

PTTEZYUW RUMUSBA5753 33-1435-EEEE--RUHMBRA RUMUGKA RUENAAA.

74Y EEEEE

2 050030Z NOV 70

FM HELAT/LTRON THREE

TO RUENAAA/SECNAV

INFO RUHMBRA/CINCPACFLT

RUMUGKA/COMNAVFORV

ZEN/DEPCOMNAVFORV

ZEN/CTF ONE ONE SIX

BT

UNCLAS E F T O //N01650// SECTION ONE OF TWO

FAST ACTION AWARD RECOMMENDATION

A. COMNAVFORVINST 1650.3B

B. CINCPACFLTINST 1650.1 SERIES

1. IAW REF A AND B RECOMMENDED

A. KEVIN FRANCIS DELANEY, LTJG, 731477, [REDACTED] USN

B. HELAT/LTRON THREE

C. NAVY CROSS

D. AT APPROXIMATELY 2330H ON 12 NOVEMBER 1970, LTJG DELANEY'S FIRE TEAM WAS MAKING THE FINAL FIRING RUNS IN A SERIES OF STRIKES IN SUPPORT OF A VIETNAMESE OUTPOST WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER A B-40 AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS ATTACK WHEN HE RECEIVED WORD THAT THE KIEN AN

JUD 0035Z/2 NOV 70/0.1
HAL-3 (12 COPIES)

Delaney
12 Nov

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NAVY BASE WAS UNDER MORTAR ATTACK AND WAS IN URGENT NEED OF AIR SUPPORT. ENEMY FIRE AT THE OUTPOST HAD BEEN SUPPRESSED AND HE IMMEDIATELY BROKE OFF TARGET AND SCRAMBLED TO SUPPORT THE NAVY UNIT. AFTER A BRIEF STOP FOR FUEL AND ORDNANCE, THE SEAWOLVES WERE OVERHEAD; HOWEVER THE MORTAR FIRE CEASED AS THEY ARRIVED ON STATION. THE SUSPECTED ORIGIN OF FIRE WAS IN EXTREMELY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO A FRIENDLY HAMLET SO NO AIR STRIKE COULD BE INITIATED. WEATHER CONDITIONS WERE EXTREMELY POOR AND WERE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING. THE SEAWOLVES WERE INFORMED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL CRITICALLY WOUNDED NAVY PERSONNEL ON THE GROUND AND THAT NO MEDICAL EVACUATION HELICOPTER WAS AVAILABLE. THE SEAWOLVES WERE ALSO WARNED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL SAPPERS IN THE PERIMETER OF THE BASE. LTJG DELANEY ESCORTED THE OTHER SEAWOLF HELICOPTER AS IT MADE ITS APPROACH TO A PIER WHICH WAS ADJACENT TO THE BASE. AT THIS TIME FOG AND HEAVY RAINS WERE BEGINNING TO MOVE IN FROM THE SOUTH AND VISIBILITY WAS REDUCED TO APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF MILE AND WAS DECREASING. AS THE HELICOPTER LIFTED, LTJG DELANEY SAFELY ESCORTED IT FROM THE AREA AND THEN RETURNED AS SINGLE AIRCRAFT WITHOUT ANY COVER TO MEDEVAC THREE SAILORS WHO WERE LIFE OR DEATH CASES. FOG AND LOW CLOUDS HAD

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BY THIS TIME ENGULFED THE AREA AND AN INTENSE DOWNPOUR FURTHER REDUCED VISIBILITY. AFTER TWO PASSES, THE PIER WAS LOCATED AND LTJG DELANEY EXECUTED AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND DEMANDING APPROACH USING HIS OPEN SIDE WINDOWS AS THE ONLY MEANS OF SEEING THROUGH THE DRIVING RAIN. AS HE WAS MAKING HIS APPROACH, HE WAS IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH A PBR BOAT CAPTAIN WHO WAS ATTEMPTING TO VECTOR HIM TO THE PIER. THE BOAT CAPTAIN ADVISED LTJG DELANEY THAT HIS AIRCRAFT WAS HOVERING EIGHT TO TEN FEET OVERHEAD HIS BOAT, BUT NEITHER LTJG DELANEY NOR HIS CREW WERE ABLE TO SEE THE PBR. FINALLY AFTER FEELING HIS WAY THROUGH THE DRIVING RAIN, THE NARROW WOODEN PIER WHICH WAS THE INTENDED LANDING AREA, WAS SIGHTED AND LTJG DELANEY LANDED HIS AIRCRAFT SAFELY, ALTHOUGH THE PIER WAS BARELY WIDE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THE SKIDS OF HIS AIRCRAFT. THIS LANDING WAS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AS THERE WERE PILINGS PROTRUDING FROM THE PIER AND ADJACENT TO THE PIER WERE SEVERAL TELEPHONE POLES AND MANY WIRES. ANY OF THESE OBSTRUCTIONS COULD HAVE BEEN DEADLY BUT LTJG DELANEY SKILLFULLY AVOIDED THEM. HIS CREW THEN QUICKLY EMBARKED THE WOUNDED SAILORS. BY THIS TIME, THERE WERE NO REFERENCE POINTS BECAUSE VISIBILITY HAD REACHED ZERO AND HIS RADAR ALTIMETER

