



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

FN Heriberto Segovia Hernandez, United States Coast Guard

Born: 23 July 1948

Killed in action: 5 December 1968



Heriberto S. Hernandez was a native of San Antonio, Texas, and in July 1965, he enlisted from that city for four years of service in the United States Coast Guard. He served on board the Cutter BERING STRAIT, Loran Station Saipan, Base Galveston and, in the spring of 1968, he deployed for duty in Vietnam. Beginning in May, Fireman Hernandez, known by his shipmates as “Eddie,” served on board the 82-foot cutter POINT CYPRESS where he was killed in action.

FN Hernandez posthumously received the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal with the Combat “V” device. He is the second Hispanic American service member known to have received this honor. In his citation for the BSM, Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt wrote: “Fireman Hernandez’s heroic actions under enemy fire were instrumental to the success of friendly forces in harassing and destroying the enemy’s morale and feeling of security. Fireman Hernandez’s professional skill, courage under enemy fire, and devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself, and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

While Hernandez should be remembered for his heroic service and devotion to duty, he should also be remembered as a Coast Guardsman that was respected, admired and well-liked by his shipmates. There seems a no more fitting accolade than the following photograph and remembrance by Coast Guard veteran Alan Dillenbeck, Hernandez’s shipmate on POINT CYPRESS:



"Eddie's and my deployment overlapped by just a few months, however, working with him made a huge impact on my life. I really don't know why Ed chose to join the CG; avoiding Viet Nam service certainly was not a factor as all the enlisted billets were filled by volunteers and there was often a long waiting list. I suspect Ed, like most of us, went to RONONE [Coast Guard Squadron One] for a variety of reasons. The CG in the 60's had little minority representation, but I doubt that was a factor. I think he just wanted to be part of our nation's struggle at that time. I don't have a recollection of his boxing experience but I always felt better when Ed was with me when we were in a Navy Club. He had a formidable presence. There was no one who I would have felt more comfortable with watching my back. From left to right, the photo shows me, our VN [South Vietnamese Navy] liaison, a U.S. Navy medic and Eddie. It was taken on 20 September 1968 after an operation using the 13' Whaler shown in the picture. Ironically, Ed was killed in the same boat a few short months later. A few weeks after the picture was taken, my tour was up and I had returned stateside. I think Eddie deserves recognition, he was a special person."

Alan Dillenbeck, SN/BM3, POINT CYPRESS, 1967-1968
