

AVSC-F (6 Feb 68)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

HEADQUARTERS, 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION, APO 96353 18 February 1968

TO: Major Jack G. Johnson, 188th Assault Helicopter Company, APO 96268

1. Jack, you have a uncanny facility for being at the right place at the right time. What's more you have shown you know exactly what to do in each instance.

2. Major Cook's letter is a fine tribute to your outstanding courage in the face of heavy hostile fire.

3. Let me add my own words of appreciation for your outstanding actions during the emergency. It is a privilege having you as a member of the "Black Baron" team.

EDGAR F. TODD
LTC, Arty
Commanding

25TH AVIATION BATTALION (INF DIV)
APO US Forces 96225

AVDCAVB-AM

6 February 1968

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

THRU: Commanding Officer
25th Aviation Battalion (Inf Div)
APO US Forces 96225

TO: Commanding Officer
269th Combat Aviation Battalion
APO US Forces 96353

1. It has been brought to my attention that a member of your command, Major Jack C. Johnson, Commanding Officer of the 138th Assault Helicopter Company demonstrated a selfless devotion to duty during the early morning hours of 31 January 1968. At approximately 0430 hours that date Dan Tieng came under a heavy mortar attack necessitating a rapid departure of Little Bear aircraft 631 the assigned counter mortar aircraft. Shortly after take-off it became obvious to the crew and certain personnel on the ground including Major Johnson that the aircraft was not developing full power and that a crash landing was imminent. Disregarding his own safety Major Johnson exposed himself to the continuing mortar attack, placed a call for medical assistance and escorted the emergency vehicle to the scene of the wreckage. He immediately evaluated the disposition of the injured and took command of the rescue operation instantly organizing the personnel who were rendering assistance. He personally assisted in extracting one crew member from the twisted wreckage moments before the helicopter burst into flames. Major Johnson's courageous action and cool, decisive leadership were directly responsible for the rescue of the stunned and injured crew members.

2. Although I am unable to document Major Johnson's actions with eyewitness statements from my crew (they were dazed and semi-conscious during the rescue effort) I feel certain that some of those involved in the rescue would substantiate the facts as they have been described to me in order to recommend Major Johnson for an appropriate award.

3. I would like to express my gratitude on behalf of the members of my command who owe their life to the devoted effort of Major Johnson.

DUNCAN S COOK
Major, Inf
Commanding

RECOMMENDATION FOR DECORATION FOR VALOR OR MERIT
(Submit in three copies)

THRU: Commanding Officer 308 269th Cbt Avn Bn APO 96353 96383		TO: Commanding General 1st Avn Bde APO 96307		FROM: Commanding Officer 188th Aslt Hel Co APO 96268 96383	
1. NAME: (Last, First, MI) JONES, Jack O. SSAN: 482-30-3808		2. SN: 077434		3. GRADE MAJ	
4. BRANCH: (MOS-WO & EM) ARTY					
5. AGE: (Nearest Year) 36 Years	6. CATEGORY 1-Y PERSONNEL ☐ YES ☒ NO	7. MONTHS IN RVN: (Nearest Month) 7 Months	8. POSTHUMOS AWARD ☐ YES ☒ NO		
9. ORGANIZATION AT TIME OF ACTION: 188th Aslt Hel Co APO 96383			10. ACTION OF FINAL APPROVING AUTH: ☐ APPROVAL ☐ DISAPPROVAL ☐ UPGRADE ☐ DOWNGRADE		
CODE:					
11. AWARD INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDED FOR:					
___ DSC ___ BS "V" ___ BS ___ SERVICE <u>XXX</u> SS ___ AM "V" ___ BAM ___ ACHIEVEMENT ___ DFC ___ ACM "V" ___ ACM ___ OAK LEAF CLUSTER ___ SM ___ LM ___ PH					FOREIGN / OTHER AWARD N/A
12. DATES OF SERVICE-MERIT: DATE(S) OF ACTION-VALOR: 31 January 1968		13. DEROS: 16 October 68		14. CURRENT ORGANIZATION: 188th Aslt Hel Co APO 96383	
15. PREVIOUS AWARDS (PH & HIGHER)					
DECORATION		DATE OF ACTION OR SERVICE		AUTHORITY	
ACM "V"		EVAL		1056 USMACV	
BAR-6th OLC		EVAL		794 USMACV	
AR "V"		EVAL		613 USMACV	
AR "V" 1st OLC		EVAL		54 USMACV	
AR "V" 2nd OLC		EVAL		844 USMACV	
AR 8-15 OLC		EVAL		795 USMACV	
AR 17-23 OLC		EVAL		796 USMACV	
DFC		EVAL		2146 USMACV	
16. OTHERS RECOMMENDED FOR AN AWARD OF THE SAME ACTION: (State Name & Award)					
Specialist Fourth Class Neal R. Haber BS "V"					
17. NAME OF EYEWITNESSES:					
Specialist Fourth Class Neal R. Haber					

18. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: (For all awards describe in detail what individual did to warrant decoration. For valor award describe in detail the mission, terrain and weather, enemy conditions and friendly casualties. (Use plain bond paper for continuation sheet if necessary).

At approximately 0430 hours on the night of 31 January, 1968, Camp Rainier, Bau Trang, RVN, came under a heavy mortar, rocket and small arms attack. When the attack began Little Bear aircraft 631, the assigned counter mortar aircraft, executed a rapid reaction take off from its night stand-by position near the 3rd Brigade TCC. Shortly after take off it became obvious to certain personnel on the ground that the aircraft was not developing full power as it passed over the 188th Assault Helicopter Company's Operations, and that a crash landing was imminent. Major Jack O. Johnson, in the operations bunker, was one of those recognizing the plight of the stricken aircraft; he immediately went into action. Disregarding his own personal safety, Major Johnson emerged from the bunker, voluntarily exposing himself to the continuing mortar attack, ran to the medical bunker, rallied and quickly briefed the medical personnel regarding the situation. Mortars and rockets were exploding everywhere but unhesitatingly Major Johnson escorted the emergency vehicle to the scene of the wreckage. Enroute to the crash scene a rocket landed a mere fifty meters from Major Johnson's vehicle. Undaunted, he instructed the driver to continue on to the downed aircraft. Reaching the crash site, Major Johnson immediately evaluated the disposition of the injured and took command of the rescue operation, instantly organizing the personnel who were rendering assistance. He personally assisted in extracting one crew member from the twisted wreckage, only moments before the helicopter burst into flames. As the aircraft burst into flames the rescue personnel related to Major Johnson that they thought a fifth person was still aboard the burning wreckage. The flames grew higher and all the other rescue personnel quickly evacuated the scene, only Major Johnson and one other man remained to search for the fifth man. Searching feverently until the fire and exploding ammunition drove him to retreat, Major Johnson remained in and close to the wreckage, and only then because further effort was impossible did Major Johnson leave the wreckage. Throughout the entire sequence of events mortars and rockets were exploding through the immediate crash site. Displaying superb professionalism, exceptional heroism, and voluntary disregard for his own personal safety, Major Johnson chose to personally supervise the rescue. Major Johnson's courageous actions and cool decisive leadership were directly responsible for the rescue of the stunned and injured crew members. Major Johnson's actions were indicative of his personal qualities and of the American fighting man's courage and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

19. INCLOSURES:		20. INDIVIDUAL INITIATING RECOMMENDATION:	
1 letter of recommendation		NAME, GRADE & POSITION	SIGNATURE & DATE
1 Proposed Citation		JOHN W. SCHABLY	<i>John W. Schably</i>
1 Statement		1LT, TC Executive Officer	
RECOMMENDATION OF THRU COMMAND:			
RECOMMENDED ☐ APPROVAL ☐ DISAPPROVAL ☐ OTHER ☐			
NAME, GRADE & POSITION:		SIGNATURE AND DATE:	

PROPOSED CITATION FOR THE SILVER STAR

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT OF CONGRESS, APPROVED 9 JULY 1918, A SILVER STAR FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IS AWARDED TO:

