeant at Arms for the Board of Harbor Commissioners and in protective services for the Port Community Advisory Committee. He and his wife reside in Irvine, Calif.

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