

# John D. Minatra

Home of record: Tennessee



## Distinguished Service Cross

*Awarded for actions during the [Vietnam War](#)*

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Sergeant First Class John D. Minatra (ASN: RA-14493353), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam while serving with Airborne Division Advisory Detachment (Airborne), Advisory Team 162, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Sergeant First Class Minatra distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions during the period 17 November to 19 November 1967 as advisor to a Vietnamese airborne infantry battalion on combat operations near Dak To. During this period the battalion was involved in an attack on Hill 1416. In the initial assault on the objective Sergeant Minatra's Vietnamese counterpart was wounded and disabled. He immediately rallied the remainder of the unit and directed their movement and fire until the company executive officer assumed command. When the attack lost its momentum, Sergeant Minatra unhesitatingly moved forward under intense fire to an exposed position and directed air and artillery strikes against the enemy. On 19 November, while being briefed at the battalion command post, he was subjected to an intense enemy mortar barrage. Although wounded in the initial minutes of the attack, he refused medical evacuation and assisted the other casualties to safety. As the fusillade subsided, the enemy assaulted the battalion's flank. Without regard for his safety Sergeant Minatra moved to the point of heaviest contact. He quickly and accurately directed close air support

against the attackers. At one point, the bombs and napalm fell only thirty meters from his own position. As the enemy assault was beaten back the battalion counterattacked. Murderous enemy rocket, mortar and small arms fire threatened to halt the advance just short of the hill's crest. Refusing to let the attack stall, Sergeant Minatra charged the hostile positions alone, killed a number of the enemy, and caused others to flee. The weary paratroopers, inspired by his actions, charged up the hill and completely overran the insurgents. Sergeant First Class Minatra's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**General Orders:** Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 1514 (April 4, 1968), **Action Date:** November 17 - 19, 1967

**Service:** Army, **Rank:** Sergeant First Class

**Company:** Airborne Division Advisory Detachment, Team 162

**Division:** Military Assistance Command, Vietnam