

HUGH ELROY BEST III

Class 42B-67

HUGH ELROY BEST III
is honored on Panel 33W, Row 13 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: HUGH ELROY BEST III
Wall Name: HUGH E BEST III
Date of Birth: 9/19/1947
Date of Casualty: 1/29/1969
Date of Death: 1/29/1969
Home of Record: TARBORO
County of Record: EDGECOMBE COUNTY
State: NC
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: KIEN TUONG



1LT Best was assigned to Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery and was serving as a Forward Observer with Company C, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division (Mechanized) when he was mortally wounded on January 25, 1969, Kien Yuong Province, Plain of Reeds. He died of the wounds on January 29, 1969. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Silver Star Medal, which were presented to his parents in a ceremony at Fort Bragg in June of 1969.

You Are Not Forgotten

We were Artillery Forward Observers in the same battalion at Rach Kien. Butch was the B Co. F.O. and I was the F.O. in A Co. Lt Brick, the C Co. F.O. and I went up and visited him in the hospital before he died. I remember our shock and our sadness upon learning of his death. He seemed fine just a day or two before. We had a nice memorial service for him in the battalion. He was missed. We were all very young. It really hit home, losing one of the four of us F.O.'s. I have never forgotten him. I'm proud of his service and honored to have served with him. Burton F. Williams, Jr., Yuba City, California (1Lt., F.A., Forward Observer, A Co., 5/60th Infantry, 1968-69)

Posted by: Burton F. Williams, Jr.
Relationship: Fellow officer
November 25, 1998

Hugh Elroy III Best

I served with Butch as a Training Officer at Ft. Jackson. He was a good friend and we misbehaved on many occasions in his green sports car. We saw each other briefly in Vietnam when he first arrived with the 9th Div at Bearcat. I'll never forget how empty I felt when I read of his death in the Stars and Stripes.

Posted by: HW "Skip" Weldon
Relationship: We served together
October 5, 2001

From the Virtual Wall

Lt Best epitomized Grace and Courage under fire. His actions on that final day in the Plain of Reeds saved many lives for Charlie Company at the cost of his own. Greater love than this, no man has.

With Utmost Respect
John Depko
1LT, C Co, 5/60th, 9th Inf Div, 1968-1969
259 E. Bay Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92627
7 February 2002

Butch,
We met for the first time in December of 1966 during our basic training at Fort Bragg. After basic we went our separate ways - you received your commission in artillery, and I received mine in infantry. We shared a house in Columbia, SC, from late 1967 to late 1968, before we both left for Vietnam.

Our fates were somewhat different during our tours of duty. You served admirably as an artillery forward observer, and I served as a platoon leader and company executive officer. In January 1969 I was asked to escort your remains to Tarboro, N. C. There is no greater compliment than to be asked by your parents to be responsible for their son.

You were indeed a good friend, a loving brother and son, and a true American hero. "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

From a friend,
Charles M. Bailey
1st Lieutenant Infantry
2/8 First Air Cavalry
3 Jun 2006



A Note from The Virtual Wall

1LT Hugh Best was wounded in action on 25 Jan 1969 when C Company, 5/60th Infantry, was engaged in the Plain of Reeds. Five men from Charlie 5/60 were killed in the action:

- 1LT Roger L. Vickers, Springfield, OH (Dist Svc Cross)
- SGT James P. Riggins, Los Fresnos, TX
- SP4 Dennis A. Holzheimer, Toppenish, WA
- SP4 James A. Luckey, Fort Myers, FL (Medic, HHC w/ C/5/60)
- CPL Jay D. Rumsey, Elmira, NY

**HQ 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96370**

5 February 1969

**GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1255**

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.

BEST, HUGH E. III FIRST LIEUTENANT FIELD ARTILLERY United States Army
Battery A, 2d Battalion, 4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division

Awarded: Silver Star

Date Action: 25 January 1969

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason:

For gallantry in action involving close combat against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: First Lieutenant Best distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 25 January 1969 while serving as a Forward Observer with Company C, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry, on a reconnaissance in force mission northwest of Tan An. After the lead elements of the company became pinned down by a murderous barrage of hostile fire, Lieutenant Best courageously moved forward with the command group to rescue the beleaguered men. When the company commander was mortally wounded, he immediately took command and repeatedly exposed himself to the fusillade as he maneuvered against the enemy emplacements. Upon reaching the forward element, Lieutenant Best began to administer first aid to a stricken soldier, but was then gravely wounded himself. He later succumbed to the wound received during his valiant actions. First Lieutenant Best's extraordinary heroism in close combat with an armed hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 9th Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

IRA A. HUNT, JR.

COL, GS

Chief of Staff

**HQ 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96370**

7 February 1969

**GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1371**

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

C I T A T I O N

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

IS PRESENTED TO

**FIRST LIEUTENANT HUGH E. BEST III
FIELD ARTILLERY
UNITED STATES ARMY**

who distinguished himself by outstandingly meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. During the period

5 November 1968 to 29 January 1969

he consistently manifested exemplary professionalism and initiative in obtaining outstanding solutions. His rapid assessment and solution of numerous problems inherent in a counterinsurgency environment greatly enhanced the allied effectiveness against a determined and aggressive enemy. Despite many adversities, he invariably performed his duties in a resolute and efficient manner. Energetically applying his sound judgement and extensive knowledge, he has contributed materially to the successful accomplishment of the United States' mission in the Republic of Vietnam. His loyalty, diligence and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.

Base Named In Honor of Lt. Hugh Best

A fire support base in Vietnam has been named in honor of the late Lt. Hugh E. Best, III.

In a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Hugh E. Best, Jr., Lt. Col. Floyd C. Adams, Jr., wrote:

On 8 August 1969, the 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery, dedicated one of their Fire Support Bases - FIRE SUPPORT BASE BEST. The 3rd Brigade Commander, the battalion commander, the brigade chaplain, and all of the members of Battery A took part in the ceremony. The ceremony included the raising of a flag which had flown over the Capitol prior to being sent to the battery. During the ceremony, Col. Crittenberger, the brigade commander, said that "Lt. Best was the epitome of America - young, courageous, vigorous and always willing to help the oppressed." The officers and men were proud to dedicate their base to such a fine individual.

From a Tarboro, NC, newspaper of the time



Hugh is buried at Edgecombe Memorial Park, Tarboro, North Carolina