

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT  
GARY BEIKIRCH**

Inducted June 2011



Gary Beikirch was born Aug. 29, 1947, in Rochester, N.Y. After finishing two years of college in upstate New York, Beikirch withdrew from college and enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 1967 with the goal of joining Special Forces and going to Vietnam. After basic and advanced Infantry training at Fort Dix, N.J., he attended Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga. After completing Airborne School, he was selected to attend Special Forces training at Fort Bragg, N.C. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course as a medical sergeant.

Sgt. Beikirch was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and deployed to Kontum Province, Vietnam, in July 1969. During his deployment, he was the medic for Detachment B-24, assigned to a remote Montagnard village in the central highlands of Vietnam. On April 1, 1970, a massive force of more than three regiments of North Vietnamese troops attacked Camp Dak Seang from well-concealed positions surrounding the camp. The allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of the intense, devastating attack. Sgt. Beikirch, with complete disregard for his personal safety, moved unhesitatingly through the heavy enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first-aid to their wounds and assisted them in reaching the medical aid station. When informed that a seriously injured American officer was lying in an exposed position, Sgt. Beikirch immediately ran through a hail of fire to retrieve him. Although seriously wounded by mortar shrapnel, Sgt. Beikirch carried the officer to the medical aid station. Ignoring his own serious injuries, Sgt. 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 the soldier's life. Sgt. Beikirch again refused treatment and continued his search for other casualties until he collapsed. Only then did he permit himself to be treated. He was taken to Pleiku, Vietnam, then to Japan, and finally to the Valley Forge Medical Center, where he remained for six months, slowly relearning to walk. For his gallantry during the battle of Dak Seang, Sgt. Beikirch was awarded the Medal of Honor. He was released from the Army in August 1971.

Beikirch's awards and decorations include the Medal of Honor; Distinguished Service Cross; Silver Star Medal; Bronze Star Medal; Purple Heart Medal with one oak-leaf cluster; Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with silver star; Combat Medic Badge; Parachutist Badge; and Vietnamese jump wings.

Beikirch has served in numerous military and service organizations, including the Military Order of the Purple Heart; the Special Forces Association; Vietnam Veterans of America; Veterans of Foreign Wars; Disabled American Veterans; Combat Medic Association; N.Y. State Veterans Hall of Fame; and the Medal of Honor Society.

Since leaving the military, he has divided his career experience between his two greatest passions: the military and young people. That experience includes hospital and prison ministry with veterans; youth ministry; 10 years working as a team counselor and executive director for the Veterans Outreach Center, providing counseling and related support services to veterans and their families. He currently serves as the chaplain of the Medal of Honor Society. In addition to his involvement with the local Army Reserve, National Guard and college ROTC units, Beikirch has also been employed as a middle-school counselor at Greece Arcadia Middle School in Rochester, N.Y., for more than 20 years.

Beikirch resides in Rochester, N.Y., with his wife, Loreen. They have three married children (Stephanie, Stephen and Sarah) and 14 grandchildren.