



FEBRUARY 2026

Stratford Veterans Museum

VETERAN OF THE MONTH



BIRDEN JEROME LAWSON



Corporal Birden Jerome Lawson, a member of D Company, 101st Airborne Division, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, was born May 30, 1948 in Essex County, NJ. Birden was a graduate of Stratford High School in 1967.

He was drafted into the Army shortly after graduating high school. After boot camp training Cpl. Lawson trained to become a Light Weapons Specialist and joined the 101st Airborne, a legendary parachute division. Once in Vietnam he fought in the controversial battle of Hamburger Hill (Hill 937), an ordeal that lasted 10 days, starting on May 10, 1969. That battle was considered a watershed event of negative public opinion toward the Vietnam War. In the end over 50 Americans were killed and nearly 400 wounded, in addition to several helicopters shot down. After the 101st Airborne took the hill on May 20th, it was abandoned days later!

Army Corporal Lawson experienced a traumatic wound, ultimately resulting in his death on May 18, 1969. Recorded circumstances attribute he died through hostile action, small arms fire.

The location was Dong Ap Bia, Hamburger Hill, South Vietnam, Thua Thein Province. He was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart. During Birden's service he received a Combat Infantry Badge, Marksmanship Badge, Parachutist Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Gallantry Cross and the Army Good Conduct Medal.