MAJOR JACK O. JOHNSON, 077484, ARTILLERY, UNITED STATES ARMY, WHO DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTIONS ON 31 JANUARY, 1968. AT APPROXIMATELY 0430 HOURS CAMP RAINIER, DAU TIENG, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, CAME UNDER A HEAVY MORTAR, ROCKET, AND SMALL ARMS ATTACK. WHEN THE ATTACK BEGAN THE ASSIGNED COUNTER MORTAR AIRCRAFT EXECUTED A RAPID REACTION TAKE OFF FROM ITS NIGHT STAND-BY POSITION. SHORTLY AFTER TAKE-OFF IT BECAME OBVIOUS TO MAJOR JOHNSON THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT DEVELOPING FULL POWER, AND THAT A CRASH LANDING WAS IMMINENT. DISREGARDING HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY, HE IMMEDIATELY WENT INTO ACTION. MAJOR JOHNSON EMERGED FROM THE BUNKER, VOLUNTARILY EXPOSING HIMSELF TO THE CONTINUING MORTAR ATTACK, RAN TO THE MEDICAL BUNKER, RALLIED AND QUICKLY BRIEFED THE MEDICAL PERSONNEL REGARDING THE SITUATION. MORTARS AND ROCKETS WERE EXPLODING EVERYWHERE BUT UNHESITANTLY MAJOR JOHNSON ESCORTED THE EMERGENCY VEHICLE TO THE SCENE OF THE WRECKAGE. ENROUTE TO THE CRASH SCENE A ROCKET LANDED A MERE FIFTY METERS FROM MAJOR JOHNSON'S VEHICLE. UNDAUNTED, HE INSTRUCTED THE DRIVER TO CONTINUE ON TO THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT. REACHING THE CRASH SITE, MAJOR JOHNSON IMMEDIATELY EVALUATED THE DISPOSITION OF THE INJURED AND TOOK COMMAND OF THE RESCUE OPERATION, INSTANTLY ORGANIZING THE PERSONNEL WHO WERE RENDERING ASSISTANCE. HE PERSONALLY ASSISTED IN EXTRACTING ONE CREW MEMBER FROM THE TWISTED WRECKAGE, ONLY MOMENTS BEFORE THE

HELICOPTER BURST INTO FLAMES. AS THE AIRCRAFT BURST INTO FLAMES, THE RESCUE PERSONNEL RELATED TO MAJOR JOHNSON THAT THEY THOUGHT A FIFTH PERSON WAS STILL ABOARD THE BURNING WRECKAGE. THE FLAMES GREW HIGHER AND ALL THE OTHER RESCUE PERSONNEL QUICKLY EVACUATED THE SCENE, ONLY MAJOR JOHNSON AND ONE OTHER MAN REMAINED TO SEARCH FOR THE FIFTH MAN, SEARCHING FEVERANTLY UNTIL THE FIRE AND EXPLODING AMMUNITION DROVE HIM TO RETREAT. MAJOR JOHNSON'S COURAGEOUS ACTION AND COOL DECISIVE LEADERSHIP WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESCUE OF THE STUNNED AND INJURED CREW MEMBERS. MAJOR JOHNSON'S ACTIONS WERE INDICATIVE OF HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES AND OF THE AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN'S COURAGE. HIS ACTIONS WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T

At approximately 0430 hours on 31 January, 1968, Camp Rainier, Dau Tieng came under heavy mortar, rocket, and small arms fire. A little Bear aircraft, the assigned counter mortar aircraft, crashed while making a rapid departure from Dau Tieng airfield. Major Johnson being aware of the crash quickly departed the safety of his bunker and ran to the medical aid bunker. After quickly briefing the medical personnel he proceeded to accompany them to the crash site. Enroute a rocket hit a mere fifty meters from Major Johnson's vehicle. Without regard for his own safety he continued on to the crash sight. Upon reaching the scene of the wreckage Major Johnson quickly assessed the situation and began organizing and directing the rescue operation. Major Johnson assisted in pulling one of the injured crew members from the twisted wreckage only seconds before the aircraft burst into flames. Some of the rescue personnel told Major Johnson that they believed a fifth person was still aboard the burning wreckage. All the other rescue personnel had departed the area when the ship burst into flames but Major Johnson remained to look for the fifth person. Not until the intense heat and exploding ammunition forced Major Johnson away from the aircraft did he give up his search. To avoid being hit by the exploding ammunition, Major Johnson jumped into a ditch, where he spent many long minutes. Major Johnson's cool decisive leadership and exceptional heroism were directly responsible for the rescue of the injured crew members. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

NEAL R. HABER
SP4, RA11424712