

Corporal Rodolfo Marciano Gonzalez

Posthumous Citizenship Petition



DOB: July 12th, 1944
Migrated to U.S.: 1955
Graduated from High School: 1964
Enlisted: 1965, U.S. Marines,
Service# 2110474
Unit: VMO-6, Command Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st MAW
KIA: November 14th, 1966
Location: Quang Nam Province, Vietnam
State of Texas and City of Harlingen Proclamations: September 20th, 2014
Burial: Mont Meta Memorial Park, San Benito, Cameron County, Texas

Sixty years ago this coming November, Corporal Rodolfo Gonzalez's quest for American citizenship came to a tragic end when hostile fire downed his "Huey" helicopter gunship during a fierce fight about 10 miles south of Danang, Viet Nam. A Mexican born resident alien, Rudy Gonzalez embraced a chance to prove his love for and loyalty to America by volunteering to go to war in Viet Nam. His dream was that military service would lead to full U.S. citizenship, and all the rights and benefits conferred on every American soldier who served with distinction.

The mission that led to Rudy's death was like so many others he had flown before. Gonzalez and three fellow crewmembers were flying cover for medevac flights during a fire fight that saw many US casualties. For the crew of VMO-6, Command Marine Aircraft Group 36, the heat of combat was all too familiar. Corporal Gonzalez's military record already contained several citations for bravery, recognizing his willingness to risk his life to help American soldiers in desperate need.

For any soldier in combat, navigating a safe return to family and loved ones is the ultimate test. That Rudy and his helicopter crew spent hours helping others on that path to safety provided a deep sense of mission within every mission. Rudy's vision for his own future was crystal clear. He wanted to go to college, and saw military service as the path to attain this goal, and this was the message he left with his sister, Francis, before shipping off for Saigon. Go to war in order to go to school. It was simple wisdom for an 18-year old kid who only months before was playing on the golf team at Harlingen High School in Rio Grande Valley of South Texas.

The family's journey from Northern Mexico to the United States began a decade earlier, after a devastating fire destroyed their home in Monterrey. Rodolfo's father, Jose Gonzalez, found work as a master milliner, a hat maker, sponsored by a Harlingen icon and civic leader named E.O. Matz. In exchange for two years of labor, Mr Matz agreed to sponsor the Gonzalez family patriarch in America. And so for two years, the elder Gonzalez saved what he could, intent on bringing the whole family to Harlingen. During that time at least 10 family members lived in the four room house in Monterrey, sharing a single bathroom as they waited for the opportunity to relocate to South Texas.

After immigrating to Harlingen in 1955, the family struggled financially but they came to love their adopted home. Back then, there were no government assistance programs to help in times of need. And even if there were such help available, Jose Gonzalez may have been too proud to take a hand out. The adversity only strengthened the family's resolve to better themselves and their growing extended family.

Rodolfo's death was a devastating blow that still resonates. However, Rodolfo's legacy lives on today as his family has grown and prospered. Four generations later, many family members have earned college degrees, professional status and recognition. There are many small business owners, and even a Pulitzer Prize winning photographer. Despite the tragic loss of one son in Viet Nam, Gonzalez family members have proudly served in the US Military for over half a century.

Now, as the 60th anniversary of Corporal Rodolfo Gonzalez's death approaches, his family wants to see his service and his dream honored. The Gonzalez family of Harlingen, Texas – four generations of American citizens – seeks a posthumous grant of citizenship for their fallen son.

Everyday Mexican immigrants like Jose Gonzalez are vilified in the national political conversation. Daily there is talk of building a wall. Here is an opportunity to recognize a Mexican-born, true American hero...and by granting his simple dream of citizenship, providing a symbol of what America has traditionally meant to so many, for so long. By rescuing wounded comrades, Rudy Gonzalez helped to build bridges that allowed American boys to return home. Please help us to recognize his sacrifice by allowing his final rest to be that of an American citizen.

Respectfully,

The Gonzalez Family

ATTAINED PROMINENCE LOCALLY OR NATIONALLY.

