

HAROLD BASCOM DURHAM JR

Class 1-67

**HAROLD BASCOM DURHAM JR
is honored on Panel 28E, Row 20 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial**

**Full Name: HAROLD BASCOM DURHAM JR
Wall Name: HAROLD B DURHAM JR
Date of Birth: 10/12/1942
Date of Casualty: 10/17/1967
Date of Death: 10/17/1967
Home of Record: TIFTON
County of Record: TIFT COUNTY
State: GA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 2LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: BINH LONG**



The President of the United States
in the name of the Congress of the United States
takes pride in presenting the

MEDAL OF HONOR

posthumously to

HAROLD BASCOM DURHAM
Second Lieutenant
United States Army

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

2LT 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, 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery. 2LT 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. 2LT 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, 2LT 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. 2LT 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, 2LT Durham shouted a warning to a nearby soldier who immediately killed the insurgents. 2LT Durham died moments later, still grasping the radio handset. 2LT 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.

The Field Artillery OCS Hall of Fame is located in Durham Hall, Building 3025, Fort Sill Oklahoma. The engraved plaque at the entrance to the Hall of Fame:

2LT Harold B. "Pinky" Durham, Jr.



Durham Hall, the OCS Hall of Fame and Museum, was originally the Brigade HQ Building of the Officer Candidate School, located at the entrance to Robinson Barracks. Ownership of Building T-3025 was transferred from Fort Sill to the OCS Alumni Chapter of the U.S. Field Artillery Association, and it is maintained as a tribute to the thousands of future officers who passed through the Fort Sill Officer Candidate School from 1941 to 1973.

Durham Hall was dedicated on May 20, 1999, and named in honor of 2LT Harold B. "Pinky" Durham, Jr., who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for action in the Battle of Ong Thanh, Republic of Vietnam, on October 17, 1967. 2LT Durham was a graduate of Artillery OCS Class 1-67, and was serving in Vietnam as a Forward Observer in Battery C, 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery,

in support of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry ("Black Lions"), 1st Infantry Division, during a battalion reconnaissance-in-force mission.

2LT Durham demonstrated "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" during the operation, exemplifying the role of the Field Artillery in combat operations, as indicated by the following extracts from his Medal of Honor citation:

"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 employ his individual weapon...With his last effort, 2LT Durham shouted a warning to a nearby soldier who immediately killed the insurgents. 2LT Durham died moments later, still gripping the radio handset...2LT 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."

This plaque is presented by Artillery OCS Class 1-67, in memory of Pinky Durham, a friend, classmate, brother in arms, and fallen comrade, on June 16, 2006.

D.A.V. Sign



The sign at the D.A.V. house on Ocilla Highway, named in honor of Pinky, was replaced by his family in 2004. The dedication to his memory by the chapter and it's president, J.D. Lindsey, will always be appreciated.

Posted by: John Durham
Relationship: He is my brother
December 5, 2004

OCS Classmate

Thank you to Pinkie's family for keeping his name and spirit alive. I was privileged to attend OCS with him (Class 24-66). His death still haunts me.

Posted by: Richard Sciaroni
Relationship: We served together
June 3, 2002

Black Lions Guidon Presentation



God bless the BLACK LIONS for their love for Pinky and the visits they make to this grave. The guidon now resides at the D.A.V. chapter, a few miles from our old homestead, Tifton.

Posted by: John Durham
Relationship: He is my brother
December 5, 2004

Keeping Ready - 1st Tour



Before re-enlisting for OCS, Spc4 Durham, cleans rifle in the field

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment Remembers - Time on Target and moment of silence

Yesterday, the anniversary of Pinky's heroic death, we massed the fires of our battalion - all 18 guns fired 2 rounds each in honor of his great sacrifice and followed with a 30 second moment of silence. This is a copy of the message that was read to every soldier of our battalion on the evening of the 16th:

