

Edward Clyde Benford was born in Staten Island, New York, on January 15, 1931. He enlisted as a Hospital Recruit in the U. S. Navy on June 27, 1949, at the U. S. Navy Recruiting Station, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was subsequently advanced to Hospital Apprentice in 1949 and to Hospitalman, third class, on August 12, 1950.

Reporting for active duty, he had recruit training at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, from June until December 1949 and, completing the basic course at the Hospital Corps School there in April 1950, was assigned to the Naval Hospital, Newport, Rhode Island. In August of that year he reported for a four months' course in Neuropsychiatric Nursing Technique at the Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, graduating in December with the designation Neuropsychiatry Technician. Remaining at that hospital until June 1951, he then had further training at the Field Medical Service School, Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, and with designation of Medical Field Technician, was ordered to duty with the Fleet Marine Force, Ground, Pacific.

He returned to the United States in June 1952, and after brief duty at the Marine Barracks, Camp Pendleton, California, he returned to the Pacific to rejoin Fleet Marine Force, Ground. He was killed in action on September 5, 1952, while serving the First Marine Division in the Korean Area. "For gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Hospital Corpsman, attached to a Company in the First Marine Division during operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea on 5 September 1952..." he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The citation continues:

"When his company was subjected to heavy artillery and mortar barrages, followed by a determined assault during the hours of darkness by an enemy force estimated at battalion strength, Benfold resolutely moved from position to position in the face of intense hostile fire, treating the wounded and lending words of encouragement. Leaving the protection of his sheltered position to treat the wounded when the platoon area in which he was working was attacked from both the front and rear, he moved forward to an exposed ridge line where he observed two Marines in a large crater. As he approached the two men to determine their condition, an enemy soldier threw two grenades into the crater while two other enemy charged the position. Picking up a grenade in each hand, Benfold leaped out of the crater and hurled himself against the onrushing hostile soldiers, pushing the grenades against their chests and killing both the attackers. Mortally wounded while carrying out this heroic act, Benfold, by his great personal valor and resolute spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of almost certain death, was directly responsible for saving the lives of his two comrades. His exceptional courage reflects the highest credit upon himself and enhances the finest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service."

In addition to the Medal of Honor, he was entitled to the Purple Heart Medal (for wounds received in action), the Korean Service Medal, and United Nations Service Medal.