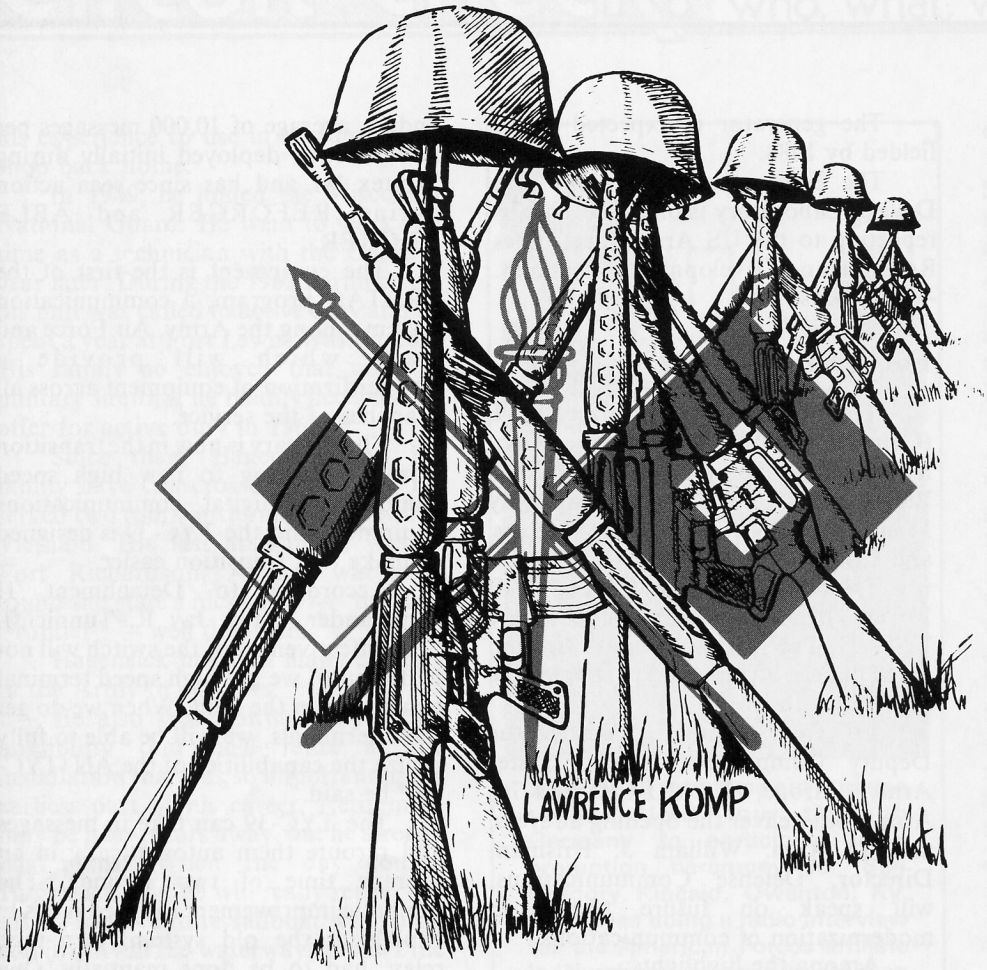

Stacked Arms

A memorial

Col. Edward R. Cobb, Jr.; Lt. Col. George G. Mattar; Maj. Ralph E. Herman and CSM James V. Dixon died aboard the Air Florida jet which crashed into the 14th Street Bridge in Washington, D.C., January 13, 1982.

Col. Cobb, who was director of the Communications and Automatic Data Processing Directorate for the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force Headquarters, was born April 30, 1935, in Mobile, Ala. He grew up in Mobile, attending the University Military School and going on to Auburn University, where he graduated in August 1957. He went through the Reserve Officer Training Corps Program at Auburn and was designated a distinguished military graduate of the program. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the US Army Signal Corps and for his entire career remained a member of the Signal Corps. Cobb rose through the officer ranks, being promoted to colonel on November 1, 1980, while assigned to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force Headquarters. The day he was promoted, he said, was the proudest day of his Army career. He was designated an Army aviator in 1959, qualified both in fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. He was later designated a senior Army aviator. Cobb served in assignments around the world. In the sixties he served in Europe, then had two tours in Vietnam. After Vietnam, he served in a number of specialized communications positions, including several at the Department of the Army level. He commanded the 67th Signal Battalion at Fort Gordon, Ga., for eighteen months. A 1979 graduate of the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., Cobb also completed work that year on two master's degrees from Shippensburg State College. He reported to MacDill Air Force Base in September 1979 to join the staff of the Joint Deployment Agency. Nine months later, he reported to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force Headquarters when the organization was four months old. He held the Bronze Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, nine Air Medals, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters and a number of other awards. In addition, he received the posthumous award of the Legion of Merit for his outstanding work with the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. At the time of his death, Cobb lived in St. Petersburg, Fla. He is survived by his wife Bonita of St. Petersburg, his son Michael of Dallas, Texas, and his mother, Gladys B. Lavender of Mobile, Ala. A memorial service was held at the MacDill Air Force Base Chapel. Another memorial service was in St. Petersburg. Interment was at the Arlington National Cemetary, Arlington, Va.

