

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 4316

11 NOVEMBER 1968

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

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

BLAKELY, WILLIAM RA PRIVATE FIRST CLASS E-3 United States Army
Co D, 1st Battalion (Abn), 501st Infantry, 2d Brigade, 101st Abn Div,
APO 96347

Awarded: Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously)

Date action: Not applicable

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company D, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Airborne). Private First Class Blakely distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 14 February 1968 during a search and clear operation in the Hai Lang Area of Quang Tri Province. He was acting as point man for his platoon as it swept through a village. He discovered a line of bunkers manned by North Vietnamese Army Regulars, and the platoon was immediately hit with hostile automatic weapons fire and command detonated mines. Although wounded by the initial barrage, Private Blakely began hurling hand grenades onto the enemy positions, killing two North Vietnamese soldiers. He then sought cover behind a haystack to his platoon's front, and from there he saw his squad leader lying wounded and unconscious fifteen meters from the enemy bunkers. With complete disregard for his safety, Private Blakely crawled forward under intense fire to rescue the man and brought him back to the shelter of the haystack. Ignoring the pain of his injuries, he then continued to engage the enemy with rifle fire and hand grenades. While in an act of throwing a grenade, he was seriously wounded by an exploding enemy rocket round. He clutched the activated grenade and fell forward on it, saving the lives of his squad leader and a medic, and preventing injuries to other members of his squad who were close by. Private First Class Blakely's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provision of the Act of Congress, approved 25 July 1963, and Department of the Army message 782774, dated 19 September 1966.