



# SFC Bennie Adkins

## Special Forces

Sergeant First Class Bennie G. Adkins Distinguished himself by acts gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as an Intelligence Sergeant with Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, during combat operations against an armed enemy at Camp A Chau, Republic of Vietnam from March 9 to 12, 1966.

When the camp was attacked by a large North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force in the early morning hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense enemy fire and manned a mortar position continually adjusting fire for the camp, despite incurring wounds as the mortar pit received several direct hits from enemy mortars. Upon learning that several soldiers were wounded near the center of camp, he temporarily turned the mortar over to another soldier, ran through exploding mortar rounds and dragged several comrades to safety.

As the hostile fire subsided, Sergeant First Class Adkins exposed himself to sporadic sniper fire while carrying his wounded comrades to the camp dispensary. When Sergeant First Class Adkins and his group of defenders came under heavy small arms fire from members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group that had defected to fight with the North Vietnamese, he maneuvered outside the camp to evacuate a seriously wounded American and draw fire all the while successfully covering the rescue.

When a resupply air drop landed outside of the camp perimeter, Sergeant First Class Adkins, again, moved outside of the camp walls to retrieve the much needed supplies. During the early morning hours of March 10, 1966, enemy forces launched their main attack and within two hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins was the only man firing a mortar weapon. When all mortar rounds were expended, Sergeant First Class

Adkins began placing effective recoilless rifle fire upon enemy positions.

Despite receiving additional wounds from enemy rounds exploding on his position, Sergeant First Class Adkins fought off intense waves of attacking Viet Cong. Sergeant First Class Adkins eliminated numerous insurgents with small arms fire after withdrawing to a communications bunker with several soldiers. Running extremely low on ammunition, he returned to the mortar pit, gathered vital ammunition and ran through intense fire back to the bunker.

After being ordered to evacuate the camp, Sergeant First Class Adkins and a small group of soldiers destroyed all signal equipment and classified documents, dug their way out of the rear of the bunker and fought their way out of the camp. While carrying a wounded soldier to the extraction point he learned that the last helicopter had already departed. Sergeant First Class Adkins led the group while evading the enemy until they were rescued by helicopter on March 12, 1966.

During the thirty-eight hour battle and forty-eight hours of escape and evasion, fighting with mortars, machine guns, recoilless rifles, small arms, and hand grenades, it was estimated that Sergeant First Class Adkins killed between one hundred thirty five and one hundred seventy-five of the enemy while sustaining eighteen different wounds to his body.

Sergeant First Class Adkins' extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces and the United States Army.



## SFC Eugene Ashley, Jr.

### Special Forces

Sergeant First Class Eugene Ashley, Jr., United States Army, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving with Detachment A-101, Company C, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, near Lang Vei Special Forces Camp in the Republic of Vietnam. On 6 and 7 February 1968, Sergeant Ashley was the Senior Special Forces Advisor of a hastily organized assault force whose mission was to rescue entrapped United States Special Forces Advisors at Camp Lang Vei.

During the initial attack on the Special Forces camp by North Vietnamese Army forces, Sergeant Ashley supported the camp with high explosive and illumination mortar rounds. When communications were lost with the main camp, he assumed the additional responsibility of directing airstrikes and artillery support. Sergeant Ashley organized and equipped a small assault force composed of local friendly personnel.

During the ensuing battle, Sergeant Ashley led a total of five vigorous assaults against the enemy, continuously exposing himself to a voluminous hail of enemy grenades, machinegun and automatic weapons fire. Throughout these assaults, he was plagued by numerous boobytrapped satchel charges in all bunkers on his avenue of approach. During his fifth and final assault, he adjusted airstrikes nearly on top of his assault element, forcing the enemy to withdraw and resulting in friendly control of the summit of the hill.

While exposing himself to intense enemy fire, he was seriously wounded by machinegun fire but continued his mission without regard for his personal safety. After the fifth assault he lost consciousness and was carried from the summit by his comrades only to suffer a fatal wound when an enemy artillery round landed in his area.

Sergeant Ashley displayed extraordinary heroism in risking his life in an attempt to save the lives of his entrapped comrades and commanding officer. His total disregard for his own personal safety while exposed to enemy observation and automatic weapons fire was an inspiration to all men committed to the assault.

The resolute valor with which he led five gallant charges placed critical diversionary pressure on the attacking enemy and his valiant efforts carved a channel in the overpowering enemy forces and weapons positions through which the survivors of Camp Lang Vei eventually escaped to freedom.

Sergeant Ashley's conspicuous gallantry at the cost of his own life was in the highest traditions of the military service, and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



# SGT Gary Beikirch

## Special Forces

Sergeant Gary B. Beikirch, United States Army, Medical Aidman, Detachment B-24, Company B, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, while serving in Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, distinguished himself during the defense of Camp Dak Seang on April 1, 1970.

