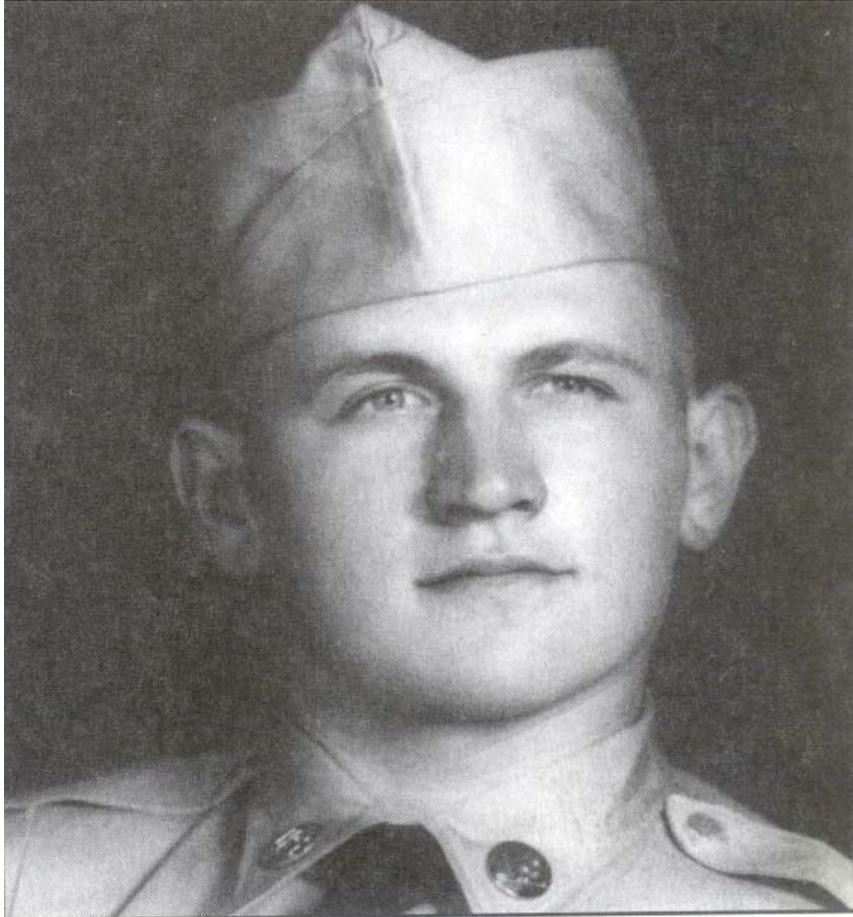


LYLE MACKEDANZ



Lyle Everett Mackedanz was born in 1939 near Hutchinson Minnesota. He grew up in rural Hutchinson attending Emmanuel Lutheran Parochial School and graduated from Hutchinson High School.

Lyle was the oldest of four children born to Everett and Hazel Mackedanz. Lyle enjoyed the outdoors and became an avid fisherman. He loved to go fishing in all seasons in Minnesota, including ice fishing in the cold Minnesota winters.



In June 1958 Lyle decided to enlist in the US Army. He was sent to Fort Carson Colorado for Basic Training.



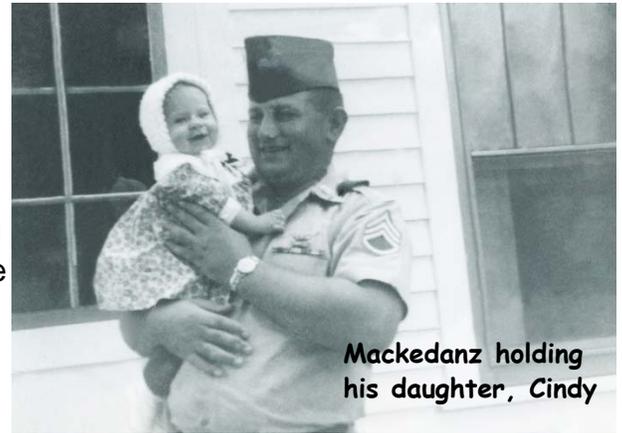
In 1963 Lyle was sent to Vietnam. He served one year in country as a Helicopter Mechanic. During his tour, Lyle survived a helicopter crash.

