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**Gene Patnaude: The Marlow resident was assisted by Rep. Charles Bass and his staff.**

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NEWPORT — An unsung hero of the Vietnam War who is now to receive 11 medals for his service was honored by Congressman Charles F. Bass Thursday morning.

Vietnam War and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Gene Patnaude of Marlow said he had known he had been awarded the Purple Heart but had never received it.

It has only been in the past few years and at the encouragement of his son and grandson that Patnaude became interested in receiving it.

Bass' staff member Leigh Ann Shriver, who deals exclusively with veteran and military affairs, helped Patnaude through the process of obtaining his Purple Heart as well as 10 other medals he had been awarded for his service, which are the Combat Action Ribbon (Vietnam), the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze campaign stars, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Color with palm), the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Civil Action Color with palm), the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Parachutist Insignia, and the Rifle Expert Badge.

In a small ceremony in Bass' Newport office Thursday morning, Bass presented Patnaude with three of the medals, including the Purple Heart. Patnaude recently received the medals through the mail and is expecting the other eight shortly, he said.

Beaming with pride, Patnaude's 12-year-old grandson Kellin Cushing of Marlow said he couldn't describe how the honor to his grandfather made him feel. "It's hard to put in words," Kellin said.

While serving in Vietnam in 1969, Patnaude was gravely wounded in an explosion that blew him 12 feet into the air. At the time, he was not expected to survive his injuries.

"Understand that Mr. Patnaude was severely wounded in Vietnam, and this is the kind of valor we should commemorate and respect every day," Bass said.

"I want to thank you for your service to America and the enormous, tremendous sacrifice you have made all these years," he said to Patnaude.