



1LT Jerry W. Thurman
Class 16-67

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to First Lieutenant (Field Artillery) Jerry W. Thurman (ASN: 0-5426997), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in action in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters & Headquarters Troop, 2d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. First Lieutenant Thurman distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 30 December 1968 while serving as a helicopter commander on a visual reconnaissance mission. Between Lai Khe and Tan Binh, a Viet Cong soldier was seen hiding in a stream and was killed. Lieutenant Thurman banked his ship and engaged several more Viet Cong spotted at the same site. Although he was advised that there was an estimated forty Viet Cong in the area, he landed to capture prisoners who might provide valuable intelligence information. He and the crew chief armed with pistols and the door gunner with a rifle advanced upon the dead Viet Cong. Moments after Lieutenant Thurman shot and killed a Viet Cong hidden in a stream, he and his two companions came under intense fire from other concealed communists. Lieutenant Thurman signaled to his co-pilot to take off in the helicopter so it would not be hit by enemy rounds. The three men then advanced, securing two wounded Viet Cong and killing two more who jumped out of the water. Receiving fire from a sniper in a tree, Lieutenant Thurman crawled under the tree and killed him. After four infantrymen arrived to give assistance, he maneuvered forward with one of the men, but a Viet Cong sprang from his hiding place and mortally wounded the infantryman. Lieutenant Thurman quickly engaged and killed the aggressor, only to come under attack from another enemy soldier located on higher ground. Realizing it was useless to proceed alone, he returned to his comrades and established a secure position. When more reinforcements arrived, he and his crew returned to their ship from which they continued to provide covering fire and aerial observation for the ground troops. During the ensuing battle, they landed twice to evacuate casualties. Lieutenant Thurman's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 1857 (May 23, 1969)