

NAVY CROSS



RICHARD DAVID KALER

Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps
Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines
Cam Lo, Republic of Vietnam, 21 July 1966
Entered service at: Patchogue, NY
Born: 13 October 1943

Citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Lance Corporal Richard David Kaler (MCSN: 2031739), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism as a machine gunner with Company H, Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, near Cam Lo, Republic of Vietnam, on 21 July 1966. The company was engaged in a search and destroy mission during Operation HASTINGS when the point man of Corporal Kaler's platoon was fired upon and killed by an enemy machine gun. Disregarding his own personal safety, he immediately moved forward through the heavy fire and carried the body back. The following day, the platoon attacked the same position. When several machine guns opened fire cutting down several of his comrades and pinning the rest of the platoon, Corporal Kaler, knowing the hazards involved, without hesitation and in complete disregard for his own safety, exposed himself to the intense fire and charged the enemy positions. Receiving a bullet in the thigh, he nevertheless closed with the North Vietnamese, silencing one position before he was struck and mortally wounded by enemy fire. By his daring initiative, valiant fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty in the face of insurmountable odds, Corporal Kaler was responsible in a great measure for saving many of his comrades and thereby upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom.