LTC Bruce P. Crandall
U.S. Army, Retired
is Awarded the Medal of Honor

On 26 February 2007, President Bush presented the Medal of Honor to retired LTC Bruce P. Crandall for his heroic actions at the Battle of Landing Zone X-Ray, Ia Drang Valley, Republic of Vietnam, 14 November 1965.

LTC Crandall's citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Major Bruce P. Crandall distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism as a Flight Commander in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company A, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). On 14 November 1965, his flight of sixteen helicopters was lifting troops for a search and destroy mission from Plei Me, Vietnam, to Landing Zone X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley. On the fourth troop lift, the airlift began to take enemy fire, and by the time the aircraft had refueled and returned for the next troop lift, the enemy had Landing Zone X-Ray targeted. As Major Crandall and the first eight helicopters landed to discharge troops on his fifth troop lift, his unarmed helicopter came under such intense enemy fire that the ground commander ordered the second flight of eight aircraft to abort their mission. As Major Crandall flew back to Plei Me, his base of operations, he determined that the ground commander of the besieged infantry battalion desperately needed more ammunition. Major Crandall then decided to adjust his base of operations to Artillery Firebase Falcon in order to shorten the flight distance to deliver ammunition and evacuate wounded soldiers. While medical evacuation was not his mission, he immediately sought volunteers, and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, led two aircraft to Landing Zone X-Ray. Despite the fact that the landing zone was still under relentless enemy fire, Major Crandall landed and proceeded to supervise the loading of seriously wounded soldiers aboard his aircraft. Major Crandall's voluntary decision to land under the most extreme fire instilled in the other pilots the will and spirit to continue to land their own aircraft, and in the ground forces the realization that they would be resupplied and that friendly wounded would be promptly evacuated. This greatly enhanced morale and the will to fight at a critical time. After his first medical evacuation, Major Crandall continued to fly into and out of the landing zone throughout the day and into the evening. That day he completed a total of 22 flights, most under intense enemy fire, retiring from the battlefield only after all possible service had been rendered to the Infantry battalion. His actions provided critical resupply of ammunition and evacuation of the wounded. Major Crandall's daring acts of bravery and courage in the face of an overwhelming and determined enemy are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

For more information, see http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/02/26/1987-army-aviator-awarded-medal-of-honor/