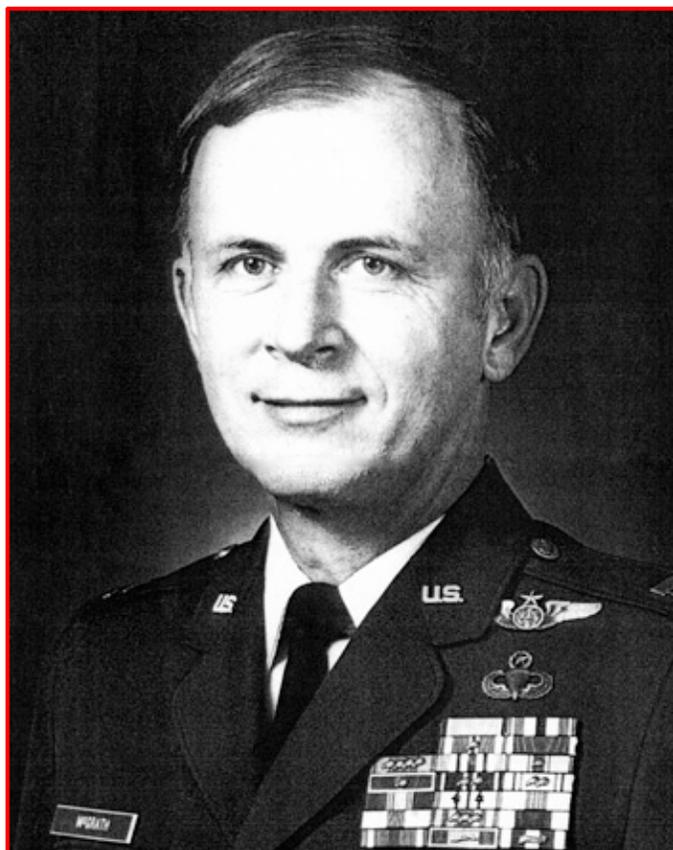


# Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



## **Sergeant Charles D. McGrath**



*Air Force Cross & Silver Star*

*Vietnam War*

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to Charles D. McGrath, Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Pararescueman on a HH-53C Rescue Helicopter of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, SEVENTH Air Force, in action in North Vietnam on 27 June 1972. On that date, while penetrating dense jungle to rescue a severely injured American airman, Sergeant McGrath exposed himself to intense ground fire in order to drag the incapacitated survivor to a suitable recovery area. Seeing his rescue aircraft crippled by the hostile fire, he directed air strikes against surrounding hostile ground forces until he was able to secure the survivor and himself to the penetrator of a backup helicopter. Rising through constant accurate ground fire, he shielded the survivor with his own body until they were successfully recovered into the aircraft where he

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immediately began providing the vital medical assistance required to save the lives of the survivor and an injured crew member. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Sergeant McGrath reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Charles McGrath was born on 16 December 1948 in Maryland. He enlisted in the US Air Force Reserve on 6 January 1970 and went on active duty on 23 March 1970. McGrath was trained as a Pararescueman and after completing Airborne School, Scuba Divers School, Medical training, Mountain Climbing School and the Pararescue Technician Course, he deployed to Southeast Asia in May 1971. He served with the 40<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand until being wounded in action in June 1972, during a mission for which he would later be awarded the Air Force Cross. He continued in the Pararescue career field until 1979 when he received a commission in the Air Force and cross-trained into computer programming, serving at the Pentagon with the Unit Status and Identity Report System from January 1980 through 1985.