

## SWORN STATEMENT OF JIM HERNANDEZ

I, Jim HERNANDEZ, being first duly sworn upon oath, depose and say as follows:

I currently reside in Clatskanie, Oregon. My birth date is August 8, 1949. I enlisted in the army in 1968 and served my first tour of duty in Viet Nam with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division starting in July of 1968. I served a total of four tours in Viet Nam concluding in 1972. I was primarily in the infantry, but for one tour I was door gunner on a helicopter. I also served with the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division.

In November or early December of 1971, I was transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division after the 101<sup>st</sup> stood down from action.

On New Year's Day, 1972, my platoon was transported from Firebase Mace to a location approximately 44 miles Northeast of Saigon. I understood our mission was to locate Vietnamese forces in that area.

Shortly after setting down on the landing zone and while setting up a perimeter, we encountered mortar fire. We were ordered to move on and spent the night beside the trail. The next day at first light we started patrolling. Nothing eventful occurred that day and no enemy were encountered.

On January 3, 1972, my platoon leader was Second Lieutenant James Ratliff. After lunch we were to patrol the area, which consisted of primarily triple canopy jungle. The first platoon returned from its patrol, reporting nothing significant or unusual. I was walking point. Next in line was Sergeant Bedford Drinnon. After approximately one

hour, I encountered a trail one to two feet in width that appeared to me to have been used during the previous couple of days. I reported this information to Sergeant Drinnon, who relayed the information to the lieutenant. I was told to continue to the left. Approximately 200 meters further I encountered a tree that had been recently cut. I knew from past experience that trees were frequently cut and used in the construction of bunkers by the North Vietnamese forces. Shortly thereafter, I came across a road ten feet in width with signs of recent use. I estimated the usage to have been within the previous 12 hours. There was evidence of bicycle tracks and sandal prints. I reported both of these observations as before and was told to continue to the left. After approximately another 20 meters, I observed a machete with a shirt drying on it. I was careful not to get too close to the drying shirt for fear of a booby trap.

It was my belief that the enemy was close at hand, based on my observations. I was very concerned that we had been ordered to continue moving left as by now it was late afternoon and we were far from the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. Originally we had been informed that we were to clover leaf to the right and reconnect with the other troops at the end of our patrol.

After traveling another 100 to 200 meters, I came upon a clearing that was in the neighborhood of 75 meters in diameter. I was very apprehensive about entering the clearing, given the observations indicating an enemy presence. I once again expressed the need to move right, but was once again ordered to move left through the clearing. I was about 30 meters in the clearing when I felt a burning in my feet. I then heard a

gun shot. Then I heard a second gun shot. I neither heard, nor saw any movement from Sgt. Drinnon. I was concerned he had been hit. I called for a medic.

I was carrying approximately 600 rounds of ammunition. Each clip held 20 rounds. In automatic mode I would shoot a clip in about a second. By now there was a barrage of weapon fire coming from the jungle to my left beyond the clearing. I focused my attention to my left as I saw the enemy moving in the shadows of the jungle. I believe there was enemy fire coming from elsewhere around the perimeter of the clearing, but was unable to look that direction due to the closeness of enemy to my left. It was my hope that support from my platoon would cover my right flank.

I was down to my last 120 rounds by that time and was concerned, as my platoon had not advanced. I could see the enemy approaching and I was nearly out of ammunition. As Sgt. Drinnon was not firing, I assumed he was dead or seriously wounded. I tried to move back, but increased enemy fire forced me to remain in place.

I then heard movement behind me. I heard the soldier coming to my aid yell "I'm hit!". Sgt. David Sprinkle dropped next to me. He put his ammunition between us. I continued to shoot to my left and Sgt. Sprinkle shot to my right. I ran out of ammunition and started to use that brought by Sgt. Sprinkle. Sgt. Sprinkle introduced himself as David. I said, "I'm Jim". Even though Sgt. Sprinkle was serving as a rifleman with my platoon that day, we had not previously met. I asked Sgt. Sprinkle if others were coming. He said he had ordered them to advance. I asked about Sgt. Drinnon and was told he was

dead. All this time, we continued to fire. Sgt. Sprinkle yelled out, "Here they come!". I started to look straight ahead, but heard activity to my left and addressed my fire in that direction. I then heard Sgt. Sprinkle open fire, I presumed on the advancing North Vietnamese.