"33 years ago tomorrow, 2LT Pinky Durham earned the Medal of Honor giving his life for his country, his infantry buddies, and his Regiment - the 15th Field Artillery in the Battle of Ong Thanh, Republic of Vietnam while fighting for the 2-28IN Black Lions. His ultimate sacrifice has earned him the right to be honored by all members, past and present, of this great battalion. Pinky Durham's selfless service, never quit attitude, and courage above and beyond the call of duty, represent all that we stand for as a proud organization. Tomorrow, at 0730, we will fire a Battalion Time on Target mission in honor of this great forward observer and 15th Regimental soldier - and therefore your attention to making this mission go as planned needs everyone's complete commitment. I would like to follow our TOT with a 30 second moment of silence so that we can, as a collective group, think about his sacrifice and pay tribute to this "Let's Go" soldier - his brother and sister, as well as all that personally knew him, will appreciate your thoughts more than you can imagine. Where ever you are, whatever you are doing as part of the Allons effort tomorrow morning, please pause with me after our 18 gun salute to contemplate this great hero. Commanders please ensure that all of your soldiers get to see this message. Thanks for all that you do! Let's Go! LTC J" The TOT was on time, on target just as Pinky would have made it! Pinky we salute you! V/r J

Posted by: LTC Samuel H. Johnson
October 19, 2000

Class 24-66 Arty OCS

Pinky, you were a leader in OCS and continued that during your service in RVN. You are a SOLDIER.

Posted by: James K. Wambold
Relationship: We served together
October 14, 2000

We love you, Pinky, and will not forget you.

You gave your life so that others could live, Pinky. Your comrades and fellow warriors of that terrible battle at Ong Thanh will never forget you. Those of us who survived owe you our very lives. Your brave example that day is remembered constantly by us. Your legacy is that your magnificent courage and basic goodness will live on in the daily lives and training of other soldiers. We will not forget you, Pinky - your family, your friends, your community, and the US Army Artillery sent you to us when we desperately needed you. This "thank you" is not good enough; we miss you and love you, Pinky. You will always be my Forward Observer. May God bless you and be holding you in his hand.

Dauntless Delta Six

Posted by: A. Clark Welch
Relationship: Rifle Company Commander
September 15, 2000

Thank you from the current members of the 15th Field Arty Regiment

Posted for: HAROLD BASCOM DURHAM JR:

To John, Genie, Marilyn, Jeff and Charlie. To Generals(R) Serio and Sheldon, COL (R) Welch, Judge Orlofsky, Joe Costello and all others who graciously gave of their time to help us remember Pinky Durham on Friday, 28 July 2000 - a most heartfelt thank you. Durham Hall gives us a deep feeling of pride every time that we enter the doors. Thanks to all of you, we know Pinky a little better now and we have a worthy role model to emulate. His selfless service and dedication to his fellow soldiers, without taking himself too seriously, are worthy of our daily thoughts and prayers. Thanks again to all of you for making him a permanent part of our lives. Allons!

Posted by: LTC Samuel H. Johnson
Relationship: Current member of the 15th FA
July 30, 2000

The Man with the Smile

I will always remember the face of Lt Harold "Pinky" Durham because it was always smiling. His countenance brought others to thoughts of hope, happiness and confidence. He was a man to be emulated. His life was given to others. Thank God for men like Pinky Durham! Jim Shelton Major Infantry Operations Officer 2/28 Inf "Black Lions" October 1967 Vietnam.

Posted by: Jim Shelton
Relationship: Comrade
June 18, 1999

Pinky

To all that knew this energetic prankster who loved God, country and his friends harder than anyone I've ever known... he will always be known by his "real" name...Pinky. Pinky Durham was the product of the 50's and a son of Tift County, Georgia. Our parents, ministers, scout leaders and teachers taught us to respect authority, fear God, and to have compassion for people...no matter who they were. Pinky was red headed, freckled faced, tough, and funny. He was the best friend I've ever had. We played cowboys and Indians, army, hunted, went camping, and had many great times as well as more fights than I care to remember. We loved each other and, as might be expected for a couple of boys only one year apart in school, we constantly set each other up during our early years but often came to the aid of the other when anyone other one of us did the other a disservice.

Pinky was killed 5 days after his 25th birthday on his second tour to Viet Nam. He loved the Vietnamese people he'd met in the villages. He'd even spent some effort teaching English (one of his weakest disciplines) on his first tour. He was planning to marry a young girl whose father had sent her to school in the U.S. just prior to his death. Christine was very special and spent a week with my family after learning of Pinky's death. She was a fine artist, devoted student, and truly loved Pinky. She would have been welcome in this family.

