

BARRY MERCER STRAW**Class 10-67**

is honored on Panel 4W, Row 26 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: BARRY MERCER STRAW
Wall Name: BARRY M STRAW
Date of Birth: 1/28/1944
Date of Casualty: 3/5/1971
Home of Record: PANORAMA CITY
County of Record: LOS ANGELES COUNTY
State: CA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: CAPT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: BINH DINH



CPT Straw served his first tour in Vietnam as a Forward Observer with the 1st Cavalry Division. He then attended flight school, requested another tour in Vietnam and was assigned to the 180th Aviation Company piloting CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

On 5 March, 1971, he was officially on leave and preparing to depart for leave in Hawaii with his wife. Another pilot was unable to fly as scheduled and CPT Straw volunteered to fly the mission of resupplying ground troops in Qui Nhon. As his CH-47 was approaching Lane Army Airfield, a Republic of Korea (ROK) O-1D spotter aircraft, was operating in the vicinity. As the CH-47 drew closer to the airfield it was struck in the left rear quarter by the plane which was in a descending left turn. On impact the O-1D flipped upside down, fell straight to the ground, impacted inverted, exploded, and burned.

The impact knocked the port engine free of the CH-47's fuselage and ruptured a fuel tank. The CH-47 caught fire and began to disintegrate in flight. By ground impact the aft pylon had separated entirely. The main body of the fuselage impacted nose-low, at which time the rear ramp portion of the fuselage separated while the forward fuselage section slid downhill, breaking into two pieces before it came to rest. The entire aircraft was destroyed by fire. Six soldiers perished in the incident.

Barry is buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles, California.

Barry will be remembered by me

I only recently learned of Barry's death in Vietnam. I remember him well. When I see his photo I can remember talking with him. He will be remembered forever by me.

Posted by: Paul F. Willems

Relationship: We served together

April 29, 2009

27 Nov 2001

Remembering our nephew and cousin,

BARRY MERCER STRAW

An Army Captain with the 180th Aviation Company

Panorama City, California

January 28, 1944 to March 5, 1971

On the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, panel 04W, line 026

Barry wanted to learn to fly so he enlisted in the US Army (1965) and was sent to Officer Training School with the goal of some day becoming a pilot. When he was 23 years old, he attended the US Army Artillery and Missile School. He was sent to Vietnam from 1968 through 1969. During this period he served as a Forward Observer with the 1st Cavalry Airmobile Division.

The infamous TET Offensive took place during his first tour of duty. The artillery unit to which Barry was assigned became trapped in a valley surrounded by Viet Cong. Only two soldiers from the unit survived. One of the survivors was Barry who escaped with an eye injury.

After his first tour in Vietnam, he returned to the United States and was sent to the US Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Here he learned to fly and became a helicopter pilot certified to fly the Huey and other single-rotor helicopters. His desire was to fly the large Chinook twin-rotor helicopters. After attending extra schooling, Barry became a certified pilot for the Chinook aircraft.

He requested another tour in Vietnam and was assigned to the 180th Aviation Company where he piloted Chinook helicopters on missions including personnel transport and ground force supply drops. On March 5, 1971, he was officially on leave and preparing to depart from Vietnam for a vacation in Hawaii with his wife. Another pilot was unable to fly a scheduled mission. Barry volunteered to fly the mission of resupplying ground troops in Qui Nhon. While enroute, a Korean observation fixed wing aircraft made an error causing a midair collision with the helicopter. The crew of 5 from the helicopter and 2 from the Korean plane were killed.

The last letter he received from his mother, Elizabeth Straw, contained the following excerpt:

February 25, 1971

"At the moment my big worry is you. I know you're right in the middle of all this fighting in Laos and Qui Nhon and every day the news is about more helicopters going down. And when they mention the Big Birds my heart stops beating. Please be careful and write often because we're so worried about your safety. Those big Chinooks are just sitting ducks up there in the sky, when you're doing a drop. I'm so scared something will happen to you. Please, please be careful!! Love, Mom"

Barry Straw died doing what he loved and he is missed.

From his cousin,
Kristine Jones Cohn
6282 Pearl Lake Ave., San Diego, Ca 92119

A Note from The Virtual Wall

On 05 March 1971, a CH-47C (tail number 67-18518, 180th Assault Support Helicopter Company) with five crewmen and three passengers aboard was approaching Lane Army Airfield. One other aircraft, a Korean Army O-1D spotter aircraft, was operating in the vicinity. As the CH-47 drew closer to the airfield it was struck in the left rear quarter by the O-1D, which was in a descending left turn. On impact the O-1D flipped upside down, fell straight to the ground, impacted inverted, exploded, and burned.

The impact knocked the port engine free of the CH-47's fuselage and ruptured a fuel tank. The CH-47 caught fire and began to disintegrate in flight. By ground impact the aft pylon had separated entirely. The main body of the fuselage impacted nose-low, at which time the rear ramp portion of the fuselage separated while the forward fuselage section slid downhill, breaking into two pieces before it came to rest. The entire aircraft was destroyed by fire.

