"Above the Best"





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Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1990 Induction



Congressional Medal of Honor Citation:

MAJ William E. Adams distinguished himself on May 25, 1971, when he volunteered to fly a lightly armed helicopter in an attempt to evacuate three seriously wounded Soldiers from a small fire base in Kontum Province in the Republic of Vietnam, which was under attack by a large enemy force.

Adams, assigned to A/227th Assault Helicopter Company, 52d Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade, made the decision with full knowledge that numerous anti-aircraft 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 machine guns, 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 Adam's aircraft departed from the fire base, it was struck and seriously damaged by enemy anti-aircraft 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.

Adams' conspicuous gallantry, intrepidity, and humanitarian regard for his fellow man were in keeping with the most cherished traditions of the military service and reflected utmost credit on him and the U.S. Army.

Editor's note: Vice President Gerald Ford presented Adam's posthumously awarded Medal of Honor to his family on Aug. 8, 1974. Adams is interned in Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver County, Colo.