

44 Del Norters remembered on Memorial Day

June 7, 2023



At the Memorial Day service at the cemetery, retired Crescent City Police Chief and Coast Guard veteran Doug Plack slowly read the names of 44 Del Norters killed in action (KIA) during military combat. Each one of these heroes has a unique story to share which goes far beyond the gravestone which sits atop their remains. It is indeed hallowed ground.

With the help of Army veteran and Crescent City resident John Wood, who served with Howard Earl Cramblet, the Triplicate takes this opportunity to remember this KIA hero.

Howard Earl Cramblet was raised in Crescent City and played basketball for the Warriors. After graduating from the Coast Guard Academy, Cramblet transferred to the Army Air corps. Cramblet was trained as a helicopter pilot with D Troop (Light Horse) of the famous Black Knights of the Third Squadron, Fifth Cavalry Regiment, Ninth Infantry Division, in Vietnam. His chopper exploded in mid-air after taking enemy fire and he was killed May 12, 1969.

Crambley was flying low in an OH 6A scout reconnaissance helicopter, the most dangerous duty for chopper pilots in the Vietnam war.

These helicopters flew very low to draw enemy fire so the attack helicopter guns could spot the source of the attack.

The posthumous awards to Crambley include the Purple Heart, Air Medal with a six oakleaf cluster, denoting each heroic action, the army commendation for heroic action and the Bronze Star. Howard Earl Crambley is buried between his mother and father, a World War II veteran, who also served in the Army Air Corps.

Howard Earl Crambley was 26 when he was killed in action.

Special thanks to John Wood for his contribution to his brother in arms, Howard Earl Crambley.