Because of our rate of fire in trying to suppress the advancing enemy, our ammunition again ran low. Sgt. Sprinkle crawled back to retrieve Sgt. Drinnon's supply of ammunition. Shortly thereafter, he returned with more ammunition. We continued to fire, me to the left, him to the right.

Sgt. Sprinkle got hit with another round. He was forced to roll on his back, but continued to fire. A rocket exploded next to Sgt. Sprinkle. He screamed out "they shot my dick off!". I told him to shut up in an attempt to help him regain his composure. Sgt. Sprinkle yelled for a medic and for the platoon to advance, all seeming to no avail.

I knew that Sgt. Sprinkle was severely injured. I called for a medic. Sgt. Sprinkle could only fire one round at a time as his rifle had been damaged by the rocket explosion. He continued, however, to lie on his back and fire. Sgt. Sprinkle began to pass out and I was afraid he was dying. A medic finally joined us. Sgt. Sprinkle told him to get Sgt. Drinnon's rifle and remaining ammunition. The medic retrieved the rifle and ammunition. The medic told us we had to crawl back, as no one was advancing. We started to crawl back, me on my stomach, facing forward, Sgt. Sprinkle on his back, his head toward the enemy.

We heard "choppers" arriving. My rifle jammed so I took and used Sgt.

Drinnon's rifle. Sgt. Sprinkle carried his damaged rifle with one round capability, but was unable to reload due to his wounds and so had stopped firing. We made slow progress. At times I had to pull Sgt. Sprinkle to assist and encourage him.

As we approached the jungle at the end of the clearing, enemy fire decreased. When we entered the jungle we saw our platoon hunkered down. Sgt. Sprinkle and I made it to awaiting "choppers" another 30 meters into the jungle. Sgt. Sprinkle was lifted out. I was examined by a medic and then evacuated. My helicopter was shot down. The helicopter crew, Sgt. Drinnon's body, and I were placed on a third "chopper" and transported to safety.

I was taken to Longh Binh Hospital, the same as Sgt. Sprinkle. After three days, I was allowed to leave my bed. I went to see Sgt. Sprinkle. He was very weak, with tubes going in and out of his body. I told him he deserved the "Medal of Honor". He thanked me and then lost consciousness. A couple days later, before I was to return to my unit, I went to say good-bye. Sgt. Sprinkle told me he was going home. I wished him good luck and left.

Back at my company, while recuperating, I worked as a clerk. Either the First Sergeant or the regular clerk, I'm not sure which, said Sgt. Sprinkle was to get the "Medal". I said, "He deserves it". I had no contact with Sgt. Sprinkle after that until he wrote me in 2001. I had assumed he had died from his injuries and was shocked to hear from him.

I sincerely believe that except for Sgt. Sprinkle's heroic actions that day, I would

have been overrun and killed. I expected my platoon to advance, which did not happen and left me isolated. Had the North Vietnamese not been held at bay by the firepower provided by Sgt. Sprinkle and myself they would surely have advanced on the platoon and could have surrounded them prior to the arrival of the gun ships.

I believe that Sgt. Sprinkle, without concern for his personal safety, advanced without the support of the remainder of his platoon, which resulted in his sustaining near fatal and life altering injuries. Had Sgt. Sprinkle not acted as he did, I believe that the operation would have had tragic results for our platoon, instead of the enemy suffering substantial casualties. I did, and still, believe Sgt. Sprinkle to be deserving of this nation's highest decoration, the "Congressional Medal of Honor"

Sworn to before me this 6<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001.

  
Jim Hernandez

  
Notary Public for Oregon

My Commission Expires: June 24, 2002



Sworn Statement Sgt. David T Sprinkle, Sept. 20, 2001 of the events of Jan 3, 1972  
44 miles N.E of Saigon Vietnam. A fire fights....

While on patrol with 3<sup>rd</sup> plat. C Co. 2/5<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade 1<sup>st</sup> Cav. Div. Div. In the afternoon of the day in question we were searching for N.V.A forces.

