

STEVEN LEE BECK**Class 4-67**

STEVEN LEE BECK
is honored on Panel 44W, Row 45 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: STEVEN LEE BECK
Wall Name: STEVEN L BECK
Date of Birth: 8/27/1944
Date of Casualty: 9/13/1968
Home of Record: ATHERTON
County of Record: SAN MATEO COUNTY
State: CA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: BINH LONG



In the spring of 1968, 1LT Beck was recovering from shrapnel wounds in the hospital and was interviewed by Major General Keith L. Ware, Commander of the 1st Infantry Division for the position of Aide. He was selected for that position and in July became the Senior Aide to MG Ware.

On 13 September 1968 MG Ware's Command and Control helicopter carrying a crew of four and the CG's four man Division Command Group was hit by enemy fire knocking five feet off the tail boom. It exploded in mid-air and crashed southeast of Loc Ninh with no survivors.



A Note from the Virtual Wall

On 13 Sep 1968, B Company, 1st Avn Bn, 1st Inf Div, provided the command and control helicopter (UH-1H tail number 67-17552) for the Division's Commanding General, Major General Keith L. Ware. The Huey was carrying a crew of four and the CG's party of four passengers when it exploded in mid-air and crashed southeast of Loc Ninh with no survivors.

B Co, 1st Aviation Battalion aircrewmembers:
CW2 William Manzanares, Jr, pilot
CPT Gerald W. Plunkett, copilot
SP5 Jose D. Gutierrez-Velaz, crew chief
SP4 Raymond Edward Lanter, gunner

1st Infantry Division Command Group:
MGen Keith L. Ware, Commanding General (Medal of Honor)
LTC Henry M. Oliver
1LT Steven L. Beck
SgtMaj Joseph A. Venable

Major General Ware had been decorated with the Medal of Honor for his actions as Commander, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, in World War II. He also received the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star for personal valor in combat.

A Note from the Virtual Wall

Although I did not know him personally, Steven Beck was born in 1946 and was killed in Vietnam in 1968. He was graduated from the San Raphael Military Academy in 1963. While in high school he was active in sports and attained the rank of Cadet Lieutenant Colonel and was Commander of the Cadet Battalion. It was his desire to become a career Army Officer.

After attending Oregon State University for two years he entered the Army in 1966 and was trained as an artilleryman. He then attended Officer Candidate School, receiving a commission as a Second Lieutenant of Artillery and assignment to Vietnam in early 1968. During his recovery from wounds received while in the Parrot's Beak, he was selected as Major General Keith Ware's aide-de-camp. He served in that position until his death on 13 Sep 1968.

The San Raphael Military Academy Class of 1969 sponsored the construction of an on-campus rose garden dedicated in his memory.

From a friend,
John C. Pursley (USMC 1970-72)
1007 N W Fuschia Court, Silverdale WA 98383
28 March 2003

War Story:

I was close to this action, as a member of the Rebels, the 1st Infantry Division's organic gunship platoon. CPT Jerry Plunkett, and CW2 Bill Manzanares, both of whom I had roomed with early in my tour as a member of the Longhorns (Division C&C).

General Ware's aircraft exploded in mid air with the crew, General Ware, the Division CSM, the Division G4 and the General's aide all lost. Many losses were incurred trying to recover the bodies. I believe the gun platoon leader of 1/4 Cav was KIA in a cobra trying to recover the bodies. General Ware was a hell of a commander, who I believe, won the Medal of Honor in Europe in WWII and was battlefield commissioned.

Jerry and Bill and the crew were fine men, as were all. There was some speculation that the aircraft was sabotaged, possibly with a grenade with the firing handle held by a rubber band and dropped in the gasoline tank. We will never know.

Another War Story:

I was the maintenance technician in A company 1st Aviation Bn at the time of this incident. Captain Plunkett spent the night with me a week before he was killed; we were both from Memphis. A Company had the slicks including the General's aircraft. B Company had the gunships, scouts, and the fixed winged aircraft. On that Friday the 13 at a little after 1300 hours they took off from a location in our northern AO and received ground fire knocking off 5 feet of their tail boom. They went into autorotation but the ship already with an extremely forward CG had real nose tuck. The gunner jumped before they reached the ground and did not survive. When they pulled collective at the bottom the rotor head separated from the mast and the aircraft hit traveling down and sideways. All on board were killed including General Ware's pet sheppard. MG Ware had received the Medal of Honor in WWII. It was estimated that they were hit at 1313 hours; they had SOI No. 13 checked and one of the two pilots had 13 days left in country. Strange.