



U.S. ARMY
SPECIALIST 5
JOHN P. BECKERS

AUGUST 27, 2023

BURKE, SD

On November 26, 2019, South Dakota launched the Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication Program. The program dedicates state bridges to South Dakota heroes who died while in active service, were a prisoner of war or were missing in action.

The Ponca Creek Bridge on SD HWY 47 near Burke is dedicated to U.S. Army Specialist 5 John P. Beckers.

Specialist Beckers distinguished himself by heroic actions on September 17, 1968, while serving with Company D, 65th Engineer Battalion in the Republic of Vietnam. While on a combat operation, his unit came under intense enemy fire and sustained several casualties. With complete disregard for his own safety, he fearlessly braved the enemy shelling as he carried his wounded comrades to safety. Throughout the entire battle, Beckers continually exposed himself to the devastating enemy fire as he assisted his injured comrades. His valorous actions contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission. Beckers was killed by enemy action on June 6, 1969.

For his service and sacrifice, Beckers received many medals and citations. Among them were the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star with oak clusters, the Silver Star, and the Army Commendation medal.

