

DAVID BRUCE PETERSON**Class 126-66**

is honored on Panel 28W, Row 1 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: DAVID BRUCE PETERSON
Wall Name: DAVID B PETERSON
Date of Birth: 3/30/1946
Date of Casualty: 3/21/1969
Date of Death: 3/21/1969
Home of Record: BELLFLOWER
County of Record: LOS ANGELES COUNTY
State: CA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: KONTUM



CPT Peterson served as a fixed wing aviator with the 225th Aviation Company, 223rd Aviation Battalion, 17th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade. He was killed when his aircraft, OV-1C tail number 62-5854, was shot down during a photo recon run over the Plei Trap Valley in western Pleiku Province. His observer, SP5 Norman N. McCauley, survived the incident. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions on that day.

***From the 223rd Aviation Battalion 225th Aviation Company History
(225th Daily Activities 69-70):***

21 March 1969: To say March came in like a lion and went out like a lamb for the 225th Blackhawks would be redundant. However, the spirits of the men were riding high on the successful accomplishments of the night photo missions and the beginning of round the clock surveillance at the border with SLAR missions. The company also began its 29th month of accident free operations with over 15,000 total flying hours. The end of march was set with the predominant mood of sadness, for the company not only lost an airplane but, much worse had lost a Blackhawk Captain - David Bruce Peterson.

CPT Peterson was the pilot of Blackhawk 09 on the morning of the 21 March 1969 on a photographic mission in the Plei Trap Valley. He was informed that it would be a particularly hazardous mission due to the many reported enemy anti-aircraft and automatic weapons in the area and the low altitude that he was required to maintain. He nevertheless accepted the mission and made ready. When nearing the target area, his aircraft came under intense fire, receiving approximately 20 hits with 37mm fire and smaller caliber rounds. One of these rounds exploded in the cockpit directly between and below CPT Peterson's legs inflicting serious wounds. Although in extreme pain, and with flames and smoke engulfing the cockpit, he was able to expertly fly the aircraft out

of danger of the enemy guns and at the same time give a "Mayday" call announcing their intentions and location. At the last possible moment, he ordered SP5 Norman N. McCauley, his observer to eject from the aircraft. After McCauley had successfully cleared the aircraft, he also ejected. Upon reaching the ground, he directed rescue helicopters to his position after seeing his observer lifted to safety by a UH-1 helicopter which then came to his assistance. As the crew was attempting to bring him aboard, he apparently lost consciousness from his many wounds and fell back to the ground. Although he was immediately rescued by heroic actions on the part of the helicopter crew and First Aid was administered, he died enroute to the hospital. His selfless actions are credited with saving the life of his observer for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously.

26 March 1969: SP5 Norman McCauley, the observer who ejected from "Blackhawk "09" arrived back in Phu Hiep and the 225th. Following ejection and successful pickup. SP5 McCauley had been taken to the 71st Evacuation Hospital where he recovered from shrapnel wounds in his right arm.

On 26 March 1969, memorial services were held for CPT David B. Peterson at the Phu Hiep Army Airfield Memorial Chapel. At this time the friends and comrades of CPT Peterson paid tribute to a fine officer and an excellent Army aviator... and freedom is a gift from God that commands the highest price.

Viet War Claims BHS Grad

Capt. Peterson Had Only 27 Days To Go In Tour Of Duty

"Killed in action in Vietnam on 21 March 1969" were the words of the telegram received this week by Mrs. William Aston, 9840 Arkansas, Bellflower, concerning her son, U.S. Army Capt. David Bruce Peterson, 22, husband of the former Kathleen Blackmore, 9448 Ramona, Bellflower.

The 1964 Bellflower High School graduate and former varsity football player was a pilot of a Mohawk reconnaissance plane on a night military mission when his aircraft was hit by hostile weapons fire and he was forced to eject from the aircraft, according to Army reports.

While Peterson was being recovered from the ground by a rescue helicopter, by mean of a winch and cable, he apparently lost consciousness and fell from the lift apparatus to the ground, the report continued.

Peterson had been in Vietnam for 11 months, and only 27 days remained in his tour of duty. He was expected home April 17 and, since he had decided to make the U.S. Army his career, he had already received orders for duty in Germany, near Frankfort, as of June 4. He would have had his 23rd birthday this week.

Capt. Peterson joined the Army Nov. 15, 1965, completed his basic training at Ft. Ord, completed Officer Candidate School at Ft. Sill, Okla., and had further training at Fts. Steward, Ga., and Rucker, Ala., then went on to Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. before going overseas.

**Buried in Rose Hill Memorial Park
Whittier, California**