

## Jesse Torres Alvarado, Jr.

**Private First Class**

Light Weapons Infantryman (Airborne Qualified)

Company B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division

Service dates: Jan. 11, 1967 – Nov. 7, 1968

Honorable Disability Retirement

Army of the United States

**Fort Worth, Texas**

**April 20, 1947 – Jan. 7, 2022**

**Awards & Decorations:** Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutist Badge, Expert Marksman Badge, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

Inurnment at Greenwood Cemetery, Fort Worth, Texas



After the military, Jess became the first member of the family to receive a college degree when he graduated from Texas A&M University at Commerce, with a bachelor's degree in industrial technology. This launched a career in the plastics industry where he became one of the top plastics designers in the southwestern United States.

His innovations included the invention and design of the rubber, and later plastic, football tee for the National Football League, the plastic Dr Pepper caddy, and the plastic rebar stand used in road construction. His major claim to fame was designing the plastic top and nozzle for the Space Coca-Cola can, which was used in space aboard the NASA Space Shuttle Challenger. Jess helped Coke beat Pepsi in the great "Space Cola War."

### **Valorous Unit Citation**

March 1, 1968

United States Army, Viet Nam

Pursuant to authority contained in Para. 202.1, AR 672-5-1, recommend that the Valorous Unit Citation be awarded to Company "B," 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Airborne), 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division for extraordinary gallantry in military operations against a hostile force from 13 August 1967 through 14 August 1967 in Quang Tin Province, Republic of Viet Nam.

#### **Citation Narrative in Part:**

"...., the individual efforts of the men in the holes was the determining factor in this assault. For example, during this period two of the right flank positions sustained direct hits by RPG rockets. In one position a machinegun took three direct hits, yet one man, SP4 Beets, although very seriously wounded remained on his gun. He asked the medic who was treating all the wounded in these positions, to roll him back onto the gun because he could not move himself. Beets killed six more enemy within 10 feet of his position during the next five minutes."

PFC Jesse Alvarado was the spotter in that fox hole. Wounded through his left wrist himself and unable to shoulder his rifle, he supported SP4 Beets with his pistol. Beets died later from his war wounds.