

2LT Harold Bascom Durham, Jr.- KIA October 17, 1967



The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to Second Lieutenant Harold Bascom Durham, Jr. (ASN: 0-5424449), United States Army (Reserve), for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a forward observer with Battery C, 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, in action against enemy aggressor forces in the Republic of Vietnam, on 17 October 1967 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 he 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 machinegun fire. As he lay on the ground near death, he saw two Viet Cong approaching, shooting the defenseless wounded men. With his last effort, Second 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 United States Army.

**General Orders: Department of the Army, General Orders No. 74
(November 20, 1969)**