

Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



Airman First Class Charles D. King



Air Force Cross

Vietnam War

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, takes pride in presenting the Air Force Cross (Posthumously) to Airman First Class Charles Douglas King, United States Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Pararescue Specialist in an HH-3E Rescue Helicopter of Detachment 1, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 3d Air Rescue and Recovery Group, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, in action near Ban Lathama, Mahaxia District, Khammouan Province, Laos, on 25 December 1968. On that date, Airman King was aboard a helicopter engaged in the recovery of a downed United States Air Force pilot from an extremely hostile area. With complete disregard for his own safety, Airman King voluntarily descended on a rescue hoist more than one hundred feet to the ground to aid the injured pilot. Once on the ground, he carried the rescue device to the pilot, freed him from the parachute, secured him to the rescue device, and then used the cable hoist to drag the pilot to a point near the hovering helicopter. Suddenly, enemy soldiers closed in and directed

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automatic weapons fire at Airman King, the injured pilot, and the helicopter. Though wounded, Airman King, in an extraordinary display of courage and valor, placed his comrades' lives above his own by refusing to continue their exposure to the murderous enemy fire. Without taking time to secure himself to the hoist cable, he radioed that he was hit and for the helicopter to pull away. Airman King made this selfless decision with the full realization that once the helicopter departed, he would be alone, wounded, and surrounded by armed, hostile forces. Through his professional dedication, aggressiveness, and extraordinary heroism, Airman King reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.