



# This Month in NCO History: June 10, 1953

*Compiled by Pablo Villar*

NCO Journal

**S**gt. Ola Lee Mize wasn't the most imposing figure. At 120 pounds, he was initially rejected by the Army for being too light before ultimately being allowed to enlist in 1950. His actions the evening of June 10, 1953, near Surang-ni, Korea, during the Korean War proved he had ample heart.

Mize was part of K Company, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, while it defended a position known as Outpost Harry. Chinese soldiers had swarmed the company's stronghold, killing or wounding all of its officers. The hail of gunfire was deafening and rattled the encampment with a menacing clatter. The situation was bleak.

But Mize wasn't shaken. Upon learning that a comrade at a nearby listening post was wounded, Mize made his way through heavy fire to rescue him. He returned to the main position and began moving from bunker to bunker at a furious pace, firing through apertures and tossing grenades to stave off the enemy. At one point, Mize shot a Chinese soldier whose weapon was aimed squarely at a fellow American. Later, Mize charged a machine gun position that had been overrun, killing 10 of the enemy and forcing the rest to flee. During the fight, the concussive blast of grenades and artillery fire knocked Mize down three times. But he kept fighting and managed to escape serious injury.



Ola L. Mize, United States Army, Korean War Medal of Honor recipient.

Around midnight, Mize worked his way to his command post, which had also been overrun. He directed friendly artillery fire along the enemy's routes of approach. The next morning, he joined American counterattack forces to help take back the outpost.

For his actions, Mize was promoted to master sergeant and was presented with the Medal of Honor by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on Sept. 7, 1954.

After the Korean War, Mize joined the Special Forces and did three tours of duty in the Vietnam War. He retired as a colonel in 1981. Mize died March 12, 2014, in Gadsden, Ala. He was 82.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8ipX8yL9pE>  
Citation

The President of the United States  
in the name of The Congress  
takes pleasure in presenting the  
Medal of Honor  
to

MIZE, OLA L.

Rank and organization: Master Sergeant (then

Sgt.), U.S. Army, Company K, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Surang-ni, Korea, 10 to 11 June 1953. Entered service at: Gadsden, Ala. Born: 28 August 1931, Marshall County, Ala. G.O.No.: 70, 24 September 1954.

Citation:

M/Sgt. Mize, a member of Company K, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and outstanding courage above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. Company K was committed to the defense of "Outpost Harry", a strategically valuable position, when the enemy launched a heavy attack. Learning that a comrade on a friendly listening post had been wounded he moved through the intense barrage, accompanied by a medical aid man, and rescued the wounded soldier. On returning to the main position he established an effective defense system and inflicted heavy casualties against attacks from determined enemy assault forces which had penetrated into trenches within the outpost area. During his fearless actions he was blown down by artillery and grenade blasts 3 times but each time he dauntlessly returned to his position, tenaciously fighting and successfully repelling hostile attacks. When enemy onslaughts ceased he took his few men and moved from bunker to bunker, firing through apertures and throwing grenades at the foe, neutralizing their positions. When an enemy soldier stepped out behind a comrade, prepared to fire, M/Sgt. Mize killed him, saving the life of his fellow soldier. After rejoining the platoon, moving from man to man, distributing ammunition, and shouting words of encouragement he observed a friendly machinegun position overrun. He immediately fought his way to the position, killing 10 of the enemy and dispersing the remainder. Fighting back to the command post, and finding several friendly wounded there, he took a position to protect them. Later, securing a radio, he directed friendly artillery fire upon the attacking enemy's routes of approach. At dawn he helped regroup for a counterattack which successfully drove the enemy from the outpost. M/Sgt. Mize's valorous conduct and unflinching courage reflect lasting glory upon himself and uphold the noble traditions of the military service.



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