

## WILLIAM ANDREW KUHNKE

Class 36A-67

is honored on Panel 16W, Row 124 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** WILLIAM ANDREW KUHNKE  
**Wall Name:** WILLIAM A KUHNKE  
**Date of Birth:** 3/24/1946  
**Date of Casualty:** 11/26/1969  
**Home of Record:** HERRIN  
**County of Record:** WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
**State:** IL  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** CAPT  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** BINH DINH



CPT Kuhnke served with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Brigade. He was the pilot of a UH-1H Helicopter attempting to complete the last sortie of noncombat material from LZ Tape to LZ Teg. As he was attempting to go to LZ Teg in adverse weather, the aircraft crashed into trees. The visibility reported by the individuals on the ground was zero ceiling and no more than 20 feet visibility.

### Always in Our Hearts



Although thirty plus years have passed and much about Vietnam has been forgotten, your family and fellow Vietnam Veterans remember as if it was yesterday. During the recent annual reunion of our platoon, we lit a candle in prayer to honor those of you who gave the ultimate sacrifice in a missing man ceremony. You are missed but never forgotten. We can never forget the cost of war in terms of human lives and this wall serves as a constant reminder of that cost. Your memory will never die.

173rd Airborne Bde Sep, Casper Platoon  
[www.casperplatoon.com](http://www.casperplatoon.com)

Posted by: Casper Aviation Platoon  
August 4, 2003

**From www.flyarmy.org**

**KUHNKE WILLIAM ANDREW**

Name: CPT William Andrew Kuhnke

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 11/26/1969 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Age at death: 23.7

Date of Birth: 03/24/1946

Home City: Herrin, IL

Service: FA branch of the reserve component of the U.S. Army.

Unit: 119 AHC, 52 CAB

Major organization: 1st Aviation Brigade

Flight class: 68-520/68-36

Service: FA branch of the U.S. Army.

The Wall location: 16W-124

Short Summary: During last sortie between LZ Tape and LZ Teg, crashed because of bad weather.

Aircraft: UH-1H tail number 68-15684

SSN: 326381146

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: 1981 = 19 Rotary Wing Aviator (Unit Commander)

Primary cause: A/C Accident

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: fire or burns

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: aircraft commander

Started Tour: 01/21/1969

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

Length of service: 03

Location: Binh Dinh Province II Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Non-hostile - died of other causes

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Roman Catholic

The following information secondary, but may help in explaining this incident.

Category of casualty as defined by the Army: non-battle dead Category of personnel:

active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 07/29/1995

## Helicopter UH-1H 68-15684

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 68-15684

The Army purchased this helicopter 0569

Total flight hours at this point: 00000655

Date: 11/26/1969

Incident number: 691126241ACD Accident case number: 691126241 Total loss or fatality Accident

Unit: 119 AHC

The station for this helicopter was An Khe in South Vietnam

Number killed in accident = 4 . . Injured = 0 . . Passengers = 0

costing 455945

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated: Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Army Aviation Safety Center database. Also: OPERA (Operations Report. )

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

**P CPT KUHNKE WILLIAM ANDREW KIA**

P CW2 DAVIS EDWARD THOMSON JR KIA

CE SP5 PLATE JAMES RICHARD KIA

G SP4 BADOSTAIN TIMOTHY ERNEST KIA

### Accident Summary:

At the time of the accident, CPT Kuhnke and his crew were attempting to complete one last sortie of noncombat material from LZ Tape to LZ TEG. The pad NCOIC located at LZ TAPE had requested WO1 Sherman, who was piloting A/C 721 of the 119th AHC to take this last sortie to LZ TEG prior to being released. The aircraft commander refused to take this last sortie to LZ TEG due to adverse weather. At this time the pad NCOIC was informed by CPT Kuhnke, who was piloting A/C 684 that he would attempt to complete this last sortie for him. WO Sherman then requested that CPT Kuhnke remain on the ground at LZ TAPE until he, in A/C 721 could make a weather check of 44s location. Just as WO Sherman reached the crest of the hill he heard CPT Kuhnke call off of LZ TAPE fully loaded. LZ TEG popped a flare for WO Sherman but he was unable to spot it due to the low ceilings and visibilities, so he turned away. CPT Kuhnke broke in on FM and informed the people at LZ TEG that he would try to make it in. WO Sherman had CPT Kuhnke in sight until he flew behind or into some clouds. CPT Kuhnke kept calling and asking the people at LZ TEG if they could see him. The ground personnel at LZ TEG told the accident board that at the time of the accident the weather at their location was zero ceiling with no more than 20 feet visibility. The ground personnel kept directing CPT Kuhnke north even though the weather was below minimums. They did not have CPT Kuhnke in sight during these course corrections. CPT Kuhnke then requested a long count. He was contacted by WO Sherman on UHF at this time telling him to get out of that location. No reply was received by WO Sherman so he attempted the same call on FM. Approximately 2 minutes later WO Sherman heard over FM "I can't see a damn thing" then silence. Finally the control at LZ TAPE called WO Sherman and informed him that CPT Kuhnke had crashed into the trees.