

Medal of Honor Recipient Dolby Dies

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By JIM CALLAHAN, Staff Writer



David C. Dolby, a Medal of Honor recipient and a fixture at local veteran events in recent years, died Friday morning in Spirit Lake, Idaho. He was 64.

Dolby, who lived in Royersford, was in Idaho for a veterans' gathering, according to friends.

The announcement of his death was made by the Congressional Medal of Honor

Society. The cause was not announced. Services are pending. Burial in Arlington National Cemetery is planned.

The Medal of Honor is the nation's highest military award for valor. Dolby's actions in Vietnam saving the lives of his fellow soldiers on May 21, 1966, led to the honor.

Two weeks ago, Dolby had joined those speaking about the disrepair of the Medal of Honor Grove at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. The nonprofit foundation has suffered financial setbacks and regular maintenance of the 52-acre memorial was suspended. Various groups are coming together to repair the grove this fall.

"Dolby was concerned the grove was not being maintained in a way that would reflect the cause of freedom ... the grove demonstrated," said state Sen. Andrew E. Dinniman, D-19th of West Whiteland. "He was very proud. He took me to the Pennsylvania site to his tree."

The grove reserves a plot for each state to commemorate its honorees with a tree and plaque. Many of the trees have died, and plaques were uprooted.

Dinniman said Dolby liked to come to the grove. "He said he could think, a place of peace for him," the senator said

Area veterans groups made a point of seeking out and including Dolby in their meetings and events in recent years.

Veterans and friends contacted Saturday said Dolby had been devoted to his wife. They had no children. She died about 10 years ago. Since then, he had been living in virtual seclusion in Barto, a town north of Pottstown.

Dolby also had given up driving and was having difficulty getting around, his friends said. He turned up at a memorial event, and when others learned of his identity, an effort was made to include him into the community. The veterans found him an apartment in Royersford to make it easier for him to get to his doctors, and easier for them to pick him up.

He became a fixture at the head table of various veterans' dinners and memorial services. Last November, for example, he was grand marshal at West Chester Veterans Day parade. And he was grand marshal at the Memorial Day Parade this year in Doylestown.

A Norristown native, Dolby was in a platoon of the 1st Cavalry Division during an attack as six of its members were killed instantly and others were wounded. In four hours of combat, he retrieved wounded men, stopped the enemy attack, reorganized his platoon and kept them covered during a counterattack. He was credited with saving the lives of many of his fellow soldiers while leaving himself continually in an exposed position, contributing to the overall success of the Army assault.

In all, Dolby served five tours in Vietnam.

President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the medal to Dolby during a ceremony on Sept. 28, 1968.

The Medal of Honor Society said there are 87 surviving Medal of Honor recipients.

To contact staff writer Jim Callahan, send an e-mail to jcallahan@dailylocal.com.

Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of dailylocal.com.

Vetguy wrote on Aug 8, 2010 9:12 AM:

" David Dolby was a good and brave man, he fought for our freedom many times over. He gave it one last fight when he went to the Grove with Senator Dinniman. He was proud of his tree there. He was very disturbed by the years of neglect of the grove and was glad it was getting the attention it has. His feud with the Freedoms Foundation was known by many, including the Foundation. He wouldn't want one penny to go directly to them for the grove..he didn't trust them...he just didn't believe the Foundation cared about the Medal of Honor Recipients. I've enjoyed watching the video again. So, safe journey pal, you did well here and now you are with your wife and your comrades. "

haircutter65 wrote on Aug 8, 2010 10:41 AM:

" Dave Dolby was a friend of mine for almost 47 years. We grew up on the same street,in Oaks,PA, a block from one another. When I came home from Nam, his Dad was the first person to come to my parents home & greet me. When I opened my barber shop, outside of Phoenixville, Dave was one of my first clients. We also had a special bond from both of us having served our country. David, my friend, your demons are now put to rest.Go home & be with your beautiful bride & your Dad. I have thought of you often over the years we lost touch, but knew we were still friends. I missed your laughter & friendship. I know you had issues & understood why. GOD BLESS YOU!! Yoy, my friend, are a TRUE AMERICAN HERO. I truly hope in death you find the peace you did not have in life.

IN BROTHERHOOD MY FRIEND,
Joe Melchiorre "

lucretia wrote on Aug 8, 2010 12:33 PM:

" Dave was a good friend to our family for many years. After his meeting with Sen Dinniman we called him and thanked him for his efforts---never dreaming it would be the last time we spoke. The article does not note that Dave received the Medal of Honor on his first tour of Vietnam and went back 4 more times. Or that he was very close to his late wife Xuan's family and went back to the Bangkok area to see them many times and help them any way he could. He got sick in Bangkok once and the military went there and brought him home. We will miss him. Hope the DLN publishes funeral plans--there are many who would pay their respects. "

balmoral wrote on Aug 8, 2010 7:45 PM:

" RIP Mr. Dolby.

As mentioned above, it's a shame that his last battle had to be about the Freedoms Foundation behaving honorably to MOH Recipients. The Foundation's board, as well as it's officers, have neglected the MOH Grove for a long period of time. They have also considered selling it since at leastthe late 1990's. I can, as I used to walk my dog there, attest to the miserable condition of the MOH Grove eight years ago. The latest bunch of bunk from Mr. Di Yeso (in his open letter to the senator) reveal nothing but the cynical attitude of the FF towards this issue. Nice try with the too-little-too-late www.ffvf.org splash banner asking for donations. Their stewardship of this memorial has been one degree below miserable and their treatment of MOH one degree below abominable. And they are still doing it. "