

**Acklen Jr., Robert "Bob" Livingston**  
**Dates in the 57<sup>th</sup> - 1968-1970**  
**Captain - Pilot**  
**Birth Date: March 24<sup>th</sup> 1941**  
**Nashville, TN**  
**Died After Tour – Date: December 31<sup>st</sup> 1998**  
**Dallas, TX**



Family links:

Parents:

[Robert Livingston Acklen \(1911 - 2006\)](#)

[Aimee Lips Acklen \(1913 - 1987\)](#)

Inscription:

ROBERT LIVINGSTON ACKLEN, JR.

CAPTAIN US ARMY

AIRBORNE

- HONORS -

SILVER STAR

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

BRONZE STAR W/2 OAK LEAF / 4 "V" DEVICE

PURPLE HEART

AIR MEDAL W/NUMERAL 36 & 4 "V" DEVICE

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL W/1 OAK LEAF / 3 "V" DEVICE

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CORPS OF CADETS HALL OF HONOR

Burial:

[Mount Olivet Cemetery](#)

Nashville

Davidson County

Tennessee, USA

<https://directory.vhpa.org/details.php?m=SoSixdBJavAx2BemNwB%2F9%2BQbi7vg%2FhjFPI%2FeJGfx5ITULsfMPbzlpzHUCrgYGrYhdOQPSFbcblmUtX44xFuoQ%3D%3D>

**Robert L. "Bob" Acklen Jr**  
**Military rank: CPT**

Status: DAT - 31 Dec 1998

There is more information about this person on the [VHPA web site](#).

[Flight Class\(es\):](#)

**68-512, 68-20**

[Call Sign\(s\):](#)

**BANSHEE 26**

[Unit\(s\):](#)

**189 AHC (68-69)**

**HHC/52 CAB (69)**

**57 AHC (69)**

**B/3/506 INF 101 ABN (69-70)**

**C/3/506 INF 101 ABN (70)**

**B/2/17 CAV 101 ABN (70-71)**

**B/7/17 CAV (71)**

**235 SQDN VNAF (71)**

[Branch of Service:](#)

**AR**

<https://www.vhpa.org/DAT/datA/D03456.HTM>

## **ACKLEN ROBERT L**

CPT Robert "Bob" L. Acklen was a VHPA member who died after his tour in Vietnam on 12/31/1998 at the age of 57.8 from Brain tumor

Quinlan, TX

Flight Classes 68-512 and 68-20

Date of Birth 03/24/1941

Served in the U.S. Army

Served in Vietnam with 189 AHC in 68-69, HHC/52 CAB in 69, 57 AHC in 69, B/3/506 INF 101 ABN in 69-70, C/3/506 INF 101 ABN in 70, B/2/17 CAV 101 ABN in 70-71, B/7/17 CAV in 71, 235 SQDN VNAF in 71

Call sign in Vietnam BANSHEE 26

This information was provided by Dallas Morning News obit

More detail on this person: One Of A&M's Most Decorated Graduates, He Never Talked About It

June 1999

Robert Livingston "Bob" Acklen '63 was a "frog," a mid-term freshman in Company A-2 of Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets in January of 1960. He'd already spent a year and a half as an Army enlisted man, so the military lifestyle was nothing new to him. In fact, his proficiency in close order drill gained him the coveted post of unit guide on bearer the next fall.

A quiet individual, he never talked much about himself. In fact, until shortly before he died of a brain tumor on New Year's Eve, Bob had never even told his family he was a war hero and had received numerous awards as a helicopter pilot and infantry commander in Vietnam.

Bob laid out of school for several years before returning to complete a degree in history in 1967. He was commissioned a U.S. Army 2nd Lieutenant upon graduation. Just over a year later he was in Vietnam. Except for a brief stint on staff and 10 months as an infantry company commander, he piloted helicopters with the 1st Aviation Brigade and the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) until he was shot down near Cheo Reo on May 8, 1971.

He received one of his Bronze Stars for valor when he grabbed a satchel bomb tossed near his helicopter and threw it back at the enemy in January of 1969. In May of 1970, he earned a Silver Star for leading a ground assault on an enemy village in Cambodia. In November of that year, he earned an Air Medal for maneuvering his helicopter between an evacuation chopper and enemy positions so other aircraft could rescue a ranger team. A Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded him when, in February of 1971, he provided covering fire to extract a reconnaissance team being attacked at night in adverse weather.

Told he would never walk again after his helicopter crashed, he spent almost two years rehabilitating a back injury. He then completed requirements for a business degree at the University of Texas and returned to active duty, earning a Ranger Tab and completing paratrooper training before being assigned to a one-year tour in Korea.

Acklen received more than 60 awards and badges including the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, six Bronze Stars, 40 Air Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, and a Purple Heart. Fourteen of the awards were for valor. He also was presented nine decorations from the Republic of Vietnam, including three for valor.

He retired as a captain in 1978 with a 70 percent disability because of his combat injuries and earned a computer science degree at North Texas State University in 1989. He taught computer science at the University of North Texas and wrote software programs for private companies. He also produced a newsletter for the 101st Airborne Division.

From 1994 to 1996 he traveled at his own expense to analyze computer needs for an Israeli eye hospital sponsored by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. In December he was honored for his humanitarian work by The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus and was in the process of being nominated to become the only American ever presented the Special Gold Medal of the Royal House of Savoy at the time of his death.

Acklen was survived by his father, Robert L. Acklen, Sr. of Dallas, two sisters and a brother.

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Bronze Stars, 40 Air Medals, four ACMs and a Purple Heart. Fourteen of the decorations were for valor. He once jumped from his helicopter, picked up a satchel charge and threw it back at the enemy.



## OBITUARIES

# Vietnam hero Bob Acklen dies at 57

By Joe Simnacher

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

Like many who served in Vietnam, retired Capt. Robert Livingston "Bob" Acklen Jr. of Dallas didn't share details of his duty with many people other than veterans of the war. Until recently, he didn't even fully discuss it with his family.

What made Mr. Acklen different was the magnitude of what he chose to keep to himself. Mr. Acklen was decorated 63 times for his



Bob Acklen Jr.

service in the Army, including a Silver Star, a Distinguished Flying Cross, six Bronze Stars, 40 Air Medals, four Army Commendation Medals and a Purple Heart. Fourteen of his decorations were for valor, combat service considered beyond the call of duty.

Mr. Acklen died New Year's Eve at the age of 57 of a brain tumor at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dallas. A memorial service was held Monday at Park Cities Presbyterian Church. He will be buried with military honors at 10 a.m. Thursday at Mount Olivet Cemetery in his hometown of Nashville, Tenn.

State District Judge John M. Marshall, a longtime friend, said Mr. Acklen's military accomplishments were so impressive that even those

## Retired captain told few about extent of honors

who had seen his citations found them hard to believe.

"When you start getting into that kind of combat career, you are starting to get into the realm of what they call dead-man's medals — the Congressional Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, the Distinguished Cross," Judge Marshall said. "The overwhelming number of those are presented posthumously. He basically got everything you could get and still be alive."

On one occasion, Mr. Acklen was honored for jumping from his helicopter, picking up a satchel bomb that had been tossed near his aircraft and throwing the bomb back at the enemy, the judge said.

Mr. Acklen's family didn't learn the extent of his military honors until shortly after his brain tumor was diagnosed in September.

"He didn't even let his family know what he'd done," said his sister, Carolyn Bender of Quinlan, Texas. "John Marshall was the one who let me know."

"We knew he had quite a few medals, but we didn't realize how many."

On another occasion, Mr. Acklen drew enemy fire on his helicopter so other aircraft could rescue troops, she said.

Mr. Acklen broke his back in Vietnam after being shot down. He was told he would never walk again

but recovered and was able to attend paratrooper jump school, becoming airborne qualified. He later went to Ranger school and served in Korea after the Vietnam War, Judge Marshall said.

Mr. Acklen earned a bachelor's degree in history at Texas A&M University in May 1967 and immediately joined the Army. At the end of the Vietnam War, he earned a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Texas at Austin. He then rejoined the Army and served in Korea. After retiring with a 70 percent disability due to his combat injuries, Mr. Acklen earned a bachelor's degree in computer science at North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas, in August 1989.

As a civilian, Mr. Acklen was a teacher, a private pilot and a private investigator, his sister said. The pain from his war injuries seemed to prevent him from staying with many of the civilian jobs he took, she said.

Mr. Acklen also did a lot of church work, including volunteering for the Order of St. John, in connection with an Israeli eye hospital. In 1980, he was honored by Queen Elizabeth II for that work.

In addition to Mrs. Bender, Mr. Acklen is survived by his father, Robert L. Acklen Sr. of Dallas; another sister, Aimee Martin of Aledo, Texas; and a brother, John Acklen of Cincinnati.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society or Park Cities Presbyterian Church.

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/15986/mount-olivet-cemetery#view-photo=119493736>



<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7366021/robert-livingston-acklen>

# Capt Robert Livingston “Bob” Acklen, Jr

<b>BIRTH</b>	24 Mar 1941  Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, USA
<b>DEATH</b>	31 Dec 1998 (aged 57)  Dallas, Dallas County, Texas, USA
<b>BURIAL</b>	<u><a href="#">Mount Olivet Cemetery</a></u>  Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, USA <u><a href="#">Show Map</a></u>
<b>MEMORIAL ID</b>	7366021 · <u><a href="#">View Source</a></u>

Captain US ARMY Airborne

-HONORS-

Silver Star; Distinguished Flying Cross; Bronze Star w/2 Oak Leaf /4 "v" Device; Purple Heart; Air Medal w/numeral 36 & 4 "v" Device; Army Commendation Medal w/1 Oak Leaf /3 "v" Device; Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets Hall of Honor



