

MICHAEL KELLY THOMPSON

Class 14-67

is honored on Panel 28W, Row 5 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: MICHAEL KELLY THOMPSON
Wall Name: MICHAEL K THOMPSON
Date of Birth: 12/14/1943
Date of Casualty: 3/21/1969
Home of Record: ADRIAN
County of Record: LENAWEE COUNTY
State: MI
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: BINH DUONG



CPT Thompson served with the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company. He was killed when the UH-1C helicopter he was flying crashed in the pattern at Lai Khe. He was a gunship platoon leader and was on a maintenance test flight at the time of the incident. He was the recipient of a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Michael is buried at Our Lady of Victory Cemetery, Paradise, Michigan

40 Years Today - a memory of a great guy, and terrific friend

Mike was my roommate in flight school - a more happy, easy going, fun loving and generous guy would be hard to imagine. We had many good times together. I remember especially the admiration and love Mike had for his family, always speaking so highly of them - he was the oldest son - they were living at 'Cloud Nine,' Paradise, MI. - an address which always sounded so exotic to me. Mike joked that friends wanted him to go on the quiz program 'I've Got A Secret' - with his secret being, "I spent Christmas in Paradise (MI) and New Years in Hell (MI)" - I too thought that would be a winner. Maybe he would have done so - sadly Mike never got that chance. But in the time I got to know him during flight school Mike proved to be a 'winner' in many different ways. And while 'in country' I recall the shock of reading his name in the 'Army Times,' among the casualties of that March 21st day in 1969. I could only think what a terrible, terrible loss - for his family, his friends like me, and his country. Looking at the photo of Mike posted here, with that ever present smile, instantly brought back fond memories of him. Like the 82 fellow soldiers who perished on the same date, Mike's life ended, but like them he will be, in all our hearts, 'forever young.' I know Mike will never be forgotten by those whose lives he touched. I spoke to Mike's mother Lone M. Thompson yesterday. Like all mother's suffering the loss of a son I'm sure her heart

will never be fully healed, but she has the special gift of being able to express her love of her lost son in written words. I would recommend reading her book, 'The Anonymous Dead' - a tribute to her dear son Mike, and, I feel privileged to say, my flight school friend, US Army aviator, Capt. Michael K. Thompson.

Posted by: Gary S. Tomczik
Relationship: flight school roommates
March 21, 2009

From www.flyarmy.org

THOMPSON MICHAEL KELLY

Name: CPT Michael Kelly Thompson (posthumously promoted)
Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 03/21/1969 while performing the duty of Pilot.
Age at death: 25.3
Date of Birth: 12/14/1943
Home City: Adrian, MI
Service: FA branch of the reserve component of the U.S. Army.
Unit: 173 AHC
Major organization: 1st Aviation Brigade
Flight class: 68-6
Service: FA branch of the U.S. Army.
The Wall location: 28W-005
Short Summary: Maintenance flight in the pattern at Lai Khe. gunship platoon leader.
Aircraft: UH-1C tail number 66-00742
Service number: O5425547
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: fire or burns
Vehicle involved: helicopter
Position in vehicle: pilot
Started Tour: 07/02/1968
"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - pilot
Length of service: 03
Location: Binh Duong Province III Corps.
Reason: aircraft lost or crashed
Casualty type: Non-hostile - died of other causes
single male U.S. citizen
Race: Caucasian
Religion: Methodist (Evangelical United Brethren)
This record was last updated on 08/20/1995

Helicopter UH-1C 66-00742

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1C tail number 66-00742

The Army purchased this helicopter 0167

Total flight hours at this point: 00001047

Date: 03/21/1969

Incident number: 690321301ACD Accident case number: 690321301 Total loss or fatality Accident

Unit: 173 AVN

The station for this helicopter was Lai Khe in

Number killed in accident = 2 . . Injured = 0 . . Passengers = 1

costing 367415

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

Crew Members:

CPT THOMPSON MICHAEL KELLY KIA

ME SP5 THOMPSON GERALD RICHARD KIA

Accident Summary:

On 21 March 1969, a UH-1C helicopter, SN 66-742, belonging to the 173D Assault Helicopter Company, Lai Khe, RVN, was on a local avionics test flight when it crashed just east of Lai Khe, RVN, killing both occupants. The control tower stated to the investigation board that aircraft 66-742 had made an initial radio call south southwest of Lai Khe for entry into the traffic pattern and landing instructions. The aircraft was instructed to enter left traffic for runway 23. There were no radio calls made to the control tower when the aircraft entered down wind. This could have been the result of the pilot either being busy trying to control the aircraft when problems occurred or radio failure. UH-1C helicopter, SN 66-742, was seen to execute a rapid rate of descent with a slight left turn (approximately a 5 degree bank). During the last one third of the flight, the rate of descent increased with a slight nose low attitude. It was observed by witnesses that the main rotor blades were turning very slowly and the flight path was a near vertical descent. Impact was at a slight nose low left bank attitude with a relatively high rate of descent. The aircraft impacted the ground on a heading of 360 degrees with enough forward speed to have a ground run of 32 feet before hitting a tree stump and mound of dirt. When the aircraft hit the stump the left skid was torn off and the left chin bubble broken. At this time the aircraft spun to the right 150 degrees moving forward another 17 feet on a 45 degree heading, and came to rest. The tail boom separated at the attaching points during the 150 degree spin and came to rest, 17 feet from the main part of the aircraft, and at 100 degree from the direction of landing. At this time the aircraft caught fire and the fuselage section of the aircraft was completely destroyed. The pilot's body was found near the left seat in the wreckage. His helmet was found 10 feet west of the wreckage. Thompson's body was found 9 feet east of the wreckage. His helmet was not found and it is suspected that his helmet burned with the aircraft. The intensity of the fire and exploding ammo precluded the removal of the bodies until some time later. With the exception of the tail boom, the aircraft was completely destroyed by fire.

This record was last updated on 05/25/1998