For two years, we didn't know Pinky was a "hero". But, the awards came and the honors continue to come. The Durham's are very proud, for sure. To me and my sister, Genie, he was invincible. We still wish this were all a bad dream. For me, my life changed in a second in October 1967. It's been 32 years since I lost my little brother and I know, if he were here today, he'd wonder what all the fuss has been all about. After all, he so often demonstrated that he seldom did things for Pinky. I knew him better than anyone and there's no doubt that to the end, his heart and thoughts were for his comrades.

Having now spent some time with some of his classmates from Ft Sill (OCS 1-67) at the dedication of the Artillery Hall of Fame last week, and recalling communications from his commander and fellow officers who witnessed the final combat, Genie and I will find comfort in the knowledge that his mission and the lives of his men required his ultimate sacrifice. Still, I miss him more than I can express.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the Americans who grace these walls. May God give them peace and may these lives not have been given in vain. I join those listed here in hoping that no other "wars" be fought where the goal is less than winning. John Price Durham, brother

Posted by: John P. Durham

Relationship: Brother

May 31, 1999

From www.virtualwall.org

Pinky was a classmate of mine in OCS, Arty Class 1-67. After that we both went to Fort Carson before deploying to Vietnam. He was a jovial and helpful kind of guy, always there when needed, and due to no money in those days we all needed each other at times. We partied together, worked together, and all in all lived as fun a life as possible.

I think of him a lot, and wonder what the world lost on that fateful day, a question we will never have an answer to ... but rest assured he will NOT be forgotten.

From a friend and classmate,
Roger H Dent
16 Feb 2006

**Battle of Ong Thanh
17 October 1967**

The 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry had been operating west of the village of Chon Thanh since October 8th, conducting "search and destroy" operations in an area known to be occupied by large Viet Cong forces. Only four of the battalion's five companies (HHC, A, B, and D) were involved; C Company was providing fire base security for the supporting artillery unit.

D Company had engaged a large enemy force on 16 October directly south of the Battalion's night defensive position, killing at least 30 VC soldiers with direct fire, mortars, and artillery at the cost of only four men wounded in action. Captain Bernard F. Jones, a MACV Advisor with a Vietnamese Provincial reconnaissance unit attached to D Company, was killed in the action. In the late afternoon the 2/28 elements withdrew to the Battalion position.

LTC Terry Allen, commanding 2/28, set his plans for 17 October based on a two-company search-and-destroy operation led by A Company with the Battalion Command Group and D Company in trail. The two companies would be protected by artillery "marching fire" to its front and flanks.

On the morning of 17 October, Alpha Company, with a total of 65 men, led out from the night defensive perimeter moving south toward the area where the 16 October fight had occurred. D Company, with 73 men and the command group, followed in trail. A Company was moving very cautiously, with point and flank patrols; by late morning the force had moved only about 1200 meters. Shortly before noon Alpha was engaged by a very much larger enemy force.

The action took place in heavy jungle west of the Village of Chon Thanh (Highway 13) in Binh Long Province. Although considered the dry season, it was humid and moist with daytime temperatures in excess of 90 degrees. The double canopy jungle was in

relatively flat ground surrounded by intermittent streams (such as Suoi Ong-Thanh), which flowed south and west.

The opposing force consisted of two battalions of the 271st VC Regiment (300-400 or more soldiers). The VC had suffered heavy losses in an engagement with the 1/18 Infantry on 06-10 October and the firefight with Delta 2/28 the previous day. They had withdrawn to a base camp called the "Long Nguyen Secret Zone" to refit and rearm. The VC did have plentiful supplies of ammunition for AK-47 rifles, RPD machine guns, some captured .50 caliber machine guns, perhaps some Chinese 12.7 mm heavy machine guns, Chicom claymores, and many RPGs.

The action was initiated when the Alpha Company point reported sighting a small group of enemy soldiers moving across their front. CPT George, Alpha's commander, ordered a hasty ambush. As the ambush force moved forward they were engaged by a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire and Claymore mines. The friendly force was not so much surprised by the enemy fire as they were overwhelmed by it. Two platoon leaders were immediately killed, and within 15 minutes, after trying to regain control of the situation, CPT George was blinded, deafened and wounded by an enemy Claymore while attempting to personally attack an enemy machine gun with hand grenades. Alpha's First Sergeant moved forward, retrieved CPT George, and led CPT George east away from the enemy fire which coming from the west. This action, while saving CPT George, left A Company leaderless. Practically every man in A Company was killed or wounded in the first 30 minutes of action.

