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Richard A. "Rick" Lillie SGT, USMC



Rick's name will be forever memorialized on Panel 05W Line 117 of The Wall in Washington, DC. He had volunteered for a mission on 18 February 1971, but the Sikorsky CH53-D helicopter developed mechanical problems and went down, taking its crew and passengers with it.

Rick was a native of Richey, Montana, a small town with a dwindling population located in the eastern part of the state, between the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. The area boasts good farmland, but no longer has the population to support it. A few years after Rick's graduation from Richey High School, the school began a co-op arrangement with nearby Lambert High, a drastic move to allow both schools to continue offering full academic and sports programs.

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His Marine MOS was 4313 (Broadcast Journalist), but in Vietnam Rick was assigned to AFVN's Detachment 2 at Da Nang as a combat photographer. He was proud to be a Marine, and was considering making the Corps his career. A Sergeant at the age of 22, Rick needed three more aerial missions to earn his Combat Air Crew Badge. He would be in-Country for only three more months and his schedule was busy, so it was essential that he volunteer for every available mission. He hoped to return to Parris Island after the war and use his experience to train recruits.

The crash occurred as Rick accompanied a crew on a mission from Da Nang to Phu Cat, located along the coast in the central part of RVN. Although the incident was officially ruled "non-hostile," the enemy was active in the area surrounding Phu Cat. Five crew members and four passengers were lost in the crash.

Rick was single. He left no dependents.