Vietnam Service Medal



The Vietnam Service Medal is presented to any service member who served on temporary duty for more than 30 consecutive days, or 60 non-consecutive days, attached to or regularly serving for one, or more, days with an organization participating in or directly supporting ground (military) operations or attached to or regularly serving for one, or more, days aboard a naval vessel directly supporting military operations in the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos within the defined combat zone (DoD 1348 C6.6.1.1.5. revised September 1996) between the dates of 15 November 1961 to 28 March 1973, and from 29 April 1975 to 30 April 1975

Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation



The Unit Citation Emblem of the colors of the Gallantry Cross is awarded to military personnel in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and Allied units that have been cited and presented a decoration which is prescribed to be awarded on a collective basis.

Known as the Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm (Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm and Frame Unit Citation), the Unit Citation Emblem in the colors of the Gallantry Cross with Palm, was created on January 20, 1968 and was issued with the Gallantry Cross ribbon bar with a bronze palm and [gold frame](#). The former [Republic of Vietnam](#) (South Vietnam) Armed Forces awarded the Gallantry Cross individually to certain military units that distinguished themselves to the same level as would be required for the individual award. Regulations for the issuance of the Vietnam Gallantry Cross permit the wearing of both the individual and unit award simultaneously since both are considered separate awards. The Vietnamese [Fourragere](#) in the colors of the Gallantry Cross represented a military unit cited two times. It was a brilliant golden-yellow, with red intermixed. Department of the Army message 111030Z from April 1974, established the policy that only one emblem for a unit award was authorized to be worn at a time. This change resulted in the fourragere being no longer authorized for wear, as it was representative of multiple awards.^[4] The Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm was awarded to every Allied nation which provided military support to South Vietnam. The unit decoration thus became the most commonly awarded Vietnamese decoration to foreigners, second only to the Republic of [Vietnam Campaign Medal](#).

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal



The Vietnam Campaign Medal may also be awarded to any service member who, while serving outside the geographical limits of the [Republic of Vietnam](#), provided direct combat support to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces for a period exceeding six months. This stipulation most often applies to members who performed Vietnam War support from [Thailand](#) and [Japan](#). In such cases, a U.S. service member must have been awarded either the [Vietnam Service Medal](#) or the [Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal](#) (for service in a Vietnam campaign) to be eligible for the Vietnam Campaign Medal. For those members who were wounded by an enemy force, captured by the enemy in the line of duty, or killed in action, the Vietnam Campaign Medal is automatically awarded regardless of total time served in Vietnam.[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The medal is issued with a device known as the “1960 Bar”. The bar displays the date of 1960 followed by a dash and a blank space. The unusual appearance was caused by the government of the Republic of Vietnam stating that the 1960 bar would show the dates of the Vietnam War from start to finish, with the ending date placed on the 1960 bar after the South Vietnamese had triumphed over [North Vietnam](#) (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam). Since South Vietnam fell, and the government ceased to exist, an ending date for the 1960 Bar was never established.

Air Medal



This air medal was award to Rodolfo four different times for Heroism as a Combat Aircrew Marine.

The Air Medal may be awarded to recognize single acts of merit or heroism, or for meritorious service. Award of the Air Medal is primarily intended to recognize those personnel who are on current crew member or non-crew member flying status which requires them to participate in aerial flight on a regular and frequent basis in the performance of their primary duties. However, it may also be awarded to certain other individuals whose combat duties require regular and frequent flying in other than a passenger status, or individuals who perform a particularly noteworthy act while performing the function of a crew member but who are not on flying status. These individuals must make a discernible contribution to the operational land combat mission or to the mission of the aircraft in flight.

Combat Action Ribbon



Public Law 106-65--Oct. 5, 1999, 113 STAT.588, G, Sec. 564 ([Pub.L. 106-65](#)), "Retroactive Award of the Navy Combat Action Ribbon", permitted the Secretary of the Navy to award the Combat Action Ribbon to a member of the Navy or Marine Corps for participation in ground or surface combat during any period on or after Dec. 7, 1941, and or before March 1,

1961, if the Secretary determines that the member has not been previously recognized in an appropriate manner for such participation.