*In Remembrance of  
Capt. Robert L. Acklen, Jr.*

*Class of '63*





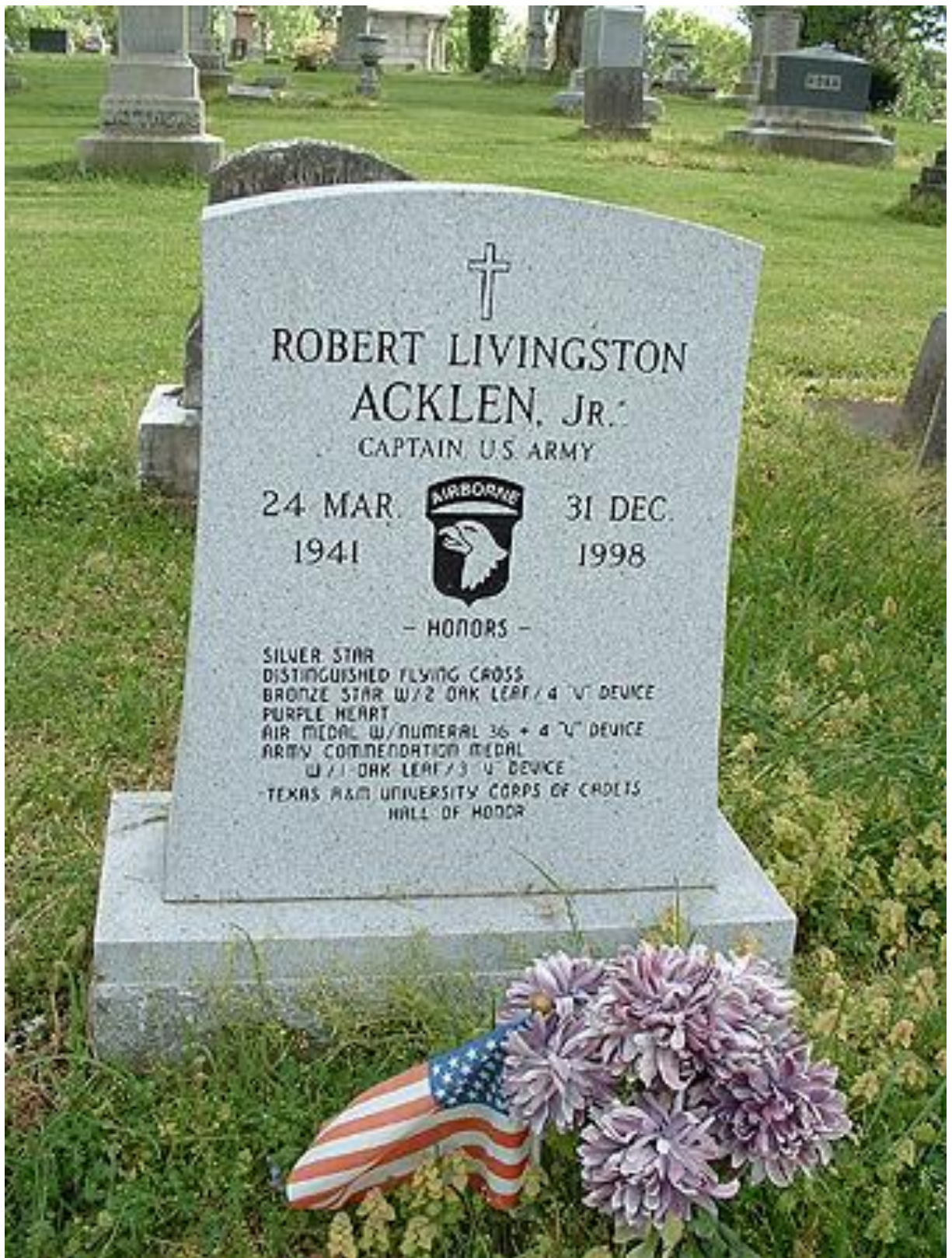
ROBERT LIVINGSTON  
ACKLEN, JR.  
CAPTAIN U.S. ARMY

24 MAR. 1941      31 DEC. 1998



- HONORS -

SILVER STAR  
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS  
BRONZE STAR W/2 OAK LEAF / 4 "V" DEVICE  
PURPLE HEART  
AIR MEDAL W/ NUMERAL 36 + 4 "V" DEVICE  
ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL  
W/1 OAK LEAF / 3 "V" DEVICE  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CORPS OF CADETS  
HALL OF HONOR



ROBERT LIVINGSTON  
ACKLEN, JR.  
CAPTAIN U.S. ARMY

24 MAR  
1941



31 DEC  
1998

- HONORS -

SILVER STAR  
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS  
BRONZE STAR W/2 OAK LEAF/4 'V' DEVICE  
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AIR MEDAL W/NUMERAL 36 + 4 'V' DEVICE  
ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL  
W/1 OAK LEAF/3 'V' DEVICE  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CORPS OF CADETS  
HALL OF HONOR