

**This is to Certify that
The President of the United States of America
Takes Pride in Presenting**



**THE
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS
to**



PAUL M. PRITCHARD

Citation: The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Paul M. Pritchard, Major (Infantry), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism while serving as a Senior Advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. On 23 April 1972, the 91st Company and the Command Group of the 9th Airborne Battalion were located in the vicinity of the 22nd Army of Vietnam Division. Throughout the pre-dawn hours the area had been under constant bombardment from enemy artillery, mortar and rocket fire. While under the rocket attack the TOC of the 22nd Army of Vietnam Division took a direct hit. While the shells continued to rain onto the position, Major Pritchard immediately went into the burning structure to assist in the removal of the friendly casualties. Shortly after returning to his position, he spotted three enemy tanks wheeling onto the airstrip and heading directly for the now smoldering ruins of the 22nd Army Vietnam Division Headquarters. Major Pritchard immediately left the safety of his position and directed a 105 recoilless into position, scoring a direct hit and knocking out the lead tank. Two 9th Battalion paratroopers had secured a XM-202 and successfully knocked out the second tank, causing the third

tank to immediately withdraw to a more suitable firing position. At this time, and from exposed positions, Major Pritchard alternately directed air strikes into the enemy forces. In the late hours of 23 April 1972, as a result of constant shelling and continued enemy pressure, an evaluation of the situation resulted in the command issuing orders for the battalion to relocate. As the first helicopters to make the extraction took off it was immediately taken under fire by intensive and accurate AK-47 and 51 caliber fires, crashed, and exploded into flames. The aircraft Major Pritchard was on also crashed upon take off, and resulted in him being wounded in the arms, legs and face. Major Pritchard's courageous and professional leadership directly resulted in the destruction of two T-54 tanks and countless recoilless rifles, with no less than 50 enemy dead, not to include the countless unconfirmed dead and wounded. His professional competency and bravery enabled his men to tactically withdraw under fire and return safely. Major Pritchard's extraordinary heroic actions and conspicuous gallantry are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit, and the United States Army.

Department of the Army, General Orders No. 2 (February 3, 1976)