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AND DIRECTION INDICATOR HAD BECOME INOPERATIVE. REALIZING THE DIRE SITUATION OF THE WOUNDED, HE IGNORED THE GRAVE DANGER WHICH EXISTED AND WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY, HE ELECTED TO TAKE-OFF. MAKING AN INSTRUMENT TAKEOFF, HIS AIRCRAFT STRUGGLED FROM THE CONFINED AND OBSTACLE LADEN AREA UNDER THE BURDEN OF ADDITIONAL WEIGHT INTO FOG AND TOTAL DARKNESS. HE PROCEEDED IN THE MAGNETIC COMPASS DIRECTION OF THE RACH GIA AIRFIELD WHERE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WAS WAITING. FOR ALMOST TEN MINUTES HIS AIRCRAFT WAS COMPLETELY ENGULFED IN FOG AND RAIN SO THAT NEITHER HE NOR HIS CREW COULD SEE ANY GEOGRAPHICAL LANDMARK OR LIGHTS. WHEN HE BROKE OUT OF THE CLOUDS HE WAS NEAR THE RACH SOI AIRFIELD AND A LOW FUEL STATE FORCED HIM TO LAND AND EXPEDITIOUSLY TAKE ON SUFFICIENT FUEL TO MAKE THE TEN FLIGHT TO RACH GIA. LANDING AT RACH GIA, THE SAILORS WERE PICKED UP BY AN AMBULANCE AND ASSURED OF COMPETENT MEDICAL TREATMENT BY A NAVY SURGEON. OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE FACT THAT THROUGHOUT HIS APPROACH, LANDING, AND TAKE OFF FROM THE KIEN AN NAVY BASE, HIS AIRCRAFT WAS CONTINUALLY SUBJECTED TO HEAVY ENEMY SNIPER FIRE FROM THREE

DIRECTING. IT WAS NOT UNTIL HIS AIRCRAFT WAS IN THE AIR THAT HE WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPE THE ENEMY'S FIRE.

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LTJG DELANEY'S DARING ACTIONS AND IN SPIRING PROFESSIONALISM UNQUESTIONABLY SAVED THE LIVES OF THE WOUNDED SAILORS. E. "FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM WHILE SERVING WITH FRIENDLY FORCES ENGAGED IN ARMED CONFLICT AGAINST THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG COMMUNIST AGGRESSORS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ON 12 NOVEMBER 1970. LTJG DELANEY WAS THE PILOT OF A UH-1B LIGHT HELICOPTER FIRE TEAM ATTACHED TO AND SERVING WITH HELICOPTER ATTACK (LIGHT) SQUADRON THREE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. HIS FIRETEAM SCRAMBLED IN REACTION TO AN URGENT REQUEST FOR AIR SUPPORT FROM THE KIEN AN NAVY BASE WHICH WAS UNDERSUSTAINED ENEMY MORTAR ATTACK. AS THE SEAWOLVES APPEARED OVERHEAD, THE MORTAR FIRE CEASED, AND THEY WERE INFORMED THAT SEVERAL SAILORS HAD BEEN CRITICALLY WOUNDED AND THEIR IMMEDIATE MEDICAL EVACUATION WAS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH. WEATHER CONDITIONS WERE EXTREMELY POOR AND RAPIDLY DETERIORATING. THE SEAWOLVES WERE ALSO WARNED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL SAPPERS IN THE PERIMETER OF THE BASE. LTJG DELANEY THEN COVERED THE LEAD SHIP AS IT EFFECTED A MEDICAL EVACUATION. LTJG DELANEY'S AIRCRAFT WAS THEN REQUESTED TO EVACUATE THREE MORE LIFE OR DEATH CASES. FULL REALIZING THE GRAVE DANGER THAT EXISTED AND WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIS OWN

