

First Lieutenant John D Piper (Class 2-65)

First Lieutenant John D Piper was commissioned a Field Artillery Officer upon graduation from Artillery Officer Candidate School Class 2-65 on 16 Feb 1965.

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Battery B, 2d Battalion, 19th Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). First Lieutenant Piper distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 27 December 1966 while serving as executive officer of an artillery battery during a massive Viet Cong attack in Binh Dinh Province. The two insurgent battalions began their attack with a mortar, recoilless rifle, and machine gun barrage which swept the artillery battery. Although barefoot, Lieutenant Piper seized a grenade launcher and raced to a howitzer position, suffering a serious knee wound as he ran. Exposing himself against a backdrop of burning ammunition to attract hostile fire away from the howitzers, he fearlessly engaged the waves of assaulting Viet Cong. When he learned that two guns on the far side of the battery had been overrun, he began crawling up to a vantage point to check the positions, ran into two insurgents, and killed them with his weapon. When the crew of his howitzer was forced to withdraw to another position to regroup, Lieutenant Piper personally covered their movement with intense fire. When he saw that the men at the rear position were unable to fire their artillery because of intense fire by hostile groups a short distance in front of the gun, Lieutenant Piper requested permission to fire anti-personnel rounds, warned the defenders in the camp to take secure cover, then personally fired two rounds which struck terror into the Viet Cong and routed them from their attacking positions. Moments later, while checking wounded in the battery, he came upon an insurgent with explosives at a howitzer and killed him with his pistol. First Lieutenant Piper's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army States Army.