



# Distinguished Flying Cross Award Citation

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross to Lieutenant Commander James L. Keyes for heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight while serving with Detachment Three of Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron Three in the Republic of Vietnam on 23 March 1969. Lieutenant Commander Keyes was serving as co-pilot aboard the wing aircraft in a UH-1B armed helicopter Light Fire Team on a visual reconnaissance and strike mission against entrenched enemy positions on Dai Dung Mountain near the Cambodian border. When the lead aircraft was struck by ground fire and crashed he quickly assumed tactical command and contacted the necessary units for assistance. While the aircraft commander pressed repeated attacks on the enemy positions, Lieutenant Commander Keyes spotted and placed accurate fire on the nearest enemy positions, denying him the offensive and forcing him to stay away from the wreckage and survivors. During the ensuing hour of continuous combat, he totally disregarded his own safety and coordinated ground and air units in the successful rescue of four wounded comrades. When his M-60 machine gun would no longer fire, he fired his M-16 rifle at enemy ground forces near the wreckage. Following the successful rescue of the surviving crew members, he again directed his aircraft through intense enemy fire in order to drop his remaining ammunition to Vietnamese ground forces attempting to recover the bodies and weapons from the wreckage. Lieutenant Commander Keyes' courage under fire, decisiveness, exercise of command and demonstrated professionalism were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.