

JUSTIN CRAIG HONAMAN

VALOR

United States Army First Lieutenant Justin Craig Honaman from Atlanta is inducted into the 2017 Class of the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for his heroism and numerous acts of selfless bravery as an Army Medical Service Corps Dustoff Helicopter Pilot and Aircraft Commander in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. As a Dustoff Pilot, he provided life-saving medical extractions for wounded or killed-in-action American Soldiers, wounded allied soldiers, wounded Vietnamese civilians, and wounded Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army Prisoners of War. All too often, he performed these critical and treacherous missions in both day and night severe weather conditions, in extremely low visibility conditions at night, or while hovering for extended periods of time above or slowly hovering down through small openings in triple canopy jungle, or on the sides of steep mountain slopes. If these flight challenges were not enough, and given the nature of this unforgiving combat environment, he often flew these missions while receiving intense ground fire from well-concealed enemy positions. During his 12-month tour, he was credited with saving the lives of 1,550 patients, during 653 combat missions, while flying 610 combat hours for an average of over four lives saved per day. As an example, on 1 November 1967, in support of the 25th Infantry Division, he answered the call for the immediate extraction of many critically wounded Soldiers while their Infantry Company was still in very heavy contact with a well-armed enemy force. As he approached the pick-up site, he realized that landing his aircraft on the debris strewn ground was impossible. With focused determination, he bravely hovered over the stumps and huge logs as the wounded were lifted up and into his waiting bird and while receiving intense enemy small arms fire. Because the number of casualties was so great, he continued to make extractions well into the night and always under fire from the enemy. For his heroism in Vietnam, he was awarded the Combat Medical Badge, 19 Air Medals for combat flying, two Air Medals for Valor, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.