Mackedanz found that he enjoyed the Army and planned to make it his career.



After he returned home from Vietnam, Lyle continued with his military career. He served with great pride and distinction. While home on leave, he met the woman that would become his wife. He was married and planned to begin to start a family of his own.

Lyle loved children. He planned to have many of his own. Mackedanz had one daughter, Cindy. She was four months old when he volunteered for a second tour of duty in Vietnam.



Mackedanz holding his daughter, Cindy

He arrived in Vietnam again in 1967, ready to complete a second tour of duty so he could return home to his wife and young daughter. He served with the 17th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 16th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade as a Staff Sergeant.

The majority of Lyle's tour went well. He was getting within about a month of being able to come back home when he volunteered to take the place of a fellow soldier on a mission. The guy was a "short timer" with only days left in his tour. It was Lyle's day off.



First Aviation Brigade Patch



Lyle Mackedanz in Vietnam.

On 20 April 1968, a UH-1H helicopter crashed at Landing Zone Veghel. The following day, April 21, Lyle had volunteered for a mission to conduct a recovery operation at LZ Veghel for the helicopter.

At approximately 0730 (7:30am) on 21 April, a crew departed Camp Eagle to check out the situation and conditions for the operation. Due to marginal weather, the mission was delayed.

Finally, around 1100 (11:00am) Lyle took off from Camp Eagle. He was serving as a Technical Observer aboard a UH-1D maintenance chase ship helicopter, with a radio call sign of Fosdick 5. Lyle and five others had their orders for a combat flight over South Vietnam.

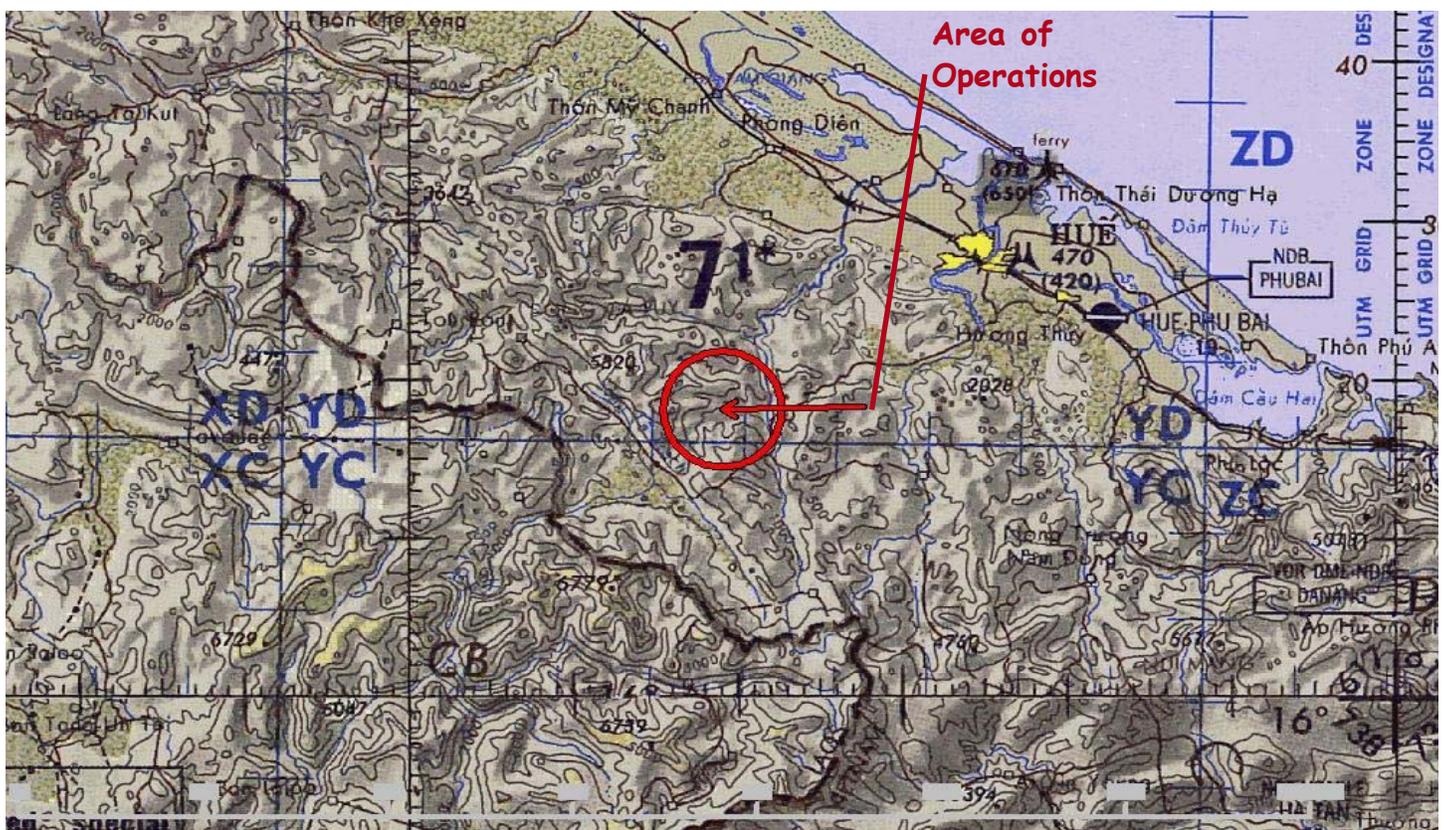
The mission would prove to be a fateful one.

