



# **Living with Honor: A Memoir by America's First Living Medal of Honor Recipient Since the Vietnam War**

*Salvatore A. Giunta*

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# Living with Honor: A Memoir by America's First Living Medal of Honor Recipient Since the Vietnam War

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## **Living with Honor: A Memoir by America's First Living Medal of Honor Recipient Since the Vietnam War** Salvatore A. Giunta

**A compelling memoir from a true hero—and one of the few living persons to ever be awarded the celebrated Medal of Honor.** Sal Giunta was just a regular kid from Iowa when he enlisted in the army to figure out what to do with his life. He never thought that a few tours of duty later, he would be the first living person since the Vietnam War to be awarded the esteemed Medal of Honor.

First stationed in Italy and then deployed into Afghanistan, Giunta had a firsthand perspective of the ground war and its daily difficulties—some quotidian in nature, some anything but. He and around 150 of his company were stationed in the dangerous Korengal Valley in 2007, where some of the most intense fighting in the war had taken place. Giunta called it, “basically hell on earth.”

Late one night in October of 2007, Giunta’s company embarked on a sting operation into the Taliban’s forces. They were ambushed on a rugged mountain path by twenty insurgents. Giunta sprang into action and with little regard for his own safety, he withstood enemy fire to administer medical aid to his wounded fellow soldiers—even rescuing one soldier who was being carried away by the insurgents—until his squad reached safety.

For the unrivaled bravery and selflessness of his actions, Giunta was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Obama. In this fascinating and riveting memoir, he depicts the realities of war, as well as the moment-by-moment details of the event that earned him the nation’s highest distinction.

## **Living with Honor: A Memoir by America's First Living Medal of Honor Recipient Since the Vietnam War Details**

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# **From Reader Review Living with Honor: A Memoir by America's First Living Medal of Honor Recipient Since the Vietnam War for online ebook**

## **Patrick says**

The first living recipient of the MoH from the War on Terror tells his story in this new book. And, it is well worth taking the time to read it. Sal Giunta tells his story: from his days growing up playing golf, to his first tour overseas, and finally the fateful battle on an Afghanistan hillside. Written on a level comparable to the superb *Outlaw Platoon* by Sean Parnell it is a powerful book.

You, and the rest of America, should read it.

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## **Derek says**

This memoir was well written. This is more than a book about the retelling of the battle in the Korengal Valley that led to Giunta receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor. I enjoyed the insight on life in an infantry unit and why some people enlist to fight. Giunta tells of daily life deployed and being in Afghanistan during the "forgotten years". I call this time period the forgotten years because the war in Iraq dominated the nightly news and news from Afghanistan was rare. Giunta reminds us that in 2005 to 2007 hostilities in Afghanistan were far from over.

I remember President Obama talking about how he truly liked Giunta. I concur, Giunta's likeability comes across in this book. Giunta is truly an All American hero not unlike many young men we know in our communities.

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## **Kira says**

Few who return from fighting overseas are willing to open up about their experiences in-country. As a result, most of us, the everyday men and women that make up the bulk of America, are unaware of the daily sacrifices made by thousands of men and women who have chosen to defend the interests and the well-being of the American people. In his poignant memoir, Sal Giunta pays tribute to the men with whom he served and grants the world a rare peek at what it means to be a soldier who has seen multiple tours of duty. Throughout the narrative, readers will find that the author's humility belies his role as America's first living recipient of the Medal of Honor in 40 years. In fact, it seems that Giunta's sense of loyalty and fair play push him to recognize the worthiness of all of his fellow comrades in arms. Throughout the narrative, the soldiers of 173rd Airborne Brigade come to life as Giunta affectionately depicts both the quirks and the strengths of the soldiers with whom he served two tours in Afghanistan. While the rest of America continues to applaud the heroic actions that merited him the highest of honors, Giunta credits all of the soldiers in his unit, living and dead, with having had the willingness, courage, and the skill necessary to do what he did. "Living With Honor" is definitely a MUST READ!

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## **Terri says**

Audiobook:

I loved the style of this memoir. Told with brutal honesty regarding what it was like to fight in Afghanistan! Beautifully written regarding a topic that must have been difficult for him to write about. A must read for anyone who enjoys memoirs!

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## **Paul Arbogast says**

This is a book by Staff Sergeant Sal Giunta, the first living person in 40 years to be awarded the Medal of Honor. From what lead him to join the Army, through his training and two deployments, the second one being 15 months in a horrible place in Afghanistan. The second deployment being where he 'earned' the Medal of Honor. As he says, he doesn't feel that he is a 'hero', and he explains in his story how all the men there do things just as if not more 'heroic' than what the did. It gives a great insight into what our troops go/went through over there, and the difficulty of transitioning from war to normal society. An excellent book all should read.

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## **Sheri S. says**

Giunta writes about his early life and some of the decisions leading to his enlistment in the Army. Giunta describes his training and the significant relationships he develops during his time in the service. During his second deployment, he is in Afghanistan, a challenging assignment due to the daily gunfire, poor living conditions and extreme terrain. While returning from a mission one evening, Giunta and his team are ambushed resulting in casualties. During the ambush, Giunta engages in admirable actions. Though Giunta believes he acted as any other soldier would in the particular circumstances he faced, he is recognized for his actions and later awarded the Medal of Honor. Giunta continually downplays his efforts and instead praises his team for their valiant efforts (while also remembering the loss of life during the ambush). Additionally, he writes of the need for the military to do a better job of helping veterans transition back to society after being deployed.

