

Captain Michael D. Balsler:

Michael was born on 3 November 1945 at Fort Rucker, AL. His parents were career military persons. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. after completing OCS on 10 February 1967.

2Lt. Balsler arrived in Vietnam on 25 August 1967. From Oct. 1967- March 1968, 2 Lt. Balsler was assigned as Second Plt. leader, Company C. 3/22nd.

At FSB Burt, on 1 & 2 January 1968 2Lt. Balsler earned his first Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action. He led an ambush patrol out of FSB, the ambush site was overrun. Four men were killed and nine men were wounded out of the sixteen men who participated in the ambush.

After initial contact, 2Lt. Balsler moved his men into a tight formation and began administering first aid and passing words of encouragement. Through heavy enemy and friendly fire, he moved forward and personally detonated two claymore mines on the enemy, then quickly retreated to the concealment of his patrol's position.

At dawn Balsler moved toward the perimeter to seek help, skillfully avoiding detection by the enemy. Due to Balsler's valorous actions and outstanding leadership, many lives were saved.

On 3 Feb. 1968, 1st Lt. Balsler earned the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in Vietnam. Lt. Balsler's unit was sent to assist another company which was pinned down by a large Viet Cong force. Although wounded by shrapnel, he moved to the location of the besieged unit and personally led his men forward to link up with the trapped element. His valorous actions were of immeasurable value to the successful completion of the mission and the defeat of the enemy force.

In March 1968, Lt. Balsler was assigned as Leader of the Recon Platoon. On 25 March 1968, Lt. Balsler earned his second Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for heroism. While on a recon mission, his platoon came upon an unknown size enemy force. Lt. Balsler quickly set up a hasty ambush and killed one enemy himself and sent the remainder of the VC fleeing.

On 12 April 1968, Lt. Balsler received his second Silver Star for gallantry in action. While on a combat operation, his recon platoon was ordered to aid a friendly beleaguered force. Lt. Balsler led his Platoon on an assault against the enemy positions.

Lt. Balsler was next assigned as Co. B, 3/22 XO. Lt. Balsler was also awarded three Bronze Stars, two with "V" device, three Purple Hearts, and the Combat Infantry Badge, and several others.

He was wounded in the ankle in January 1968 and spent one day in the hospital. On 3 Feb. 1968 Lt. Balsler was wounded in the left thigh and spent three days in the hospital. In Sept. 1968, Lt. Balsler was wounded in the lungs and spent 21 days in the hospital.

Lt. Balsler participated in Operation Yellowstone (FSB Burt), many river ambushes, Operation Saratoga (AP Cho), and the Battle of FSB Buell.

On 3 Oct. 1968, Lt. Balsler finished his tour of duty in Vietnam. On 12 Feb. 1969, Lt. Balsler was promoted to Captain. He served two more years of active duty as an advisor to reserve at Ft. Lawton, Washington.

After leaving the Army, Mike received an Associate's Degree in Police Science from North Seattle Community College. He went on to earn a BA degree in Public Administration from the University of Puget Sound.

After graduation Mike again served his country with a distinguished career with the Seattle Police Dept. He was president of his Academy class, attained the rank of Detective Sgt., and was a member Seattle's first SWAT team. He retired in 1997.

Mike's wife Karin passed away in December 2003. Mike is now reunited with Karen. Rest in Peace Brother.