



**RAdm. Thomas A. Christopher, ComNavBase, pins the Distinguished Flying Cross on the uniform of Lcdr. Charles S. Sapp at the personnel inspection April 1. Lcdr. Sapp, Officer in Charge of the Heliport, received the medal for heroism in Vietnam last November. (NAS official photos by Ron Schlatter, PH2)**

## NAS Officer Receives Distinguished Flying Cross

As of Friday, April 1, NAS has been officially graced by the presence of a real battle hero.

The hero is Lcdr. Charles S. Sapp, who was presented the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroic actions in Vietnam last November. RAdm. Thomas A. Christopher, ComNavBase, pinned the medal on his uniform in ceremonies held during the personnel inspection.

The medal, awarded by Adm. Roy L. Johnson, CinCPac, came as a result of two missions Nov. 6 and 7 while Lcdr. Sapp was flying a UH-2A "Sea Sprite" rescue helicopter with a detachment from HC-2 aboard the USS Richmond K. Turner.

On the first mission, the helicopter was going several miles into North Vietnam after five Air Force people whose aircraft had been shot down by the Viet Cong. Lcdr. Sapp piloted his helicopter through heavy anti-aircraft fire at low altitudes for about 45 minutes, despite the fact that it was unarmed and incapable of high speed, before he had to go back to his landing area because of low fuel.

The next morning, he and his crew of three went back to try to pick up the crew of another Navy helicopter shot down while trying to pick up the Air Force survivors after they had left.

He found them on the side of a mountain. He jettisoned all non-vital equipment and fuel, then,

"with extreme skill and daring," maneuvered his craft into position to pick up two of the survivors. The others were in too tough and dangerous a position for the helicopter to reach, so he returned to base.

On the way inland on the first mission, Lcdr. Sapp said, there was a great deal of anti-aircraft fire, but his helicopter was protected to an extent by other aircraft flying ahead and below to draw it off.

"We were all nervous during the operation," he said, "but I guess we were more nervous after it was all over. We had a job to do in flight, so we didn't have time to get too concerned."

Lcdr. Sapp is the Officer in Charge of the Heliport, currently. He has been on the station since Jan. 8.

A native of Concord, N.C., he graduated from Concord High School and Less McRae Junior College, Banner Elk, N. C., and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for a year. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California.

He received his commission through the Naval Aviation Cadet Program on July 1, 1954, at Hutchinson, Kansas.

Now 35 years old, he lives on the Naval Station with his wife, Royann, and a son, Garrick, age 5.