



## Chief of Naval Operations Medal of Honor Ceremony

600 words - 5 min address

1. Good afternoon. What an honor to be here today with this group of luminaries, family, and friends.
2. We've heard a lot about Senior Chief Byers and his heroic actions. He represents the absolute best of our servicemen and women, of our Navy, and of our country.
3. Senior Chief Byers is the first living active duty member of the U.S. Navy to receive the Medal of Honor since 1976, when the late Rear Admiral James Stockdale and Lieutenant Thomas Norris (also a SEAL - and here with us today) each received the decoration from President Ford.
4. Yesterday, we awarded the Medal of Honor to SOCS Byers.

5. You hear this time and again from Senior Chief - “It’s not about me - it’s about my team.”
6. This is a common refrain from MoH awardees across the decades. Even though they received this award for valor - for them, it was and is about their teammates.
7. From Robert Ingram - Navy corpsman in Vietnam, “You can lay there under fire and die, or you can get up and go. I decided the men needed me out there.”
8. From Tommy Norris - “An American was down in enemy territory - of course I would do it again!”
9. SOCS Byers is emblematic of *this* generation’s continued commitment to our core values - honor, courage, and commitment. and this award is not just about their own unquestioned valor, but also about their dedication to their shipmates...to their fellow Americans.
10. Senior Chief Byers embodies this dedication, and his actions bring alive the words of the SEAL ethos,

which reads in part, “My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work, nor seek recognition for my actions.”

11. He represents the humility and quiet dignity of all SEALs - a warrior spirit of uncompromising integrity.
12. To achieve such heights, he has relied on faith, family, and as a team leader, a complete dedication to his team.
13. He has prayed St. Michael’s prayer before every mission - *St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.*
14. His family - Madison, Hannah, his mom Peggy - has supported him every step of the way - not only allowing him to do his job, but also keeping things strong at home as a Navy wife, mother and a

command ombudsman - serving other Navy families on the team.

15. And finally the team. When we were talking the other night at dinner, SOCS Byers mentioned how proud he was of the closeness and dedication of his team, and how privileged he was to be a team leader. He said that “as long as you keep the interests of the team first, you never have to worry about doing the right thing - it will just happen.”
16. To walk in the shoes as such as Stockdale and Ingram is an honor - but he’s not just walking in their shadow. He is now the inspiration for the next generation of leaders, the next generation of Medal of Honor winners.
17. His strong faith, the love and support of his family, and his dedication to his team - all will result in future generations looking back to him for inspiration, courage, and the strength to never give up on their teammates.

18. Senior Chief Byers, thank you for your service, and congratulations on a job well done. As a wise man once said, "The deed is all, not the glory."