



**Terence F. Courtney**

**Rank, Service:**

**Captain O-3, U.S. Air Force**

**Veteran of:**

**U.S. Air Force 1968-1972  
Cold War 1968-1972  
Vietnam War 1971-1972 (KIA)**

**Tribute:**

Terence Courtney was born on August 15, 1946, in Chicago, Illinois. He was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program on May 25, 1968, and went on active duty beginning June 15, 1968. Lt Courtney completed Undergraduate Pilot Training at Webb AFB, Texas, in June 1969, and after completing B-52 Stratofortress Combat Crew Training, he was assigned to the 441st Bomb Squadron at Mather AFB, California, from December 1969 to December 1970. He then completed AC-119K Stinger gunship Combat Crew Training, and then deployed to Southeast Asia where he served with the 18th Special Operations Squadron at Phan Rang AB and Da Nang AB in the Republic of Vietnam, and Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, from June 1971 until he was killed in action on May 2, 1972. Terence Courtney was buried at the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California.



**His Air Force Cross Citation reads:**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Terence F. Courtney for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an AC-119K Aircraft Commander at An Loc, Republic of Vietnam, on 2 May 1972. On that date, while supporting friendly forces under intense enemy fire, Captain Courtney's aircraft was struck in the right wing by antiaircraft artillery fire. Both right engines began to burn profusely, with flames trailing from the wing to the tail of the aircraft. Control of the aircraft had become so difficult that Captain Courtney had to use all his strength to maintain control. He wrapped his arms around the yoke to keep the aircraft's nose from pitching down. When he could no longer control the aircraft, he ordered his crew to bail out. Immediately after the last man bailed out, the aircraft crashed and burst into flames. As a result of Captain Courtney's conscious and deliberate decision to sacrifice his own life by remaining at the controls of his doomed aircraft, seven of his crew were recovered with only minor injuries. His courage, gallantry, intrepidity, and sense of responsibility toward his fellowmen overrode any desire or instinctive reaction for his own self-preservation. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, and in the dedication of his service to his country, Captain Courtney reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