On that date, the allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of an intense, devastating attack launched by the enemy from well-concealed positions surrounding the camp. Sergeant Beikirch, with complete disregard for his personal safety, moved unhesitatingly through the withering enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first aid to their wounds and assisted them to the medical aid station. When informed that a seriously injured American officer was lying in an exposed position, Sergeant Beikirch ran immediately through the hail of fire.

Although he was wounded seriously by fragments from an exploding enemy mortar shell, Sergeant Beikirch carried the officer to a medical aid station. Ignoring his own serious injuries, Sergeant Beikirch left the relative safety of the medical bunker to search for and evacuate other men who had been injured. He was again wounded as he dragged a critically injured Vietnamese soldier to the medical bunker while simultaneously applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to sustain his life.

Sergeant Beikirch again refused treatment and continued his search for other casualties until he collapsed. Only then did he permit himself to be treated.

Sergeant Beikirch's conspicuous gallantry in action, his complete devotion to the welfare of his comrades, and his intrepidity at the risk of his life are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.



# SSG Roy Benavidez

## Special Forces

Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. Benavidez, United States Army, distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions on 2 May 1968 while assigned to Detachment B-56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam.

On the morning of 2 May 1968, a 12-man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopters in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam to gather intelligence information about confirmed large-scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army.

After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction, but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire.

Sergeant Benavidez was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters returned to off-load wounded crewmembers and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant Benavidez voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt.

Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team. Prior to reaching the team's position, he was wounded in his right leg, face, and head.

Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft, and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position.

Despite his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members.

As the enemy's fire intensified, he hurried to recover the body and classified documents on the dead team leader. When he reached the team leader's body, Sergeant Benavidez was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back.

At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Sergeant Benavidez secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the over-turned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter.

Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, re-instilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant Benavidez mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt.

He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft.

On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed [producing] additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them.

With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to insure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded. Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft.

Sergeant Benavidez' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits, to expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men.

His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.



# SFC William Bryant

## Special Forces

Sergeant First Class William M. Bryant, assigned to Company A, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, distinguished himself on 24 March 1969 while serving as Commanding Officer of Civilian Irregular Defense Group Company 321, 2d Battalion, 3rd Mobile Strike Force Command, during combat operations in Long Khanh Province, Republic of Vietnam.

The battalion came under heavy fire and became surrounded by the elements of three enemy regiments. Sergeant Bryant displayed extraordinary heroism throughout the succeeding 3 hours of incessant attack as he moved throughout the company position heedless of the intense hostile fire while establishing and improving the defensive perimeter, directing fire during critical phases of the battle, distributing ammunition, assisting the wounded, and providing the leadership and inspirational example of courage to his men.

When a helicopter drop of ammunition was made to resupply the beleaguered force, Sergeant Bryant with complete disregard for his own safety ran through the heavy enemy fire to retrieve the scattered ammunition boxes and distributed needed ammunition to his men.

During a lull in the intense fighting, Sergeant Bryant led a patrol outside the perimeter to obtain information of the enemy. The patrol came under intense automatic weapons fire and was pinned down. Sergeant Bryant single-handedly repulsed one enemy attack on his small force and by his heroic action inspired his men to fight off other assaults.

Seeing a wounded enemy soldier some distance from the patrol location, Sergeant Bryant crawled forward alone under heavy fire to retrieve the soldier for intelligence purposes. Finding that the enemy soldier had expired, Sergeant Bryant crawled back to his patrol and led his men back to the company position where he again took command of the defense.

As the siege continued, Sergeant Bryant organized and led a patrol in a daring attempt to break through the enemy encirclement. The patrol had advanced some two hundred meters by heavy fighting when it was pinned down by the intense automatic weapons fire from heavily fortified bunkers and Sergeant Bryant was severely wounded.

Despite his wounds he rallied his men, called for helicopter gunship support, and directed heavy suppressive fire upon the enemy positions. Following the last gunship attack, Sergeant Bryant fearlessly charged an enemy automatic weapons position, overrunning it and single-handedly destroying its three defenders.

Inspired by his heroic example, his men renewed their attack on the entrenched enemy. While regrouping his small force for the final assault against the enemy, Sergeant Bryant fell mortally wounded by an enemy rocket.

Sergeant Bryant's conspicuous gallantry, selfless concern for his comrades, and intrepidity at the cost of his own life above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



# SGT Brian Buker

## Special Forces

Sergeant Brian L. Buker, United States Army, Detachment B-55, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces distinguished himself on 5 April 1970 while serving as a platoon advisor of a Vietnamese mobile Strike Force Company during an offensive mission in Chau Doc Province, Republic of Vietnam.

Sergeant Buker personally led the platoon; cleared a strategically located, well-guarded pass; and established the first foothold at the top of what had been an impenetrable mountain fortress.

