

50. CPT Frederick Phillip "Fred" Smith was killed on 13 February 1971. CPT Smith was the Assistant Division Chemical Officer assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), United States Army, Pacific—Republic of Vietnam. CPT Smith was stationed at Phuoc Vinh, Camp Casey, Republic of South Vietnam. On 13 February 1971, CPT Smith was conducting a "People Sniffer" mission over Binh Tuy Province, III Corps (present-day Binh Thuan Province) in a valley suspected to be occupied by enemy troops at Military grid coordinates YS848912. Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 2d Battalion, 20th Artillery (aerial rocket), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was tasked to support the mission. The mission team consisted of one Army UH-1H Huey helicopter (68-16360) and two AH-1G Cobra attack helicopters. LTC Adalbert E. "Bert" Toepel, Jr., 2d Battalion's commanding officer, sat in the Huey's front left seat as the aircraft commander. In the front right seat sat the pilot, CPT L.R. Burnette. The crew engineer (or crew chief) in the far left well was SP4 T.M. Morgan. PFC W. Wallace was the gunner in the far right well. Besides CPT Smith, others on the flight included 2d Battalion's Sergeant Major, SGM Dobson, and an enlisted soldier from the 184th Chemical Platoon (Direct Support) that was there to assist CPT Smith with the drop. The mission's objective was to make one or two runs at 1,500 feet (optimum altitude for maximum effect) down the valley dropping approximately 20 modified Air Force BLU E158 tactical CS-2 (2-chlorobenzalmononitrile) clusters bombs from the Huey helicopter. CS is a chemical agent in the family of riot control agents, commonly called "tear gas." Each E158 cluster bomb consisted of 264 D-cell battery-sized canisters of CS held in place by a plastic unit that measures 3-foot-long and 1-foot-wide. A timing fuse detonates a bursting/igniting charge that sends the smaller munitions over a 50-meter area, spraying CS as they scatter. The hope was that the tear gas submunitions would drive the enemy from their hiding places and expose them in a more open area making them vulnerable to rocket and gunfire from two supporting Cobra attack helicopters. The drop time was in early morning to assure that the CS gas would settle into the jungle canopy instead of being blown away by the wind, which was expected to happen later in the day. Take off was scheduled for 0600 hours. No problems were encountered in the preparations and loading of the canisters, which were placed on end just inside the open doors of the helicopter's cargo compartment. As a safety precaution, the pilot of the aircraft (right seat) wore a protective mask in the event any of the CS gas entered the crew compartment and adversely affected either of the pilots. It is not recalled if anybody else was wearing a protective mask during the mission. All passengers were seat-belted in. Upon the start of their run, there was a sudden explosion in the passenger/cargo compartment and the entire interior was immediately filled with burning CS gas. Somehow the arming wires of the third cluster must have come loose, and an E 158 cluster began detonating inside the Huey helicopter by the door. It's surmised that the cause of the malfunction was that someone somehow accidentally snagged the arming wire, which activated the timer. The copper retaining wires on the fuzes had been precut. This explosion started a chain reaction setting off the other clusters. Prior to the mission, a gallon can of transmission fluid was placed in the cargo compartment. After the clusters went off the crew chief announced over the intercom, "Sir, the transmission fluid is on fire!" The pilot immediately went into autorotation in order to

