



SP4 James T. Davis
3d Radio Research Unit
Killed in Action 22 Dec 1961



This page is for you Bro.

{This tribute page was designed by Rocky Chilson}



[Added Feb 5th, 2002: Click this link to see photo's of James Davis burial site.](#)



"Official Account"

(Source: MI Fact Book)

Specialist Four James T. Davis served as a 3rd Radio Research Unit advisor to elements of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). In this capacity, Specialist Davis participated in numerous operations in direct support of ARVN tactical forces, thus exposing himself to great danger from Viet Cong (VC) rebels.

On 22 December 1961, his team was required to go to a new position. On the way, the team was ambushed by the VC. The truck in which they were riding hit a road mine, and the men were thrown from the truck. Davis was still able to function and managed to fire several rounds from his M-1 before being killed. From an investigation of the ambush area and an interview with a survivor, it was obvious that Specialist Davis died defending his comrades-in-arms. He was the first Army Security Agency soldier to be killed in the Vietnam War.

President Johnson later termed Davis "The first American to fall in defense of our freedom in Vietnam."

Note From Rocky:

There are various versions of this incident. My Senior Operator, MSG Troung, claimed to be the lone survivor. The validity of his claim, I cannot verify. Here is another version:

December 22, 1961. For Tom Davis, the day began like any other since his arrival in Vietnam in May. Scheduled to take his men and his electronic equipment into the field to monitor Viet Cong radio broadcasts, he looked forward to another uneven day. His thoughts on that warm December morning turned, as they often did, to his family... his wife, Gerrie, and his 13-month-old daughter, Cindy. Some 10,000 miles away, they were preparing the house for the holidays. This would be the first Christmas he would spend away from them.

When first assigned to Vietnam, Davis had to search out the country on a map. Even now, after six months in the rice paddies and the jungles with the 3rd Radio Research Unit, the country seemed new and exciting. "It is really an experience for me," he wrote. "The country is really very beautiful and the people fascinating. I believe I have really learned a lot since coming here."

Despite missing his family, Davis felt proud to be serving his country. "You did your job in the 40s," he had written his father, James Clarence "Bum" Davis, who had fought in the Second World War. "Now it's my turn." And like many of his fellow advisors, he felt certain that his work was important. "I feel a little proud of this deal. I just hope that our little bit will help to ease things in this part of the world. I don't feel too badly about having to be here when I think of all the potential good it will have for this country."

Initially, Davis's brushes with the enemy had been slight. As the months wore on, however, the war seemed to be closing in as Communist attacks steadily increased. In August, he wrote to his father telling him of the narrow escape of two U.S. advisors from an enemy ambush:

"We became a little more involved in this conflict yesterday... It looks like the bad guys have gotten the word to start giving us hell. It breaks the daily routine even though it could become a bit dangerous. I didn't really get shaky until I realized that I was very lucky. I had worked the night before, and I and another fellow came over the road earlier that morning on our way back to town. So, it's just chance that it was Bill instead of us that got hit. Fortunately, nobody was hurt."

Later, on December 22, returning from the field in a truck transporting himself and ten South Vietnamese soldiers along a road 12 miles west of Saigon, the young Tennessean glanced uneasily into the brush lining the roadside. Although the road appeared clear and an ARVN outpost lay less than a mile ahead in the village of Duc Hoa, Davis remained alert. The guerillas had an uncanny knack of appearing out of nowhere.

Suddenly, an explosion rocked the 3/4-ton truck, ripping through the tailgate. A remote-control mine planted in the road had been detonated as the truck rolled by. The damaged

vehicle limped forward another 30 yards before dying along the right side of the road. Immediately, the VC opened fire, raking the disabled vehicle with submachinegun fire, cutting down the Vietnamese soldiers as they struggled out the rear of the truck.

Riding in the cab, Davis had escaped the mine explosion. Now he reacted. Snatching up his M-14 carbine [sic], he scrambled from the smoking cab and returned the fire. A VC bullet found its mark, piercing his head and killing him instantly.

Specialist 4 James Thomas Davis, RA 14 696 877, Livingston, Tennessee, had made the ultimate sacrifice for his country - his life. He had also secured for himself a tragic niche in American history: the first American to die in combat in Vietnam. He would not be the last.

(Excerpted from "The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War 1961-1975" by George Esper and The Associated Press, published by Ballantine Books, New York, First Edition, November 1983)

17 Jan 1998

"Dear Rocky:

Your tribute brought tears to the eyes. Thanks. After 36 years, it still pulls the ol' heart strings. Have just watched the program "National Security Agency" which will be shown on the Discovery network early this year, don't know the date as yet. The program was great. All about the history of the agency. Having visited the U.S.A.S.A. in 1969, during a memorial, I look forward to a return visit, maybe this spring. I've not seen the "Wall", do not think I could stand it. I did see a mockup that toured the US several years ago and it was awesome. I'm 49, would have been in Nam in 1970 except for a medical condition which kept me out. From the time period, I'm really not sure whether I glad or not. I have a lot of high school friends who went, some didn't make it back. Anyway, enough of my rambling. From the Davis family (dad passed away in 1982) thank you. As you stated, let's not forget. The A.S.A. and 3rd RRG will always be in my heart."

Jack Davis

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