

August 7, 2019

Becker County Board of Commissioners approves honorary road designation of CSAH 26 at their August 6, 2019 meeting. An eight and half mile stretch of CSAH 26, in Becker County, between Ponsford and State Highway 34 will receive honorary naming designation in memory of Seabee Force Master Chief James D. Fairbanks who grew up on the White Earth Reservation in the Village of Ponsford, MN.



BIOGRAPHY: James D. Fairbanks was born in White Earth, Minnesota, to Tom and Marie Fairbanks. He attended Pine Point and Osage Elementary schools and graduated from Park Rapids High School in 1970. James honorably served his country in the Marine Corps and Navy for 28 ½ years, which included three wartime eras: Vietnam, Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). He was promoted from an E-1 all the way to Force Master Chief Petty Officer on the first attempt, which is unheard of. James is also the only E-9 Master Chief Petty Officer that we know of from Becker County. Only 0.89% of Navy personnel make Master Chief Petty Officer E-9! He was promoted to 13th Force Master Chief Petty Officer with 23 years of service, making him the top-ranked enlisted Navy Seabee.

James D. Fairbanks enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in November 1970 and was honorably discharged in September of 1972 at the rank of Corporal. James returned to active duty in the United States Navy in January 1977 and was honorably discharged in January 1979. He returned to work for American Iron and Supply Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota, until 1986. James then re-enlisted in the Navy in September 1986, serving with the NMCB 1 (Navy Mobile Construction Battalion) until February 1990. He received orders to the Navy Construction Training Center in Gulfport, Mississippi. His next duty station was Public Works Department, Keflavik in Iceland. Upon completion of a 30-month tour, he transferred to NMCB 133, where he served until 1999. James then reported to the Naval Construction Training Center in March 1999 and served as the Command Master Chief until May 2001. He then reported to NMCB 1 and served with the finest until December 2002, and then transferred to the 22nd Naval Construction Regiment after completing a three year tour. He was selected as the 13th Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Seabees, which is the highest

ranking Non-Commissioned Officer in the Seabees. James served as Force Master Chief Petty Officer from December of 2005 to May of 2008. He led the charge of over 20,000 Seabees worldwide. His next assignment was serving as Command Master Chief, Naval Construction Battalion in Gulfport, Mississippi. He was serving in this capacity at the time of his passing in May 2011. As mentioned earlier, James served during three war eras: Vietnam, Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). He did two tours in Iraq where he was decorated with a Bronze Star. As Seabee Force Master Chief Petty Officer, he also made 13 trips to Iraq. James visited an estimated 30-40 countries and spent 7 ½ months in Bosnia.

Seabee Force Master Chief Petty Officer James D. Fairbanks was loved by all the troops that served under him. His New Year's resolution for 2011 (the year he passed) was to help as many people as he could. James lived by a quote from General George C. Marshall, "*There is no limit to the amount of good you can do, if you don't care who gets the credit.*"