get the aircraft closer to the ground and the crew prepared for a possible emergency landing in the 100-foot plus high jungle canopy. The aircraft commander instructed the crew in the cargo compartment to jettison all canisters, which the aircraft commander now believes had already happened. In avoiding the conflagration in the cargo compartment someone somersaulted onto the radio console, located between the two pilots. The aircraft commander wrestled with that person briefly to remove him from the proximity of the aircraft controls. The aircraft commander instructed the pilot to check his instruments and the pilot reported that they still had power. Now realizing that there wasn't a fire on board, but there was a lot of CS gas and smoke, the aircraft commander jettisoned his aircraft entry door. With his sight now returning, the aircraft commander took control of the aircraft from the pilot and flew in a slip (sideways), which caused air to blow across the interior of the helicopter and helped evacuate the gas fumes. While this was going on, CPT Smith, although badly burned and with his clothing on fire from the black powder bursting charges, realized that everyone's lives was endanger and he was able to undo his seat-belt and push all of the clusters out of the helicopter. In the confusion, blinded and choking by the CS smoke, he may have been thrown out during the autorotation or by the explosion of the charges. CPT Smith went out with the clusters munitions and fell 1,500 feet to his death. When their vision returned, someone reported that CPT Smith was missing. What was originally thought to be a burning can of transmission fluid turned out to be the burning of a small container of CS gas on the floor of the aircraft. The small containers of burning gas caused extensive damage to the nylon seats and interior insulation in the aircraft. CPT Smith's quick thinking and actions saved the lives of six people onboard the Huey helicopter. The helicopter crewmembers were wearing their standard issue Nomex flight clothing and gloves, and were protected from more serious burns on their skin. Despite protective clothing and a helmet, one of the CS containers became lodged just behind the aircraft commander's neck, which resulted in third-degree burns. One of those containers also landed next to his right arm resulting in second-degree burns. Portions of his face not covered by the visor of his flight helmet were hit by gas and caused first- and second-degree burns. Other crewmembers were similarly burned. The helicopter crew chief was transferred to Camp Zama Hospital in Japan with severe burns. The passengers on the helicopter wore standard nylon jungle fatigues and were also extensively burned. The enlisted soldier assisting Captain Smith received severe burns and was transferred to Camp Zama Hospital where he underwent an extensive period of hospitalization. Not knowing what damage may have occurred to the aircraft, the helicopter was flown to a nearby artillery firebase FSB Mace where it landed. The accompanying escort aircraft followed. SP4 Lee Gurley and another medic from C Company, 15th Medical Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) treated the injured. The incident was then reported to the division tactical operations center. Three days later an infantry unit was able to go in and recover Captain Smith's body. CPT Smith was awarded the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart Medal. CPT Smith was an Explosive Ordnance Disposal school graduate. CPT Smith was inducted in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps Hall of Fame in June 2008.

Additional Facts: Service Number (Enlisted): RA 18733814; Service Number:

448463006; Born: 6 March 1946, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Age: 24; Hometown: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Buried: Rose Hill Burial Park, 6001 NW Grand Blvd, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Vietnam Memorial: Panel 05W-Line 102.

Virtual Vietnam Wall—CPT Smith
The Wall—CPT Smith
Army Together We Served—CPT Smith
First Cavalry Division Memorial
Find-A-Grave—CPT Smith

Acknowledgements:

1. SGM James G. "Jim" Ferris, USA (Retired).
2. LTC Robert E. "Bob" Leiendecker, USA (Retired).
3. Dr. Jeffrey M. Leatherwood, Ph.D.

Note: All mortuary records for World War II, for all branches, are kept at the Total Army Personnel Command (TAPC). You may write and request a copy of his Individual Deceased Personal File (IDPF) at the below listed address:

U.S. Total Army Personnel Command
ATTN: TAPC-PAO (FOIA)
200 Stoval Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0404
Phone: (703) 325-5300 (for questions and to check your request)

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE
LIFE OF THE HONORABLE FER-
NANDO VEGA

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a great and good man, Fernando Vega, who lived a life of service to his country and his community, and who died peacefully at his home at the age of 88, surrounded by his loving family.

Fernando Vega was born in Houston, Texas, on November 20, 1924, and died on May 9, 2013 in Redwood City, California. Between the bookmarks of birth and death, he accomplished much and served many. He was a devoted husband and father, and his marriage in 1948 to his beloved Tina was an inspiration to everyone. He proudly served his country in the United States Army Air Corps where he received the training that led to his lifelong career as an airline mechanic. A transfer led Tina and Fernando to Redwood City with their six children in 1960, a move that proved fortuitous for them and our entire community.

Fernando made Redwood City his home and gave it his all. To supplement his income for his large family, he opened Vegas Market and Grill on Middlefield Road. The market was sold in 1984, but it still bears the family's name. He served on the Redwood City Council with distinction, and was a member of the Redwood City Elementary School District Board of Trustees. He was a Commissioner of the San Mateo County Grand Jury and the San Mateo County Civil Service Commission.

Fernando was rightfully proud of his service with Kiwanis in the formation and continued operation of the Redwood City Farmer's Market which contributed so much to the needy in the community. He began his service with the market in the late '80s and only ended it about five years ago when a stroke deprived him of the mobility he needed to help out.

Fernando is survived by his beloved wife Tina, and was predeceased by his son David

(Pat). His children Oscar (Nada), George (Karen), Eloy (Sef), Fernando (Carol), and Belinda will miss him deeply, as will his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary life and accomplishments of Fernando Vega and in extolling his life of service to others. I ask my colleagues to also join me in extending our most sincere condolences to Fernando Vega's family, for their loss is a great one. I'm very proud to have had the opportunity to know and work with Fernando and even prouder to have called him my friend. There wasn't a finer human being or greater patriot. Through his integrity, leadership and decency, he strengthened our country and our community in countless ways.