We moved out cautiously starting a clover leaf patrol. After about an hour we began to encounter fresh sign of the enemy on a continuing basis. We found a machete in a stump with a NVA shirt wet with sweat rings hanging from it. We started again and after a short while came upon a wide well used trail. It contained many footprints and bicycle tracks and was maybe 10 ft. wide. Across the trail we felt that perhaps we could see three bunker holes 20 meters away. Shortly we continued on after calling in our findings and being ordered ahead. The point man and I, also the squad leader advised against this and were rebuffed.

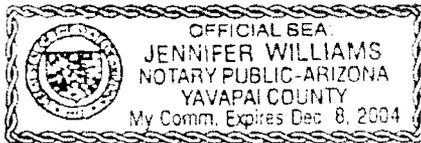
I was walking fifth man behind Jim Hernandez, Bedford Drinnon Sqd. Leader, Lt. James Ratliff PLt. Leader, His RTO..myself. I had volunteered for the patrol after being asked by the LT. To come and read sign and bolster up the Plt. which had quite a few new men. We are moving into areas that are getting clearer as if the brush had been cleared out for a bunker complex. One or two shots go off, then bullets start flying like a volcanic eruption. I run left 5 to 10 meters and hit the ground; a new guy is beside me. I yell at him to open fire I hear the pointman yelling for a medic. I look to the right but I can't see him, the Lt. And RTO are hunkered down next to the trail. I tell the new guy to go back and order gun teams up and form a perimeter. I take off to run behind the Lt and RTO. They have a good spot. I get up to run to Bedford and crash down beside him, He is not moving and shot twice ...I check him and he is gone, I say good bye. I scoot closer to him the firing is very intense up here and the pointman is pinned down from three sides, I get up to run to him he is shot in both feet. I am hit in the hip as I get tangled in a vine and go down. I start to leap and crawl to Jim's right side. I say I'm Dave He says he's Jim, I've never met him before this day. We fire furiously, madly trying to gain fire superiority. I see them trying to flank us on the right and concentrate my fire on them as they fall. I get hit again and I take hand grenades and smoke grenades and lay them out for close in fighting. We fire continuously at movements of shadows and flashes trying to keep them off us. I crawl back to Bedford to get his ammo and return. I eliminate 2 men running at me. I am wounded again while I roll on my back to reload. A rocket explodes over me, It blows up my abdominal area...I scream and scream and Jim tells me shut up. I get an aid dressing out and try to scoop up what's left of me. I lay on my back and fire I load one round at a time by hand for my weapon was disabled by the rocket. I fire over and over and call for a medic and for the platoon to come up. Finally the medic comes, he is afraid and new. I tell him to go get me Bedford's weapon and any ammo he has. He ties me up as best he can and says there is nothing I can do for you and no one is coming to get you. If you hear chopper you will have to crawl back yourself. He gets me the weapon and I tell him to go help other wounded and don't come back up here. I am wounded again we keep firing then we hear choppers, enemy fire is dying down Jim and I decide to crawl back and he takes Bedford's weapon and I pick up my disabled one. His weapon has burnt up from too much fire at a rapid rate. I drag myself by my elbows on my back facing the enemy with my weapon across my chest to protect me. Jim leads off we go slow But he encourages me and tugs on the top of my shirt and head across the clearing towards the jungle. I see Harry and Tom coming out of the jungle to our right with the M-60 I give them an "atta boy," and tell them to fire forward and right. I catch a round or shrapnel that's hot behind my right knee I cry out. I crawl past men on my left and encourage them to keep firing and be watchful. I get to the rigid litter.

Faced with horrendous, small arms, machine gun and rocket fire, Mr. Hernandez has and with at least one bunker we can see less than forty feet away. He has courageously faced them down with me.

I feel we eliminated their flanking movements and assaults so we were killed or our platoon surrounded and decimated. If we had not taken these actions we would not have survived.

Later in the hospital at 24<sup>th</sup> Evac 4 days later I was asked to turn down the Congressional Medal of Honor which I had been nominated for because of the circumstances there and the conflicting accounts so as not have any embarrassment at the end of the War. The First Sargent and medic and Mr. Hernandez had complete knowledge of this and others in the platoon also. I felt what could I do I was in intensive recovery care and heavily medicated. Mr Hernandez was assured I received the medal and felt I had past away until I contacted him in late Jan 2001. The last time he had seen me in the Hosp. He felt I was not going to live so he was shocked that I contacted him after 29 1/2 years.

