

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS  
JOHN J. KEDENBURG**

Inducted 20 November 2016



Specialist Fifth Class John J. Kedenburg was born on July 31, 1946, in Brooklyn, New York. He joined the Army from Baldwin, New York (Long Island) in 1965, and by June 13, 1968, at the age of 21, he was serving as a Specialist Five in the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). While in a fierce fire fight, Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg voluntarily gave up the last spot on an extraction helicopter to a South Vietnamese soldier, ordering the helicopter to leave, then continued to engage the enemy until he was overrun. Due to his valiant actions on that day, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. His citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg, U.S. Army, Command and Control Detachment North, Forward Operating Base 2, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), distinguished himself while serving as advisor to a long-range reconnaissance team of South Vietnamese irregular troops. The team's mission was to conduct counter-guerrilla operations deep within enemy-held territory.

Prior to reaching the day's objective, the team was attacked and encircled by a battalion-size North Vietnamese Army force. Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg assumed immediate command of the team that succeeded, after a fierce fight, in breaking out of the encirclement. As the team moved through thick jungle to a position from which it could be extracted by helicopter, Kedenburg conducted a gallant rear guard fight against the pursuing enemy and called for tactical air support and rescue helicopters. His withering fire against the enemy permitted the team to reach a preselected landing zone with the loss of only one man, who was unaccounted for. Once in the landing zone, Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg deployed the team into a perimeter defense against the numerically superior enemy force. When tactical air support arrived, he skillfully directed air strikes against the enemy, suppressing their fire so that helicopters could hover over the area and drop slings to be used in the extraction of the team.

After half of the team was extracted by helicopter, Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg and the remaining three members of the team harnessed themselves to the sling on a second hovering helicopter. Just as the helicopter was to lift them out of the area, the South Vietnamese team member who had been unaccounted for after the initial encounter with the enemy appeared in the landing zone. Kedenburg unhesitatingly gave up his place in the sling to the man and directed the helicopter pilot to leave the area. He then continued to engage the enemy who were swarming into the landing zone, killing six enemy soldiers before he was overpowered. Spec. 5th Class Kedenburg's inspiring leadership, consummate courage and willing self-sacrifice permitted his small team to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy and escape almost certain annihilation. His actions reflect great credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.

Kedenburg Road on Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was named in his honor.