HONORING COLONEL MARK C.
GARDNER

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Mark C. Gardner and to recognize his lifetime of service to our country.

On June 28, Col. Gardner will retire from the Georgia National Guard after thirty years of sacrifice and service to this great nation.

While he currently serves as the Georgia National Guard's State Inspector General, he has worked in many different capacities. In 1983, Col. Gardner's first assignment was with U.S. Army Missile Command, and he has since been assigned to infantry, maintenance, and forward support duties across the world. His career has taken him to Korea, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq, and several military installations here in the United States.

For his distinguished leadership throughout his career, Col. Gardner has been awarded with decorations like the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korea Defense Service Medal, the Army Reserve Service Medal, the Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

Col. Gardner has played an invaluable role in the U.S. Armed Forces for decades and he will surely be missed.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 11th District of Georgia, my deepest thanks to Col. Gardner for devoting his life to the upholding the Constitution of the United States and to the protection of its citizens. I wish him a happy—and well-deserved—retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF POYANT
SIGNS

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Poyant Signs of New Bedford, Massachusetts, as the company celebrates seventy-five years of business this month.

Founder Maurice J. Poyant first began his signmaking company in 1938, originally operating under the name Aircraft Sign Company. His small business would see great expansion and many changes over the course of the following decades, such as moving into its well-known Acushnet Avenue storefront, the purchase of its first 45-foot crane, and incorporation of the business under the new name Poyant Signs in the 1950s. Several members of the Poyant family would go on to lead the company over the years following Maurice's retirement, including Maurice's son Leonard Poyant and grandson Richard Poyant. As sales continued to increase, Poyant Signs maintained its growth and success, and over the years the company was even able to acquire several competing signage companies. Although it has since outgrown its Acushnet Avenue location, Poyant Signs still calls New Bedford home, and is headquartered today in a modern 45,000 square foot facility located in New Bedford Business Park.

The success of Poyant Signs has continued into the twenty-first century, and today the company stands as the largest sign manufacturer in New England. It serves both well-known local businesses and clients that operate on a national level, and the company has been the recipient of numerous awards within the industry. In 2009, Poyant Signs was honored as a finalist in the Massachusetts Family Business of the Year Awards, as well as by the New Hampshire Sign Association Awards for the company's excellence in signmaking.

Since its founding in 1938, Poyant Signs has played a central role in the development of New Bedford's local economy. The company is emblematic of the type of business that makes New Bedford the great city that it is today, and it is certainly fitting to celebrate this company's many years of success.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Poyant Signs upon the company's seventy-fifth anniversary. I ask that my colleagues join me in this recognition and in congratulating Poyant Signs for its many decades of prosperity.

THEY GOT TO TEXAS AS FAST AS
THEY COULD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, from the establishment of our great State, people have traveled from all over the world to come to Texas either to live, to work or to visit. Before Texas was a state, some even came to fight

for us. Many of the soldiers that fought in the battle at the Alamo were from different states and even a few countries. The diversity of people that have traveled to the state since the 1800's has contributed to its vast culture. That has made Texas what it is today.

Today, Texas' diversity is expansive and includes the contributions of many different cultures that help make Texas' own culture that much more unique. From the numerous Vietnamese Pho restaurants in downtown Houston to the German Karbach Brewery in North Houston, the global influence on Houston's culture is immense.

The Houston Chronicle recently reported about a Houston historian who focused on determining how streets in Houston-area communities received their names. Many settlers provided the names for not only cities and counties but for streets in local communities as well. Spring Branch, a community in the Second Congressional District of Texas, had several streets named after early immigrant settlers from Germany. Most of the early settlers were German farmers who came to the United States in pursuit of prosperity and to have land to farm. The City of Houston was named after the great Sam Houston, who was of Scots-Irish descent and originally from Virginia. The county that encompasses Houston, Harris County, was named after John Richardson Harris, a settler who came to Texas from New York by way of Missouri.

As the saying goes, if you weren't born in Texas, you got there as fast as you could.

People from around the world continue to hang a "Gone to Texas" sign on their front door. Our Texas pride comes from our rich history, a history that was built by the contributions of many local heroes and leaders who simply got to Texas as fast as they could. And that's just the way it is.

OLIVIA FOUSEL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Olivia Fousel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Olivia Fousel is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Olivia Fousel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Olivia Fousel for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.