D Company, commanded by 1LT Welch, formed a perimeter around the battalion command group. LTC Allen had no radio contact with A Company, and enemy fire was now hitting D Company. LTC Allen directed 1LT Welch to move forward to contact with A Company. 1LT Welch moved part of Delta forward, but found only Alpha's dead and wounded rather than a fighting force. Welch then directed a fighting withdrawal to the Delta perimeter, collecting as many of Alpha's wounded as possible. LTC Allen was on the radio requesting air strikes when Welch reported that it appeared that A Company had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force. Delta pulled into a tight perimeter approximately 60 feet in diameter and prepared to defend itself.

Enemy fire was heavy, with small arms, machine guns, and RPGs chopping through the underbrush into the Delta position. It became apparent that the enemy was maneuvering around both sides of the Delta perimeter, intent on destroying the Americans. LTC Allen was desperately trying to direct air strikes against the enemy, but they were ineffective due to the nature of the double-canopy jungle and the proximity of friend and foe. Delta's Artillery Forward Observer, 2LT Durham, brought artillery fire closer into his position while avoiding the area to Delta's front where Alpha's dead and wounded were laying in the jungle. Enemy soldiers were already maneuvering through that location, killing any Alpha Company wounded they found.

Practically all the D company radios had been destroyed or damaged by enemy fire and radio communications were maintained only by gathering damaged radios so they could be cannibalized. 2LT Durham, the artillery forward observer, was protecting his artillery net radio with his body while operating his radio handset to talk with the stub of his wrist,

as his hand had been blown off by enemy fire. He continued to adjust the artillery fire more closely in, still smiling and calling to both 1LT Welch and Delta's First Sergeant.

At this point LTC Allen ordered 1LT Welch to withdraw along their ingress route, but doing so would have required abandoning the wounded and Welch ignored the order. Enemy fire continued to hit the Delta perimeter from three directions and casualties continued to mount.

At about 1400, some 2-1/2 hours after the contact began, a relief force fought its way to the Delta perimeter. By that time LTC Allen and everyone in the Battalion Command Group was dead, Alpha was destroyed, and Delta was more than decimated.

The fight at Ong Thanh resulted in the loss of at least 60 Americans - 55 killed in the action, 2 missing, and 3 who would die of their wounds. The VC left 163 bodies on the battlefield. The American dead were

- HHC, 1st Brigade, 1 Infantry Division
 - MAJ Donald W. Holleder, Webster, NY (Silver Star)
- C Co, 121st Signal Battalion
 - SP5 Verland A. Gilbertson, Banning, CA
- C Btry, 6th Bn, 15th Artillery
 - 2LT Harold B. Durham, Tifton, GA (Medal of Honor)
- A Co, 2nd Bn, 28th Infantry
 - PFC Larry M. Anderson, Spencer, IA
 - PFC Clifford L. Breeden, Hillsdale, MI (Bronze Star "V")
 - PFC Santos Camero, Malaga, CA
 - SP4 Ralph Carrasco, Phoenix, AZ
 - SP4 Elwood D. Chaney, Washington, DC
 - PFC Richard L. Crites, Cleveland, OH
 - PFC Wesley E. Dodson, Robinson, PA
 - SP4 Leon N. East, Ironto, VA
 - SP4 Maurice S. Ellis, Asheville, NC
 - PFC Anthony J. Familiare, Philadelphia, PA
 - SP4 Michael J. Farrell, New Orleans, LA
 - SSG Paul L. Fitzgerald, Fort Valley, GA (MIA/BNR)
 - SP4 Michael J. Gallagher, New Hyde Park, NY
 - SP4 Arturo Garcia, Mercedes, TX
 - SP4 Ray N. Gribble, Muncie, IN
 - SSG Olin Hargrove, Birmingham, AL (MIA/BNR)
 - PSGT Willie C. Johnson, Savannah, GA (DoW 11/09/1967)
 - PFC John D. Krische, West Hempstead, NY
 - SP4 Jerry D. Lancaster, Lebanon, TN
 - PFC Walter Platosz, Hartford, CT
 - PFC Allan V. Reilly, Los Angeles, CA

