

POW / MIA PROFILES

The purpose of the State POW/MIA Committee is to “provide increased awareness of POW / MIAs, to organize the Department and Posts’ POW / MIA activities and to provide education to the public”. To realize this duty, a profile of a WI resident who is or has been classified as POW / MIA will be presented each month for your reflection. It is with great respect that we present this month’s Profile.

Roy Kubley was born in 1939 in Glidden, WI. After attending grade school in Morse and graduating from Glidden High School, he attended the University of Wisconsin – Madison. In 1961, Roy graduated with a degree in civil engineering and a pilot license obtained through the ROTC program at UWM. Enlistment with the United States Air Force came next and he was initially stationed at Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Oklahoma. After several other stateside assignments, Roy was sent to Vietnam in 1965 on what was to be the first of three tours.

In January 1967, on his third tour, Captain Kubley was assigned to the 12th Air Commando Squadron flying the C123 “Provider “ aircraft. The C123 was an all-metal aircraft and the first transport plane to see service in Vietnam. Captain Kubley operated a C123B. These aircraft were specially modified for Operation “Ranch Hand”. Ranch Hand aircraft were tasked with spraying pesticides and herbicides that destroyed both the forest that concealed the Viet Cong and the rice that fed them.

On January 31, 1967, Major Lloyd Walker was the pilot of a C123B sent on a defoliation mission. His crew that day included Capt. Roy Kubley, Capt. Howard Barden, Capt. Harvey Mulhauser, and Airman 1st Class Ronald Miyazaki, the flight mechanic. The aircraft had leveled off and started spraying when it suddenly inverted and crashed. The crash occurred about 5 miles south-southwest of Sepone, Savannakhet Province, Laos. It was determined during later investigation that hostile fire had struck one of the propellers causing the crash. In February 1967 the UC-123B crew was declared killed in action, body not recovered. This crew is among nearly 600 Americans listed as missing in Laos.

Captain Kubley was awarded ten medals posthumously. On July 11, 1967, his family was given these medals at a formal ceremony held at Duluth Air Force Base. Colonel James K. Dowling presented a Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the 16th thru 19th clusters to the Air Medal, the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, a third Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Gallantry Cross, awarded by the Republic of Vietnam.

Each year in September the 1st District, Wisconsin American Legion, conducts a Silent March in conjunction with National POW/MIA Recognition Day. During the ceremony, black balloons are released in reverence for those listed as POW/MIA from WWI, WWII, and Korea. We also read aloud the names of the 30 Wisconsin Veterans who are still unaccounted for from Vietnam. One who we remember is Captain Roy R. Kubley.

The POW/ MIA Committee wishes to thank Mr. & Mrs. Carl Kubley (Glidden WI), Dwane & Blondell Kempf (Glidden, WI), David Brisk (Commander, POST 0008), and pownetwork.org for their outstanding contributions to this story.