Five aircrewmen and one passenger died in the crash; two non-American passengers survived. The six dead were

CPT Barry Mercer Straw, pilot, 180th ASHC

CPT Ralph Leland Ward, pilot, 180th ASHC

SP5 Richard Samuel Dennison, crewman, 180th ASHC

SP5 Gary Gale Prentice, crew chief, 180th ASHC

SP4 Edward Lee Rayburn, gunner, 180th ASHC

L. C. Ho, rank and unit unknown, RoK Army

STRAW BARRY MERCER

Name: CPT Barry Mercer Straw

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 03/05/1971 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Age at death: 27.1

Date of Birth: 01/28/1944

Home City: Panorama City, CA

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

Unit: 180 ASHC, 268 CAB

Major organization: 1st Aviation Brigade

Flight class: 69-40

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

The Wall location: 04W-026

Short Summary: Mid-air with ROKA O-1D, crashed and burned.

Aircraft: CH-47C tail number 67-18518

Country: South Vietnam

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

Primary cause: Mid-Air

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: vehicular accident

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: co-pilot

Vehicle ownership: government

Started Tour: 08/31/1970

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

The initial status of this person was: no previous report

Length of service: *

Location: Binh Dinh Province II Corps.

Military grid coordinates of event: BR934209

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Non-hostile - died of other causes

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Seventh Day Adventist

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 08/20/1995

Helicopter CH-47C 67-18518

Information on U.S. Army helicopter CH-47C tail number 67-18518

The Army purchased this helicopter 0568

Total flight hours at this point: 00000757

Date: 03/05/1971

Incident number: 710305101ACD Accident case number: 710305101 Total loss or fatality Accident

Unit: 180 ASHC

This was a Accident incident.

The station for this helicopter was Tuy Hoa in South Vietnam

UTM grid coordinates: BR928208

Number killed in accident = 6 . . Injured = 0 . . Passengers = 3
costing 1931161

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:

P CPT STRAW BARRY MERCER KIA

P CPT WARD RALPH LELAND KIA

CE SP5 PRENTICE GARY GALE KIA

G SP4 RAYBURN EDWARD LEE KIA

C SP5 DENNISON RICHARD SAMUEL KIA

Passengers and/or other participants:

UNKNOWN, LCO, G

X2 HO LC, , PX, KIA

LECHANG MD, PAX, G

Accident Summary:

On March 5 at approximately 1340 hours a mid air collision took place between a CH-47C and a ROKA O-1D. The O-1D took off to the north from Tiger Strip, BR 948208, and made a left turn and flew over Lane Army Airfield approximately five (5) minutes before the crash: See statements one(1) and two (2). The O-1D flew south and through a pass west of the accident site and was in a left descending turn looking for red smoke; see statements three(3) and four(4). The CH-47C took off from 3rd Battalion Cavalry Regiment and was due at the Recon Pad at 1345. See statement one (1). At 1335 the CH-47C called LT Goodman, the ROKA Liaison Officer, on FM five (5) minutes out from the Recon Pad. The CH-47C also called Lane Tower five (5) miles southwest for landing. The tower gave the wind 100 at 5. At the same time Lucky 660 called QSY to Lane Tower and Big Windy 518 requested that the tower allow him to talk to Lucky 660 and the tower approved it. Big windy 26 asked Lucky 42 to thank Lucky 44 for some kills he got the other day; See statements eight (8) and nine (9). At 1340 a mid-air between the CH-47C and the O-1D took place at BR 934209. The O-1D contacted the left rear

center of the CH 47 on a 45 degree angle to the flight path on a slight degree of descent while in a left descending turn; See statements three(3), four (4) and six (6). The impact knocked the left engine off the CH-47C and ruptured the fuel cell and the CH-47C caught fire. The CH-47C aft rotor blade tore the right wing and the engine off the 0-1D; See statement four (4), picture A diagram. The 0-1D dropped down the left side of the CH-47C and flipped over and fell straight to the ground impacting inverted facing west at BR 934109; See statement four (4). On impact with the ground the 0-1D exploded and burned; See statement five (5) and picture B. The CH-47C blades lost synchronization and meshed due to loss of blades when the 0-1D impacted the CH-47C; See diagrams and picture Tab 9. As the CH-47 descended in flames a portion of the aft pylon with the aft vertical shaft broke off and impacted the ground at the upper portion of the crash site. The remainder of the aircraft impacted the ground at the lower right center of the crash site in a nose low attitude with the co-pilot chin bubble impaling on a stump, heading 140 degrees; See statement seven (7) picture I, at which time the ramp area broke off at station 160 and burned; See diagram four (4) and picture H. The remainder of the aircraft continued to slide down the hill until its movement was stopped by rocks. The momentum caused the forward cabin section and main fuselage to separate at station 482: see diagram D and picture I. The forward transmission with the rotor lose and continued to slide due to momentum and came to rest at the lower portion of the crash site; See diagram 4 and picture G. The entire aircraft was destroyed by fire.

This record was last updated on 11/16/2004