

Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



Airman First Class Joel E. Talley



Air Force Cross

Vietnam

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to Joel E. Talley, Airman, U.S. Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force while serving as a Rescue Specialist (Pararescueman) on an HH-3E Rescue Helicopter of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 3d Air Rescue and Recovery Group, DaNang Air Base, Vietnam, SEVENTH Air Force, in action in near Dong

Hoi, North Vietnam on 2 July 1968. On that date, Airman Talley volunteered to be lowered to the ground from a hovering helicopter into the jungle of North Vietnam to rescue an injured pilot, who had ejected the previous day. The downed pilot had parachuted into a concentration of North Vietnamese Army regulars who immediately surrounded him and set up gun positions to trap the forthcoming rescue helicopters. Four rescue attempts were driven off, and a supporting fighter aircraft was shot down by devastating ground fire, which encircled the survivor's position. Despite full knowledge of the well-laid trap, Airman Talley voluntarily descended to search the jungle floor. After an extensive search he found the helpless survivor, carried him to the rescue device, and signaled the helicopter to commence extraction. While Airman Talley and the survivor were being hoisted, a fusillade of fire raked the helicopter scoring more than forty hits, forcing the helicopter to exit the area, exposing both airmen to hostile fire. The rescue was successfully accomplished. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Airman Talley reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.