

Information on U.S. Air Force helicopter HH-53C tail number 68-10366

Date: 11/25/1971 MIA-POW file reference number: 1780

Incident number: 71112555.KIA

Unit: 37th ARRS

South Vietnam

UTM grid coordinates: XS953730

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated: Defense Intelligence Agency Reference Notes. Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Also: 1780 ()

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

P CPT GEORGE JOHN WILLIAM KIA

P MAJ SWENCK ROBERT BENNETT KIA

PR TSG THOMAS JAMES RICHARD BNR

PR A1C PROSE THOMAS DEAN KIA

SYNOPSIS:

Jim Thomas joined the Air Force when he was 18 and was assigned duty as an aircraft mechanic. While he was stationed in Hawaii, he was able to train for pararescue, and subsequently assigned to a pararescue Squadron at Da Nang, Vietnam. On November 25, 1971, while on a TDY assignment, Jim was on a rescue mission which successfully retrieved 13 soldiers whose helicopter had been shot down. Jim's chopper took ground fire during the rescue, and the crew stopped at a forward base camp to make sure the chopper was safe to fly. The soldiers got off at that time. On the flight back to its home base at Bien Hoa, the chopper took more fire and the pilot was hit. It began a slow descent and impacted in the Na Bhe River, breaking in two. Three crew members were found dead. The two crew members standing next to Jim both got out and were recovered by friendly forces. A local fisherman who saw the crash said a third man, wearing a white t-shirt, also escaped. Jim was the only one wearing a white t-shirt. One side of the river was controlled by friendly forces, and the other by enemy troops.

This record was last updated on 05/25/1998

<http://www.flyarmy.org/incident/71112555.HTM>

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