- D Co, 2nd Bn, 28th Infantry
 - PFC Donald W. Adkins, Gretna, VA
 - SGT Gary L. Barker, Garden Grove, CA
 - SP4 Jackie E. Bolen, Ury, WV (Silver Star)
 - PFC Joseph O. Booker, Richmond, VA (DoW 10/18/1967)
 - SP4 Melvin B. Cook, Salem, OR
 - PFC Joe A. Crutcher, Winter Park, FL
 - PFC Edward P. Dye, Wellston, OH
 - PFC Robert L. Fuqua, Mansfield, OH
 - PFC Melesso Garcia, Watsonville, CA
 - SP4 Stanley D. Gilbert, Dexter, MN
 - PFC Richard W. Jones, Cairo, IL
 - PFC Gary G. Lincoln, Eaton, OH
 - 2LT Andrew P. Luberda, Chicago, IL
 - PFC Emil G. Megiveron, Pontiac, MI
 - SP4 Michael M. Miller, Mount Pleasant, FL
 - PFC Robert J. Nagy, Lorain, OH
 - SP4 Steven L. Ostroff, Sun Valley, CA
 - SFC Eugene J. Plier, Sheboygan, WI
 - PFC Ronney D. Reece, Atlanta, GA
 - PFC Jack W. Schroder, Clay Center, NE
 - PFC Jackie E. Shubert, Jacksonville, FL
 - SP4 Daniel Sikorski, Milwaukee, WI
 - SSG Luther A. Smith, Miami, FL
 - PFC Theodore D. Thomas, Houston, TX
 - SP4 Kenneth P. Wilson, Clinton, NC
- HHC, 2nd Bn, 28th Infantry
 - LTC Terry D. Allen, El Paso, TX (Dist Svc Cross)
 - CPT James L. Blackwell, Evansville, IN
 - SMAJ Francis E. Dowling, Coopertown, ND
 - PFC Allen D. Jagielo, San Gabriel, CA
 - SP4 Joe Lovato, Lubbock, TX
 - PFC Joe D. Moultrie, St Stephen, SC
 - SP5 Archie A. Porter, Cameron, WV (DoW 10/21/1967)
 - SP4 Garland J. Randall, Houston, TX
 - SP4 Pasuale J. Tizzio, New York, NY
- C Co, 2nd Bn, 2nd Infantry
 - SP4 Harry C. Sarsfield, Oxnard, CA
- C Btry, 2nd Bn, 33rd Artillery
 - SGT James E. Larson, Mauston, WI
- MACV Advisory Team 91
 - CPT Bernard F. Jones, Coalton, WV (KIA 10/16/1967)



OCS Graduation Photo 1966

"Thank You, Pinky"

Pinky, Thank you, so very much, for the ultimate sacrifice, you gave, to our Country. I remember, you well, in OCS (class 24-66) and will never forget, your humor, under adverse situations.

Bob Thomas

Friend, during OCS., at Ft. Sill, Okla

24028, Tobarro Court, Murrieta, CA., 92562, USA

September 10, 2005



Durham Hall at Fort Drum New York

***ARMY HONORS HEROISM
OF RM (Rocky Mountain)
BORN OFFICER***

ROCKY MOUNT - The people who knew Harold B. Durham Jr. remember two sides to him. One was the loving brother, the Army buddy, the easy-going guy. The other was a fierce warrior who, when his unit was in danger of being overrun in a battle in Vietnam, rained down an artillery barrage that saved the lives of many of his comrades. As the battle reached its peak, he waded into it himself. Though mortally wounded, his unflinching heroism earned him the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration.

Though the battle was fought more than 30 years ago on Oct. 17, 1967 the Army has not forgotten Durham's bravery. It recently dedicated the Hall of Fame building for the former Field Artillery Officer Candidate School FA OCS in military slang at Fort Sill, Okla., in his memory. It's a great story to be written about an American kid who did a tough job when it had to get done, said Jim Shelton, a retired Army brigadier general who, as a major, was coordinating the battle.

Clark Welch, the company commander Durham fought alongside, remembered both facets of Durham as well. He was as brave a man as I have ever met, but kind and nice and funny, wrote the retired Army colonel in an e-mail. For many years it has been too hard for me to talk about those last few battles.

Now it is easier, but not yet easy.

Durham was born in Rocky Mount on Oct. 12, 1942, the son of a buyer for American Tobacco Co., explained John Durham, his older brother. The Durham family spent about a month here before the father moved on to another market on the buying-season circuit. The family called Tifton, Ga., home.