Personnel who earned the [Combat Infantryman Badge](#) or [Combat Medical Badge](#) while a member of the [United States Army](#) may be authorized to wear the Combat Action Ribbon upon application to the [Department of the Navy](#). As of May 2005, the United States Army has created a new decoration known as the [Combat Action Badge](#) (previously known as the [Combat Recognition Ribbon](#)) which is considered the direct Army equivalent to the Combat Action Ribbon, though the CAB is not available to infantry or medical Soldiers who are in combat arms units, and is available to officers at or below the rank of Colonel

National Defense Service Medal



The National Defense Service Medal is awarded to anyone who serves on active duty in the United States military during the below time periods.

[Vietnam War](#)

January 1, 1961 to August 14, 1974

Purple Heart



The Purple Heart is a [United States military decoration](#) awarded in the name of the [President](#) to those who have been wounded or killed while serving on or after April 5, 1917 with the [U.S. military](#). With its forerunner, the [Badge of Military Merit](#), which took the form of a heart made of purple cloth, the Purple Heart is the oldest [military award](#) that is still given to members of the U.S. military, the only earlier award being the obsolete [Fidelity Medallion](#). The [National Purple Heart Hall of Honor](#) is located in [New Windsor, New York](#).

USMC Combat Aircrew Badge



The Marine Combat Aircrew Badge can be issued to service members of both the Marine Corps and United States Navy (while serving in a Marine Corps aviation squadron).

Footnote: Medal description via Wikipedia - The Free Encyclopedia

HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.

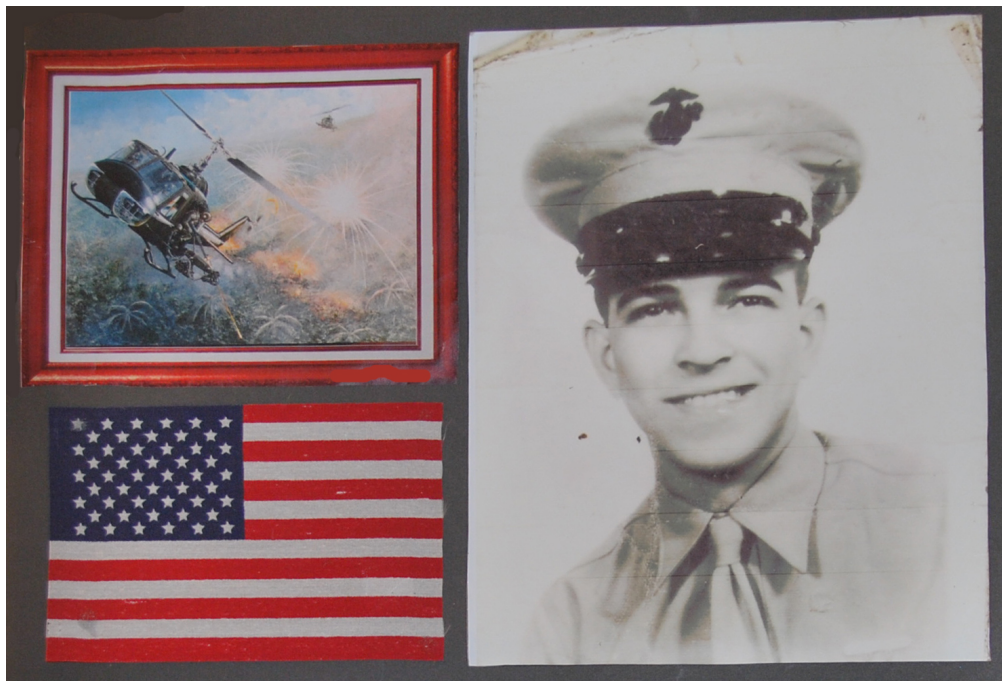
Rodolfo M. Gonzalez is an hero who loved his adopted country and sacrificed his life in pursuit of the American Dream. There is no doubt that if Uncle Rodolfo would be alive today, he would inspire all by example in pursuing a higher education, working hard for the community while showing unconditional love of family and country!

