



Donel C. Kinnard

Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Donel Clifford Kinnard, of Logan, West Virginia, was the recipient of seven Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, and many awards of valor, including the Navy Cross, the country's second-highest award for valor in combat.

Kinnard was born April 5, 1936. He joined the U.S. Navy in July 1954, shortly after graduating from high school. Following Hospital Corpsman training and his initial assignment to Naval Hospital Corps Christi, Texas, Kinnard attended Field Medical Service School at Camp Pendleton, California. Afterward, he accepted orders for several successful tours that included Fleet Marine Force deployments to Southeast Asia, shipboard deployments aboard units of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and shore duty medical facility assignments that included a tour at Naval Support Activity Da Nang, Vietnam.

He completed SEAL training in 1970, after which he served extensively in Southeast Asia while attached to UDT-11, UDT-12 and UDT-13. He retired from active duty after 22 years of service.

Following retirement, Kinnard served as the State and District Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as well as the Commander for the Teays Valley post. He was deeply involved with veterans advocacy issues throughout the state and was a key proponent for the establishment of the West Virginia State Veterans Cemetery and the West Virginia Veterans Nursing Home.

Governor Joe Manchin appointed Kinnard Chairman of the West Virginia Veterans Counsel. Additionally, he was a member of the Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Legion of Valor, Military Order of the Purple Heart, American Legion, UDT-SEAL Association, Fleet Reserve Association, Marine Corps League and the Military Order of the Cooties.

At his request, following his death on February 14, 2009, his ashes were held until the new state veterans cemetery was completed. The state of West Virginia was proud to honor him as the first veteran interred in the cemetery that bears his name.