

**ROBERT GORDON COZART JR
is honored on Panel 12W, Row 24 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial**

Full Name: ROBERT GORDON
COZART JR
Wall Name: ROBERT G COZART JR
Date of Birth: 2/27/1947
Date of Casualty: 3/20/1970
Date of Death: 3/20/1970
Home of Record: HAMMOND
County of Record: TANGIPAHOA PARISH
State: LA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: MAJ
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: PR & MR UNKNOWN



MAJ Cozart served with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 214th Aviation Battalion, 164th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade.

On March 20, 1970, CPT Cozart, pilot, and WO James E. Butler departed Vinh Long, South Vietnam aboard an O-1G Bird dog at 1016 hours on a visual reconnaissance mission over Vinh Binh Province with a stop at the Province Capitol of Phu Vinh. At 1028 hours, a radio transmission was received from WO Butler advising the Team 72 Tactical Operations Center that they were airborne and en route to Tra Vinh. This was the last communication with the crew. The aircraft never landed at Tra Vinh.

Upon receiving notification that the aircraft was missing, a province-wide search was initiated. All immediate search efforts were unsuccessful. Vietnamese civilians, however, reported that an aircraft had been downed in the vicinity of Tra Vinh. Local forces with U.S. advisors, U.S. troops, coastal patrol boats and light aircraft conducted extensive search efforts from March 20 through March 27 but without success. The tail section of the aircraft was finally recovered and identified October 23, 1970.

In 1989 the Vietnamese government turned over a large number of human remains believed to be those of American servicemen. On August 1, 1989, the US announced the positive identification of Captain Cozart's remains. He was posthumously promoted to Major. On 4 September 1997, WO Butler's remains were positively identified and returned to his family for burial in Lillington, NC, next to his father.

Flight School

I was in the same Fixed Wing class with Robert. We may have flown together a time or two. I don't recall too many details, but I remember he was quick witted, funny and had a positive attitude. I recall one time when we were conducting a pre-flight check of the Cessna training aircraft. Part of the pre-flight was to climb up on the strut and open the fuel cap to make sure the tanks were topped off. Robert climbed up and opened the fuel cap and some fuel spilled out over the wing. I vividly recall him saying, 'I guess you could say that tank is full.' The instructor didn't laugh, but we got a good chuckle out of it. We never kept in touch after flight school, but after I returned to Ft. Stewart learned through the grape vine that he was MIA. I was initially shocked, then saddened. I thought back to times I was with him in flight school. What a great loss. I always remember him as upbeat and his great sense of humor.

Posted by: Mel Schlentner 219 AVN
Relationship: We served together
October 9, 2010

From the Virtual Wall

Robert (Buster) Cozart and I were roommates at the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion's T&P Hotel (tin and plywood) - 'BOQ' - at Vinh Long at the time of his loss in 1970. Buster was the Battalion Safety Officer and I was the Battalion Communications Officer. Buster was such a pro - he so loved his flying.

After his O-1 went down the Army held its Flight Evaluation Board and I was assigned to help investigate various avionics aspects. When I left Vietnam, in May 1970, little more was known as to Buster's or his co-pilot's (CWO Butler) whereabouts.

As life's little connections often go, a few years later, the Army sent me back to school at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. One day the local newspaper ran a story about an MIA pilot whose family lived in Tuscaloosa - Buster Cozart! I visited with his family and still remember how gracious they all were despite no new news still by that time (circa 1973). I've since visited The Wall several times and located his name.

I thank all of you who wore that MIA bracelet for Buster all those years. Your respect and honor for a man you never met was no doubt of great solace for his family over those long years. I'm betting Buster is grateful for your vigilance too. He was good friend to all of us.

Frank Long
COL, US Army (Ret)
8 Nov 2007

From www.pownetwork.org (1998)

COZART, ROBERT GORDON JR.
Remains Returned - ID Announced 01 August 1989

Name: Robert Gordon "Buster" Cozart, Jr.
Rank/Branch: O3/US Army
Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 214th Aviation Battalion, 164th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade
Date of Birth: 27 March 1947 (Tuscaloosa AL)
Home City of Record: Hammond LA
Date of Loss: 20 March 1970
Country of Loss: South Vietnam
Loss Coordinates: 095900N 1062045E (XS547038)
Status (in 1973): Missing In Action
Category: 1
Acft/Vehicle/Ground: O1G "Birddog"
Refno: 1575
Other Personnel In Incident: James E. Butler (missing)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 01 April 1991 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK 1998.

REMARKS: IR SAYS BOTH CREWMEMBERS KILLED

SYNOPSIS: "Buster" Cozart believed a person should take full advantage of every opportunity given to him and to do his very best at it. He loved to fly and wanted to be the best. His wife described him as a happy, optimistic person of great strength of character and deep faith in God.

On March 20, 1970, Capt. Robert G. Cozart, pilot, and WO James E. Butler departed Vinh Long, South Vietnam aboard an O1G (serial #51-12899) at 1016 hours on a visual reconnaissance mission over Vinh Binh Province with a stop at the Province capitol of Phu Vinh. At 1028 hours, a radio transmission was received from WO Butler advising the Team 72 Tactical Operations Center that they were airborne and en route to Tra Vinh. This was the last communication with the crew. The aircraft never landed at Tra Vinh.

Upon receiving notification that the aircraft was missing, a province-wide search was initiated. All immediate search efforts were unsuccessful. Vietnamese civilians, however, reported that an aircraft had been downed in the vicinity of Tra Vinh. Local forces with U.S. advisors, U.S. troops, coastal patrol boats and light aircraft conducted

extensive search efforts from March 20 through March 27. During the search efforts, one control communications set and one control radio set were located, but were never identified as positively being from Capt. Cozart's aircraft. However, they were of the sort used on the O1G.

According to Butler's wife, a Vietnamese civilian had reported the crash, prompting the search in the area. Another Vietnamese civilian report indicated that the pilot of the plane (Cozart) had been killed in the crash and the Viet Cong killed or wounded the other crewman (Butler) and either took the bodies to Cang Long Base area for display or threw them into the river and dismantled the aircraft. Another Vietnamese civilian report indicated that part of the plane was located but a September 21, 1970 search was aborted due to booby traps. The tail section of the aircraft was finally recovered and identified October 23, 1970.

The United States Government has classified both Cozart and Butler as "Category 1," which means that there is certain evidence to indicate that the enemy forces know the fate of the Americans. In the Peace agreement signed in Paris in 1973, the Vietnamese agreed to release all American prisoners of war and account for the missing. They have not done so. The U.S. Government has named the return and accounting of Americans "highest national priority", yet has dealt with the issue with less than "high priority."

On August 1, 1989, the U.S. announced that remains returned by the Vietnamese had been positively identified as those of Buster Cozart. It is has been widely known for several years that the Vietnamese maintain a large store of remains from which to select shipments to the U.S. when it is politically favorable to do so. Buster Cozart - living or dead - was a prisoner of war for nearly 20 years. Although the uncertainty his family has had to endure is now at an end, they may never know how - or when - Buster died. The fate of James E. Butler remains unknown.