

History

The Air Mobile School originally opened its doors on 31 January 1974 by order of Major General Sidney B. Berry, the Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). The original four Air Mobile Badges were created by Major Jack R. Rickman from excess dental fillings, and one of these badges remains proudly on display at the 101st Airborne Division Museum. Airmobile School started its first class on 26 March 1974 and awarded its first Airmobile Badge to Major James Daily, the first Airmobile School Commander. On 4 October 1974 The Airmobile School was officially renamed the Air Assault School. On 18 January 1978 the Air Assault badge was formally recognized as an official qualification badge.

On 8 July 1994 The Air Assault School was again renamed as The Sabalauski Air Assault School in honor of Retired Command Sergeant Major Walter James Sabalauski. The Sabalauski Air Assault School was relocated to its current location on 17 December 1999.

WALTER JAMES SABALAUSKI (1910 - 1993)

Walter James Sabalauski was born in Lithuania in 1910. His family moved to the United States while he was a small child. From 1929 to 1937, he boxed professionally while living in the Chicago area. An auto accident ended his career with an outstanding record of only two defeats in 33 bouts. Command Sergeant Major Sabalauski entered the Army in June 1941. During World War II, he served in the Pacific Theater, fighting on the beachheads of the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, and the Philippines. He later served in the Korean War with the 187th Regiment, Combat Team (Airborne) and 25th Infantry Regiment. In 1963, CSM Sabalauski went to Vietnam for the first time, where he served as an advisor to the 32d Vietnamese Ranger Battalion. After service in the Dominican Republic in 1965, he returned to Vietnam in 1966. It was during this tour that he fought his most memorable battle.



Early in June of 1966, Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment was conducting a mission to locate elements of the 24th North Vietnamese Regiment. Charlie Company made contact with what was estimated to be a battalion-sized enemy element. Under heavy enemy fire and unable to maneuver, the company commander, CPT William Carpenter called for air strikes on his position in an attempt to force the enemy to withdraw. The enemy ceased fire long enough to allow Charlie Company to consolidate, reorganize and establish a position from which to defend and begin evacuation of wounded personnel. 1SG Sabalauski, in utter disregard for his own safety, repeatedly placed himself at risk for the sake of his soldiers during the conduct of this mission. For his extraordinary heroism in destroying the enemy and in evacuating the mass casualties, he received both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star.

After his second tour in Vietnam he returned to the United States to serve as Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major at West Point. In 1968, he again returned to Vietnam and the 2-502d Infantry Regiment. Command Sergeant Major Sabalauski continued to serve until 1971 when he retired at the age of 61.

Command Sergeant Major Sabalauski's awards include the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, 8 Bronze Stars, 3 Air Medals, 6 Army Commendation Medals, 4 Purple Hearts, 3 Awards of the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge along with campaign medals for service in World War II, Korea, Dominican Republic, and Vietnam.

Command Sergeant Major Sabalauski died in 1993 and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. To the soldiers who served with him, he is remembered as a fearless leader in combat and as having a heart as big as any country in which he served.

