

Harold B. Durham, Jr. – Artillery OCS Class 1-67

Second Lieutenant Harold B. Durham, Jr. was commissioned as an Artillery Officer upon graduation from the Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in class 1-67, 17 December 1966.

His first duty assignment was: Platoon Leader in G Battery, 26th Field Artillery (Searchlight), Fort Carson, Colorado. His subsequent duty assignment was: Forward Observer in C Battery, 6th Battalion 15th Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, Vietnam in support of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry. His military education consists of: Officer Candidate School and Field Artillery Searchlight Course.

His military awards include the Medal of Honor, Bronze Star Medal w/ Valor Device and Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/ 2 Bronze Service Stars, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 Device.

The Medal of Honor

Second Lieutenant Durham, Artillery, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the cost of his life above and beyond the call of duty while assigned to Battery C. Second Lieutenant Durham was serving as a forward observer with Company D, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry during a battalion reconnaissance-in-force mission. At approximately 1015 hours contact was made with an enemy force concealed in well-camouflaged positions and fortified bunkers. Second Lieutenant Durham immediately moved into an exposed position to adjust the supporting artillery fire onto the insurgents. During a brief lull in the battle, administered emergency first aid to the wounded in spite of heavy enemy sniper fire directed toward him. Moments later, as enemy units assaulted friendly positions, he learned that Company A, bearing the brunt of the attack, had lost its forward observer. While he was moving to replace the wounded observer, the enemy detonated a Claymore mine, severely wounding him in the head and impairing his vision. In spite of the intense pain, he continued to direct the supporting artillery fire and to employ his individual weapon in support of the hard pressed infantrymen. As the enemy pressed their attack, Second Lieutenant Durham called for supporting fire to be placed almost directly on his position. Twice the insurgents were driven back, leaving many dead and wounded behind. Second Lieutenant Durham was then taken to a secondary defensive position. Even in his extremely weakened condition, he continued to call artillery fire onto the enemy. He refused to seek cover and instead positioned himself in a small clearing which offered a better vantage point from which to adjust the fire. Suddenly, he was severely wounded a second time by enemy machine gun fire. As he lay on the ground near death, he saw two Viet Cong approaching, shooting the defenseless wounded men. With his last effort, 2d Lieutenant Durham shouted a warning to a nearby soldier who immediately killed the insurgents. Second Lieutenant Durham died moments later, still grasping the radio handset. Second Lieutenant Durham's gallant actions in close combat with an enemy force are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.