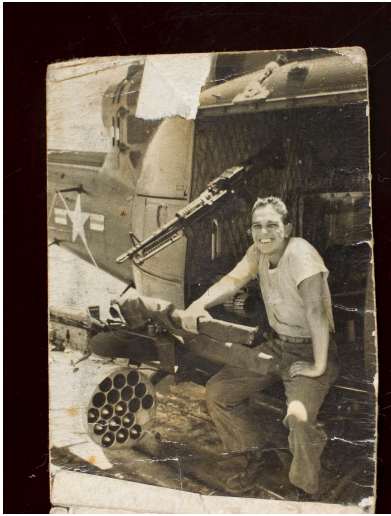
The Vietnam War - the forgotten war that we must remember by keeping the memory of Rudy and those who proudly served with him alive. May his sacrifice and the sacrifice of all the men and women of this country be a reminder to those of us today living the American Dream that we are mindful and thankful for what we have.

Vietnam War Pt 2 - 1966 Search & Destroy

<http://youtu.be/rIsHII4VZKY>

The Gonzalez Family Today

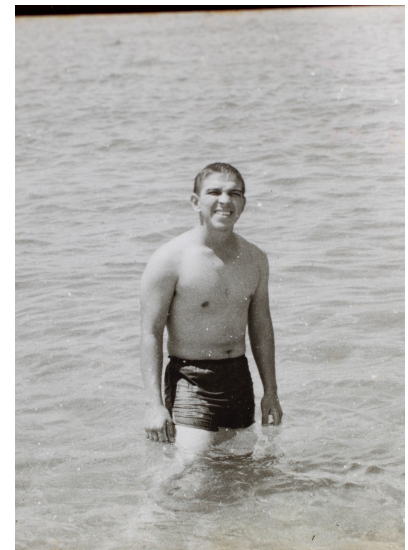




Crew Chief & Door Gunner aboard Marine VMO-6 helicopter gunship.



Danang Air Base 1965



And a little R&R off Danang coast.

VMO-6 Vietnam

Incident Date 661114 VMO-6 UH-1E 151873+ Hostile Fire, Crash

[CREW]

Bennett, Daniel Morris Sgt Crew VMO-6 MAG-36 661114 (vvm 12E:070)

Chadwick III, Leon Gordon Capt Pilot VMO-6 MAG-36 661114 (vvm 12E:070)

Gonzalez, Rodolfo Marciano Cpl Crew VMO-6 MAG-36 661114 (vvm 12E:070)

BENNETT DANIEL MORRIS : 1150307 : USMCR : SGT : E5 : 3071 : 33 : BOYNTON BEACH : FL : 19661114 : hostile, crash, land : Crew : body recovered : Quang Nam :08 : 19321120 : Cauc : Protestant/married : 12E : 070

CHADWICK LEON GORDON III : 087306 : USMC : CAPT : O3 : 7335 : 26 : RALEIGH : NC : 19661114 : hostile, crash, land : Pilot : body recovered : Quang Nam :03 : 19400402 : Cauc : Protestant/married : 12E : 070 : SILVER STAR 31OCT66 : Montlawn Memorial Park, Raleigh, NC

GONZALEZ RODOLFO MARCIANO : 2110474 : USMC : CPL : E4 : 3071 : 22 : HARLINGEN : TX : 19661114 : hostile, crash, land : Crew : body recovered : Quang Nam :02 : 19440712 : Cauc : RomanCatholic/single : 12E : 070

MAG-16 Command Chronology - Nov 1966:

