

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MAJOR
DREW DIX**

Inducted June 2011



Drew Dix was born in West Point, N.Y., Dec. 14, 1944. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1962 at the age of 17 with the intent of joining Special Forces. Initially turned down by Special Forces because of his age, he spent three years serving with the 82nd Airborne Division. During that time he served in Operation Power Pack, the U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. In 1966, when he was 21, he was accepted into Special Forces. By 1968, Staff Sgt. Dix was deployed to Vietnam as a Special Forces adviser working on a CIA project in the provincial capital of Chau Phu near the Cambodian border. His mission was to coordinate intelligence-gathering with a company-sized unit composed mainly of indigenous Vietnamese, Cambodians and Nungs. Their task was to capture Viet Cong soldiers for interrogation.

On Jan. 31, 1968, two heavily armed Viet Cong battalions attacked Chau Phu, resulting in the complete breakdown and fragmentation of the defenses of the city. Staff Sgt. Dix, with a patrol of Vietnamese soldiers, was recalled to assist in the city's defense. Learning that a nurse was trapped in a house near the center of the city, Dix organized a relief force that rescued the nurse and returned her to the safety of the tactical operations center. Being informed of other trapped civilians within the city, Staff Sgt. Dix voluntarily led another force to rescue eight civilian employees located in a building that was under heavy fire from mortars and small arms. Upon returning to the city center, Dix was subjected to intense fire from the automatic rifles and machine guns of an unknown number of Viet Cong. He personally assaulted the building from which the fire was coming, killing six Viet Cong and rescuing two Filipinos. The following day, Staff Sgt. Dix, still on his own volition, assembled a 20-man force and, though under intense enemy fire, cleared the Viet Cong out of a hotel, theater and other adjacent buildings within the city. During this portion of the operation, soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, inspired by Dix's heroism and success, rallied and began firing upon the Viet Cong. Staff Sgt. Dix then attacked enemy troops who had entered the residence of the deputy province chief and was successful in rescuing the official's wife and children. Staff Sgt. Dix's personal heroic actions resulted in 14 confirmed Viet Cong killed in action and possibly 25 more; the capture of 20 prisoners, including a high-ranking Viet Cong official; and the rescue of 14 U.S. and other foreign nationals. For his gallantry, Staff Sgt. Dix was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Lyndon B. Johnson during a ceremony at the White House on Jan. 19, 1969. He was the first Special Forces enlisted man to receive the Medal of Honor.

Dix later received a direct commission to first lieutenant and was reassigned to Vietnam as a company commander in the 101st Airborne Division. Dix also served in the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne); in the 6th Special Forces Group (Airborne); as aide to the commanding general of the JFK Special Warfare Center; as aide to the commanding general, XVIII Airborne Corps; in the Joint Special Operations Support Element at MacDill AFB, Fla.; and in the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

His awards and decorations include the Medal of Honor; Bronze Star Medal; Purple Heart Medal; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with gold star; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with silver star; Combat Infantryman Badge; and Master Parachutist Badge.

In 2000, he wrote a memoir about the fight for Chau Phu entitled *The Rescue of River City*. He continues to be very active with the military, speaking to those deploying and/or returning from deployment, and he is heavily engaged with the Department of Defense on matters pertaining to post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. He lives with his wife on a ranch in New Mexico with their four horses.