

Local Korean War Hero Finally Awarded Bronze Star

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In 1952, in the midst of the Korean War, Dr. Richard Blum served in the Army's 212th Psychiatric Detachment as the first-ever "Combat Psychologist," a successful experimental position that saved many soldiers from the horrors of combat fatigue and created a fighting force that could recuperate more quickly from the emotional toll that war often inflicts on soldiers. Dr. Blum's research not only led to new diagnostic methods that made it easier to treat large numbers of soldiers with psychological ailments, but he also conducted research that helped to fight hemorrhagic fever, a Hanta Virus-like ailment that was devastating to those fighting on the front-lines.

At the end of Dr. Blum's tour in 1952, his Commanding Officer recommended him for the Bronze Star, but because of problems with his paperwork, the Army did not give him the award at that time. Although it is extremely rare for medals to be awarded so long after service has occurred, Rep. Anna G. Eshoo recently wrote to the Department of the Army, urging them to act quickly to grant him the honor. Eshoo said, "After 53 years, Dr. Blum will finally receive the Bronze Star he earned and it is an honor to have helped make this day arrive."

This Monday, Eshoo will host a medal ceremony and introduce Dr. Blum's Commanding Officer, David Wilson, M.A., M.D., J.D., who, after 53 years of waiting, will pin the Bronze Star on Dr. Blum's lapel.

Listen to NPR's story on Dr. Blum, "First Combat Psychologist Recognized"

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