I can be contacted in [REDACTED]  
Lt John McCorkle of third Plt. can be contacted at [REDACTED]  
His Plt. came to our aid after I was already gone on a medivac. The medic was new man and can be located on the company roster through the US Army.  
I have no one else who can be contacted because the 1<sup>st</sup> Sargent died a couple years ago.



ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE ME THIS 24  
DAY OF Sept 2001  
NOTARY Jennifer Williams

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam  
APO San Francisco 96375

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 661

31 March 1972

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

TC 439. The following AWARD is announced.

SPRINKLE, DAVID T. [REDACTED] SERGEANT United States Army, Company C, 2d  
Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) APO 96490  
Awarded: Silver Star

Dates of action: 1 January 1972

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of  
Congress, approved 9 July 1918

Reason: For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations against  
an armed enemy force in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Sprinkle  
distinguished himself on 1 January 1972 while serving as a rifleman  
on a combat operation in the Republic of Vietnam. During the late  
afternoon, an estimated company sized element of the North Vietnamese  
Army ambushed the platoon patrol. Throughout the ensuing battle,  
Sergeant Sprinkle directed a suppressive volume of retaliatory fire  
on the enemy positions as he repeatedly exposed himself to the intense  
hostile rocket, machine gun and small arms fire. Realizing that the  
point man and squad leader had been incapacitated with the first volley  
of unfriendly fire and had left a huge gap in the friendly line, Sergeant  
Sprinkle moved through the bullet swept area to fill this gap. Shortly  
after reaching this position, he was seriously wounded when a rocket  
exploded next to his position. Even while receiving aid he continued to  
direct a suppressive volume of retaliatory fire on the enemy positions.  
Sergeant Sprinkle's gallantry in action was in keeping with the highest  
traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon him-  
self, his unit, and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



C. A. STANFIEL

Colonel, AGC

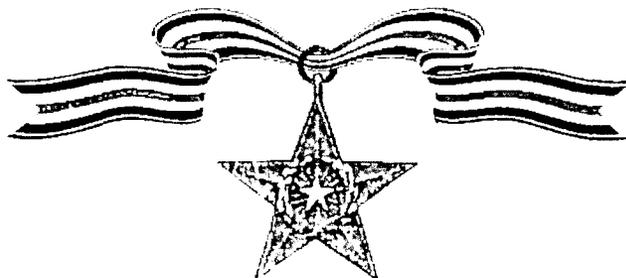
Adjutant General

L. H. SCHEITLER

MG US ARMY

Chief of Staff

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# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUTHORIZED BY ACT OF CONGRESS JULY 9, 1918  
HAS AWARDED

## THE SILVER STAR

TO

SERGEANT DAVID T. SPRINKLE, [REDACTED]  
UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR  
GALLANTRY IN ACTION

IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ON 3 JANUARY 1972

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 31ST DAY OF MARCH 1972

*Creighton W. Abrams*

CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS  
General, United States Army  
Commanding



*Robert J. Froehke*  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 3RD BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRBORNE)  
6000 FORT BRAGG, FORT BRAGG, NC 28540

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 121

22 January 1972

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR MERIT

TO 437. The following Award is authorized:

SERGEANT DAVID M. [REDACTED] ST-GR-76 UNITED STATES ARMY  
Company C 2nd Battalion (Airborne) 5th Cavalry

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date of Action: 3 January 1972

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order 11646, 24 August 1962.

