

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



BENJAMIN RAYMOND CASCIO

Captain, U. S. Marine Corps
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 362
Flying Medivacs for 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines
Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, 28 April 1968

Citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross to Captain Benjamin Raymond Cascio (MCSN: 0-89613), United States Marine Corps, for heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight while serving as a Pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO (HMM-362), First Marine Aircraft Wing in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. During the early morning hours of 28 April 1968, Captain Cascio launched as Section Leader of a flight of two UH-34 transport helicopters assigned an emergency medical evacuation mission in Quang Tri Province. Arriving over the designated area, he was informed that the Marines had recently broken contact with a large North Vietnamese Army force and that the landing zone was extremely small. Undaunted by the hazardous situation, he skillfully maneuvered his aircraft into the landing zone and landed safely. While the last casualty was being embarked, the aircraft came under a heavy volume of hostile fire and hand grenades. During the initial moments of the attack, Captain Cascio was seriously wounded and the aircraft sustained extensive battle damage. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, he immediately relinquished control of the aircraft to his co-pilot who quickly lifted the helicopter out of the hazardous area. Ignoring his painful injury, Captain Cascio rapidly contacted the escort helicopter and, informing the pilot of his aircraft's precarious situation, turned on his helicopters exterior lights to pinpoint his position. Throughout the flight to a secure landing zone, he continuously offered words of encouragement to his inexperienced co-pilot. His heroic and timely actions inspired all who observed him and were instrumental in saving the lives of several Marines. Captain Casio's courage, exceptional aeronautical ability and steadfast devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger contributed significantly to the accomplishment of the hazardous mission and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.