

HARRY TODD HARRISON

Class 36A-67

is honored on Panel 30W, Row 23 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: HARRY TODD HARRISON
Wall Name: HARRY T HARRISON
Date of Birth: 12/13/1946
Date of Casualty: 3/3/1969
Home of Record: MADRID
County of Record: BOONE COUNTY
State: IA
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 1LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: VINH LONG



1LT Harrison was assigned to Battery B, 6th Battalion, 77th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division. He had served as a Forward Observer with the 5th ARVN Ranger Battalion and was killed in a helicopter crash while serving as a Pay Officer for his unit.

He is remembered



My son was Lt. Harry Todd Harrison, killed March 3, 1969, in a helicopter crash. He was born Dec 13, 1946. This is his high school photo from Madrid, Iowa high school yearbook.

Posted by: Dorothy Harrison
March 9, 2005

Your faithful RTO will always remember you!

Lt Harrison and I served with the 5th ARVN Ranger Battalion. We were the only Americans with this unit so we got to know each other quite well. He was the Forward Observer and I was his RTO (I carried the radio). We provided the artillery support and air power for all our enemy engagements. He saved my life more than once because he knew how to get us out of trouble real fast. I was 18 years old and depended on his skill and leadership which was great for his 22 years. It really shook me up when I learned he had died in the accidental helicopter crash. When we were back at base he was the Pay Officer for our unit. He had made a trip via helicopter to deliver pay checks to the troops out in the bush. A few soldiers were on R&R when he made the first trip so he had to go back the next day to deliver their checks. The rotors of the helicopter he was in got caught in some telephone wires and came crashing down. It really shook me up having to go through his stuff to send it home to his young wife. Here we had been through so much hostile action together and then he lost his life accidentally. I only wish I could have been there for you like you had been there so many times for me. You will never know how much I miss you and think about you. There is hardly a day that goes by that I don't think about you and your wild handlebar moustache! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me through so much, for putting up with my antics, and for putting me in for the Bronze Star. I will never forget you buddy - I am eternally indebted to you!

Your RTO, Tom Tottleben

May 03, 2001

Harry is buried at Municipal Cemetery, Ames, Iowa



From www.flyarmy.org

Helicopter UH-1H 67-17287

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 67-17287

The Army purchased this helicopter 0268

Total flight hours at this point: 00001365

Date: 03/03/1969

Incident number: 690303321ACD Accident case number: 690303321 Total loss or fatality Accident

Unit: 114 AHC

South Vietnam

Number killed in accident = 7 . . Injured = 2 . . Passengers = 6
costing 545866

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 W1 WJ CUNNING

P W1 KK WINCHELL

CE SP4 HICKMAN STEVEN MURDOCK KIA

G SP4 COOK WEYMAN TERRY KIA

Passengers and/or other participants:

UNK UNK, LCO, G

2LT SAMS MICHAEL DOUGLAS, AR, PX, KIA

SP4 TEEPLE WAYNE WINSTON, AR, PX, KIA

1LT HARRISON HARRY TODD, NOT, A KIA

MAJ MCCARTNEY DARRYL EUGENE, AR, PX, KIA

SP4 BINNS GEORGE MICHAEL, AR, PX, KIA

Accident Summary:

Brief: (abridged) WO Cunning decided to make a hover check before attempting his takeoff. He pulled up to about a three foot hover and the RPM bled down to 6400. Also the aircraft went IFR. Cunning then set the aircraft down and told his crew chief and gunner to off load about 200 pounds of cargo. They actually off loaded about 290 pounds of cargo. Cunning then picked up the aircraft, made a 180 deg pedal turn and hovered away from the wires approximately 180 ft. The aircraft bled off to 6400 rpm as Cunning hovered what he thought was downwind, actually he was hovering into a quartering headwind. He was engulfed in dust as he hovered back. He then did a 180 degree pedal turn again and immediately took off from a three foot hover. The takeoff was normal with extra power pulled in to reach translational lift as early as possible. Upon initiating his takeoff, Cunning had the wires in sight; however, as he began moving forward, back toward the road the dust caused him to lose sight of the wires.

When he did break above the dust he saw the wires directly to his front. He immediately applied aft cyclic, for a cyclic climb and pulled up his remaining collective. He cleared the first set of wires by about 5 ft. He continued to hold what he had so as to clear the second set of wires about 50 ft away. At this point he was about 50 ft in the air with maximum or near maximum collective, slow airspeed and an RPM somewhere between 5000 and 5400. For accident investigation purposes, Cunning had now taken the aircraft beyond the point of where an uneventful landing could have been made. Cunning realized that the takeoff had to be aborted and he decided to try for the rice paddy approximately 200 yards to his front and just beyond some buildings. In doing this he passed over about 150 yards of open field which contained two more sets of wires running perpendicular to his route of flight. Cunning's reason for not immediately aborting the takeoff and attempting a running landing to the dirt field was that he was afraid of the wires. He then turned slightly to the left to try and fly through an opening between the two main buildings. He was no longer able to hold his altitude and as he flew thru the opening he had two severe blade strikes on the wall of the right (east) building. The aircraft was then turned 90 degrees to the right and it rolled 90 degrees over on its left side. It landed in that position, its nose 90 degrees from its original route of flight. The cargo compartment landed directly over a drainage ditch. Two of the dead men were found partially submerged in water in the ditch. Cook, the gunner, sitting on the right side was apparently unhurt at impact, exited the aircraft immediately after it hit. He moved a few feet clear of the crash but then turned back to the aircraft to help the other passengers. At this point there was apparently a fuel explosion with Cook facing the blast. He had his flight helmet off and his face was unprotected. Both the aircraft commander and the pilot were in their seats when the fuel exploded however they were effectively protected by the armor seats. WO Cunning and WO Winchell then cleared the aircraft, Winchell going thru the front windshield and Cunning out the right door. Major McCartney and SP4 Cook were the only others to get out of the aircraft, their clothes in flames. The five personnel trapped in the aircraft all died of burns.

This record was last updated on 09/20/1998