

# Nicholas Joseph Cutinha

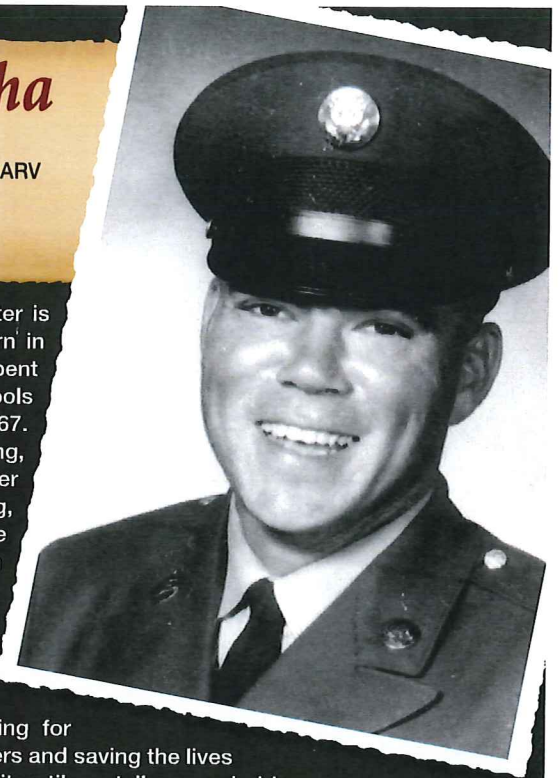
Specialist Four

1ST PLT, C CO, 4TH BN, 9TH INFANTRY, 25TH INF DIV, USARV

Army of the United States

Fernandina Beach, Florida

January 13, 1945 to March 02, 1968



The road leading to the Robert M. Foster Justice Center is named in honor of Nicholas J. Cutinha. He was born in Fernandina Beach on January 13, 1945, and spent his childhood in Nassau County, attending schools in Yulee before entering service on March 1, 1967.

He completed his basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia and was sent to Vietnam in September 1967. On a combat mission near Gia Ding, Republic of Vietnam, on March 2, 1968, he displayed courageous action during an ambush by a large communist force, in what was to become one of the worst single encounter loss of life incidents in the history of the Vietnam War.

Cutinha provided machine gun coverage for his company allowing for the evacuation of wounded soldiers and saving the lives

of at least 9 members of his unit until mortally wounded by enemy

forces. He was 23 years old. On April 7, 1970, for his bravery and valor, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the only Nassau County native so honored. The Medal of Honor is our country's highest award for personal valor above and beyond the call of duty in action against an enemy force. He is buried in the Fort Denaud Cemetery in Denaud, Florida. His medal is under the custodianship of the American Legion Post 130 in LaBelle, Florida, where it is on public display. Specialist Cutinha's official Medal of Honor Citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. While serving as a machine gunner with Company C, Sp4c. Cutinha accompanied his unit on a combat mission near GiaDinh. Suddenly his company came under small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and rocket propelled grenade fire, from a battalion size enemy unit. During the initial hostile attack, communication with the battalion was lost and the company commander and numerous members of the company became casualties. When Sp4c. Cutinha observed that his company was pinned down and disorganized, he moved to the front with complete disregard for his safety, firing his machine gun at the charging enemy. As he moved forward he drew fire on his own position and was seriously wounded in the leg. As the hostile fire intensified and half of the company was killed or wounded, Sp4c. Cutinha assumed command of all the survivors in his area and initiated a withdrawal while providing covering fire for the evacuation of the wounded. He killed several enemy soldiers but sustained another leg wound when his machine gun was destroyed by incoming rounds. Undaunted, he crawled through a hail of enemy fire to an operable machine gun in order to continue the defense of his injured comrades who were being administered medical treatment. Sp4c. Cutinha maintained this position, refused assistance, and provided defensive fire for his comrades until he fell mortally wounded. He was solely responsible for killing 15 enemy soldiers while saving the lives of at least 9 members of his own unit. Sp4c. Cutinha's gallantry and extraordinary heroism were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay  
down his life for his friends.*

*John 15:13*