

THOMAS JEROME DOSTAL**Class 3-69**

THOMAS JEROME DOSTAL
is honored on Panel 19W, Row 111 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: THOMAS JEROME DOSTAL
Wall Name: THOMAS J DOSTAL
Date of Birth: 4/7/1945
Date of Casualty: 8/25/1969
Home of Record: IOWA CITY
County of Record: JOHNSON COUNTY
State: IA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 2LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: PHUOC LONG



2LT Dostal was a Forward Observer from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 13th Artillery, 23rd Artillery Group serving with the Vietnamese 3rd Mobile Strike Force. On 25 August 1969 the Mobile Strike Force was decimated upon insertion into a hot landing zone and LT Dostal was killed immediately by small arms fire on the first day of the mission. The Strike Force was extracted and the mission cancelled. Battery D returned to Phu Loi.



Thomas is buried at St Joseph's Cemetery in Iowa City, Iowa

From the Virtual Wall

2LT Tom Dostal was assigned to B Battery 2nd Battalion 12th Artillery, a 155 mm battery based out of Phu Loi, Vietnam. A composite unit of three howitzers from B Battery 2/12 was formed with three 105 mm howitzers from A Battery 2nd Battalion 13th Artillery, to be known as D Battery 2nd Battalion 13th Artillery. In July 1969 I was the Fire Direction Officer of A Battery 2/13. I had recently completed a 34 day mission as Forward Observer for D Battery 2nd Battalion 13th Artillery. Tom Dostal replaced me as Forward Observer for D Battery. I never met Tom. But I am aware through first-hand experience and accounts from battery personnel of Tom's situation.

D Battery was in direct support of the Third Mobile Strike Force during August 1969. The operation was conducted near Thien Ngon in War Zone C. The area was a hotbed of activity. Captain Thomas Karr was the commander of D Battery, and was medevaced from wounds suffered in repelling an NVA ground attack on the battery perimeter. Several battery personnel were also wounded in the encounter. The mission continued after this failed assault. On 25 August 1969 the Mobile Strike Force was decimated upon insertion into a hot landing zone. 2LT Tom Dostal was killed immediately by small arms fire on the first day of the mission. The Strike Force was extracted and the mission cancelled. D Battery returned to Phu Loi.

2LT Dostal's death impacted me deeply. Bob Saunders, the Forward Observer I replaced, was wounded by an artillery round he called in a "Danger Close" fire mission. Tom Dostal, the Forward Observer who replaced me, was killed in a landing zone insertion. Tom had a very dangerous assignment to a unit accustomed to hazardous missions. He gave his life to direct supporting fires for the Third Mobile Strike Force.

Tom was commissioned from the Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was instilled with a belief in the paramount importance of the phrase "Fire Mission." The Call for Fire initiates with the Forward Observer. A firing battery is only as effective as the information the Forward Observer provides.

Colonel Joseph Luger, commander of 2/13 Artillery, recently acknowledged that the Forward Observer in the Jungles of Vietnam had the toughest of all artillery assignments. Tom was assigned a duty with a unit accustomed to difficult missions. Rest in Peace, Tom. You are remembered by D Battery 2nd Battalion 13th Artillery as one of the Forward Observers who delivered the Call for Fire. You were a key part of the Red Dragon Clan.

William E. Novakovic
513 Woodland Avenue Oakmont, PA 15139
4 Jan 2004