Reason: For heroism, he voluntarily participated in aerial flight, in connection with ground operations in a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant David M. [REDACTED] distinguished himself by valorous action on 3 January 1972. With complete disregard for his own safety, he courageously took actions which were a direct contribution to the other members of his unit and were instrumental in the successful completion of the mission. His display of personal bravery and devotion to duty as a Soldier of the United States Army, and his reflection of the values of the military service, and reflected credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

[Signature]  
F. DE BR  
[Signature]  
[Signature]

HERBERT R. MOODY  
LTC, I  
Chief of Staff

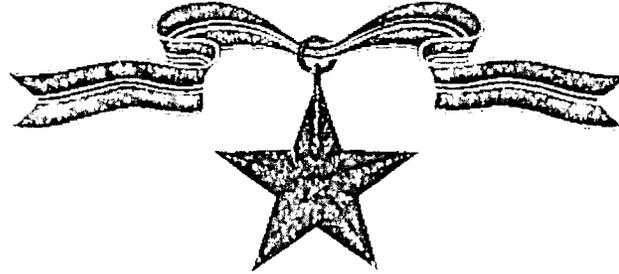
DISTRIBUTION:

2 - AVDAAG-ASL  
1 - INDAAGI

35 - [REDACTED]  
2 - [REDACTED]

SEPARATE DIS:

1 - AGID-SCD, # : AGID-SCD P + 24 Jan 1972, # 45216



# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, FEBRUARY 4, 1944  
HAS AWARDED

## THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO

SERGEANT ERIC T. STINKIE [REDACTED] 100th Airborne Division

FOR

HEROISM IN GROUND COMBAT

at the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_

Handwritten signature of James F. Hamlet in cursive.

JAMES F. HAMLET  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding



Handwritten signature of Robert J. Froehcke in cursive.

ROBERT J. FROECKE  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

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# Citation

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

## THE AIR MEDAL

IS PRESENTED TO

SERGEANT DAVID T. SPRINKLE 

UNITED STATES ARMY

who distinguished himself by meritorious achievement, while participating in sustained aerial flight, in support of combat ground forces in the Republic of Vietnam. During the period

14 JULY 1971 TO 2 JANUARY 1972

he actively participated in more than twenty-five aerial missions over hostile territory in support of operations against communist aggression. During all of these flights, he displayed the highest order of air discipline and acted in accordance with the best traditions of the service. By his determination to accomplish his mission, in spite of the hazards inherent in repeated aerial flights over hostile territory, and by his outstanding degree of professionalism and devotion to duty, he has brought credit upon himself, his organization, and the United States Army.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 3RD BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)  
APO San Francisco 96490

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 585

2 March 1972

AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL

TC 439. The following AWARDS are announced.

Awarded: Air Medal

Dates of Service: As indicated in the Standard Name Line.

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order 9157, 11 May 1942, as amended by Executive Order 1242-A, 11 September 1942, and DA Message 170631, dated 29 July 1964.

Reason: For meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight in the Republic of Vietnam.

BUSKTY, ALBERT A. [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

BACOT, JOHN P. [REDACTED] FIRST LIEUTENANT INFANTRY UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

BIERHAUS, DANNER F. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

CAROUCCI, ELEUTERIO [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

LOUGHERTY, MIKE D. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

DAUGHERTY, RODNEY B. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

FREDRICHS, DAVID J. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

HERSHMAN, TIMMY W. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

HILL, KURT C. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

KINDIE, TOMMY J. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

MCCABE, PRESTON L. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

MCINTYRE, ALEXANDER S. [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72 (3rd AW)

McKITCH, JOSEPH J. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

MILLER, WAYNE G. [REDACTED] STAFF SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

MORCHAD, JOHN W. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

RATLIFF, BILL T. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

RIDEOUT, GARY D. [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

SMITH, PHILIP G. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

TIBBETS, DANNY R. [REDACTED] PRIVATE FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY  
Co B 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cav 22 Sep 71 - 16 Jan 72

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 3RD BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)  
APO San Francisco 96490

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 14

7 January 1972

TC 439. The following AWARDS are announced.

Awarded: Purple Heart

Date Action: As indicated in Standard Name Line

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For wounds received in connection with military operations against a hostile force.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of AR 672-5-1 and USARPAC Message 16300 dated 17 August 1965.