Fosdick 5 was commanded by Captain Floyd Olsen and piloted by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Link. Specialist 5 Frankie Johnson Jr served as Crew Chief, and Specialist 4 Larry Jamerson was the Door Gunner. Mackedanz was the Technical Observer, and Specialist 4 James Creamer was a passenger.

After departing from Camp Eagle, the men flew to Fire Support Base Bastogne which was the designated pick-up zone (PZ). Fosdick 5 stayed with the other assault aircraft on the mission before picking up rigging equipment for the recovery of the downed helicopter at LZ Veghel.

During the course of the mission, radio contact was kept with all of the helicopters in the group of nearly 15 aircraft. The operations officer of the operation heard from Fosdick 5 that they had set rigging, and were flying overhead the Landing Zone at Veghel. Later he heard from the aircraft that they had gone above the cloud layer and were flying at about 3,500 ft altitude.

The Command and Control aircraft soon reported that the weather had turned for the worse, and the determination was made that all flights would return to previous status. By this time, Fosdick 5 was enroute to Camp Eagle. They arrived and held until the weather returned to satisfactory conditions.



At approximately 1430 (2:30pm), Fosdick 5 again departed Camp Eagle for continuation of the recovery operations. Improvements in the weather conditions made the mission a possibility once again. Once airborne, communication was made with Lyle's helicopter that the possible extraction of a Marine gunship was also possible during the mission after the extraction of the UH-1H aircraft. Fosdick 5 reported that they were going to go to Phu Bai for another sling rigging for the gunship extraction. Communication was made to Fosdick 5 that the extraction of the Marine aircraft would need approval from the Marines as it was their aircraft. Due to the tactical situation, the recoveries were cancelled.

At 1515 (3:15pm) Fosdick 5 was informed the missions were cancelled, they acknowledged. This was the last communication from Fosdick 5.

By 1530 (3:30pm), the weather in the area was again becoming marginal. Flights continued, however, until about 1730 (5:30pm). Around 1800 (6pm) it was noted that communication had not been received from Fosdick 5. Reports came from other aircraft in the group that they had not heard from Lyle's helicopter, and communication with Fosdick 5 was attempted. No response was received. Word went up to Battalion that an aircraft was missing, and an alert was sent out to all nearby air-bases to check their ramps for Fosdick 5.

During this time, the 17th's aircraft were flying combat assault operations and were not available for immediate search and rescue operations. They did not return to base until after sunset. The search of the surrounding airfields took a large part of the night, with no results. By the morning of 22 April, plans were formed for the initiation of a search and rescue mission for the lost aircraft.

