



* * * WILLIAM E. ADAMS * * *
(posthumous)

Rank and organization: Major, US Army, A/227th Assault Helicopter Company, 52d Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade. Place and date: Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, 25 May 1971. Entered service at: Kansas City, MO. Born: 16 June 1939, Casper, WY.

CITATION

Maj. Adams distinguished himself on 25 May 1971 while serving as a helicopter pilot in Kontum Province in the Republic of Vietnam. On that date, Maj. Adams volunteered to fly a lightly armed helicopter in an attempt to evacuate 3 seriously wounded soldiers from a small fire base which was under attack by a large enemy force. He made the decision with full knowledge that numerous antiaircraft weapons were positioned around the base and that the clear weather would afford the enemy gunners unobstructed view of all routes into the base. As he approached the base, the enemy gunners opened fire with heavy machineguns, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. Undaunted by the fusillade, he continued his approach determined to accomplish the mission. Displaying tremendous courage under fire, he calmly directed the attacks of supporting gunships while maintaining absolute control of the helicopter he was flying. He landed the aircraft at the fire base despite the ever-increasing enemy fire and calmly waited until the wounded soldiers were placed on board. As his aircraft departed from the fire base, it was struck and seriously damaged by enemy antiaircraft fire and began descending. Flying with exceptional skill, he immediately regained control of the crippled aircraft and attempted a controlled landing. Despite his valiant efforts, the helicopter exploded, overturned, and plummeted to earth amid the hail of enemy fire. Maj. Adams' conspicuous gallantry, intrepidity, and humanitarian regard for his fellow man were in keeping with the most cherished traditions of the military service and reflect utmost credit on him and the US Army.