

7 July, 1969

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Dodson,

It is with the deepest regret and sympathy that I write you this letter. As Freddie's immediate supervisor, as well as his friend, I feel it my duty to write you and give you the information which I'm sure the War Department did not give.

Freddie to me, was a conscientious, hard working guy who was devoted to his work and to his duty. He was loyal, devoted and well liked by everyone in the unit.

On the 30th of June, his aircraft was escorting U.S. Marine helicopters on a resupply mission to troops fighting the Viet-Cong. There are two escort helicopters on such a mission.

Freddie's aircraft, with the rest of the crew, consisting of the

mission Commander, Captain Rodney
P. Turner as co-pilot, 2nd Lt. James
Lawthorne ^{as pilot} and O.C. Benito Salinas
as gunner, was assigned to ^{and forget} ~~forget~~
mission. This is going into the
area where the supply aircraft
will land, at ~~the~~ top level
and draw fire if there were any
enemy troops near to the landing
zone. If fire was drawn, their
mission along with the rest,
escort helicopters would return
fire, & suppress enemy fire while
the supply aircraft landed.
On their second pass over the
landing zone they drew fire,
and the pilot was hit in the
chest. He lost consciousness, and before
the co-pilot could effect the
flight abort, the crashed into
a bush. The aircraft exploded
on impact. The co-pilot, pilot,
& gunner were thrown clear enough
for the gunner to get the other

Fred was out of the way. Fred was
 badly injured in the wreckage.
 Pfc. Salinas tried to get Fred
 body free from the wreckage,
 but sustained severe second degree
 burns over the face, arms, hands
 and other parts of his body. The
 rocket and machine gun ammo ran
 out the aircraft started exploding.
 Pfc. Salinas was so badly burned
 that he was unable in the aircraft
 any longer and he left to attend
 to the other two injured. It
 was impossible to get Fred body
 from the twisted burning wreckage.

D. Maini being the second with
 second, and all this, but the
 shot was too intense. Fred
 did not know enough for he
 was unconscious
 when they were trying to get him
 out of the wreckage.

Fred was taken to the hospital by
 helicopter, and Lt. Cantor died.

It will
be before Capt. Jones
on his own again,
for he had 5 bones in his left
ankle broken, and his foot smashed.
The Salinas will be saved for
life from the burns. All will
have a horrible memory to
harbor for the rest of their lives.
This is a terrible, horrible war.
Any war is. War is a terrible thing
under any circumstance, and in war
people must die. So cruel and
hard for anyone to accept. Especially
when it is a loved one.

It is the price we all must
face, and some must pay for
freedom. In this tiny county,
freedom is being fought for
not only for these people, but
for our own country and our
way of life. A life is a costly
price to pay, but some die so
that others may live. Freddy

5
lives, believed and fought for
this free way of life, and gave
the most precious thing ~~any~~ and
payed the highest price any man
can pay to preserve this freedom
he loved and believed in. Freddy
gave his life fighting for the
preservation of this freedom so that
others may live. He died for a cause.

Everyone here in the outfit
shares your grief. It's not easy
to see a buddy go out and not
come back. It also makes us
think, but we must go on with
our job, as everyone in the free
world must do to guard, build and
keep a way of life which we believe
in.

Please accept my deepest &
humblest sympathy in your time
of grief.

If there is anything that I
may do for you now or
later, please feel free to write

me at this address:

52nd Aviation Battalion

91 P.O. #137 Team 1

San Francisco, California

I assure you that I will
do anything within my power to
assist you in any way at any
time, for I feel that the parents
of my friends and fellow soldiers
are my friends in this time of
their grief.

I remain, always;

your devoted servant
Sgt Robert H. Vaughan Jr.
A 13664527
Maintenance Supervisor