Approximately sixteen aircraft searched from dawn until dusk for Fosdick 5 with negative results. Continued search missions were conducted for the next several weeks with negative results.

Fosdick 5 was gone. All six of the men on board were missing.



**Captain
Floyd W. Olsen**



**CWO3
Robert Link**



**Specialist 5
Frankie Johnson**



**Specialist 5
Larry Jamerson**



**Specialist 4
James Creamer**



**Staff Sergeant
Lyle Mackedanz**

On 8 May 1968 elements of the Army Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 8th Airborne division recovered the dogtags of Crew Chief Frankie Johnson in a "non US 3/4 ton truck". It was not established if the truck was allied or enemy, nor if there were any other items found in the vicinity of the truck.

On 25 May 1968, a 101st Airborne Division gunship sighted the tail boom of a crashed helicopter. The following day a gunship from the 17th Assault Helicopter Company made a positive identification of the tail boom markings of the helicopter as #66-16209, FOSDICK 5. Intense enemy fire made further ariel or ground reconnaissance impossible.

On May 27, members of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Airborne Infantry discovered the main rotor blades of FOSDICK 5 in a river bed 200 meters west of the identified tail boom. They continued to the area of the tail boom for further reconnaissance. When the tactical situation changed, the forces withdrew.

On 31 May 1968, members of the accident board along with infantry elements for security flew to the accident site. Parts of the aircraft were discovered over a 300 meter area. The cockpit and cabin of the aircraft were not found. No crew members, personal effects, signs nor any indication of graves were found in the area. After two hours on the ground, the group came under enemy fire twice. When they evacuated the area, the helicopter they were in came under enemy anti aircraft fire, and one of the aircraft was hit.

After evaluating the intelligence reports, enemy hostilities in the area, and evidence of enemy anti aircraft weapons in the area, it was suspected that Fosdick 5 was hit by enemy fire and came apart in the air. The crew was still missing and presumed dead.

The Mackedanz family back in Hutchinson was notified that Lyle and all aboard the aircraft were killed. No explanation was given to the discovery of Specialist Johnson's dogtags in a non military truck. Lyle Everett Mackedanz was promoted (while MIA) to Sergeant First Class. Lyle's daughter, Cindy, was one year old when her father disappeared. She grew up only knowing him from photos and stories.

In 1985, declassified CIA documents obtained via the Freedom of Information Act contained detailed drawings of a Vietcong Prison Camp and a list of positively identified Prisoners of War held by the North Vietnamese. Lyle's name was on the list.

Copies of the report were given to the Mackedanz family, who were never told there was even a remote possibility Lyle could have been alive and captured. The Department of Defense suspects the accuracy and reliability of these documents.

For forty years after the events of that day, family members of Lyle Mackedanz have struggled through the lack of closure to Lyle's circumstance. A rollercoaster of possible leads and information pertaining to Lyle's status has made those years that much harder.

If Lyle was indeed killed on that day in April 1968, the family can accept that, but if he is one of the many some believe are still alive, they want him home. For forty years they have dealt with the heart-wrenching loss of Lyle, and for over twenty fought with the possibility that that something else could have happened to him.

The questions still remain, and answers are few and far between. One thing is clear, however, Lyle's memory, and his sacrifice for his country are not forgotten, not by those that knew him.



Although she never knew her grandfather, Natasha Johnson (Cindy's daughter) honored his memory with the work above. Natasha went to school for, and has become a professional photographer.