WILL, ROBERT E. [REDACTED] CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER UNITED STATES ARMY  
Medical Company 215th Composite Services Battalion WHOKBO 3 January 1972  
VANALST, EARL D. [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FOUR UNITED STATES ARMY  
Company C 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 5th Cavalry WAGMOO 3 January 1972  
HERNANDEZ, JIMMY [REDACTED] SPECIALIST FOUR UNITED STATES ARMY  
Company C 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 5th Cavalry WAGMOO 3 January 1972  
SPRINKLE, DAVID T. [REDACTED] SERGEANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Company C 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 5th Cavalry WAGMOO 3 January 1972  
RATLIFF, JAMES L. [REDACTED] FIRST LIEUTENANT UNITED STATES ARMY  
Company C 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 5th Cavalry WAGMOO 3 January 1972

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

HERBERT T. MOODY  
LTC, IN  
Chief of Staff

*R. F. BERGH*  
R. F. BERGH  
OPT, AGC  
Asst AG

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2 - AVDAAG-ASD 2 - Each Indiv Conc  
2 - USARV, ATTN: AVHAG-DE 5 - AVDAAG-ER  
1 - AVDAGP 75 - AVDAAG-AGD  
60 - AG Casualty Br (V/Dist to as LNO) 2 - Each Unit Conc

SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION:

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15 - HQ DA (DAAG-PSR-O), EMGO Bldg, Falls Church, VA 22041

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THOMAS, DENNIS F. [REDACTED] PFC 11B4Y.

Type of Award: Pathfinder badge  
Authority: Para 108.1, AR 672-5-1  
Assigned to: HHC 229th Avn Bn WAAXTO  
Effective date: 3 Jul 71 VOCC dtd cfm 3 Jul 71

SARFF, WAYNE D. [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co E 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMEO  
THOMPSON, LEON G JR [REDACTED] PFC 11C10 Co E 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMEO  
VASQUES, MARTIN [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO  
~~SREEDHAR, DAVID [REDACTED] SGT 11B43 Co E 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO~~  
OSORIO, JOSE [REDACTED] 1LT 1542 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO  
EPPERSON, MARCUS [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO  
MILLER, LEROY [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO  
KRUGER, BRADLEY [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO  
KERNEK, STEVEN [REDACTED] PFC 11B10 Co C 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMCO

Type of Award: COMBAT INFANTRYMAN'S BADGE  
Authority: Para 96, AR 672-5-1  
Assigned to: As indicated in SNL  
Effective date: 28 Jul 71 VOCC dtd cfm 28 Jul 71

JOYNER, DOUGLAS B [REDACTED] 1LT 1542 Co A 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMAO  
MEEKER, WILLIAM C [REDACTED] 1LT 1542 Co A 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMAO  
VUKSICH, GREGORY E [REDACTED] 1LT 1542 Co A 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMAO  
MOSHER, DALE A [REDACTED] 1LT 1542 Co A 2nd Inf Bn (AM) 5th Cav WAGMAO  
HARTLEY, DAVID H [REDACTED] SFC 11D40 HHC 1st Inf Bn (AM) 7th Cav WAGPTO

Type of Award: COMBAT INFANTRYMAN'S BADGE  
Authority: Para 97, AR 672-5-1  
Assigned to: As indicated in SNL  
Effective date: 1 Aug 71 VOCC dtd cfm 1 Aug 71

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

*John M. Collins*  
JOHN M. COLLINS  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

CHARLES E. HODGES  
LTC, IN  
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION:

- 45 - AG Orders Br
- 2 - Each Indiv Conc
- 35 - AVDAAG-ER
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  - 2 - Co C 229th Avn Bn
  - 2 - 191st MI Det
  - 2 - HHC 229th Avn Bn
  - 2 - Co E 2/5th
  - 2 - Co C 2/5th
  - 2 - Co A 2/5th
  - 2 - HHC 1/7th

John L. McCorkle

September 28, 2001

To Whom It May Concern,

I, John MCCORKLE, do hereby depose and say as follows:

I currently reside in Jacksonville, Illinois. My date of birth is 1 April 1949. I enlisted in the US Army in June, 1969. In August, 1970 after completion of Infantry Officer Candidate School I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. I served a tour of duty with the 3rd Brigade, First Air Cavalry Division in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1971 through March 1972. During most of that time I was assigned as Platoon Leader for 1st Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

On 3 January 1972 two (2) platoons from our company was conducting search and a destroy mission. During our patrols that morning we had encountered a vacant bunker complex that had evidently been used by some element(s) of the North Vietnamese Army. We also encountered trails and other signs indicating enemy activity in the area.

