

FRANCIS MICHAEL GIRARDOT**Class 20A-67**

is honored on Panel 15W, Row 63 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: FRANCIS MICHAEL GIRARDOT
Wall Name: FRANCIS M GIRARDOT
Date of Birth: 10/21/1945
Date of Casualty: 12/16/1969
Home of Record: ROYAL OAK
County of Record: OAKLAND COUNTY
State: MI
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: TAY NINH



CPT Girardot was assigned to Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery, 25th Infantry Division. He was killed in the crash of a UH-1H helicopter that went down on approach to a landing zone at night in bad weather.

so sorry

Mike was the cutup of our class. I was going through some old photos of our class and came across one of Mike. Great guy. Positive and a real friend for the six months. It was shock to see this memorial and with his name on it. I have done more than one search of the internet to see if I could find him. Funny how almost 40 years have passed since we graduated and I last saw him, and yet I feel that I have lost a true friend.

Posted by: Larry J. Ingram
Relationship: OCS classmates
July 16, 2008

**Francis Girardot is a Canadian.
His name is engraved on the Canadian Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.**

Helicopter UH-1H 68-16196

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 68-16196

The Army purchased this helicopter 0869

Total flight hours at this point: 00000342

Date: 12/16/1969

Incident number: 691216191ACD Accident case number: 691216191 Total loss or fatality Accident

Unit: A/25 AVN 25 INF

The station for this helicopter was Cu Chi in South Vietnam

Number killed in accident = 4 . . Injured = 2 . . Passengers = 2

costing 457945

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated: Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Army Aviation Safety Center database. Also: OPERA (Operations Report.)

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

AC WO1 DRAKE MICHAEL JOSEPH KIA

P WO1 SUGIMOTO LEONARD JAMES KIA

CE CPL DEVINE THOMAS EDWARD KIA

G E4 BJ HARRIS

OB CPT GIRARDOT FRANCIS MICHAEL KIA

Passengers and/or other participants:

E6 RA YOUMANS, PAX, D

Accident Summary:

The aircraft departed the A Company ramp at approximately 2245 hours with crew and one passenger. At approximately 2345 hours, the aircraft arrived at XT 2343 and picked up Youmans. When he boarded the aircraft he was unable to locate his seat belt in the dark so he sat on the right edge of the cargo bench seat without being restrained by a seat belt. CPT Girardot sat to his left. The aircraft then departed that location. At approximately 0015, 16 December the 25th Aviation Battalion Tactical Operations Center received a call from the Aircraft Commander stating that they were over their intended landing point, but could not begin their approach because the people on the ground were not ready. He said he would begin his approach in 10 to 15 minutes as soon as he had landing instructions and the landing area was marked. At this time the winds near the surface were out of the north at 50 to 70 knots, visibility was approximately 7 miles, sky condition was 3500 feet broken, 10,000 feet overcast with a temperature and dew-point spread of approximately 76/72. A light rain had just ended and there was a very light mist or fog from the surface to approximately 10 to 20 feet. An aircraft landing light could penetrate this condition from 300 feet. Finally, there was very little ambient light. After a delay of approximately 5 to 8 minutes, the landing area was marked by a strobe light. The light was identified by FM radio from the aircraft as it began a left circling approach. AFB Bellin, who was at the landing area called the

aircraft and instructed it to land from south to north. This transmission was not acknowledged, so he repeated it, but still heard no reply. Soon after the aircraft began its approach all lights on it were extinguished. As the aircraft passed over the road to the south of the compound, it appeared to be quite low. Seconds later, while in a steep left turn the tip of the right main rotor blade struck the ground at a point 450 meters, on a heading of 160 degrees from the intended landing area. The strike, although not deep enough in the ground to cause separation of the rotor system from the aircraft, did cause the system to lose enough inertia that it remained with the aircraft throughout the crash sequence, additionally, the loss of lift and torque effect threw the aircraft into the ground initially onto the heel of the left skid, the aircraft then bounced over to the toe of the right skid and nosed over as indicated by green canopy plexiglass fragments on the ground. As the fuselage was inverting, it rotated in a clockwise direction about its longitudinal axis. When the aircraft became inverted the top, left portion of the tail fin struck the ground ripping the tail boom from the fuselage. The tail rotor had little motion when it struck the ground. Simultaneously, the collapse of the aircraft structure caused a massive rupturing of at least one of the fuel cells which engulfed the engine in fuel resulting in a large fireball. This ignition of fuel was so intense that it left a large burn mark on the ground, even though the fuselage continued to roll along the crash axis at least one more time before it came to rest in an inverted position 68 meters from where it first struck the ground. It then continued to burn until almost completely destroyed.

This record was last updated on 09/20/1998



Francis is buried at White Chapel Memorial Park Cemetery in Troy, Michigan
Section 15754 Space 10 Block M