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PERSONAL SAFETY, HE ELECTED TO EVACUATE THE CRITICALLY INJURED SAILORS. BY THIS TIME THE STORM HAD ENGULFED THE BASE AND VISIBILITY WAS REDUCED TO ZERO IN DRIVING RAIN, FOG, AND TOTAL DARKNESS. AFTER TWO PASSES A NARROW, WOODEN PIER FROM WHICH THE MEN WERE TO BE EVACUATED WAS LOCATED. LTJG DELANEY FLEW HIS AIRCRAFT THROUGH THE STORM TO A SAFE LANDING DESPITE NUMEROUS OBSTACLES WHICH SURROUNDED THE PIER. AFTER EMBARKING THE WOUNDED MEN, LTJG DELANEY TOOK OFF INTO THE STORM IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT VALUABLE FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS WERE INOPERATIVE. AFTER FLYING COMPLETELY ON HIS INSTRUMENTS FOR SEVERAL MINUTES HIS AIRCRAFT BROKE OUT OF THE STORM AND BECAUSE OF AN EMERGENCY FUEL STATE LANDED TO REFUEL. HE THEN EXPEDITIOUSLY PROCEEDED TO RACH GIA AIRFIELD WHERE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WAS WAITING. OF PARTICULAR NOTE WAS THE FACT THAT THROUGHOUT HIS APPROACH, LANDING, AND TAKEOFF FROM THE KIEN AN NAVY BASE, LTJG DELANEY WAS CONTINUALLY SUBJECTED TO HEAVY ENEMY SNIPER FIRE FROM SNIPER FIRE FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS. LTJG DELANEY'S DEVOTION TO DUTY, COURAGE UNDER FIRE, AND EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONALISM WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE."

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UNCLAS E F T O //N01650// FINAL SECTION OF TWO

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F. FIRST STRIKE/FLIGHT AIR MEDAL, TWO VIETNAMESE CROSSES OF GALLANTRY AND TWO NAVY COMMENDATION MEDALS AND ONE COMBAT ACTION RIBBON

G. DECEMBER 79

H. STATEMENT OF LTJG WILLIAM R. PALMER, USNR, 745531/1635, SENIOR ADVISOR, RIVER PATROL DIVISION FIVE EIGHT AND R01 DONALD D. WATERS, USN, 478 29 55, ADVISOR, RIVER PATROL DIVISION FIVE EIGHT CONCERNING THE ACTIONS OF LTJG KEVIN FRANCIS DELANEY, USN, 781477/1317, ON 12 NOVEMBER 1970, BOTH ORIGINATOR'S WERE ACTING AS ADVISORS ABOARD RIVER PATROL BOATS OF RIVER PATROL DIVISION FIFTY EIGHT ON THE NIGHT OF 12-13 NOVEMBER 1970. AT 122350H, PBPS OF

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RPD 58 IN WATERBORNE GUARDPOST WERE SCRAMBLED TO ASSIST KIEN AN BASE WHICH HAD COME UNDER HEAVY ENEMY MORTAR AND ROCKET FIRE. SEA-WOLF 82, LTJG DELANEY, SCRAMBLED AND CIRCLED OVERHEAD, BUT WAS UNABLE TO PLACE A STRIKE DUE TO THE EXTREMELY LOW CEILING. DESPITE RECEIVING STEADY SMALL ARMS FIRE, LTJG DELANEY REMAINED OVERHEAD TO PROVIDE COVER FOR THE DUSTOFF HELO REPORTEDLY ENROUTE. UPON HEARING THAT FIVE VNN WOUNDED WERE LIFE OR DEATH STATUS, LTJG DELANEY IMMEDIATELY VOLUNTEERED TO MEDEVAC THEM, FULLY AWARE OF THE EXTREME DANGER IN MAKING A BLIND DESCENT INTO A HOSTILE LANDING AREA. NEVERTHELESS, WITH EXCEPTIONAL FLYING SKILL AND SELFLESS COURAGE LTJG DELANEY MANEUVERED HIS HELO IN NEARLY 0/2 VISIBILITY DOWN TO A SMALL AND VULNERABLE LANDING AREA ON THE DOCK, 50-60 FEET FROM WHERE TWO ENEMY ROCKETS HAD EXPLODED ONLY FIFTEEN MINUTES EARLIER. THE WEATHER HAD DETERIORATED SO TOTALLY BY THIS POINT THAT LTJG DELANEY COULD NOT HAVE EVEN SEEN HIS LANDING AREA UNTIL HE WAS ONLY A FEW FEET OFF THE DECK, IN THE ESTIMATION OF THE RPD58 ADVISOR WATCHING FROM ACROSS THE RIVER. THE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED SAILORS WERE WHISKED BY LTJG DELANEY TO PACH GIA WHERE AMBULANCES AWAITED. THE QUICK, UNHESITATING ACTION BY LTJG DELANEY UNDER

