



# GENERAL HENRY H. ARNOLD EDUCATION GRANT

in honor of

## CAPTAIN LANCE PETER SIJAN



Captain Lance P. Sijan is remembered as one of only twelve Air Force recipients of the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War. The road to the ultimate military honor was painful, ultimately, and fatal.

Lance Sijan was born on April 13, 1942 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He graduated from the Air Force Academy in June 1965 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Humanities. Captain Sijan went to Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas and F-4 qualification at George Air Force Base, California. He was then assigned to Da Nang, South Vietnam.

On November 9, 1967, he ejected over North Vietnam after his F-4C aircraft became disabled on a mission. A brain concussion, a mangled right hand, and serious injuries to his left leg were sustained. Despite injury, shock and malnutrition, he successfully evaded capture for more than six weeks. Even after capture, in his emaciated condition, he was able to overpower a guard and escape into the jungle. He was shortly recaptured.

Captain Sijan was transferred to another prison camp, kept in solitary confinement, interrogated at length and severely tortured. Nevertheless, he did not divulge any information to his captors. Captain Sijan subsequently lapsed into delirium and was placed in the care of another prisoner. His spirit remained unbroken until death from pneumonia ended his ordeal less than a month after his capture. He was only 26.

President Ford presented the Medal of Honor posthumously in 1976 to Captain Sijan's parents. His Citation in part read, "Captain Sijan's extraordinary heroism and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at the cost of his life are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Armed Forces." Captain Sijan also received the Purple Heart for the same circumstances.

Each year, the prestigious Sijan award is presented by the Air Force Chief of Staff to two officers and two enlisted people who exhibit outstanding leadership. A cadet dorm at the Air Force Academy is named in honor of Captain Lance Sijan, as a perpetual reminder to cadets of his bravery.