

Veteran Tributes

Honoring Those Who Served

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David B. Hatcher

Rank, Service

Lieutenant Colonel O-5, U.S. Air Force

Veteran of:

U.S. Air Force 1954-1974
Cold War 1954-1974
Vietnam War 1965-1973 (POW)

Tribute:

David Hatcher was born in 1934 in Mount Airy, North Carolina. He entered the Aviation Cadet Program of the U.S. Air Force for Aviation Observer and Navigator training on February 24, 1954, and was commissioned a 2d Lt and awarded his Navigator Wings at Harlingen AFB, Texas, on May 9, 1955. His first assignment was as a KB-29 Superfortress Navigator and Radar Operator with the 508th Air Refueling Squadron at Turner AFB, Georgia, from May 1955 to September 1957, followed by service as a KC-97 Stratotanker Navigator with the 341st and then the 71st Air Refueling Squadrons at Dow AFB, Maine, from September 1957 to June 1958. Lt Hatcher next attended pilot training and was awarded his pilot wings at Vance AFB, Oklahoma, in September 1959. After completing F-100 Super Sabre Combat Crew Training, he served as an F-100 and then as an F-105 Thunderchief pilot with the 22nd Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing at Bitburg AB, West Germany, from September 1960 to September 1963, followed by service as an F-105 pilot with the 333rd and the 335th Tactical Fighter Squadrons of the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, from September 1963 to December 1965. Capt Hatcher then deployed to Southeast Asia where he served as an F-105 pilot with the 333rd Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, from December 1965 until he was forced to eject over North Vietnam on May 30, 1966. He was captured and taken as a Prisoner of War the next day, on May 31, 1966. After spending 2,451 days in captivity, Col Hatcher was released during Operation Homecoming on February 12, 1973. He was briefly hospitalized to recover from his injuries at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, and then served as Chief of Flight Operations of the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB from August 1973 until his retirement from the Air Force on March 1, 1974.

His Silver Star Citation reads:

For the Period 1 June 1966 to 8 June 1966: This officer distinguished himself by gallantry and intrepidity in action in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force during the above period while a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam. Ignoring international agreements on treatment of prisoners of war, the enemy resorted to mental and physical cruelties to obtain information, confessions, and propaganda materials. This individual resisted their demands by calling upon his deepest inner strengths in a manner which reflected his devotion to duty and great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



HATCHER, DAVID BURNETT

Name: David Burnett Hatcher
 Branch/Rank: UNITED STATES AIR FORCE/O3
 Unit: 333 TFS
 Date of Birth:
 Home City of Record: MT. AIRY NC
 Date of Loss: 30-May-66
 Country of Loss: NORTH VIETNAM
 Loss Coordinates: 221600 North 1042200 East
 Status (in 1973):
 Category:
 Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: F105
 Missions: 87
 Other Personnel in Incident:
 Refno:

Source: Compiled by P.O.W. NETWORK from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews and CACCF = Combined Action Combat Casualty File.

REMARKS: 730212 RELEASED BY DRV

05/20/1998.

David B. Hatcher, (Dave)

Born Mount Airy, NC.... March 27, 1934

Trained Spence Field, Moultrie Ga; Vance AB, Enid Okla.;
 Williams AB Chandler AZ.; Nellis AB, Las Vegas, Nevada. 1958-1960.
 36th TFW, 22nd TFS, Bitburg Germany F-100C and F-105D. 1960-1961
 4th TFW, 335th and 333rd TFS Seymour Johnson AB Goldsboro, NC
 1963-1965 F-105D.
 Talkli AB, Thailand Dec 1965 to May 30 1996. 333 TFS. 87 Missions
 into North Vietnam.

Air Force 1954 thru 1974. Wife, Willodene, Married May 9, 1955.
 Currently a Real Estate Appraiser in North Carolina. Two daughters and
 sons in law with 3 grand children, and another on the way.

