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Two Former Postal Employees Receive Medal of Honor *Santiago Erevia and Jose Rodela to be honored by U.S. Postal Service on Upcoming Stamp Sheet*

WASHINGTON — Only a few close friends who have known Santiago Erevia during his 32-year Postal Service career are aware that the San Antonio letter carrier was decorated for his extraordinary heroism in Vietnam. Nearly 45 years later, President Obama shared his story with the world today when he upgraded Erevia's Distinguished Service Cross to the Medal of Honor for his gallantry, intrepidity and heroism above and beyond the call of duty.

Jose Rodela, who served as a Mail Handler for the Postal Service during the late 1970s, also had his Distinguished Service Cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor by President Obama today.

"Nearly 20 percent of our workforce has served our country in the military," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. "Clearly 100 percent of our postal family is proud to learn of this long overdue honor. We salute you Santiago and Jose, as well as all who have unselfishly served our nation at great personal sacrifice in the military."

A radio telephone operator in the 101st Airborne Division, Specialist Fourth Class Erevia was participating in a search-and-clear mission in central Vietnam in 1969 when his platoon came under fire. Erevia crawled from one wounded soldier to another to provide aid, then charged and destroyed several enemy bunkers while under hostile fire.

Erevia said receiving the Medal of Honor "is bitter sweet after so much time has passed, but I am elated by this distinction. It is truly a great honor."

Erevia followed the path of many veterans upon leaving the armed forces — continuing to serve the nation by joining the Postal Service. Six months after returning home in 1970, Erevia began his postal career as a San Antonio letter carrier and for the last seven years of his career served at San Antonio's Frank Tejada Station.

Sergeant First Class Jose Rodela's courageous actions took place while serving as the company commander, Detachment B-36, Company A, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces during combat in Phuoc Long Province, Sept. 1, 1969. Rodela commanded his company through 18 hours of continuous combat while his battalion was attacked, taking heavy casualties. Throughout the battle, in spite of his wounds, Rodela repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to attend to the fallen and eliminate an enemy rocket position.

Rodela retired from the Army in 1975 and worked for the Postal Service in Corpus Christi and San Antonio, TX, between 1976 to 1978 before joining the Air Force. He currently resides in San Antonio.

Medal of Honor Forever Stamps

Ereivia and Rodela bring the total number of living former postal employees/Medal of Honor recipients to three. [George Sakato](#), a World War II Distinguished Service Cross recipient from Denver, CO, was upgraded to receive the Medal in 2000. Sakato's image is featured on the [World War II Medal of Honor Forever stamp sheet](#) issued Veterans' Day 2013. The sheet lists all 464 World War II Medal of Honor recipients and includes photographs of recipients who were alive at the time of the stamp proposal. The Korean War Medal of Honor Forever stamps will be issued Veterans' Day 2014. The Vietnam Medal of Honor stamps, bearing photographs of living recipients, will be issued at a yet-to-be announced date.

Congressional Review of Discrimination

Today's Medal of Honor presentation to Ereivia, Rodela and 22 other veterans culminates a 12-year Pentagon review ordered by Congress in 2002, through the Defense Authorization Act, which called for a review of Jewish-American and Hispanic-American veteran war records from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, to ensure those deserving the Medal of Honor were not denied because of prejudice.

President Obama will award the 24 Army veterans the Medal of Honor in recognition of their valor during major combat operations in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Each of these soldiers' bravery was previously recognized by award of the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest military award. The award will be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

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