

## JAMES FREDERICK SPENCER

Class 509-68

is honored on Panel 16W, Row 20 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** JAMES FREDERICK SPENCER  
**Wall Name:** JAMES F SPENCER  
**Date of Birth:** 3/12/1947  
**Date of Casualty:** 11/2/1969  
**Home of Record:** OSCODA  
**County of Record:** IOSCO COUNTY  
**State:** MI  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** 1LT  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** PHUOC LONG



1LT Spencer was the pilot of a UH-1H helicopter that crashed during a bad-weather take-off at night from Fire Support Base Buttons. He was serving with Company C, 227th Aviation Battalion, 11th Aviation Group, 1st Cavalry Division at the time of his death.

### Not Forgotten

Not Forgotten

Posted by: John C. Mattina  
Relationship: OCS / Flight School / Vietnam  
August 9, 2011

### AFTER 29 YEARS...

Jim,  
You were a fine officer who set the example for others to follow. I will never forget you. Chuck

Posted by: C. JOHNSON  
Relationship: Company Executive Officer  
July 22, 1999

**James is buried at Arlington National Cemetery**

**A Note from The Virtual Wall**

Four men were killed and one injured when UH-1H tail number 68-15767 (C Co, 227th AHB) crashed during a night, bad-weather take-off from Fire Support Base Buttons. The dead were

- WO Ralph D. Tadevic, Chicago, IL, pilot;
- 1LT James F. Spencer, Oscoda, MI, copilot (DoI 11/02/1969);
- SP4 George H. Ayala, Bay City, MI, gunner; and
- CPL Terrence C. Connolly, New York, NY, observer.

The crew chief, SP4 F. W. Smith, was injured but survived.

**From www.flyarmy.org**

**SPENCER JAMES FREDERICK**

Name: 1LT James Frederick Spencer

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 10/28/1969 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Died 5 days later on 11/02/1969.

Age at death: 22.6

Date of Birth: 03/12/1947

Home City: Oscoda, MI

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

Unit: C/227 AHB 1 CAV

Major organization: 1st Cavalry Division

Flight class: 69-16

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

The Wall location: 16W-020

Short Summary: Crashed flying IFR at night at FSB Buttons. Spencer's dogtags were used for the MIA/POW stamp.

Aircraft: UH-1H tail number 68-15767

Call sign: Ghost Rider

SSN: 384466412

Country: South Vietnam

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

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: weapons

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: pilot

Started Tour: 07/25/1969

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - pilot

Length of service: 02

Location: Phuoc Long Province III Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Non-hostile - died illness or injuries  
married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Episcopal (Anglican)

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 02/21/1994

### **Helicopter UH-1H 68-15767**

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 68-15767

The Army purchased this helicopter 0769

Total flight hours at this point: 00000246

Date: 10/28/1969

Incident number: 691028211ACD Accident case number: 691028211 Total loss or  
fatality Accident

Unit: C/227 AVN

The station for this helicopter was Phouc Vinh in South Vietnam

Number killed in accident = 4 . . Injured = 1. . Passengers = 0  
costing 400145

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:

AC WO1 TADEVIC RALPH DULANE KIA

**P O2 SPENCER JAMES FREDERICK KIA**

OB CPL CONNOLLY TERRENCE CHARLES KIA

CE E4 FW SMITH

G SP4 AYALA GEORGE HERMAN KIA

Accident Summary:

The mission was in support of 2D Bde, 1ST Cav Div (AM), at Song Be, RVN. The mission consisted of one UH-1 helicopter with one AH-1G gun ship as escort and attack support. The aircraft first departed Phuoc Vinh at about 1800 hours, 27 October 1969, but due to weather conditions at their destination were required to return to Phuoc Vinh.

WO Tadevic, while on final approach to Buttons entered IFR conditions and experienced vertigo severe enough to require turning over control to LT Spencer. LT Spencer executed a missed approach and instrument climb to VFR conditions where WO Tadevic again assumed control and flew the ship to Phuoc Vinh. There is no instrument approach at FSB Buttons. At approximately 2400 hours, weather conditions were reported to have improved throughout the division area of operations with the dissipation of the thunderstorms which had existed earlier in the evening. Mission ZA06

was ordered to depart for Buttons. Both aircraft arrived at FSB Buttons after uneventful flights, and a mission briefing was conducted at approximately 0100 hours. During the briefing it was reported that fog covered most of the aircraft's area of operations, and it was decided to hold the aircraft down until conditions had improved. By 0200 hours, fog began moving into the area of FSB Buttons, and the crews were released from their mission and told that they could return to home station, "if you can get off in this weather." after discussing the conditions, the pilots decided that the UH-1H would take off and make a weather check, reporting the height of the fog layer and actual conditions on the reported weather. The UH-1H was started, lifted to a hover, and moved out of the revetment. He began an immediate takeoff from between two rows of revetments. Takeoff was on a heading of 230 degrees. Navigation lights, the rotating beacon, landing light, and the aircraft searchlight were all on during the take-off. The take-off was normal to a point about 200 meters from departure point at an altitude of about 100 feet AGL. At this point, over the defensive perimeter of the fire support base, the landing and search lights were turned off and the aircraft started a descending right turn. The turn was stopped after about 30 degrees, but the descent continued over the cleared area outside of the defensive wire until the aircraft impacted in the trees at the edge of a rubber plantation 400 meters from the fire support base.

This record was last updated on 08/08/1999