

Farewell to a Hero



Major Frank L. Ribich, Jr. (Retired) 1941-2007

Compiled by Ms. Rebecca Higeons

Major Frank L. Ribich, Jr., the son of Croatian immigrants, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1941. He entered the U.S. Army in March 1960, where he served as a military police noncommissioned officer before graduating from the University of Nebraska with a degree in criminal justice. Major Ribich graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1966 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He successfully completed the Military Police Officer Basic Course, Military Police Officer Advanced Course, Special Forces Qualification Course, Nepalese Language School, and Special Forces Predeployment Course (Republic of Vietnam).

Major Ribich spent his entire military career supporting excellence in military police operations worldwide. Undoubtedly, his most famous contribution to our Nation occurred in a short span of time in January 1968. The then First Lieutenant Ribich led his Soldiers to victory in the most important engagement of the Battle of Saigon. His heroism as a combat military policeman is legendary in the history of the Military Police Corps Regiment. First Lieutenant Ribich commanded the military police reaction forces that immediately responded to a Vietcong attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon where enemy sappers had taken the first floor of a satellite building, killing one military police Soldier and one Marine. First Lieutenant Ribich and his men bottled up the enemy and systematically secured the embassy perimeter. He established a joint command with U.S. Marines, planned the assault on the enemy, and led the execution of the attack that resulted in the capture of one Vietcong soldier, the death of 20 Vietcong soldiers, and the retaking of the embassy grounds. During the battle, First Lieutenant Ribich personally intercepted an enemy sapper, intent on resupplying his cohorts with ammunition, and killed him in a gun battle on the streets adjacent to the embassy. For his extraordinary bravery, First Lieutenant Ribich was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism. He has also been featured in *Life* magazine, on the Fox News and Discovery Channels, and in numerous other national media outlets.



"1LT Ribich distinguished himself by exceptional valorous conduct on 31 Jan 1968 in Saigon, Republic of Vietnam. The enemy had launched vicious attacks throughout the city. 1LT Ribich took the initial alert force to the scene of the United States Embassy engagement. He organized his forces from a disaster control team to an infantry squad, while facing intense fire from the enemy within the embassy compound. He directed the establishment of a command post and aid station for evacuation of the wounded. He employed part of his team as a traffic control post and a blocking force—thus securing the main street to the front of the embassy. He continued to command his force and directed their fires so that the enemy force was neutralized and fixed in their position. When his commanding officer arrived on the scene, 1LT Ribich turned over command of the situation to him but continued to maintain control of the members of his force. He assisted in organizing the final assault on the front gate and participated in it. His cool example inspired the members of his force and contributed immeasurably to the success of the operation."

—Bronze Star Citation

Major Ribich concluded his military career at the U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command, commanding division elements in Europe during the height of European terrorism.

After his military retirement in April 1980, Major Ribich was appointed Chief, Weapons Group, U.S. Army Military Police School, Fort McClellan, Alabama. In 1984, he was appointed Chief, Special Operations Branch, U.S. Army Military Police School where he developed a comprehensive antiterrorism training program. Major Ribich led the development of a multitude of training courses that provided antiterrorism training to members of the Department of Defense. For this effort, he won the Best Antiterrorism Program Manager award in 1988. Major Ribich quietly and effectively developed the finest total antiterrorism training program in the Department of Defense.

On 1 July 2001, Major Ribich retired from civil service with an additional 20 years of distinguished service to the U.S. Army Military Police Corps Regiment. He was truly a hero of the Corps and, for his accomplishments, was inducted into the Military Police Corps Hall of Fame in 2003.

Major Ribich died on 4 August 2007. He was 66 years old. He will be greatly missed.
