

CASE SYNOPSIS: STINSON, WILLIAM SHERRIL

Name: William Sherril Stinson

Rank/Branch: E5/US Army

Unit: 67th Aviation Company, 11th Combat Aviation, 1st Aviation Brigade

Date of Birth: 17 June 1947

Home City of Record: Georgiana AL

Loss Date: 08 January 1973

Country of Loss: South Vietnam

Loss Coordinates: 16421N 1070956E (YD324528)

Status (in 1973): Missing In Action

Category: 1

Acft/Vehicle/Ground: UH1H

Other Personnel in Incident: Elbert W. Bush; William L. Deane; Richard A. Knutson; Manuel A. Lauterio; Mickey A. Wilson (all missing)

REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: WO1 Richard Knutson, pilot; WO1 Mickey A. Wilson, aircraft commander SPC William S. Stinson, gunner; SPC Manuel A. Lauterio, crew chief; and SSGT. Elbert W. Bush and Maj. William L. Dean, both passengers; were aboard a UH1H helicopter (serial #69-15619) that flew in support of the American Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese Airborne Division in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, working between the provincial capitals of Hue and Quang Tri.

On January 8, 1973, at about 1430 hours, the aircraft had departed a landing zone en route to other LZs without making radio contact with the 2nd Battalion Technical Operations Center. When no radio contact was received by 1500 hours, the other LZs were queried. The helicopter did not go to either of the two designated LZs, nor had any communication been established with them.

The helicopter's intended route would have taken it northwest toward Quang Tri, with a left turn to an LZ south of the Thach Han River. Although the helicopter failed to contact either LZ along the route, it was later seen flying northwest toward Quang Tri City and crossing the Thach Han River into enemy held territory. While in this area, the helicopter was seen to circle with door guns firing. Enemy automatic weapons fire was heard, and a direct hit was made on the tail boom by a missile, reportedly an SA7.

Aerial searches of the suspected crash site on January 8 and 9 failed to locate either the wreckage or the crew. The aircraft was shot down less than three weeks before American involvement in the war came to an official end.

Intelligence reports indicated that of the six men aboard, four were seen alive on the ground. The families of the men assumed that their loved ones would be released with the other POWs. Some were even so informed.

But, the crew of the UH1H was not released, and have not been released or found since that day. As thousands of reports of Americans alive in Southeast Asia mount, these families wonder if their men are among the hundreds thought to be still alive.