

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT BRIAN L. BUKER**

Inducted 20 September 2012



Brian L. Buker was born on November 3, 1949, in Benton, Maine. Coming from a military family there was no surprise when he immediately enlisted in the Army at 17 just as his 3 older brothers, Victor, Gerald, and Alan, had done. "All 4 of us went to Vietnam and fortunately we all came back from Vietnam without a scratch," says Alan Buker. "But Brian went back over for a second tour."

As recounted by his commander, Buker, for his second Vietnam tour, volunteered for 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)), but was diverted to the 4th Infantry Division in An Khe, an assignment he did not want. Intent on assigned to 5th SFG(A), he hitch-hiked across Vietnam to Nha Trang, 5th SFG(A) headquarters. Afraid that if he just presented himself to the 5th SFG(A) headquarters, he would be sent back to 4th ID, he instead went to the Mobile Strike Force Command (MIKE Force) compound adjacent to the Group Headquarters and obtained an interview with the Company Sergeant Major. Whatever he said must have worked since he received new orders assigning him to 5th SFG(A) MIKE Force – Detachment B-55, immediately.

By 5 April 1970, Buker was the acting platoon advisor for a Vietnamese mobile strike force company. He and his team were flown for a mission to Chau Doc Province, Republic of Vietnam with the mission to marry up with several hundred South Vietnamese strikers and "kick" a North Vietnamese battalion of 300 to 400 soldiers "off of the Chu Pong Mountain, located in the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam, near the border with Cambodia. The unit began ascending the mountain early on the morning of April 5. About halfway up, a major firefight began. The enemy fighters, in a position of dominance, shielded behind rocks at a higher elevation in two fortified bunkers, assaulted Buker and his team with automatic weapons, small arms and bazooka fire.

Sergeant Buker personally leading the platoon, cleared a strategically located, well-guarded pass, and established the first foothold at the top of what had been considered an impenetrable mountain fortress. The platoon continued to come under intense fire from the two heavily fortified enemy bunkers. Sergeant Buker, realizing that the unit could not remain where it was or retreat without incurring casualties, unhesitatingly and with complete disregard for his own safety, charged through the hail of heavy fire, destroying the first bunker with hand grenades. While organizing his men for the attack on the second bunker, he 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 again wounded, this time mortally. As a direct result of his heroic actions, many casualties were averted, and the assault of the enemy position was successful. For his gallantry, Buker was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Buker, aged 20 at his death, was buried at Brown Cemetery in his hometown of Benton, Maine. On September 15, 2010, in accordance with his mother's wishes, the Buker family donated his Medal of Honor and other memorabilia to his alma mater, Lawrence High School in Fairfield, for display.

His awards and decorations include: Congressional Medal of Honor; Bronze Star Medal; Purple Heart; Vietnamese Gallantry Cross; Combat Infantryman Badge. The Buker Learning Center in Fort Devens, MA is the Digital Training Site (DTS) for Distance Learning for Reserve training.