Lt. Col. Mattar was commander of the JCSE at the time of his death. A graduate of the Citadel in Charleston, S.C., he was commissioned a second

lieutenant Signal Corps on June 1, 1963, and entered active duty on March 17, 1964. His first assignment was with the 41st Signal Battalion (combat area) at Fort Lewis, Wash., as a platoon leader. He next served as operations officer of B Company, 41st Signal Battalion (CA) in Vietnam. Returning to the United States in 1966, Mattar commanded B Company, 501st Signal Battalion, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky. He also served as S-4, Battalion Executive Officer and Assistant Division Signal Officer. Having completed the Signal Officers' Advanced Course, Mattar was assigned to Fort Bragg, N.C., where he was a staff officer with the Signal Section, Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps. Following that assignment, he returned to southeast Asia for a tour with the US Army Special Forces. In January of 1972, Mattar became Chief of Contingency and War Plans, Defense Communications Agency — Europe. He returned to Fort Bragg, N.C., where he served subsequently as executive officer of the 82nd Signal Battalion, Deputy IG, 82nd Airborne Division and operations officer, 35th Signal Brigade. His next assignment was to MacDill Air Force Base where he served with USREDCOM and RDJTF Directorate of Communications-Electronics. He was a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and the Air Force Air Command and Staff College. He earned graduate degrees in communications system engineering management and human relation. Mattar was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, 1-OLC; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal, 3-OLC; master parachutist badge; Kingdoms of Laos and Thailand parachutist badges and Royal Thai Special Forces Fouregere. Mattar lived in Tampa, Fla., with his wife Suzanne and three children, Gabrielle, Jill and Michael.

Maj. Herman was commissioned through the Signal Officer Candidate School at Fort Gordon in April of 1967. His first assignment was as a platoon leader with the Communications Support Element, United States Strike Command. He then served as commander, Company B, 44th Signal Battalion in Vietnam. Herman returned to the United States in 1969 and commanded Company C, 50th Signal Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C. He also served as the battalion S-4 officer. He completed the Signal Officers' Advanced Course at Fort Monmouth in 1972, and was an Army ROTC instructor at the University of Arkansas from 1972 through 1975. He was assigned to United States Army Europe in 1972, and performed duties for three years as the Assistant Division Signal Officer, Third Armored Division. He returned to the United States in 1978 and was assigned as Chief of Operations, Combat Developments Directorate, USA Intelligence School, Fort Huachuca, Ariz. In January 1980, he was assigned to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. His last assignment was as the Chief of Operations, Joint Communications Support Element, MacDill Air Force Base. He had four and a half years previous enlisted service, was a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and the University of Tampa. Herman was awarded the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, 2-OLC, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam service ribbons and senior parachutists badge. He is survived by his wife, Karen, and three children.

CSM Dixon, who was born in Sherman, Texas, entered the United States Army in February 1962. He completed his basic training at Fort Carson, Colo., and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Ga., in the military police school. Dixon began his military career as a military policeman where he served as a patrolman and a desk sergeant, but it was with the Signal Corps where he was to make his mark in the military service. Transferring to the Signal Corps, he served as a multichannel radio operator, radio team chief, platoon sergeant and as an instructor and evaluation NCO with the Signal School. He twice served as a unit first sergeant; first with the 122nd Signal Battalion and later with the Joint Communications Support Element. His overseas tours included two tours in Korea, and tours in Vietnam and Turkey. He was twice awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Joint Service Commendation Medal. He received the Good Conduct Medal six times. In February 1978, Dixon graduated from the Army's Sergeants Major Academy, and then began his tour with the Joint Communications Support Element where he served as a detachment first sergeant and later as the operations sergeant major.

Maj. Ronald W. Mobley, last assigned to the C-E Board at Ft. Gordon, Ga., died along with his two sons, Jeff (13) and Clay (7), in a boating accident at a nearby lake recently. He is survived by his wife, Brenda L. Mobley, and his mother, Mrs. Elsie Miller.

Mobley entered the enlisted service in July 1962. He later earned his OCS commission at Ft. Benning, Ga. (Nov. 1969). A graduate of Campbell College in North Carolina, Mobley also successfully completed the Radio Frequency Managers Course, the C-E Engineering Course and the Signal Officer Advanced Course.

He had been a platoon leader for the 50th Signal Bn. at Ft. Bragg; a C-E officer and Bn. S-2 in Vietnam, where he served with the 89th MP Gp. and the 97th MP Bn.; and a C-E officer, company commander and Bn. S-3 at Ft. Gordon. He also served with the 5th Signal Command in Germany.

He earned the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the National Defense Service Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

AC