

MILTON FRANCIS SMITH**Class 3-63**

is honored on Panel 12E, Row 56 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: MILTON FRANCIS SMITH
Wall Name: MILTON F SMITH
Date of Birth: 7/22/1941
Date of Casualty: 11/11/1966
Home of Record: DANIA
County of Record: BROWARD COUNTY
State: FL
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: PR & MR UNKNOWN



CPT Smith served with the 170th Aviation Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion. He lost his life in a night time landing accident while piloting a UH-1D helicopter. The aircraft struck higher terrain 100 yards short of the intended touchdown point, rolled inverted and came to rest upright.

I flew with Smithy

I flew with Cpt. Smith during the first six months we were in Vietnam. We sailed with our helicopter company to Vietnam by the US Navy Ship, USS John Pope. We landed at Qui Nhon and spent several weeks there, then to Pleiku. Milton and I flew the "C" Model Huey Gunship for the next 6 months. He was extremely happy to tell me of the birth of his baby. We were in the 170th Avn Co, 52 Aviation Battalion. We were Buccaneers.

Posted by: Dave Larcomb
Relationship: We served together
July 3, 2007

From thewall-usa.com

Think of Captain Smith & Major Callinan every day!!

I was the crew chief on the chopper that day along with Gerald Downs, the gunner. We had what was the worst day I had in country, even before we crashed. We were resupplying and evacuating dead and wounded troops of the 25th Infantry Division all day long, and both of the pilots did some rather extraordinary flying all day. In and out of a hot LZ for the whole time. We were under fire the whole time. Saw other aircraft shot out of the sky near us. It was a very scary day for all of us. We had thought we were through and on our way back to Holloway, we were told to go back to the special forces camp to pick up a passenger to return with us. When we made our approach, the dust swirled all around us and we hit the ground hard. It was all a blur to me. Both Captain Smith and Major Callinan were killed instantly upon impact. Somehow, myself and Downs were thrown out and received considerably minor injuries. I have thought of both of these men every day since and I wonder why. It has been a long time, forty two years to the day of this posting, and I hope that their families have been able to cope as best as they are able. It was the only time I had flown with them so I didn't know them before that day, but I will say that they both conducted themselves in a very professional way that day, especially considering all that had happened up until that horrific accident. I miss the both of them and pray for them every night.

Joe Puglisi

I was the crew chief on the chopper
41 Caincrest Rd. York Me 03909
Nov 11, 2008

A GREAT GUY

I was there when his huey crashed. It was very erie. They hit a berm, rolled 360 degrees and landed right side up again. In doing this the rotor blade cut through the cabin and then the transmission and rotor head detached and landed about fifty feet away. The engine was still running full on and did so for forty minutes until it ran out of gas. It happened right next to a large fuel bladder and gave us some tense moments until the engine finally died. They had lost orientation due to the dust the blades kick up. He was a damn fine man and really stuck his neck out for me at one point. He always did the right thing when others would take the easy way out. I really, really miss him, Thanks Captain.

Robert Walker
CO and friend
PO BOX 998
Paradise, Ca 95967
January 26, 2005

From www.flyarmy.org

SMITH MILTON FRANCIS

Name: CPT Milton Francis Smith

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 11/11/1966 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Age at death: 25.3

Date of Birth: 07/22/1941

Home City: Dania, FL

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

Unit: 52 CAB

Major organization: other

Flight class: 65-2

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

The Wall location: 12E-056

Short Summary: Assigned to S-4, 52nd CAB and borrowed this helicopter from the 170 AHC.

Aircraft: UH-1D tail number 65-09903

Service number: O5406191

Country: South Vietnam

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

Primary cause: A/C Accident

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: unknown

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: advisor

Started Tour: 11/29/1965

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

Length of service: 06

Location: Unknown Province

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Non-hostile - died of other causes

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Methodist (Evangelical United Brethren)

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

Category of casualty as defined by the Army: non-battle dead Category of personnel:

active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 03/27/2000

Helicopter UH-1D 65-09903

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1D tail number 65-09903

The Army purchased this helicopter 0566

Total flight hours at this point: 00000307

Date: 11/11/1966

Incident number: H648ACD Accident case number: H648

Unit: 170 AHC

South Vietnam

Number killed in accident = 2 . . Injured = 2 . . Passengers = 0

costing 239921

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.)

Summary: The pilots were assigned to S-4, 52nd CAB and borrowed this helicopter from the 170 AHC.

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

P MAJ CALLINAN WILLIAM FRANCIS KIA

P CPT SMITH MILTON FRANCIS KIA

Accident Summary:

Landing to ground guide with flashlight struck higher terrain 100 yards short of intended touchdown point. Aircraft rolled inverted but came to rest up right. Crew made approach low and fast and failed to use either landing or searchlight.

This record was last updated on 03/27/2000

More information on the incident from the 174th AHC

Major William Francis "Bill" Callinan, another original member of the 174th AHC, was also transferred to the 52nd CAB during the DEROS shuffle in April 1966 shortly after the unit arrived in Vietnam. He served as the S-4 and supply officer of the battalion. In the afternoon of 11 November 1966, during the same action in which Captain Rick Speare was killed, Major Bill Callinan was killed in the crash of a UH-1D along with Captain Milton Francis Smith. All of the flyable aircraft of the battalion's subordinate companies had been involved in the CA at LZ 10 Alpha. When a number of them were destroyed or rendered unflyable, the battalion commander radioed the headquarters for help.

Lieutenant Colonel Bernie Cobb, another original 174th pilot and then deputy airfield commander at Pleiku, was involved in the mission that Friday and described the events as follows: "During an emergency flight operation in the afternoon on Friday, 11 November 1966, when some 25th Division troops were getting the hell kicked out of them out west of Pleiku, I was ordered by Lieutenant Colonel Foy Rice, the 52nd CAB and Airfield Commander, who was in the field flying C&C (Command and Control) with the 52nd CAB, to immediately form a flight of remaining helicopters at Camp Holloway using all available staff officers as pilots, and begin resupplying the infantry troops with ammo and plasma. Most of the only helicopters available were on the maintenance ramp awaiting repairs. We began that ill-fated mission with seven flyable birds, and every one of them dropped out for one reason or another during the day. Mine was first out when we lost transmission oil.

Major Callinan was flying as aircraft commander and his copilot, Captain Milton Francis Smith, was his Assistant S-4. Their aircraft was a 170th AHC aircraft, UH-1D 65-09903. On final approach to Camp Holloway at the end of the day, Callinan was ordered to return to the original assembly area and recover the assistant operations officer and radio operator, who had inadvertently been left behind. On landing at that site, at dusk, Callinan and Smith are believed to have experienced vertigo, or at least were blinded by a swirl of dust. They hit the ground hard and the blades flexed down through the cockpit, partially decapitating both Callinan and Smith and killing them both instantly.

Not only did Major Callinan leave behind his wife and seven children, but Captain Smith had already received his orders to return to the states in just two weeks, the normal end of his tour. He left behind his widow and a new baby he had never seen.

This tragic accident triggered a new policy within the 52nd Battalion and maybe elsewhere as well. Henceforth, any crew member within two weeks of rotation back to the United States was exempt from flying operational missions." Major Bill Callinan was a devote Roman Catholic and his home of record was Bangor, Maine. (Information provided by Marty Heuer, Mar 2007.)