"Above the Best"

Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1986 Induction

Sergeant First Class Rodney J.T. Yano was an Aircraft Technical Inspector in the Air Cavalry Troop of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. He enlisted in the Army at age 17 in 1961. Described as a superb soldier, he spent his entire time in the service in the aircraft maintenance field.

He rose to the rank of Sergeant First Class and was an invaluable member of the aviation team. His posthumous citation for the Congressional Medal of Honor states that he distinguished himself on 1 January 1969 while serving with the Air Cavalry Troop, 11th ACR, in the vicinity of Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Yano was performing the duties of crew chief aboard the troop's command-and-control helicopter during action against enemy forces entrenched in dense jungle.

From an exposed position in the face of intense small arms and antiaircraft fire he delivered suppressive fire upon the enemy forces and marked their positions with smoke and white phosphorus grenades, thus enabling his troop commander to direct accurate and effective

artillery fire against the hostile emplacements.

A grenade, exploding prematurely, covered him with burning phosphorus, and left him severely wounded. Flaming fragments within the helicopter caused supplies and ammunition to detonate. Dense white smoke filled the aircraft, obscuring the pilot's vision and causing him to lose control.

Although having the use of only one arm and being partially blinded by the initial explosion, Sergeant Yano completely disregarded his own welfare and began hurling blazing ammunition from the helicopter. In so doing he inflicted additional wounds upon himself, yet he persisted until the danger was past. Sergeant Yano's indomitable courage and profound concern for his comrades averted loss of life and additional injury to the rest of the crew. By his conspicuous gallantry at the cost of his own life, in the highest traditions of the military service, Sergeant Yano has reflected great credit on himself, his unit, and the United States Army.