14 Nov [1966]- On a medevac mission into a zone ten miles south of Danang [1/2 mile S. of Hill 55] where for several days last week our aircraft and crews suffered a number of casualties, the HMM-263 med evac aircraft was downed by hostile fire. A second UH-34D went into the zone immediately to rescue the crew, wounded pilot and medevacs, and escaped with hits but no injuries while under the protective cover of VMO-2 gunship fire suppression. A third aircraft was sent into the zone for more medevacs after huey gunships and fixed wing had attempted to neutralize the area, but this aircraft was also hit. Still later in the day another UH-34D was sent to a nearby zone to insert a maintenance team. Fire was taken and the VMO-6 gunship, in returning the fire, was hit on a gunnery run [pilot was shot during gun run] and crashed in flames. Three of the four crewmembers were killed either by the enemy fire or the crash. The fourth crewmember, Colonel Kenneth L. REUSSER, MAG-16 Commanding Officer [and three-war aviation hero] was rescued by a Marine from a nearby patrol. Col REUSSER was taken from the zone to HILL 55 by an armored vehicle, then to the Naval Hospital by helicopter. [Col Reusser died 20 June 2009 in Oregon and is buried in the Willamette National Cemetery]

Submitted by [Alan H Barbour, Historian](#), Historian, USMC Combat Helicopter Association



Harlingen Marine Dies In Viet Nam

Mr. and Mrs. Jose Gonzalez, 17 E. Monroe of Harlingen, were notified by Marine officials late Tuesday night that their son, Marine Corporal Rodolfo M. Gonzalez, 22, was killed in action in Viet Nam Oct. 14.

Reporting the Marine's death, the Harlingen office, Corporal Gonzalez was killed in the vicinity of Danang when the aircraft in which he was riding received automatic small arms fire from the vicinity of the landing zone where the craft was attempting to land, causing it to crash and burn.

Corporal Gonzalez was born in Harlingen, Texas in 1944 when he was a child his family moved to Harlingen and he attended Harlingen schools. He was a 1961 graduate of Harlingen high school.

According to Glen Checkler, Harlingen high school assistant principal, young Gonzalez was on the school's golf team in the years 1962-63, and participated in the distributive education program at the school.

"I'm sorry to hear this kind of news about him," Checkler said. "I remember the boy well. He was a nice well-mannered student."

Corporal Gonzalez enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1964, and was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, Calif., and shipped to Viet Nam in late October.

Turn to **MARINE** Page 2



Gemini 12 Crew Back To Earth

Perfect Splashdown
Tank Record Flashed

ATLANTA (UPI) — The Gemini 12 crew returned to Earth late Tuesday night after a 14-day mission in space.

The splashdown was perfect, and the crew was rescued by a helicopter.

The mission was the longest in the Gemini program, and the crew set a record for the longest time in space.

The crew was welcomed home by a large crowd of people.

CLASS OF SERVICE: This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
W. P. MARSHALL, President

DA034 AB099

NS A WA159 XV GOVT PD=FAX WASHINGTON DC NOV 16 5 AM IES 26

MR AND MRS JOSE GONZALEZ, REPORT DELIVERY MONT PHONE= 517 EAST MONROE HARLINGEN TEX=

I DEEPLY REGRET TO CONFIRM THAT OUR SON CORPORAL RODOLFO M GONZALEZ USMC DIED 14 NOVEMBER 1966 IN THE VICINITY OF DANANG, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WHEN THE AIRCRAFT ON WHICH HE WAS A CREWMEMBER RECEIVED INTENSE SMALL ARMS FIRE CAUSING IT TO CRASH AND BURN. HIS REMAINS WILL BE PREPARED, ENCASED, AND SHIPPED AT NO EXPENSE TO YOU, ACCOMPANIED BY AN REPORT, EITHER TO A FUNERAL HOME OR TO A NATIONAL CEMETERY. SELECT YOUR PREFERENCE.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

CLASS OF SERVICE: This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
W. P. MARSHALL, President