Pinky Durham followed his brother's lead, joining the Army in 1964. He pulled a tour in Vietnam as an enlisted helicopter and airplane mechanic. As his year there was winding down, he accepted an offer to go to FA OCS. When he graduated and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in December 1966, he volunteered to return to Vietnam, arriving in September 1967. Durham worked with Welch's unit as a forward observer, planning and radioing in requests for artillery fire to support Welch's infantry company.

An operation that started on Oct. 16, 1967, carried their unit into a stronghold of the Viet Cong, the Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam. The company withdrew, but was ordered to follow another company back into the area the next day. The battalion staff was moving with Welch's unit. The battle quickly turned against the Americans, who were badly outnumbered, according to accounts by Welch and Shelton. The leading company was destroyed as a unit, and many of its officers, sergeants and soldiers were killed. That left Welch and Durham to take charge of the fight. "When Company A (the lead company) was destroyed, Pinky and I crawled and ran up to where it had been, but there was nothing left of the unit, one of Welch's e-mails says. Pinky remained forward and started calling the fires that we had been planning. I ran back (and) brought my company up one platoon at a time. . . . Deadly enemy fire was coming in on us from three sides when I got back up to Pinky. He was badly hurt by then, but calmly calling in the artillery fire that kept the enemy from moving in and killing all of us.

Welch's e-mails and the citation that accompanied Durham's Medal of Honor paint a picture of a man determined to fight for his life and those of the men around him. Both Durham and Welch were hit repeatedly all 125 soldiers in Welch's company were either wounded or killed in the battle. At times, Durham had to shoot his own rifle to help drive back Viet Cong soldiers who were pressing the attack. At another time, he helped treat wounded soldiers.

Though wounded himself, Durham put himself in exposed positions so he could better call in artillery fire. Before he passed out from blood loss, Welch heard Durham calling in more artillery rounds, erecting a barrier of explosions and shrapnel around the company. Later, when I regained consciousness, the artillery was coming just as (Durham) had planned, Welch's e-mail says. My surviving men were surrounded by the

enemy, but fighting back and trying to protect the wounded from both Company A and D and the battalion command group, but my (forward observer) was dead. Lieutenant Pinky Durham was still holding the radio handset.

John Durham returned home when the family was informed of Pinky Durham's death. The news struck his father, a Marine veteran of World War II, particularly hard. "I remember when I showed up in Tifton, Ga., and (my father) came out of that house completely broken, John Durham recalled. Pinky Durham's funeral was held on the same day as the high school homecoming, which that year fell on Halloween.

Interviews with several participants in the battle those at the scene and others listening in on radio traffic did not show who submitted Durham's name for the Medal of Honor. The process of approving citations took almost two years. Durham's mother received the framed medal from Vice President Spiro Agnew and Gen. William Westmoreland, the Army's chief of staff, on Oct. 31, 1969. Durham's father died between when his son died and the presentation of the medal. He did not know his son was being considered for the nation's highest military honor. One of the saddest parts was my father only knew he lost a son, said John Durham.

Though he died long ago, Durham's life still touches many people who knew him. Stephen Orlofsky, now a federal district judge in New Jersey and a FA OCS classmate of Durham, has a photo of his friend, a copy of the Medal of Honor citation and a rubbing of Durham's name from the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial on a wall in his chambers. While FA OCS was demanding on the men it trained, Durham never lost his sense of humor or would let the rigor of the program get him down. Orlofsky recalled Durham as being both an outstanding soldier and a bit irreverent in the eyes of the officers training them.

Durham was charming and engaging, in Orlofsky's words, and always smiling, but totally devoted to his country. When the role of federal judge weighs heavy on his shoulders, Orlofsky looks at the wall-mounted reminders of his friend and classmate. *"On the days I think I'm having a bad day, I think about Pinky and it puts things into perspective," he said.*

Finally, how did such a brave man as Durham become known by everyone as *"Pinky"*? The answer is found at a hospital in Rocky Mount the day he was born, explained John Durham. *"I think the real situation was they ran out of blue blankets for boys, and put a pink blanket over him. "*



HAROLD B. DURHAM, JR.
GEORGIA
2d LIEUTENANT US ARMY
VIETNAM MEDAL OF HONOR
BSM 4 OLC - ARCOM PH
OCT. 12, 1942 - OCT. 17, 1967

701 2 24



Buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery Tifton, Georgia

