


FROM: COMMANDING OFFICER, MLS/QL
SOA (CCS) 5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (ABN)
1ST SPECIAL FORCES
APO 96297

TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

ON 2 APRIL 1970, MAJOR MARSHALL G. HARRISON, AIR FORCE, WHILE PARTICIPATING IN AERIAL FLIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM, DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY HEROIC ACTIONS ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY. A FIVE MAN SPECIAL FORCES RECON TEAM CONDUCTING A CLASSIFIED MISSION FOUND ITSELF COMPROMISED AND IN GRAVE DANGER AND REQUESTED IMMEDIATE HELICOPTER EXTRACTION. THE RECON TEAM SENT AN URGENT MESSAGE TO MAJ HARRISON, THE FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER, REQUESTING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE. MAJOR HARRISON IMMEDIATELY SCRAMBLED HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS AND PIN-POINTED THE TEAM'S POSITION WHO BY THIS TIME WERE RECEIVING INTENSE ENEMY FIRE. MAJOR HARRISON, SEEING THAT AN EXTRACTION WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITION, BEGAN VECTORING THE TEAM THROUGH THE HEAVY TRIPLE-CANOPIED JUNGLE. RELYING SOLELY ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE TERRAIN AND USING LIMITED SIGNALLING AND VERBAL DISCRPTIONS TO THE TEAM ON THE GROUND, MAJOR HARRISON DIRECTED THE TEAM TO A SUITABLE EXTRACTION AREA. BY THE TIME MAJOR HARRISON HAD MOVED THE RECON TEAM TO THE EXTRACTION POINT THE FOUR HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS HE HAD REQUESTED ARRIVED IN THE AREA. THE RECON TEAM WAS NOW COMPLETELY ENCIRCLED BY THE ENEMY AND WAS RECEIVING HEAVY SMALL ARMS, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND B-40 ROCKET FIRE AND REQUESTED IMMEDIATE 360 DEGREE SURPRESSION FIRE AT A DISTANCE OF 20 METERS. MAJ HARRISON IMMEDIATELY AND SKILLFULLY DIRECTED THE GUNSHIPS FIRE WITHIN 20 METERS OF THE FRIENDLY POSITION. THE ENEMY RESPONDED WITH INTENSE AIR TO GROUND FIRE INCLUDING AUTOMATIC AND B-40 ROCKETS INFLECTING NUMEROUS HITS TO THREE OF THE GUNSHIPS THUS NECESSITATING RAPID EXPENDITURE OF THEIR ORDINANCE. MAJOR HARRISON RECOGNIZED THIS CRITICAL SITUATION AND IMMEDIATELY SCRAMBLED ADDITIONAL GUNSHIPS. THE SPECIAL FORCES RECON TEAM ADVISED MAJOR HARRISON THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED 100 PER CENT CASUALTIES WITH ONE

KIA. THE FOUR GUNSHIPS HAD BY NOW COMPLETELY EXPENDED THEIR ORDINANCE. MAJOR HARRISON ONCE AGAIN BECAME THE SOLE SUPPORT OF THE SPECIAL FORCES RECON TEAM AND UNHESITATINGLY BEGAN TO EXPEND HIS ROCKETS AND 7.62 MACHINE GUNS. MAJOR HARRISON MADE MANY "COLD" PASSES IN A VALIANT EFFORT TO DRAW THE ENEMY'S FIRE AWAY FROM THE RECON TEAM WHILE CAREFULLY CONSERVING HIS ORDINANCE UNTIL OTHER GUNSHIPS COULD ARRIVE. ON ONE OF HIS PASSES MAJOR HARRISON'S OV-10 AIRCRAFT SUSTAINED A HIT FROM AN EXPLODING B-40 ROCKET BUT, DESPITE THIS THE MAJOR CONTINUED HIS HEROIC EFFORT TO PROTECT THE TEAM. ON ONE PASS MAJOR HARRISON OBSERVED APPROXIMATELY 45 ENEMY ADVANCING RAPIDLY ON THE TEAM'S POSITION. HE ENGAGED THE ENEMY WITH HIS ORDINANCE KILLING AND WOUNDING A LARGE NUMBER OF THEM THUS BREAKING THE ENEMY'S DEADLY ASSAULT. THE PICK-UP SHIP WITH MORE GUNSHIPS ARRIVED ON STATION AT THIS TIME BUT DUE TO THE FAILURE OF THE AIRBORNE COMMANDER'S RADIOS, WAS UNABLE TO DIRECT THE RECOVERY OF THE RECON TEAM. MAJOR HARRISON IMMEDIATELY TOOK COMMAND. WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE SUPPRESSING FIRE, MAJOR HARRISON DIRECTED THE GUNSHIPS ON TARGET AND THE RECOVERY, BY THE PICK-UP SHIP OF THE SPECIAL FORCES RECON TEAM, WHICH BY THIS TIME, HAD ONE KIA AND FOUR SERIOUSLY WOUNDED PERSONNEL. MAJOR HARRISON'S VALOROUS ACTIONS IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING HOSTILE ADVERSITY WAS BEYOND A DOUBT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAVING OF FOUR AMERICAN SPECIAL FORCES LIVES. MAJOR HARRISON'S COURAGEOUS AND VALOROUS ACTIONS AND DEVOTION TO DUTY REFLECTED THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONALISM IN COMBAT AND SHOULD BE APPROPRIATELY RECOGNIZED IN THE TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS CORPS.


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