Shot down May 30, 1996, while strafing a train Northwest of Dien Bien
 Phu near the China Border. Don Heiliger was flying wing, who later
 became a POW. Captured next day, and arrived at the Hanoi Hilton
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Served with some fine Americans at the Zoo, Little Vegas, Plantation,
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 in solitary and Dave Burroughs was my first cell mate. Christmas, 1966
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Let us spend our waning years showing that same spirit to our families,

our neighbors, and our nation, let us entreat the All Mighty God, Our Heavenly Father, to have mercy on our great land, and to give wisdom to those who serve in high places. Without His intervention, what hope is there? We can continue to be examples in the sphere in which we serve.

RET LTCOL/RESIDES NC/WIFE WILLODENE/ALIVE 98

[MORE INFO](#)



David Burnett Hatcher

Date of birth: March 27, 1934

Place of Birth: North Carolina, Mount Airy

Home of record: Charlotte North Carolina

Status: POW

David Hatcher was interned as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam after he was shot down on May 30, 1966, and was held until his release on February 12, 1973.

AWARDS AND CITATIONS



Silver Star

See more recipients of this award

Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant Colonel David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force while serving as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam from 1 June 1966 to 8 June 1966. Ignoring international agreements on treatment of prisoners of war, the enemy resorted to mental and physical cruelties to obtain information, confessions, and propaganda materials. This individual resisted their demands by calling upon his deepest inner strengths in a manner which reflected his devotion to duty and great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Action Date: June 1 - 8, 1966

Service: Air Force

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

Division: Prisoner of War (North Vietnam)

HALL OF VALOR MilitaryTimes



Legion of Merit

See more recipients of this award

Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War

(Citation Needed) - SYNOPSIS: Lieutenant Colonel David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, was awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States while serving as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam. His ceaseless efforts, by a continuous showing of resistance to an enemy who ignored all international agreements on treatment of Prisoners of War, in the extremely adverse conditions of the communist prisons of North Vietnam, demonstrated his professional competence, unwavering devotion, and loyalty to his country. Despite the harsh treatment through his long years of incarceration, he continued to perform his duties in a clearly exceptional manner which reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Action Date: Vietnam War

Service: Air Force

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

Division: Prisoner of War (North Vietnam)



Legion of Merit

See more recipients of this award

Awarded for actions during the Peace Time Awards

(Citation Needed) - SYNOPSIS: Lieutenant Colonel David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, was awarded a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Second Award of the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States.

Service: Air Force

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

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Distinguished Flying Cross

[See more recipients of this award](#)

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 with Combat "V" to Captain David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, for heroism while participating in aerial flight as a F-105 Pilot in Southeast Asia on 7 February 1966. On that date, Captain Hatcher, despite intense and accurate ground fire, strafed and destroyed six hostile anti-aircraft gun positions that were firing on his flight. Further attacks resulted in the sinking of two barges and the damage of a military docking area. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Hatcher reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

General Orders: Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Special Orders No. G-355 (May 2, 1966)

Action Date: February 7, 1966

Service: Air Force

Rank: Captain



Distinguished Flying Cross

[See more recipients of this award](#)

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 a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Second Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Captain David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 pilot in Southeast Asia on 25 April 1966 and 26 April 1966. On these dates, Captain Hatcher flew two night, single aircraft, low level, radar bombing missions on a special experimental project over unusually hostile territory. With outstanding courage Captain Hatcher navigated on instruments and radar through numerous exploding anti-aircraft fire and delivered his ordnance on the target. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Hatcher reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

HALL OF VALOR MilitaryTimes

Service: Air Force

Rank: Captain



Prisoner of War Medal

[See more recipients of this award](#)

Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War

Lieutenant Colonel David Burnett Hatcher (AFSN: AD-14519547), United States Air Force, was held as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam from May 30, 1966 until his release on February 12, 1973.

Action Date: May 30, 1966 - February 12, 1973

Service: Air Force

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

Division: Prisoner of War (North Vietnam)

HATCHER, DAVID BURNETT

Name: David Burnett Hatcher
Branch/Rank: UNITED STATES AIR FORCE/O3
Unit: 333 TFS
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Home City of Record: MT. AIRY NC
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Loss Coordinates: 221600 North 1042200 East
Status (in 1973):
Category:
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: F105
Missions: 87
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Source: Compiled by P.O.W. NETWORK from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews and CACCF = Combined Action Combat Casualty File.

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