

ERIC VINCENT PULLIAM

Class 30A-67

is honored on Panel 28W, Row 75 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: ERIC VINCENT PULLIAM
Wall Name: ERIC V PULLIAM
Date of Birth: 8/29/1945
Date of Casualty: 3/28/1969
Home of Record: BALTIMORE
County of Record: BALTIMORE CITY
State: MD
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: THUA THIEN



1LT Pulliam served with Company C, 101st Aviation Battalion, 101ST Airborne Division. He was the co-pilot of a UH-1D Helicopter on a reconnaissance mission in mountainous terrain near the A Shau 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 pilot of the aircraft, 1LT Wilofard A. McClain III, a graduate of Field Artillery OCS Class 16-67 also perished in the crash.

Were Served Together in OCS

Eric Pulliam and I were in the same firing battery at Ft Sill, OK. As I recall, we graduated on 8 Aug 68. I never saw Eric again and only learned of his death when visiting the Vietnam Memorial during a Veteran's Day Ceremony. While there I looked his name, 1st LT John Miller, and CPT Harold Faldermeyer. Harold and I served together at FT Bragg, NC. At that point in time we were both 2 LT's. Harold was in the 82d Airborne and I was in the 4th BN 39th Field Artillery (8" SP). I never saw Eric, John or Harold again. I do know that Harold did a second tour in Vietnam and that was when he was killed.

Posted by: Donald D. Fithian, Jr., LTC USAR Retired
February 23, 2006



Eric and I graduated from Artillery Officer Candidate Class 30-67, Ft Sill, Okla. We were friends, and in the same platoon. We both applied for helicopter pilot training. He was accepted, and I was not. Becoming a helicopter pilot was my primary military goal. I was crushed, but Eric sensed my disappointment, and he did his best to make it OK. I was assigned to Vietnam as an artillery forward observer. Eric went to Rotary Wing Flight School at Fort Rucker, Alabama. We lost touch with each other till February, 1969. I was ending my tour, and returning to the world. I stopped at the Cam Ranh Bay O-Club, and sitting there at a table was a FNG pilot who looked very familiar. Eric was about to begin his tour, and mine was over. We reminisced about our days at Fort Sill, until I had to leave and catch my flight home. "Take care of yourself" was the last thing I said to him. I left with just a little envy, but I was glad to be leaving that awful place. Eric was killed one month later in Thua Thien Province, I Corps. His aircraft crashed and burned as a result of hostile fire.

"Some of God's greatest gifts are our unanswered prayers." - Garth Brooks -

From a friend,
Ed Mihalacki
25 December 2004

A Note from The Virtual Wall

Three men were killed when UH-1D tail number 66-16284 was shot down in Thua Thien Province:

1LT Wilofard A. McClain, El Paso, TX, pilot;
1LT Eric V. Pulliam, Baltimore, MD, copilot; and
SP4 Ronald F. Ricciardo, Deer Park, NY, crew chief.

Other officers in the company remember them as well:

"I was a CW2 in 2nd platoon C Company, my call sign was Black Widow 44. Ron Ricciardo was my crewchief, 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 hours 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 gunner's name. The aircraft mission was to recon particular mountainous terrain in or near the Ashau 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 tree-top 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." Eric Penttila

"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 [combat assault] 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 funeral for them only 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 Ricciardo was from the Bronx if I remember correctly. He always had a smile and was following in Ed McMahon's footsteps by saying "Hereeee's 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..." John H Forslund
Black Widow 48, RVN 68-69

From www.flyarmy.org

PULLIAM ERIC VINCENT

Name: 1LT Eric Vincent Pulliam

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

Age at death: 23.6

Date of Birth: 08/29/1945

Home City: Baltimore, MD

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: 68-22

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

The Wall location: 28W-075

Short Summary: See McClain.

Aircraft: UH-1D tail number 66-16284

Call sign: Black Widow

Service number: O5429267

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: pilot

Started Tour: 02/22/1969

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - pilot

Length of service: 02

Location: Thua Thien Province I Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - killed

single male U.S. citizen

Race: Negro

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 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

"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. From: Eric Penttila.

This record was last updated on 08/18/2005

From the wall-usa.com

Hangman - During the many dull times in flight school, learning the intricacies of NDB approaches, etc., some of us took to playing clandestine games of "Hangman" to pass the time. Eric was enthusiastically involved in these games, along with Benny Dever, myself, and a few others. Once, Eric showed me a Hangman puzzle with two names, one with five letters, the second with three. I looked at it for a second and said, "Myrna Loy." Eric practically dropped on the floor. I will never forget his reaction, and the infectious laugh he employed on that and many other occasions. He died barely a month after arriving in country. We were both from Baltimore, and loved to talk about the old home town. He will be forever missed.

Thomas Farley

flight school classmate

Port St. Lucie, FL 34985

November 30, 1999