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PROHIBITIVE FLYING CONDITIONS, WITH TOTAL DISREGARD FOR HIS OWN SAFETY, MAY VERY WELL HAVE SAVED SEVERAL LIVES. WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT

THAT NO DUSTOFF HELO WOULD BE AVAILABLE, LTJG DELANEY ONCE AGAIN VOLUNTEERED TO UNDERTAKE THE MEDEVAC OF THE REMAINING SERIOUSLY WOUNDED PATIENTS. NOW IN EVEN WORSE WEATHER, IF THAT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT THE PBR ADVISOR ON THE GROUND ADVISED AGAINST ANOTHER SUCH EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS ATTEMPT AND THE DECISION WAS MADE TO MEDEVAC THE REMAINING WOUNDED BY PBR. FOR SUCH SELFLESS COURAGE, HUMANITY, DEVOTION TO DUTY, AND SUPERB AIRMANSHIP UNDER THE WORST IMAGINABLE FLYING CONDITIONS, IT IS REQUESTED THAT LTJG DELANEY BE RECOMMENDED FOR THE NAVY CROSS. RDI WATERS WAS A BOAT RIDER AND EYEWITNESS TO THE ABOVE ACTIONS, AND LTJG PALMER MONITORED THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE IN THE RACH SOI NOC.

STATEMENT OF CDR I.M. WATSON, USN, SENIOR NAVAL ADVISOR, KIEN AN NAVAL SUPPORT BASE. AT ABOUT 2340 ON 12 NOVEMBER 1970, UNITS OF SEAWOLF DETACHMENT EIGHT WERE CALLED UPON TO ASSIST KIEN AN NAVY BASE WHICH WAS UNDER HEAVY MORTAR ATTACK. THE SEAWOLVES SCRAMBLED IMMEDIATELY FROM THEIR HOME BASE AT RACH GIA AND PROCEEDED TO KIEN AN. A HEAVY RAINSTORM ENGULFED THE AREA AND SEVERELY LIMITED THE

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VISIBILITY. BECAUSE OF THE DOWNPOUR THE BASE PERSONNEL WERE UNABLE TO PINPOINT THE ENEMY'S MORTAR POSITION AND RETALIATE. ROUNDS CONTINUED TO POUR ON NUMEROUS CASUALTIES TO VIETNAMESE NAVY PERSONNEL ENSUED. PERSONNEL AT THE BASE PROVIDED FIRST AID AND TO THE INJURED AND FOUND THAT MANY WERE CRITICALLY WOUNDED. MEDICAL EVACUATION HELICOPTERS WERE REQUESTED BY THE KIEN AN BASE, HOWEVER THEY WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE. THE RAIN HAD INTENSIFIED AND VISIBILITY HAD DECREASED TO A FEW FEET, THUS MAKING SUCH A MISSION EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. THE SEAWOLVES WERE THEN CALLED UPON TO TAKE ON THE EVACUATION MISSION. DISREGARDING THE ENEMY FIRE DIRECTED AT THEM AND THE EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS FLYING CONDITIONS, THE SEAWOLVES COURAGEOUSLY ANSWERED THE DISTRESS CALL AND PROCEEDED TO EVACUATE THE WOUNDED. THERE WAS NO HELICOPTER LANDING PAD AT KIEN AN BASE AND THE ONLY POSSIBLE RECOVERY AREA WAS A SMALL WOODEN PIER. PILINGS EXTENDING FOUR FEET ABOVE THE PIER, TELEPHONE POLES AND LIGHT STANDARDS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA ADDED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE DANGERS OF THE RECOVERY. THE AIR WAS GUSTING AS THE PILOTS MANEUVERED THEIR AIRCRAFT WITH EXTREME SKILL AND TREMENDOUS COURAGE AND SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATED SEVEN WOUNDED VIETNAMESE SAILORS. CDR

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WATSON OBSERVED LTJG DELANEY'S ACTIONS FROM THE WOODEN PIER.

I. FENN, R.G., LTJG, 727704, [REDACTED], USNR, SILVER STAR

PARRETT, T.S., LTJG, 749267, [REDACTED], USNR, DFC

JOPLIN, J.E., LT, 663042, [REDACTED], USN, SILVER STAR

UNDERWOOD, R.L., AE1, 692 58 59, [REDACTED], USN, DFC

MADRID, M.J., ATMAN, B86 79 35, [REDACTED], USN, DFC

BREEN, H.E., ADJAN, B21 17 69, [REDACTED], USN, DFC

LANG, R.E., ADJ2, B82 78 30, [REDACTED], USN, DFC

J. P/A

BT

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