During our patrol we set up a perimeter defensive position and broke for lunch. During this time my company Commander, Captain Adolf CARLSON, assigned me to take a patrol out from our perimeter to the north. Our patrol went approximately 250-300 meters to the north then turned towards the west and went another 75-100 meters. In that area we encountered vegetation so thick that we had to cut through it with machetes. Because of the noise that created I radioed the Company Commander informing him of the situation and he ordered me to return to the perimeter.

Upon our return Captain CARLSON sent another patrol under the leadership of Lieutenant Jim RATLIFF to the west. Approximately 15-20 minutes after they left our perimeter we heard the sounds of small arms fire indicating a heavy fire-fight. Captain CARLSON ordered the rest of the company to move toward the sound of the contact. I left two (2) men from my platoon behind to secure our perimeter area and we immediately moved toward the sound of the firefight.

Linking up with Lieutenant RATLIFF'S platoon we set up a defensive perimeter. I heard via the company radio that one man, SGT. Bedford DRINNON, had been killed and several were wounded. The total wounded would turn out to be fourteen (14).

We had called for medical evacuation helicopters and gunships for support and they arrived very shortly. Because of the triple canopy jungle in the area the medical evacuation helicopters used a device called a "jungle penetrator" to retrieve the wounded and dead. Because of the close proximity of the firefight, a total of four (4) of these medical evacuation helicopters were shot down that afternoon.

Two (2) of the wounded soldiers who were evacuated were Jim HERNANDEZ and David SPRINKLE. In talking with some of the men from that platoon later I learned that HERNANDEZ was walking point that afternoon and SPRINKLE was walking fifth in the line of march. SGT. DRINNON, who was killed was walking the "slack" or 2nd position in line of march. At the time of the initial contact SPRINKLE moved up from his position toward the point of the contact. I was informed that it was at this time that both he and HERNANDEZ were wounded severely. They were, however, able to continue to produce a heavy enough volume of fire to prevent the enemy element from overrunning and wiping out the platoon.

Regarding the exact actions of HERNANDEZ and SPRINKLE on that afternoon of 3 January 1972 I cannot give testimony because I was not there until

our platoon linked up with the one in contact with the enemy. I do remember that HERNANDEZ was new to our company having just been re-assigned from the 101st Airborne which had stood down.

I had known SGT. SPRINKLE for several months and had the opportunity to observe his performance. I found SGT. SPRINKLE to be one of the most dedicated, hard-working soldiers I had encountered. He performed his duties with the utmost professionalism. I also remember that on 3 January 1972, SGT. SPRINKLE was assigned to the headquarters contingent of C Company and volunteered to go on that patrol with Lieutenant RATLIFF'S platoon. We had several new soldiers assigned to our unit and SGT. SPRINKLE volunteered to go on that patrol to assist in looking for signs of enemy activity.

3 January 1972 was the last time I saw SGT. SPRINKLE until late September 2001. I had made telephone contact with him in August of 2001 and learned that he lived in Arizona. While visiting my in-laws in Bullhead City, Arizona SGT. SPRINKLE and I made arrangements and were able to spend an afternoon together. It was during this time that SGT. SPRINKLE informed me that subsequent to the firefight on 3 January 1972 he was informed that he had been submitted for the Congressional Medal of Honor, but that somehow the paperwork was lost. He also said he was in the process of investigating that situation.

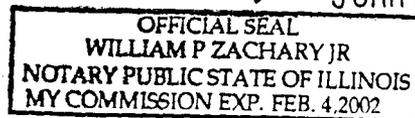
Because of that I have decided to write my perceptions of the account of that day and my remembrances of SGT. SPRINKLE. I have heard SGT. SPRINKLE'S account of his actions that day. I have also read the sworn statement of Jim HERNANDEZ who was alongside SPRINKLE during the entire firefight. Both of these accounts are in keeping with the type of behavior I would expect from a professional soldier such as SGT. SPRINKLE. To my remembrance, SGT. SPRINKLE was always a self-sacrificing, loyal soldier.

