

**CHARLES MILTON FITTS****CLASS 4-61**

is honored on Panel 1E, Row 16 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** CHARLES MILTON FITTS  
**Wall Name:** CHARLES M FITTS  
**Date of Birth:** 11/21/1932  
**Date of Casualty:** 1/11/1963  
**Home of Record:** SAN ANGELO  
**State:** TX  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** 1LT  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** PR & MR UNKNOWN



1LT Charles Milton Fitts was the first graduate of Fort Sill Field Artillery OCS to die in the Vietnam War. He had served his country for eight years at the time of his death. LT Fitts was a Rotary Wing Aviator and died while a passenger in a CH-21C (Shawnee) helicopter that crashed as a result of hostile fire. He was serving with the 93<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company, 45<sup>th</sup> Aviation Group, Military Assistance Advisory Group Vietnam (MAAGV)

**Notes from the Virtual Wall**

Captain Fitts was a career military man from San Angelo, Texas. He first entered the Army as an enlisted man after graduating from high school and taking college courses in San Angelo. He served six years as an enlisted man and applied for and was accepted for OCS in Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He completed OCS and was commissioned a 2LT in April 1961. He immediately applied and was accepted for Rotary Flight Training. He completed training in 1962 and applied for a branch transfer to Transportation and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

He went to Vietnam as a helicopter pilot with the Military Assistance Advisory Group in October 1962. He died as a passenger on a CH-21C helicopter that went down under hostile conditions. He was the first casualty of San Angelo and the second Permian Basin area serviceman to die in Vietnam.

1LT Fitts was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for a previous action. Building 312 at Fort Rucker, Alabama is named for LT Fitts.

Seven men died when a CH-21C helicopter (hull number 55-04220) belonging to the 57th Transportation Company went down. The three crewmen were from the 57th; four passengers were from the 93rd Transportation Company.

- CW2 Raymond Charles Wilde, pilot, 57th Trans Co
- CW2 Lawrence Clair Hammond, co-pilot, 57th Trans Co
- PFC Boyce Eugene Lawson, crew chief, 57th Trans Co
- CPT Donald Bonney Toth, passenger, 93rd Trans Co
- 1LT Lewis Lynn Stone, passenger, 93rd Trans Co
- **1LT Charles Milton Fitts, passenger, 93rd Trans Co**
- SP5 James Delmas McAndrew, passenger, 93rd Trans Co

On 25 June 1963, the 93rd Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) was redesignated the 121st Aviation Company and later was redesignated as the 121st Assault Helicopter Company (121st AHC).

**The following is from the Permian Basin Vietnam Memorial**  
**[www.veteransmemorial.us](http://www.veteransmemorial.us)**

## **AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Army Aviator Wings, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal (2 awards), National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Charles Fitts was born in Roscoe, Texas, the son Marie Crabtree and Eugene Fitts. He attended Roscoe School, and graduated in 1948. After high school, he moved to San Angelo and lived with relatives and worked as a truck driver. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1954. He married Jeraldine Elizabeth Weddle of San Angelo and the marriage produced two children both born in San Angelo. He served as an enlisted man for six years. On his third re-enlistment he applied for Officer Candidate School and was accepted. He attended the Field Artillery OCS at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1960-61 and graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant on April 1961.

Lieutenant Fitts applied for Rotary Flight Training upon completion of OCS and was trained at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He completed flight school in 1962. He was promoted to 1st Lieutenant and did a branch transfer from Artillery to Transportation. He departed

for Vietnam as a part of the Military Assistance Advisory Group-Vietnam in October 1962. He was a helicopter pilot for the 93rd Transportation Group, 45th Aviation Group. On January 11, 1963, he was one of three passengers and a crew of four on a CH-21C tail number 55-04220. The aircraft was from the 57th Transportation Company. The aircraft was flying in the area about 55 miles southwest of Saigon. The helicopter went down under hostile conditions and crashed on an island in the Mekong River. All seven personnel perished.



Fairmont Cemetery-San Angelo, Texas



Picture from Headstone

Lieutenant Charles Milton Fitts was buried in the Fairmont Cemetery in San Angelo, Texas with full military honors. Building 312 at Fort Rucker, Alabama was named and dedicated in honor of 1Lt. Charles Milton Fitts. He was survived by his wife, Jeraldine and his two children, Milton Eugene Jr and Sherri Marie all of San Angelo. He was also survived by his father of Carlsbad, New Mexico, his grandmother Mrs. Mollie Fitts of Roscoe and by two brothers and two sisters.

**From www.flyarmy.org**

**FITTS CHARLES MILTON**

Name: 1LT Charles Milton Fitts

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 01/11/1963 while performing the duty of Pilot Passenger.

Age at death: 30.1

Date of Birth: 11/21/1932

Home City: San Angelo, TX

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

Unit: 93 TC CO

Major organization: other

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

The Wall location: 01E-016

Short Summary: A/C from 57 TR Co crashed killing passengers Fitts, Donald Toth and Lewis Stone. Pilots were Hammond & Wilde. Seven people killed.

Aircraft: CH-21C tail number 55-04220

Service number: O5405571

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: 1981 = 19 Rotary Wing Aviator (Unit Commander)

Primary cause: Hostile Fire

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: unknown

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: passenger

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - non-aircrew

Length of service: 08

Location: Unknown Province

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - killed

single 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 07/23/1994

## **Helicopter CH-21C 55-04220**

Information on U.S. Army helicopter CH-21C tail number 55-04220

Date: 630111

Incident number: 05661ACD Accident case number: 05661 Total Loss Accident

Unit: 57 TR CO

Number killed in accident = 7. . Injured = 0. . Passengers = 4

costing 250540

Source(s) from which the incident was created or updated: Army Aviation Safety Center database.

### Crew Members:

P CW2 WILDE RAYMOND CHARLES KIA

AC CW2 HAMMOND LAWRENCE CLAIR KIA

CE PFC LAWSON BOYCE EUGENE KIA

OP SP5 MCANDREW JAMES DELMAS KIA

**PP 1LT FITTS CHARLES MILTON KIA**

### Passengers and/or other participants:

1LT STONE LEWIS LYNN, AR, PP, KIA

CPT TOTH DONALD BONNEY, AR, PP, KIA

This record was last updated on 09/20/1998

### **From thewall-usa.com**

Fitts (as we called him) and Don Toth, were going to Saigon for the weekend. I was standing nearby as he talked to a pilot from the 56th Co., which had stopped at Soc Trang, for fuel and food. I overheard the pilot (a friend of Fitts) say, "put your things, in 611 and ride with me." The next morning on going outside, I found there was a search getting underway, for a H-21, which did not reach Saigon. It turned out to be 611. A small control rod had broken, causing a total loss of control, the crash and loss of all on board.

Willard Womack

fellow Viet Nam pilot

December 19, 2002