IN ADDITION YOU WILL BE REIMBURSED AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS TOWARD FUNERAL AND INTERMENT EXPENSES IF INTERMENT IS IN A PRIVATE CEMETERY ONE HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS IF REMAINS ARE CONSIGNED TO A FUNERAL HOME PRIOR TO INTERMENT IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY, OR SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLAR IF REMAINS ARE CONSIGNED DIRECTLY TO A NATIONAL CEMETERY. PLEASE WIRE COLLECT HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS YOUR DEFENSES IN THIS RESPECT, INDICATING THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE FUNERAL HOME OR NATIONAL CEMETERY TO WHICH YOU WISH THE REMAINS SENT AND WHETHER OR NOT YOU DESIRE A REPORT.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Military Service Held For Harlingen War Victim

A small, quiet group of Marines stood waiting in the serene quiet of Mont Vista Memorial Park Friday morning. They were the men who would fire the rifles, and there was the man who would sound on his bugle the sad notes of "Taps."

There, too, was the officer who would, after the last volley was fired, after the finality of



SGT. ADAN ALANIZ
"Taps" for a buddy ...

"Taps" had echoed out in the would be prepared, in a tenth of a second, to be at attention the moment the uniformed pallbearer moved toward the open grave, carrying their fellow Marine who had died in a war in a distant land called Viet Nam.

They were the men with the Marine Inspector - Instructor Staff in Corpus Christi whose duty for several months has been to arrange and attend full military rites for Marines who die in Viet Nam and who are returned to South Texas for burial.

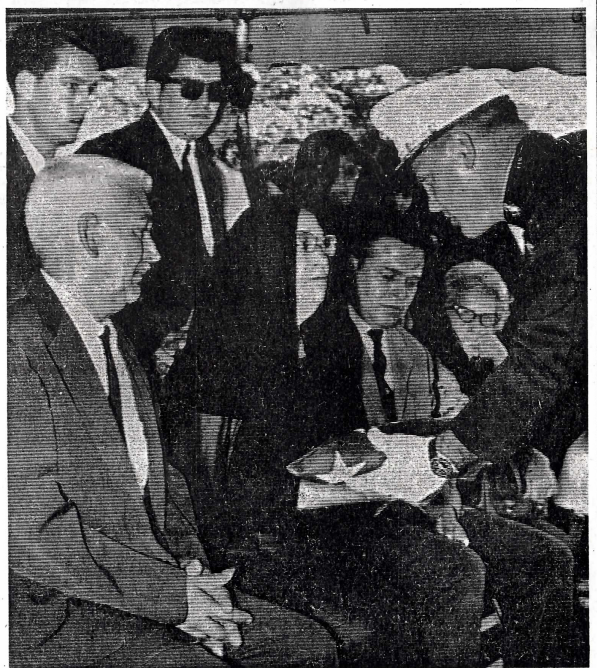
Outlook
Their leader, Major O. R. Kartchner, said, sadly, almost apologetically, "They have to have a perspective, an understanding outlook about these full rites. After so many they can get to you." He said this was the 20th his group had attended in recent months.

"Our plane is waiting," he said, "We must go to another this afternoon."

The Marine who had accompanied the body of his buddy on its journey to Harlingen, said, "I would rather be over yonder." He meant Viet Nam.

Had To Tell
Another Marine spoke out: "I feel for Sgt. Mendez. He is the one who recruited this man, and he was the one who had to be first to tell his parents." Sgt. Serge Mendez is the Harlingen Marine recruiter.

"But," said another, "take Al Turn to **MITES** Page 2



MILITARY RITES — Full military rites at graveside were held Friday morning for Marine Cpl. Rodolfo Gonzalez, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jose Gonzalez of Harlingen. The corporal was killed in action in the Viet Nam war. Funeral mass was held in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, the Rev. J. D. Diehl officiating, with military rites following in Mont Vista cemetery. Cox Mortuary had charge of arrangements. (Star Photo)

Rites

Continued from Page One
yonder. A man he recruited came home like this, and Al not only had to tell the parents, he also had to play "Taps" for him."

The Marine next to him said, "Yes. Take Al. He's had three times like that. I don't see how he finds the strength to do it. I'd rather be in Viet Nam, too."