When the platoon came under intense fire from a determined enemy located in two heavily fortified bunkers, and realizing that withdrawal would result in heavy casualties, Sergeant Buker unhesitatingly, and with complete disregard for his personal safety, charged through the hail of enemy fire and destroyed the first bunker with hand grenades. While reorganizing his men for the attack on the second bunker, Sergeant Buker was seriously wounded.

Despite his wounds and the deadly enemy fire, he crawled forward and destroyed the second bunker. Sergeant Buker refused medical attention and was reorganizing his men to continue the attack when he was mortally wounded. As a direct result of his heroic actions, many casualties were averted, and the assault of the enemy position was successful.

Sergeant Buker's conspicuous gallantry and extraordinary heroism at the cost of his life are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.



# SSG Jon Cavaiani

## Special Forces

Staff Sergeant Jon R. Cavaiani, United States Army, United States Army Vietnam Training Advisory Group, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 4 and 5 June 1971 while serving as a platoon leader to a security platoon providing security for an isolated radio relay site located within enemy-held territory.

On the morning of 4 June 1971, the entire camp came under an intense barrage of enemy small arms, automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenade, and mortar fire from a superior-size enemy force. Sergeant Cavaiani acted with complete disregard for his personal safety as he repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire in order to move about the camp's perimeter directing the platoon's fire and rallying the platoon in a desperate fight for survival.

Sergeant Cavaiani also returned heavy suppressive fire upon the assaulting enemy force during this period with a variety of weapons. When the entire platoon was to be evacuated, Sergeant Cavaiani unhesitatingly volunteered to remain on the ground and direct the helicopters into the landing zone. Sergeant Cavaiani was able to direct the first three helicopters in evacuating a major portion of the platoon.

Due to intense increase in enemy fire, Sergeant Cavaiani was forced to remain at the camp overnight where he calmly directed the remaining platoon members in strengthening their defenses. On the morning of 5 June, a heavy ground fog restricted visibility. The superior size enemy force launched a major ground attack in an attempt to completely annihilate the remaining small force.

The enemy force advanced in two ranks, first firing a heavy volume of small arms automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenade fire while the second rank continuously threw a steady barrage of hand grenades at the beleaguered force. Sergeant Cavaiani returned a heavy barrage of small arms and hand grenade fire on the assaulting enemy force but was unable to slow them down.

He ordered the remaining platoon members to attempt to escape while he provided them with cover fire. With one last courageous exertion, Sergeant Cavaiani recovered a machine gun, stood up, completely exposing himself to the heavy enemy fire directed at him, and began firing the machine gun in a sweeping motion along the two ranks of advancing enemy soldiers.

Through Sergeant Cavaiani's valiant efforts with complete disregard for his safety, the majority of the remaining platoon members were able to escape. While inflicting severe losses on the advancing enemy force, Sergeant Cavaiani was wounded numerous times. Staff Sergeant Cavaiani's conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.





## SFC Christopher Celiz

### Rangers

Sergeant First Class Christopher A. Celiz distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while engaged with the enemy in Paktia Province, Afghanistan on July 12, 2018.

As the leader of a special operations unit comprised of partnered forces and members of the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Sergeant First Class Celiz led an operation to clear an area of enemy forces and thereby disrupt future attacks against the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and allied forces.

Shortly after his team reached their initial objectives, a large enemy force attacked, placing effective fire on him and his team, thus preventing them from maneuvering to counterattack. Realizing the danger the attack posed to his team and the operation, Sergeant First Class Celiz voluntarily exposed himself to intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire to retrieve and employ a heavy weapon system, thereby allowing U.S. and partnered forces to regain the initiative, maneuver to a secure location, and begin treatment of a critically wounded partnered force member. As the medical evacuation helicopter arrived, it was immediately engaged by accurate and sustained enemy fire.

Knowing how critical it was to quickly load the casualty, Sergeant First Class Celiz willingly exposed himself to heavy and effective enemy fire to direct and lead the evacuation. As the casualty moved from a position of cover and out into intense, accurate enemy fire, Sergeant First Class Celiz made a conscious effort to ensure his body acted as a physical shield to his team carrying the casualty and the crew of the aircraft.

As the casualty was loaded and Sergeant First Class Celiz' team returned to cover, he alone remained at the aircraft, returning a high volume of fire and constantly repositioning himself to act as a physical shield to the aircraft and its crew. With his final reposition, Sergeant First Class Celiz placed himself directly between the cockpit and the enemy, ensuring the aircraft was able to depart. As the helicopter lifted off, Sergeant First Class Celiz was hit by enemy fire. Fully aware of his own injury, but understanding the peril to the aircraft from the intense enemy machinegun fire, Sergeant First Class Celiz motioned to the aircraft to depart rather than remain to load him.

His selfless actions saved the life of the evacuated partnered force member and almost certainly prevented further casualties among other members of his team and the aircrew. Throughout the entire engagement, Sergeant First Class Celiz significantly changed the course of the battle by repeatedly placing himself in extreme danger to protect his team and defeat the enemy.

Sergeant First Class Celiz' extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.