

WILOFARD A MCCLAIN II**Class 16-67**

is honored on Panel 28W, Row 74 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: WILOFARD A MCCLAIN II
Wall Name: WILOFARD A MCCLAIN II
Date of Birth: 6/18/1941
Date of Casualty: 3/28/1969
Date of Death: 3/28/1969
Home of Record: EL PASO
County of Record: EL PASO COUNTY
State: TX
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: THUA THIEN



1LT McClain served with Company C, 101st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. He was the pilot of a UH-1D Helicopter on a reconnaissance mission in mountainous terrain near the A Chau Valley. While flying low and slow over the tree tops in the mission area, they were taken under fire and hit by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG). The co-pilot of the aircraft, 1LT Eric Vincent Pulliam, a graduate of Field Artillery OCS Class 30A-67 also perished in the crash.

Wilofard is buried in Ft Bliss National Cemetery, El Paso County, Texas



From www.flyarmy.org

MCCLAIN WILOFARD A II

Name: 1LT Wilofard A. Mc Clain II

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 03/28/1969 while performing the duty of Aircraft Commander.

Age at death: 27.8

Date of Birth: 06/18/1941

Home City: El Paso, TX

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

Unit: C/101 AVN 101 ABN

Major organization: 101st Airborne Division

Flight class: 68-510/68-16

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

The Wall location: 28W-074

Short Summary: See Pulliam.

Aircraft: UH-1D tail number 66-16284

Call sign: Black Widows

Service number: O5426962

Country: South Vietnam

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

Primary cause: Hostile Fire

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: fire or burns

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: aircraft commander

Started Tour: 09/09/1968

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

Length of service: 10

Location: Thua Thien Province I Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - killed

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Presbyterian

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 03/29/2005

Helicopter UH-1D 66-16284

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1D tail number 66-16284

The Army purchased this helicopter 0467

Total flight hours at this point: 00000485

Date: 03/28/1969

Incident number: 69032888.KIA

Unit: C/101 AVN 101 ABN

South Vietnam

UTM grid coordinates: YC567816

Casualties = 03 KIA . .

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

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

AC 1LT MCCLAIN WILOFARD A II KIA

P 1LT PULLIAM ERIC VINCENT KIA

CE SP4 RICCIARDO RONALD FRANCIS KIA

War Story:

I had just returned from R&R in Hawaii and was back in the saddle on the 28th and like Dick said we were returning from a morning CA when a call came through that said the 158th needed assistance. Since I was short on monthly flying time I volunteered to assist them and McClain told the flight that he would take the mission and that we were to return to home base. Later that day he was shot down and killed along with Eric Pulliam and Ronald Ricciardo. We had the only funeral for them a few days later and that was the last of the five people killed during my tour. I was lucky enough to be in the Honor Guard for the guys.

Now for some more info on the three fellows; LT McClain was a good platoon leader and had the respect of the platoon members. He was a card player and even cashed a few of my checks so I would have some spending money. I don't remember flying with him but I may have. I thought LT McClain was from Georgia but I am not sure these many years later. LT Pulliam had recently signed into the company and was there for the move from LZ Sally to Phu Bia. His total time in the company was less than one month and I never had a chance to fly with him or even get to know him.

SP-4 Ricciadro was from Deer Park, NY. He always had a smile and was following in Ed McMahon's footsteps by saying "Hereeees Johnny" when we flew together. He was always spicing up the day like that. He told me that he was seriously thinking about extending his tour so he could get into flight school because he enjoyed flying so much. He was a great person to be around.

I have no photos of them, just memories of 36 years ago but I would suggest that you contact Bob Crow's crew chief to see if he has any photos. I don't have that gentleman's name or address but I believe Dick does.

From: John H Forslund, Black Widow 48, RVN 68-69

War Story:

"I might be able to shed some light on this incident. I apologize that my memory is no longer as sharp as it was, I don't remember the A/C number. I do remember the aircraft as I was assigned to it. Actually I had flown down to the repair facility at Cu Chi from Camp Eagle during March of 1969 to pick this rebuilt helicopter up and fly it back to Camp Eagle and C Company 101st Avn Bn. The helicopter had been a 1st Cav aircraft damaged in a mortar attack and had been repaired at Cu Chi and returned to service with C Company. As I remember on the flight back to Camp Eagle we encountered some electrical problems with the radios, also the helicopter had a lateral vibration in the rotor system.

I was a CW2 in 2nd platoon C Company, my call sign Black Widow 44. Ron Ricciardo was my crew chief, Wilofard McClain was my platoon leader and Eric Pulliam was new to the Company. In fact, he had just been in the Company for approximately 2 weeks before he was killed. Here is the story as I remember it. On 2/28/69, because I had flown 130 hour in 30 days, that meant a mandatory day off. 1LT McClain was assigned to my aircraft on that day and 1LT Pulliam was his copilot. SP4 Ricciardo was the crew chief and I can't recall the gunners name. The aircraft mission was to recon particular mountainous terrain in or near the A Shau Valley. While flying low and slow over the tree tops in the mission area, they were taken under fire. SP4 Ricciardo was said to have taken an RPG in the chest which resulted in the helicopter crashing. As the helicopter was going down, the gunner jumped out of the helicopter at near treetop level, breaking bones when he hit the ground. 1LT McClain and 1LT Pulliam were both killed in the crash. The gunner was not found for several hours, but was later rescued and medevaced to a hospital where he survived."

From: Eric Penttila

