

James Harold Alley

Sergeant

601ST PHOTO FLT, 7TH AF

United States Air Force

Plantation, Florida

September 18, 1949 to April 06, 1972

JAMES H ALLEY is on the Wall at Panel 02W Line 130



Sgt. James Harold Alley

James Harold Alley
Sergeant, E-4

When shot down, Sergeant Alley was attached to 37th ARRS as a photographer aboard an air rescue HH-53

PERSONAL DATA

Home of Record: Plantation, FL
Date of birth: 09/18/1949
Religion: Baptist
Marital Status: Single

MILITARY DATA

Service: United States Air Force
Grade at loss: E4
Rank: Sergeant
ID No: 263844820
MOS: 23152: Still Photographic Specialist
Length Service: **
Unit: 601ST PHOTO FLT, 7TH AF

CASUALTY DATA

Start Tour: -----
Incident Date: 04/06/1972
Casualty Date: 04/06/1972
Age at Loss: 22
Location: Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam
Remains: Body not recovered
Repatriated: 06/07/1994
Identified: 09/25/1997
Casualty Type: Hostile, died outright
Casualty Reason: Helicopter - Crew
Casualty Detail: Air loss or crash over land

URL: www.VirtualWall.org/da/AlleyJH01a.htm

ON THE WALL Panel 02W Line 130

Excerpted from an April 2010 News Article

Slain Vietnam airman finally coming home

Airman slain in Vietnam to be buried in Arcadia

By JAMES A. JONES JR. - jajones1@bradenton.com

Thirty-eight years after he died during a high-priority rescue mission in the Vietnam War, the remains of Sgt. James Harold Alley are finally coming home.

Alley, who grew up near Fort Lauderdale and has relatives in Manatee County, will be interred in Oakridge Cemetery in Arcadia. The ceremony is tentatively scheduled for May 8, 2010

The 22-year-old was a combat photographer serving in the U.S. Air Force when he volunteered for a risky mission on a Sikorsky HH-53C helicopter, called a Jolly Green Giant. Rescue helicopters were trying to find Lt. Col. Gene Hambleton, who had ejected from an EB-66C jet after it was shot down near Quang Tri by a surface-to-air missile while escorting a flight of B-52 bombers.

During the rescue attempt on April 6, 1972, four days after Hambleton ejected, Alley's Jolly Green Giant was shot down and the entire crew of six was lost. Alley had just two weeks left in his tour of duty at the time.

Other air crews in the area saw the Jolly Green Giant explode and crash. Witnesses said it would have been impossible for anyone to survive, said B.R. Alley, a Bradenton resident and Alley's uncle.

Hambleton evaded capture for 11 days before being rescued.

Darrel Whitcomb, author of the 1998 book "The Rescue of Bat 21," called the rescue effort one of the largest of the war. The book takes its name from Hambleton's call sign "Bat 21B."

"This was probably the single most intense rescue operation of the war and was one of the toughest," Whitcomb said in a telephone interview. "Jim was on there because he was a combat photographer to capture the history of this event. I wish we could find his camera. It would have quite a story to tell."

Some sources say the North Vietnamese had 30,000 troops in the area at the time. Ultimately five aircraft were shot down trying to rescue Hambleton.

John Evans, who was stationed with Alley in Ubon, Thailand, and now lives near Green Bay, Wis., said in a phone interview Monday that Alley was assigned to temporary duty near DaNang to help document the war.

"We worked together on a lot of projects. He was a quiet kid, a hard worker and a good photographer," Evans said.

The crew of the Jolly Green Giant was interred with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in 1997, but at that time, no part of the remains had been positively identified as belonging to Alley.

Later DNA testing in Hawaii confirmed a portion of the remains were Alley's. The lab results by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command lab were confirmed in February, and agreed to by a member of the immediate family.

"We sent those troops out there so it's our responsibility to bring them home," said Tim Nicholson, mortuary officer at Dover Air Force Base.

Alley's relatives now living in Arcadia wanted the remains to be buried near where other family members were interred at Oakridge Cemetery.

James Alley's younger brother, Tim, is scheduled to accompany the remains on the flight from Hawaii to Fort Myers International Airport.