

***COMMANDER MELVIN LEDERMAN, MD
US NAVY***





May, 23rd, 2016

On May 23, 2016 Congressman Joe Kennedy III(4th District – MA), in conjunction with Town of Brookline, the Stephen F. Rutledge Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 864, and American Legion Post 11, was honored to present Marty Lederman, brother of Commander Melvin Lederman, US Navy his fourth Purple Heart for his extraordinary valor in saving the lives of servicemen in Vietnam.

Commander Lederman was killed in action along with five Marines and one sailor on November 29, 1969 south of Da Nang in the Republic of Vietnam when the rescue helicopter (YK-9) he was riding in exploded in flight. Initially the incident was listed as mechanical failure and the seven deceased servicemen were not awarded Purple Heart medals. However, an investigation determined that the aircraft was struck by hostile

gunfire causing the crash. The records of the five Marines were adjusted to “Killed In Action” and they were awarded the Purple Hearts. However the records of Commander Lederman and Naval Corpsmen James M. Garrett were not adjusted.

Commander Lederman was recommended for a Silver Star Medal on December 12, 1969 by the Marine Helicopter Squadron 364 Awards Board for the actions of November 12, 1969. Commander Lederman and two Marines were recommended for a rescue mission to save two downed Marine helicopter pilots. For unknown reasons the award was not processed after his death. An anonymous letter sent to the Lederman family in 1970 stated that the doctor’s Silver Star medal recommendation should never have been pulled after his death. Commander Lederman’s brother Martin was told that other naval officers felt a naval surgeon was to high value to the Navy to fly combat missions. Commander Lederman believed that a young Marine was to high value to his family to let him bleed to death on the flight to the hospital ship. That is why he volunteered to go on combat missions (over two dozen) to save American lives. Today the Lederman family is working with Congressman Joe Kennedy III to have the Navy review and posthumously award Commander Lederman the Silver Star Medal he deserved.

In 1970, a field along Storrow Drive in Boston was dedicated as Lederman Park to honor the valor of Commander Lederman. A group of family and friend have been working with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to plan and raise fund for a monument at the park. This is not only an opportunity to keep Commander Lederman’s memory alive but also a chance to teach future generations about courage, compassion and sacrifice.