

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.

PFC Duwayne Soulier was a member of Headquarters Company, 7th Command Battalion, 1st Marine Division. He had been wounded during a combat operation and transported to the hospital at Chu Lai, Quang Tin Province South Vietnam for medical treatment.

On 1 May 1967, Several Marines, including Duwayne Soulier, were being medically evacuated from Chu Lai to the Navy's hospital ship, USS Sanctuary, located in the South China Sea. SSGT. Stan L. Cornfield was assigned as the door gunner of a CH46A Sea Knight that was conducting the medivac mission. The helicopters crew was from HMM-165, MAG-36, 1st Marine Air Wing. The Helicopter call sign was Buffalo City 2-2. Buffalo City 2-2 was the #2 aircraft in a flight of 2. Buffalo City 2-1, the lead aircraft was piloted by Capt. Nesmith

The following were also wounded Marine passengers onboard the Sea Knight:

Sgt. John H. Bailey, Company M, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division
Cpl. Roger C. Gaughan, 3rd Marine Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division
PFC Hilario H. Guajardo, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division
Lcpl. Carl A. Smith, Company B, 1st Support Battalion, 1st Marine Division

As Buffalo City 2-2 circled the USS Sanctuary, the pilot, Capt. John Tatum, felt the aircraft sink a little and get sluggish. He glanced at the cockpit gauges and saw that engine #1 had quit. He immediately radioed in an emergency Mayday call stating "I've lost an engine" shortly after Capt. Tatum reported they lost engine #2 and were auto rotating down. Tatum radioed, "I'm going in".

Just before the aircraft crashed into the water Capt. Tatum gave their position, which was approximately 12 miles east-northeast of Chu Lai and 57 miles southeast of DaNang. Search and Recovery operations were launched immediately and rescue helicopters were on site within minutes of the loss. SAR personnel were able to locate and rescue the pilot: Capt. John Tatum, co-pilot: Lt. Bob Rogers, crew chief: Lcpl. Terry Blosser, and at least 1 Navy Corpsman assigned to the flight. However, they were unable to find any trace of Sgt. Bailey, SSGT. Corfield, Cpl. Gaughan, PFC Guajardo, LCPL. Smith and PFC Soulier.

Even though the weather was good, there were 8-10 foot swells that tipped the Sea Knight on it's right side within 2-3 seconds causing it to fill with water and sink within 30 seconds.

The US Navy believed the six men were trapped inside the helicopter when it rolled over on its side and sank to the bottom of the South China Sea. At the time the formal search

operation was terminated. John Bailey, Stan Corfield, Roger Gaughan, Hilario Guajardo, Carl Smith and Duwayne Soulier were listed Killed in Action.

Under the circumstances, it is highly unlikely the remains of the men killed in this tragic loss at sea can ever be found without a massive underwater salvage/recovery operation being undertaken. Each man has a right to have his remains returned to his family, friends and country if at all humanly possible. However, in this helicopter loss, that will probably never happen. Above all else, each man has the right not to be forgotten by the nation for which he gave his life. .

The POW/ MIA Committee wishes to thank Kyle Holewinski from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, former Marine Sgt. and a member of American Legion Post 70 for providing this information. Kyle has been wearing the red POW/MIA bracelet for Duwayne since 1989.