

20Jun70 Laos SAR

Charles E. Engle

Rank, Service

Captain O-3, U.S. Air Force

Veteran of:

U.S. Air Force 1968-1971

Cold War 1968-1971

Vietnam War 1969-1971 (KIA)

Tribute:

Chuck Engle was born on February 8, 1945, in Carlos, Indiana. He was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program at Purdue University on January 31, 1968, and went on active duty beginning May 17, 1968. Lt Engle completed Undergraduate Pilot Training and was awarded his pilot wings at Laughlin AFB, Texas, in May 1969, and after completing Forward Air Controller training, he was assigned to the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS) at Cam Ranh Bay in the Republic of Vietnam in September 1969. Lt Engle served with the 21st TASS until May 1970, when he transferred to the 56th Special Operations Wing at Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, and served as a Raven FAC until he was killed in action on February 22, 1971. He was posthumously promoted to Captain and his remains were returned to the United States and he was buried at the Fountain Park Cemetery in Winchester, Indiana.



His Air Force Cross Citation reads:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Charles E. Engle for extraordinary heroism in military

operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller in Southeast Asia on 20 June 1970. On that date, while attempting to pinpoint a downed pilot's location, Captain Engle's aircraft was met with a hail of gunfire which severed the fuel line, drenching the aircraft and the pilot. With complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Engle continued his efforts to suppress surrounding ground fire positions. When the pilot was located, a pickup was attempted. During the attempt, the rescue helicopter received heavy automatic weapons fire. Realizing that the rescue aircraft was in extreme danger of being shot down, Captain Engle, again with complete disregard for his own safety, dove his aircraft between the gun position and the helicopter, thereby allowing the helicopter to safely break away. After the ground fire was suppressed, other aircraft moved in for a successful pickup. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Captain Engle reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

