

Larry Chmiel
Died from heart attack at home
while serving as USS Bonefish's Engineering Officer
HL Stimson Gold AWEPS 1983

Lt. Larry A. Chmiel U.S.N.
of Summerville, S. Carolina

Navy Lt. Larry Anthony Chmiel, who died unexpectedly at his home at the age of 36, was, at his request, buried at sea April 18th from the ship on which he had been serving, the USS Bonefish (SS-582). Lt. Chmiel is survived by his wife, Thi Sau; his children, Andrew, Frederick, Lia and Paul; his parents, Anthony and Lucy Chmiel of Johnson City; two sisters, Mrs. Dennis (Terrie) Powell, East Syracuse; Mrs. Kim (Rita) Carpenter, Johnson City; a brother, Richard, Johnson City and his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Paul (Eleanor) Prusik, Johnson City.

Chmiel was a Johnson City native, graduating from Johnson City High School as an honor student in 1965. He was enrolled at Broome Community College for a year in the electrical engineering program before enlisting in the United States Navy in October 1966, entering active duty on February 14, 1967.

He received his training at the US Naval Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois; where fellow shipmates selected him as Honorman of Co. 90. Other company recognition posts included Lineman of the Month in Norfolk, Va., in the Operation Maintenance Division, and Sailor of the Month with the Fleet Air Support Unit at Binh Thuy.

Lt. Chmiel's military awards and decorations include three Navy Achievement Medals, one with a gold star in lieu of second award, and one Navy Commendation Medal between July 1967 and May of 1981. Other medals presented to Chmiel for service to his country included: the Combat Action Ribbon; Navy Unit Commendation; Meritorious Unit Commendation; the National Defense Service Medal; and the Good Conduct Medal with Bronze Star in lieu of second award.

His seventeen years of military service included a four-year tour of duty in Vietnam and resulted in Chmiel being awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with four stars; the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Brigade Level with clasp; the Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Medal with clasp; and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea).

Lt. Chmiel served at the Norfolk Naval Air Station, the Oceana Naval Station, and aboard the USS Ranger (CVA-61) FASU at Binh Thuy, Republic of Vietnam prior to attending the University of Washington at Seattle in the Naval Enlisted Scientific Education Program. He graduated in June of 1976 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Oceanography and was commissioned an Ensign in the United States Navy.

After training at the submarine base at Groton, Conn., Lt. Chmiel was assigned to the USS Grayback, where his outstanding performance as a ship handler resulted in his winning of the Junior Officer Award in Shiphandling for the year 1979.

Further training at schools in Norfolk, Va., in weaponry resulted in his assignments to the USS Henry Stimson (SSBN-655), the USS Mariano G. Vallejo (SSBN-658) and the USS Bonefish (SS-582). On February 14th, Lt. Chmiel suffered an apparent heart attack at his home. He was serving as the Engineering Officer of the USS Bonefish (SS-582) at the time of his death.

Funeral services at the All Saints Chapel, Naval Weapons Station, in Charleston, South Carolina, on February 17th included a celebration of the Mass of the Resurrection and full military honors. Local arrangements are by the Barber Memorial Home, Inc., 428 Main Street, Johnson City.