

STERLING EDWARD COX**Class 18-67**

STERLING EDWARD COX
is honored on Panel 34W, Row 6 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: STERLING EDWARD COX
Wall Name: STERLING E COX
Date of Birth: 3/27/1941
Date of Casualty: 1/15/1969
Home of Record: KNOXVILLE
County of Record: KNOX COUNTY
State: TN
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: PLEIKU



1LT Cox served with Troop C, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry. He was the pilot of an AH-1G Cobra that was shot down while making a low-level gun run north of Plei Djereng. The aircraft exploded in the air after hitting trees. He had served a tour of duty in Vietnam as an enlisted man in 1964.

From thewall-usa.com

You are not forgotten

We went through OCS together, and never saw each other again, but I remember you.

Max Rishell
classmate, friend, Viet Nam vet
2629 East Madison Springfield MO 65802
Sep 14, 2010

A Note From The Virtual Wall

Two men of C Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, died when their AH-1G COBRA (hull number 67-15651) was shot down:

1LT Sterling Edward Cox
WO1 James Birch Petteys

The gunship had crashed on a heavily forested slope. Other men of C Troop were promptly inserted to rescue Cox and Petteys. After working their way through the jungle to the crash site, they found both crewmen dead. They removed the bodies in order to carry them back to the landing zone.

While enroute to the LZ, the rescue forces came under heavy fire and in short order were surrounded. In the ensuing fight, PFC Garfield Langhorn distinguished himself by covering an enemy hand grenade with his own body in order to save his comrades from death or injury. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions

Garfield Langhorn was the only one of the rescue party who died. His body, together with those of Lieutenant Cox and Warrant Officer Petteys, was brought out by the other men of C Troop.

Delta Company, 2/35th Infantry, had been inserted in support of the Air Cav troopers; they too lost a man: Sgt Steve R. Reiser, a medic with D/2/35. In addition, they had 10 men wounded.

From the Virtual Wall

On the afternoon of 15 Jan 1969, First Lieutenant Cox and Warrant Officer Petteys were flying an AH-1G Cobra gunship on a reconnaissance mission providing air support for elements of the 4th Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam. 1LT Cox was the aircraft commander and leader of the aerial weapons team and WO Petteys was the pilot/gunner of the aircraft. At approximately 4:20 pm, after hours of concentrated search, the aero-scout elements reported a number of heavily used trails leading to a reinforced bunker complex. After receiving clearance and firing into the position, the aero-scouts radioed that they were receiving a heavy volume of enemy automatic weapons fire. Without hesitation, 1LT Cox and WO Petteys drew the enemy's fire to themselves and away from the vulnerable scout helicopters by diving their aircraft at the source of the ground fire and engaging the position with rockets and minigun fire. Their aircraft sustained disabling hits which prohibited recovery from its last dive. Even then, they continued to saturate the enemy bunker area with minigun fire until their helicopter exploded in flames and plunged to the ground. Both men died instantly upon impact."

Submitted in loving memory by the Petteys family.
Lloyd Petteys, Jr.



I am the widow of Sterling Edward Cox. He was a wonderful husband and father. He was an honor graduate of OCS in 1968 and an honor graduate of both flight schools. He spent two tours in Vietnam - 1964 and 1968 - and he was stationed at Pleiku both times.

We had been in love since we were 14 years old and he was the wind beneath my wings.

He would be very proud of his two sons, Michael and Sean Cox, as we are proud of him and all the guys who have served their country.

I have since married another veteran and he honors Sterling's memory with us and helped me raise my sons. I will always have him in my heart.

From his wife
Joyce Cox
17 Oct 2005

COX STERLING EDWARD

Name: 1LT Sterling Edward Cox

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 01/15/1969 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Age at death: 27.8

Date of Birth: 03/27/1941

Home City: Knoxville, TN

Service: FA branch of the reserve component of the U.S. Army.

Unit: C/7/17 CAV

Major organization: 1st Aviation Brigade

Flight class: 68-10

Service: FA branch of the U.S. Army.

The Wall location: 34W-006

Short Summary: Exploded in the air after hitting trees on a low level gun run while on a VR north of Plei Djereng w/WO1 James Petteys.

Aircraft: AH-1G tail number 67-15651

Service number: O5427134

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: 1204 = 12 Armored Reconnaissance Unit Commander

Primary cause: Hostile Fire

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: fire or burns

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: aircraft commander

Started Tour: 09/10/1968

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

Length of service: 08

Location: Pleiku Province II Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - killed

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Baptist - other groups

The following information secondary, but may help in explaining this incident.

Category of casualty as defined by the Army: battle dead Category of personnel: active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 12/09/1995

Helicopter AH-1G 67-15651

Information on U.S. Army helicopter AH-1G tail number 67-15651

The Army purchased this helicopter 0668

Total flight hours at this point: 00000331

Date: 01/15/1969

Incident number: 69011555.KIA

Unit: C/7/17 CAV

This was a Combat Loss caused by being shot down by Ground Fire with the mission function of Armed Helicopter (having primary weapon subsystems installed and utilized to provide direct fire support)

This was a Combat incident. This helicopter was LOSS TO INVENTORY

This was an Unknown mission

While in Target Area this helicopter was Attacking at UNK feet and UNK knots.

South Vietnam

UTM grid coordinates: YA878677

Count of hits was not possible because the helicopter burned or exploded.

Small Arms/Automatic Weapons; Gun launched non-explosive ballistic projectiles less than 20 mm in size.

Systems damaged were: PERSONNEL

Casualties = 02 DOI . .

Search and rescue operations were Not Required

The helicopter Crashed. Aircraft Destroyed.

Both mission and flight capability were terminated.

Burned

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated:

Survivability/Vulnerability Information Analysis Center AVDAC database. Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Survivability/Vulnerability Information Analysis Center Helicopter database. Also: OPERA, LNOF, 90017, CRAFX, CASRP (Operations Report. Lindenmuth Old Format Data Base. Crash Facts Message. Casualty Report.)

Loss to Inventory and Helicopter was recovered

Crew Members:

P 1LT COX STERLING EDWARD KIA

P WO1 PETTEYS JAMES BIRCH KIA

This record was last updated on 04/15/2004