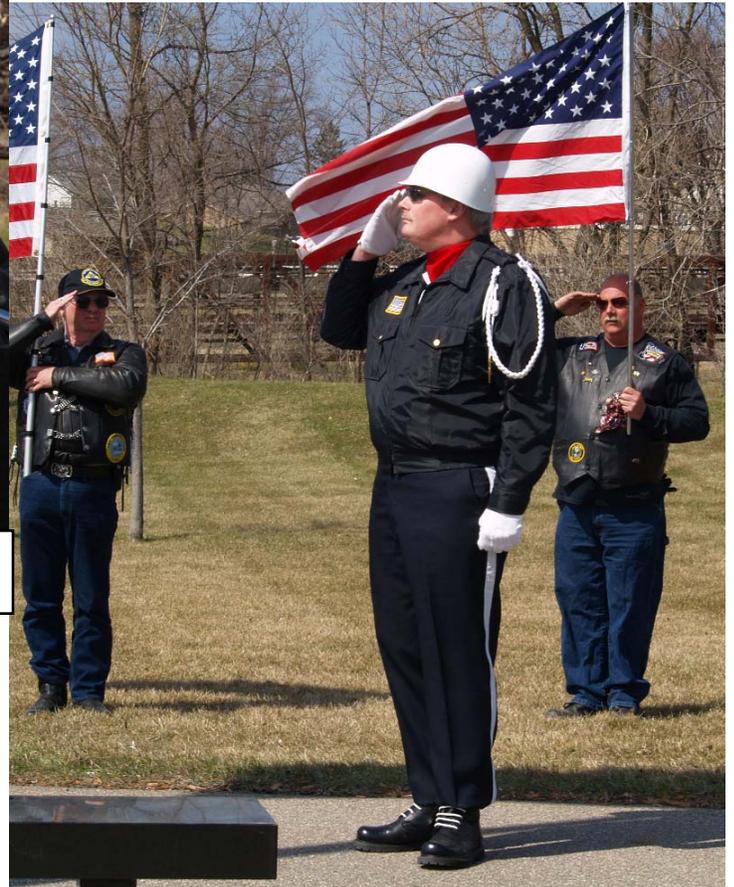


In April 2008, Lyle's second cousin, Ron Mackedanz, worked to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Lyle's disappearance. A memorial program was held at the Veteran's Memorial Park in Hutchinson. Patriot Guard riders stood a flag line, the Hutchinson Memorial color Guard provided a 21 gun salute and Taps, and a helicopter provided a tribute flyover. A history of Lyle's story was presented by Ron, also a Vietnam veteran.



Ron Mackedanz at Lyle's Remembrance Day
photo by Natasha Johnson

At the close of the service, Ron presented Lyle's father, Everett, wife, Carol, and daughter, Cindy with folded American flags in honor of Lyle.



Honor Guard Salute - photo by Natasha Johnson



Presentation of the flags
photo by Natasha Johnson



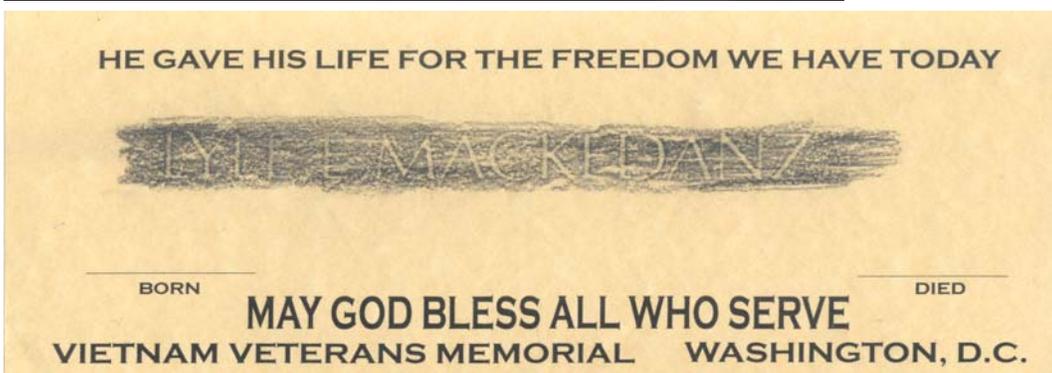
POW/MIA bracelet worn in memory of Lyle Mackedanz.



Patriot Guard members stand in silent tribute to Lyle. Photo & photo art by Natasha Johnson.



For his service in the US Army Lyle earned the following awards:
 Air Crewman's wings, Ribbons: Purple Heart (top), (second row from left) Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, (bottom row from left) Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, & Republic of Vietnam Service Medal.



Lyle's name is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. To the left is a rubbing of Lyle's name taken from the memorial.