Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2004 Induction

SP5 Dennis M. Fujii distinguished himself in February 1971 in Laos while serving as a crew chief aboard a helicopter ambulance of the 237th Medical Detachment.

The team's mission was to evacuate seriously wounded Vietnamese military personnel from a battlefield. While approaching the heavily defended landing zone Fujii's helicopter was shot down. Another American helicopter extracted all the downed crewmen except for Fujii, who was unable to board due to intense enemy fire directed at him. Rather than further endanger the lives of his comrades aboard the second helicopter, Fujii waved the craft out of the combat area and remained behind as the only American on the battlefield in Laos.

During the night of Feb. 19 and all through the next day, Fujii disregarded his own wounds as he administered first aid to the South Vietnamese casualties. When his position was attacked by a reinforced enemy regiment supported by heavy artillery, Fujii called in American helicopter gunships to assist the small unit in repelling the attack. For more than 17 hours, Fujii repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire as he left the security of his entrenchment to better observe enemy troop positions and to direct air strikes against them. On Feb. 20 he was evacuated, but the helicopter was shot down. Two days passed before Fujii finally was rescued.

For this and other contributions, Fujii was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, two Air Medals, and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.