

..... PARTING SHOT



Gerald Herbert/AP

Some Gave All

Jack Rittichier, the only U.S. Coastguardsman listed as missing in action in the Vietnam War, arrived in-country on April 3, 1968. One of the first Coast Guard helicopter pilots in the war, he volunteered to serve with the USAF 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Da Nang Air Base.

Two months later, on June 9, 1968, on a rescue mission to extract a U.S. Marine Corps A-4 Skyhawk pilot shot down over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, Lt. Rittichier's HH-3E Jolly Green Giant, with three crewmembers aboard, came under heavy enemy fire, crash-landed, and burst into flames.

Rittichier and the three crewmen were listed as

Missing in Action, Presumed Dead.

Thirty-five years later, a U.S. military MIA team recovered and identified Rittichier's remains at the crash site. On October 6, 2003, he was put to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Pictured in the photo are his brother Dave, right, with his hand on his chest; his wife Maggie; and Lt. Rittichier's widow, Carol Wypick.

Of the 8,000 Coast Guardsmen who served in the Vietnam War, three officers, including Lt. Rittichier, who received a posthumous Silver Star, and four enlisted men were killed in action, and 59 were wounded. ♦