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## **Karen says**

This is one of those books that everyone should read. It is about a soldier who lived through war in Afghanistan. It begins with his life as a young man and what led him to join the Army. War changed him while serving in Afghanistan and his story is about serving in combat and how his Medal of Honor is something that he feels was not possible if not for all the other guys he was with at the time they were surrounded by enemy. It is about camaraderie that is so necessary for soldiers serving together and stories about each person who has impacted his life. His humbleness is what makes his story so worth it to read.

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## **John says**

The author, Staff Sergeant Giunta, was the first living person to receive the Medal of Honor since the conclusion of the Vietnam War. This tells a complicated coming-of-age story and the common travails of U.S. soldiers stationed in the outposts of Afghanistan, concluding with a gripping retelling of the battle that led to his military awards. Great read.

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## **Craig Bowman says**

An excellent memoir of a soldier fighting in Afghanistan. It was a daunting task to deal with insurgents trying to kill you and locals you are trying to help that all look and dress the same. One point he drives home is he feels like everyone in his platoon involved in the fire fight were brave and fought equally well to him. He was just the chosen one to get the medal of honor. Too much to go into in this short review but suffice to say it was an excellent read.

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## **John says**

What a great book!! Giunta tells a compelling story about his service in Afghanistan and pays tribute to all those he served with. He is especially humble about receiving the Medal of Honor as the story of what took place takes up only a few pages in the book. He is brutally honest in his feelings about being in Afghanistan, about his mission there, and about the natives of that country. It wasn't what I expected, it was better than I expected! This is one soldier's story and it is a powerful one!

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## **P.e. lolo says**

A very good book. Mr. Giunta shares a lot about himself good and bad very honest. He also shares and wants men & women who have served to get treated for PTSD. He is still living with that last battle and the loss of his friends but he making it work. Airborne are a tough and different breed. I am glad he talking and trying to help all the men & women coming back and who are here it is ok to ask for help. Great book about a living hero.

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## **Avolyn Fisher says**

If there is only one book that you read this year, make it this one. I laughed, I cried, and at times identified with Sal while he described growing up in Eastern Iowa and the high school we both went to. He speaks honestly and openly without filtering his true feelings on what he went through. He is humble and reluctantly accepts praise for what he has done for our country. More than anything I feel ashamed for being so ignorant about what our troops are doing overseas. Like most Americans I was proud of our troops and I appreciated what they were doing for us but I knew very little about what they actually go through. I grossly underestimated what it was like for our troops. I found myself in tears on the plane when I got to the part about Rock Avalanche and the night of October 25, 2007. I am forever changed by Sal's story and I am

grateful that he chose to open up and share it with us in a way that most soldiers/veterans don't feel comfortable doing. I know I'll never fully understand what combat is like but I have such a different perspective now and never again will I take it lightly for one second what any soldier is doing for this country. Thank you, Sal.

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### **Brenda says**

This book was a new or refreshing way to look at our current military. I am not sure I would have picked the book up to read, if it hadn't been picked to discuss at Book Club. I thought I had a healthy respect for soldiers before I read this book, but now I feel this respect has been refined. It pleased me that this author did not present war as "cool and an awesome adventure." The ugly side he presented assisted me in respecting the military and veterans more. This quote hit home with me, "I want people to know that the life we have in America-a life of freedom and opportunity, a life largely free of violence and suffering-is not without cost. There are people out there fighting for it every day." Because of reading this book, the 4TH of July will never be the same for me. I will truly try to remember who fought and continues to serve so I can enjoy more freedom and more opportunities than anyone born in any other country on the planet. Thank you for serving in the U.S.A. military if you are reading this. Thank you Sal for taking time to give the common person a glimpse into current war and combat.

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### **Lisa Blair says**

On the same level as House to House by David Bellavia.

Living With Honor allows one to see the intensity of battle on the foreign soil of Afghanistan. Living With Honor also allows one to hear the intensity of pain as our soldiers process the loss of their buddies.

This is an honest re-telling of experiences faced on the battlefield and I am grateful to "know the truth" of what our soldiers have faced in our war on terror.

Warning: prolific use of foul language is the only negative

Quote: "I want people to know that the life we have in America - a life of freedom and opportunity, a life largely free of violence and suffering - is not without cost. There are people out there fighting for it every day. Soldiers on the ground do not have the luxury of political opinion - it's irrelevant to their existence and their mission. They do what they are told, regardless of how crazy it sometimes seems. Soldiers do not make big decisions; they do not have choices, other than those that are made in the blink of an eye and have life-and-death consequences.

And they accept this responsibility willingly. They seek it out. They fight so that others don't have to fight. ....I think it's acceptable to remind people once in a while that these privileges, given as a birthright, are preserved and maintained by men and women in uniform, and these people are doing extraordinary and courageous work under unbelievably difficult circumstances. In return, they expect.....nothing." pg 290

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## **Norm Minekime says**

This was an excellent book. It provided a soldier's view of the US Army today and a first person account of the War in Afghanistan. The book read like a long conversation with Sal Giunta. We really do not know what is happening with our fighting men and women today - the media coverage of current military action is poor at best. To find out what is really going on, we need to read books like this one. I highly recommend this book.

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