All Had Been There

All those men had been there. They know what Viet Nam is like. Al does, too. Al is Sgt. Adan Alaniz, and his home and his parents and his kin are in Rio Grande City.

The big, black hearse came then, with its train of mourners a mile long, and the waiting Marine firing squad was at attention. Some distance away stood Sgt. Alaniz, at attention, his bugle ready. He stood in the shade of an ebony tree.

The pallbearers placed the casket at graveside near the canopy under which members of the family of Cpl. Rodolfo Gonzalez, 22, wept silently or looked forward stonily in that quiet, dry-eyed kind of grief, the hard kind of grief.

One Of Four

The corporal, one of four sons of Mr. and Mrs. Jose Gonzalez of 517 E. Monroe, Harlingen, fell in Viet Nam on Nov. 14. He enlisted through Recruiting Sgt. Mendez in 1964. His death came not far from Quang Nam to which he was flying with a supply group when the plane he was riding fell and burned after he was hit by small arms fire from the ground.

The volleys of the Marine rifles snapped the quiet hovering

over the cemetery, and the mournful notes of Sgt. Alaniz' bugle still lamented bell-like in mind's ears of the crowd surrounding the burial area, and the low tone of the priest's words were carried on a gentle breeze for all to hear, as were the words of Maj. Kartchner when he presented the colors to the mother of the fallen Marine. The father held her hand, the hand which caressed the folded flag.

It was all over. The mother arose and kissed the casket of her Marine son, and members of her family led her and his father away.

At Attention

The little group of Marines who had waited stood at attention, as did Sgt. Adan Alaniz beneath yonder ebony tree.

They had been over there. And here in the cemetery they had waited for another who was there to give him the honors due a fallen fighting man.

Somehow, there was a truth and reality emerging from the words of the scribe of yesterday's prose and poetry who wrote: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

RIO GRANDE CITY (UPI)—Webb County Sheriff's Department officials Monday delivered a lecture to Starr County Deputy Sheriffs on the subject of riot control.

The lectures were requested by Starr County Attorney Randall Nye, who said he wanted the deputies to be prepared in case of trouble growing out of the current farm union strike in the Rio Grande Valley.

My Jesus have mercy on the Soul of

Cpl. RODOLFO M. GONZALEZ

Cpl. RODOLFO M. GONZALEZ

U. S. Marines

Died Nov. 14 - 1966

in Service of his Country

Son of

MR. & MRS. JOSE GONZALEZ

Funeral 10 a. m.

Friday at Immaculate Heart

of Mary Catholic Church

Rosary Wed. and Thursday

night at 8 p. m.

at COX CHAPEL

O gentlest heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls, have mercy on the soul of Thy departed servant. Be not severe in Thy judgment but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames, and do Thou O Merciful Saviour, send Thy Angels to conduct Thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Merciful Jesus grant eternal rest.

COX MORTUARY
Harlingen — LaFeria, Texas

DAVID H PAULSEN ·
HIELDS · ROBERT W SMITH ·
WARD CARROLA · ROBERT L SHOCKEY ·
MICHAEL J MACARELL ·
H X GRANT · JAMES R A NORTHERN ·
N R SCHULTZ · WILLIAM F SPERRY ·
RALPH O WATTS ·
CK III · RODOLFO M GONZALEZ ·
JIMMIE TUCH · RICHARD W HASTINGS ·
BROCK · JAMES W BRUHN ·
N · WALTER E DANIELS ·
PER · THOMAS C MITCHELL ·
IE D PEOPLES · JIMMIE L PLATO ·
HT Jr · THOMAS SHAW ·
HORNTON · BRUCE A TIMMONS ·
E GROW · BERNARD J O'DONNELL ·
DYCE Jr · DOUGLAS D KERN ·



Family of Rodolfo's
L-R: Rodolfo #5, Rodolfo #4, Rodolfo #2 (Deceased 2012) & Rodolfo #3

