

is honored on Panel 6W, Row 92 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** WILLIAM DANIEL KENNEDY III  
**Wall Name:** WILLIAM D KENNEDY III  
**Date of Birth:** 6/6/1945  
**Date of Casualty:** 11/29/1970  
**Date of Death:** 11/29/1970  
**Home of Record:** SAN FRANCISCO  
**State:** CA  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** CAPT  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** NIHN THUAN



CPT Kennedy was on his second tour of duty in Vietnam and served with Battery A, 6th Battalion, 32nd Artillery.

He was killed when the Air Force C-123 in which he was a passenger crashed into a hill 10-15 miles south of Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN (near Phan Rang Air Base, Ninh Thuan Province, RVN). C-123K, (#54-0649), "Bookie 540", flight from Phan Rang AB to Cam Ranh Bay AB. There were 2 survivors, the other personnel were lost on impact, and were recovered between 12-16 December 1970.



C-123 File Photo

## Capt Kennedy

You were an inspiration to me during the short time we were together during our tour of duty in Vietnam in 1970. As I remember it, you were a Mustang Officer. That is an Officer who has come up through the ranks and then went on to OCS.

I was a graduate of the NCO Academy at Ft. Sill, OK, so I came to Nam as a Sgt E5. You helped me figure out what the schooling left out and not only what to do, but more importantly, how to do it. I remember during one of our discussions, just after you made me battery educational NCO, you were pushing me to follow in your footsteps and go back to school and get a college degree and then go on to OCS.

Well, that might have happened if you had come back, unfortunately you were killed in a C130 plane crash and it never came to pass. If you have children, I would want them to know what a great leader you were but even more importantly what a wonderful and caring person you were.

After leaving Nam, my time was up with the Army so I came home and signed up for college the first week I was home and subsequently went on to earn an MBA, for which you are due some credit. Wherever you may be today, I hope this brings you some joy. If you were survived by a wife and children, I would love to hear from them.

Just this past October 2005, I went with my wife to Washington DC. This was probably my third trip, but it was the first time I went to the Wall and looked up your name. It was very moving; the world lost a remarkable individual the day you plane went down.

If any of your family or friends wishes to contact me, please free to do so.

Posted by: Gregg Rice  
January 10, 2006

He was interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington National Cemetery  
Section 17 Site 23850.

**The following note comes from V. J. Fairbrother, Jr. USAF (Retired)**

Day of Remembrance, November 29th, 1970

Thirty Seven Years ago this day in Vietnam, a C-123K, 54-0649, Flight Bookie 540, on a routine milk run (passenger) mission from Phan Rang to Cam Rahn Bay crashed into a Mountain Ridge 14 Miles outside Cam Rahn Bay. On board that aircraft were 44 people, 32 U.S. Military and 12 South Vietnamese. The crash site was located a week later, on December 5th, by U.S. Army Rangers and South Vietnamese Rangers. There were only two survivors, myself and Sgt Gary Aldredge. For some unknown reason we survived the crash, our injuries, and having no food or water for seven days.

The Day of Remembrance is for those 30 American Servicemen who died that morning and to their families. I have not forgotten and neither has Gary. I have been to the Wall many times. I have touched each and every name of those men killed that day. You will forever be in my thoughts.

Those Men:

U.S. Air Force Crew losses: (profiles on USAF TWS)

Capt. Cecil Moyer, Pilot/Crew

Capt. Norbert Podhajsky, Crew

1LT James Saxby, Crew

SSgt Grayson Newberry, Crew

SSgt Harry Watson, Crew

U.S. Air Forcenon-crew losses: (all profiled on USAF TWS)

1LT Elmon C. Caudill

1LT Jon King

1LT Charles L. Kollenberg

Sgt Ronald C. Teschendorf

Sgt Billie Jack Hogan

MSgt B. Seay

TSgt Robert B. Johnson

SSgt James C. Starnes

SSgt Ralph S. Guck

SGT J. Stubblefield

A1C James B. Young

U.S. Army losses: (all profiled on Army TWS)

**Capt William D. Kennedy**

Capt Robert J. Polniak

CW2 Franklin D. Defenbaugh

Sgt Raymond H. Gray  
Sgt Joseph C. Blackwell  
SP4 Jack R. Gibbs  
SP4 Samuel A. Grayson, III  
SP4 Charles A. Johnson, III  
SP4 Donald A. Slate  
SP4 George Beedy  
SP4 Ronald R. Greenhouse  
PFC Joseph A. Jacques  
PFC Arthur J. Menn  
Pvt. Gary Anderson

**Diary Excerpt from the Ben H. Swett Colonel USAF (Retired) who was involved in the search:**

Sun 29 Nov - Bookie 540 [tail number 54-0649] crashed today at 0820, 15 miles south of Cam Ranh Bay. There were 44 people aboard, including 14 U.S. on their way to catch their freedom bird. I flew 2.2 with the "Walt" FAC (O-2) looking for Bookie 102. Didn't find them. Bill Pantle flew the second sortie with the FAC. Didn't find them. At the bar that night, some idiot said, "Why are you and Bill busting your humps flying with the FAC? They're probably all dead anyway." I blew my top: "Look, Mac, if it's you laying out there in the weeds all busted, what're you thinking?" He said, "I guess I'm hoping somebody's coming to get me." I said, "Right! That's why Bill and I are looking for them. We've got to keep the faith." He put his head down and nodded.

Mon 30 Nov - Stood by all day to search for Bookie 102 and 540. Total of 123 people, 38 U.S. Weather in the hills was impossible. No use losing another bird. But hard waiting. Glad to hear that Dusty Rhodes wasn't on Bookie 540. [He had finished his tour and was going to Cam Ranh Bay to catch his freedom bird. As he was walking out to Bookie 540 a friend of his said "Why don't you come and ride with me?" so he changed aircraft at the last minute.]

Fri 4 Dec - Packing and clearing. Bookie 540 was found today on a mountain south of Cam Ranh Bay at 2600 feet. GCA operator flew him into the mountain -- 5 nautical mile radar range error. There were two VN survivors, found making their way West toward the highway, no American survivors. **[37 years later, I learned there were two American survivors. They were found the next day, 5 December, at the crash site.]**