

James M. Ray Scholarship

Jim Ray was born on November 10, 1949, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967 and was trained in military intelligence. Private Ray went to Vietnam in 1968 and was captured by the Viet Cong near Di Linh, Lam Dong Province, South Vietnam, on March 18, 1968. He was with a unit of the South Vietnamese Army on a road clearing mission when they came under attack. Ray was wounded by an explosion but managed to return fire on the enemy before he was taken captive. Sgt. Ray managed an escape attempt from his captors in July 1969, but he was quickly recaptured. Sgt. James Ray died in captivity on November 30, 1969. His remains have never been returned to the United States.



S/SGT James Michael Ray was declared a Prisoner of War on March 18, 1968 in South Vietnam while serving in the United States Army. Unfortunately, his whereabouts are still unknown. In the spirit of keeping his memory alive, we have named our scholarship in his honor.

His Silver Star Citation Reads:

S/SGT. James M. Ray is awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against an armed enemy while serving as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam during the period July 1969. Sergeant Ray distinguished himself by attempting to escape from an enemy prison camp. He recognized that odds for success were slight and if he was recaptured he would receive severe torture, long periods of solitary confinement, and possible death by execution. Although he was recaptured, he maintained strong conviction in the Code of Conduct. In June 1969, Sergeant Ray was punished for violation of camp regulations by being placed in double chains, one on each ankle. Then in July 1969 while en route to the latrine, he attempted to escape by assaulting a guard. At that time, he had a chain locked to each ankle and was carrying the excess chain in each hand. As he approached the guard sitting on a stool in the guard hooch, he suddenly stopped, dropped the chains, and hit the guard in the face with his fist, knocking him from the stool to the ground. He then reached and grabbed the guard's rifle and started to turn when he slipped and fell. As Sergeant Ray fell to the ground, the additional guard who unlocked him jumped on him, wrapping the chain around his neck and began beating him with his fist. The guard who had been knocked to the ground got up and started to kick and beat on Sgt. Ray. Then both guards wrapped Sergeant Ray in the chains and locked them and then threw him into his bunker. He was left overnight wrapped in the chains and the next day he was again secured to his bunker with two chains, one attached to each ankle. He was not allowed outside his bunker, and his rations were cut to one meal a day. Shortly after this, he was removed from the camp and was never seen again. This extreme gallantry exhibited by Sergeant Ray was amply illustrated by the fact that so few prisoners ever tried to escape, primarily due to the rigid security measures imposed by the camp. This courageous escape attempt served more than to merely get him out of the prison camp. More guards were required, and prisoner morale soared. This act of gallantry, with recognition of the grave risk to his own life, demonstrated a great devotion to duty and his country, which reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Army.