

is honored on Panel 14W, Row 104 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: JAMES MICHAEL LYON
Wall Name: JAMES M LYON
Date of Birth: 3/8/1948
Date of Casualty: 2/5/1970
Home of Record: INDIANAPOLIS
County of Record: INDIANAPOLIS AND
MARION COUNTY
State: IN
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: THUA THIEN
Status: MIA



CPT Lyon was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and was the pilot of a UH-1H helicopter on a maintenance mission from Hue to Phu Bai, South Vietnam.

When the aircraft was approximately 18 miles southwest of the city of Hue, the helicopter caught fire due to a malfunction and crashed into the rugged jungle covered mountains. CPT Lyon was thrown clear of the aircraft and was burned extensively over his body and his leg was severed four inches below the knee. The other crewmembers were also injured in the crash, but not as seriously as CPT Lyon. Because of their injuries, none of the men were capable of taking evasive action and were captured by NVA troops. It is believed that CPT Lyon was killed by the NVA troops in a mercy killing because his extensive injuries that made his survival unlikely.



LYON JAMES MICHAEL

Name: CPT James Michael Lyon

Status: Body Not Recovered from an incident on 02/05/1970 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Died 1 days later on 02/06/1970.

Age at death: 21.9

Date of Birth: 03/08/1948

Home City: Indianapolis, IN

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

Unit: HHC 2 BDE 101 ABN

Major organization: 101st Airborne Division

Flight class: 68-24/68-40

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

The Wall location: 14W-104

Short Summary: Crashed due to WX. Captured & shot next day by NVA because of burns & nearly severed leg. Other 3 crew POW for 3 years.

Aircraft: UH-1H tail number 68-16441

Call sign: Brandy 3

Service number: O5433415

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: *

Primary cause: Shot While POW

Compliment cause: small arms fire

Started Tour: 03/21/1969

"Official" listing: ground casualty

The initial status of this person was: missing in action - captured/interned

Length of service: *

Location: Thua Thien Province I Corps.

Military grid coordinates of event: YD639271

Reason: gunshot or small arms fire

Casualty type: Hostile - died while captured or interned

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: battle dead Category of personnel: active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 06/20/1993

Helicopter UH-1H 68-16441

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 68-16441

The Army purchased this helicopter 1169

Total flight hours at this point: 00000182

Date: 02/05/1970 MIA-POW file reference number: 1556

Incident number: 70020524.KIA

Unit: 2 BDE 101 ABN

South Vietnam

UTM grid coordinates: YD494093

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated:

Defense Intelligence Agency Reference Notes. Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Also: 1556

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

P CPT LYON JAMES MICHAEL BNR

P CPT PARSELS JOHN W POW

G SP4 HEFEL DANIEL HENRY POW

CE SP5 KOBASHIGAWA TOM Y POW

REFNO Synopsis:

Name: Daniel Henry Hefel Rank/Branch: E4/US Army Unit: HHC, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division Date of Birth: Home City of Record: Guttenberg IA Date of Loss: 05 February 1970 Country of Loss: South Vietnam Loss Coordinates: 163045N 1072824E (YD494093) Status (in 1973): Returned POW Category: Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: UH1H Other Personnel in Incident: Tom Y. Kobashigawa, John W. Parsels (returned POWs); James M. Lyon (missing) REMARKS: 730327 RELSD BY PRG SYNOPSIS: At 1530 hours on February 5, 1970, Capt. James M. Lyon, pilot, Capt. John W. Parsels, copilot, SP5 Tom Y. Kobashigawa, crew chief, and SP4 Daniel Hefel, door gunner, were flying a UH1H helicopter (serial #68-16441) on a maintenance mission from Hue to Phyl Bai, South Vietnam. When the aircraft was about 18 miles northwest of Hue City, the helicopter caught fire and crashed (due to a malfunction). Capt. Lyon was thrown clear of the aircraft and was burned extensively over his body and part of his right leg. His leg was severed four inches below the knee. The other crew members were also injured and could not take evasive action. They were captured at 1630 hours by NVA troops and spent the night near the crash site. Throughout the night, the crew members heard their pilot yelling and moaning in pain. At 0600 hours, Capt. Lyon moaned and then a shot was heard from his position about 30 feet from the aircraft wreckage. No other outcry from Capt. Lyon was heard, and the others believed that he had been killed by the guard. Two weeks later, Capt. Parsels was told by 1Lt. Lee Van Mac (an NVA commander at "Camp Farnsworth") that Capt. Lyon died from his wounds and was buried at the crash site. 1Lt. Lee Van Mac gave Capt. Parsels the personal effects of Capt. Lyon, including his ID card and several photos which appeared to be of Lyon's wife. In late March, 1973, Parsels, Hefel and Kobashigawa were released from prisons in North Vietnam. In their debriefings, all three concurred on the story that Lyon had apparently been shot. They considered it a mercy killing, because their pilot had been so seriously injured that they doubted that he could survive.



**James is buried at West Bridgeport Cemetery, Bridgeport, Wise County, Texas
Plot: 4NE, 6, 991**