

Flier Honored After Death For Gallantry

A Del City man, who was recently killed in Vietnam, has received four Gallantry Cross Medals for bravery, awarded posthumously by the Vietnamese government.

Capt. Michael Clint Hope, 29, of 4408 SE 21, Del City, was killed June 7 when his plane crashed and burned after receiving enemy ground fire as he attempted to rocket an enemy jungle position.

Third Tour as Pilot

Hope joined the Army in December, 1965, and was graduated from Officers Candidate School in January, 1967. He went to Vietnam in May, 1968.

At the time of his death, he was serving a third tour of duty in Vietnam as an Army pilot. Capt. Hope had only 18 days of duty left before returning to his home in Oklahoma.

For two successive years, he had served as a pilot in support of the 18th Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

Plane Often Hit

Known by his friends as the "Oklahoma Indian," Hope achieved his greatest value during engagements with the enemy when he adjusted artillery and deployed helicopter gunships and air strikes against enemy positions, the Vietnamese said.

At times, Capt. Hope flew such missions daily. He used to comment that his plane had received more bullet holes than any in Vietnam still flying.

When first assigned to Vietnam, he began working as an aloft pilot flying in support of the 18th ARVN Division northeast of Saigon.

During this time, he built his reputation as a daring, resourceful pilot under enemy fire and became leader of the aloft platoon.

General Has Praise

ARVN Division commanding general Lam Quang Tho said, "Capt. Hope was helping this division fight the VC before I came here.

"In the past year, I have seen him risk his life to help the men of the ground. Many times his actions in the air have saved the lives of my men."

On June 7, he was flying a routine visual reconnaissance looking for enemy positions. He sighted an enemy bunker and positioned his aircraft to fire a rocket. The enemy opened fire causing his plane to crash and burn.

Hope, a native of Tahlequah, moved to Del City as a child and graduated from Del City High School in 1958. He had attended the University of Oklahoma and had been employed at Tinker Air Force Base for seven years prior to enlisting in the Army.

He is survived by a son, Michael Allen, Houston; a daughter, Tracy, Oklahoma City, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Temple Hope of the home.