



## **Delbert W. Fleener**

Date of Birth: 1 Mar 29

Home of Record: Indianapolis, Indiana



### **Air Force Cross**

*Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War*

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to Captain Delbert W. Fleener (AFSN: 0-53927A), United States Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force while serving as an O-1 Pilot of the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam, in action near the District of Binh Duong, Republic of Vietnam, on 17 December 1965. On that date, Captain Fleener was diverted from his original target to search for a pilot who had been shot down over hostile held territory. With complete disregard for his personal safety, and though exposed to an intensive barrage of small arms, automatic weapons and

anti-aircraft fire, Captain Fleener continuously flew his aircraft at an extremely low altitude over the hostile positions in an effort to locate the downed pilot. The wreckage was sighted and almost entirely hidden by hostile forces attempting to camouflage the plane. With only four rockets, Captain Fleener made repeated low passes over the wreckage, firing one rocket on each pass. This daring and aggressive attack by Captain Fleener caused the hostile forces to disperse temporarily and denied them access to secret material and valuable radio equipment. After expending his ordnance, he landed his badly damaged aircraft on a nearby airstrip to refuel and rearm his aircraft. After returning to the area, he provided air cover for a helicopter crew which was attempting to discover the fate of the downed pilot. Although wounded in his right leg and in great pain, Captain Fleener continuously provided protection for the helicopter for over thirty minutes before being ordered to leave the area. While fighting off loss of consciousness, Captain Fleener successfully flew his crippled aircraft into a remote airstrip and landed without further incident. The extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness demonstrated by, Captain Fleener reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

**General Orders:** Department of the Air Force, Special Order GB-122 (May 6, 1966), **Action Date:** 17-Dec-65, **Service:** Air Force, **Rank:** Captain  
**Company:** 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron,  
**Division:** Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam

**NOTE:** *The pilot that CPT Fleener was attempting to rescue was **Red Marker CPT Donald R. Hawley**, who was killed in action that day.*



## **Distinguished Flying Cross**

*Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War*

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished

Flying Cross to Captain Delbert W. Fleener (AFSN: 0-53927A), United States Air Force, for heroism while participating in aerial flight as a Forward Air Controller near the District of Long Phuoc Thon, Republic of Vietnam, on 6 December 1965. On that date Captain Fleener, in an effort to save the lives of a contingent of friendly Vietnamese ground forces mistaken for insurgents by a flight of fighter aircraft with lost communications, courageously and intentionally maneuvered his aircraft over the friendly forces in line of fire and bombs of the fighter aircraft. By this valiant and heroic act Captain Fleener diverted the fighter aircraft and saved the lives of hundreds of friendly ground forces. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Fleener reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

**General Orders:** Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Special Orders No. G-130 (February 11, 1966), **Action Date:** December 6, 1965, **Service:** Air Force

**Rank:** Captain, **Company:** 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron  
**Division:** Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam