

19Mar72

LACKEY, JOHN EDGAR (18-19 Mar 72)

Citation:

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to John Edgar Lackey (15834289), Captain, U.S. Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Tactical Fighter Pilot of the 1st Special Operations Squadron, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, SEVENTH Air Force, in action in Southeast Asia from 18 to 19 March 1972. During this period, Captain Lackey was the commander of an extremely hazardous and complex search and rescue mission that was attempting to recover two American crew members located in one of the most heavily defended segments of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos. In order to force the hostile gunners to disclose their positions, Captain Lackey exposed himself to their lethal fire for more than four hours, directing tactical air strikes on each of the more than thirty large caliber weapons as they opened fire, thereby eliminating the threat and allowing the vulnerable rescue helicopter to effect a safe and successful recovery of both crew members. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Captain Lackey reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.