Because of the evidence with which I have been presented I would state, without hesitation, that SGT. SPRINKLE and probably Jim HERNANDEZ also, are deserving of the nation's highest honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Sworn before me this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September 2001

John L. McCorkle

John L. McCorkle



William P Zachary Jr  
Notary Public for Illinois

GENERAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 656

31 March 1972

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

TC 439. The following AWARD is announced.

MCCORKLE, JOHN L. [REDACTED] FIRST LIEUTENANT INFANTRY United States Army  
Company C, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) APO 96490

Awarded: Silver Star

Dates of service: 3 January 1972

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of  
Congress, approved 9 July 1918

Reason: For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: First Lieutenant McCorkle distinguished himself on 3 January 1972 while serving as Platoon Leader of the 1st Platoon, C Company, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in the Republic of Vietnam. On that date, another platoon in his company was hit with intense rocket and ground fire from an established company-size element of the North Vietnamese Army. At the command point, First Lieutenant McCorkle organized his platoon, arriving at the contact point shortly thereafter. He linked his platoon with the platoon already under fire, and unhesitatingly exposed himself to intense hostile fire as he deployed his men so that they could most effectively combat the enemy. If not for his quick reaction and superb leadership, there would have been many more casualties inflicted upon the third platoon. He remained in complete control of his actions throughout the situation and maneuvered constantly through the bullet swept area. First Lieutenant McCorkle continuously produced a heavy volume of suppressive fire which enable the precise evacuation of his wounded comrades. First Lieutenant McCorkle's gallantry in action is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



C. A. STANFIEL  
Colonel, AGC  
Adjutant General

L. H. SCHWEITER  
MG US ARMY  
Chief of Staff

Info removed by VNCA

Dear Sir;

This is the first written account of the firefight on Jan,3,1972 in Vietnam. The more accurate it is it was not presented in a formal manner and notarized. Since Mr. Hernandez was not able to get a lot of education we felt that it would be better if he related his account to the Columbia co. District Court judge [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]. It is never the less a heart stopping account of the days events and lends credibility to SGT. Sprinkle, request reconsideration of the events taking place out in the field and in the hosp. Grove said he welcomes your calls about his opinion about our veracity and recollection of the events. Not one person ever contacted Mr. Hernandez or Mr. Ratliff in thirty years. Or even replied when a christmas card was sent 20 years ago. Ratliff The platoon commander that day.

Sincerely,  
Dan H. Sprinkle

Jan. 1, 1972

Never Told we'd be going on Recon.  
ever one get perpaid, just what we'll  
Need, Ammo, Grenades, smoke Grenades,  
water,

I hadn't been with the First Cav. 7/5 3rd  
Brigade Charlie Co. 3rd Plt. Know just A Few  
guys, yet they Trust me, for I start walk  
ing point, I have walk point before.  
some for The Big Red 1. and The 101st.  
Air BORN.

My not very good at letter, But  
I'll put or try it in words,  
were ready to leave, 3rd, First, Cpt.  
Fly out northwest of Saigon. They Drop  
us off in a clearing, 1st lead off, The Cpt.  
3rd covering the Rear. we stop after awhile  
not mach of a Brake, mortar start  
hit around us, we take cover then we  
move out, we kept going till we make  
Camp on the TRAIL. Jan 2, we move out  
we're on the move all day. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Thank we shook the NVA, like I said I new to the outfit, I don't feel right, I feel like we're being watch, got that feeling something going to happen, I met up with Squad leader, Bedford, tell him about my feeling he tell me, Jim we're all afraid, I tell him I am always afraid when I go out on patrol, But I've also listen to my feeling that way I've lived this long.

Jan. 3, we move out, we stop later sat up a perimeter, we're told 1st PLT. is going on patrol, they return saw nothing.

We're told to eat lunch, will be going out after lunch, we move out after lunch, I move out about 10 meter out front, then slick man, witch is Bedford, still have the bad feeling But I kept moving, for the LT. is giving the order, moving carefully for I don't want to miss a Booby Trap, or not to run in to ambush. gone about 250 meter, sign of old trail, But, it look like being use, start out again

LT. say move to the left, <sup>Page 3</sup> I don't  
Feel Right, call Back, I say we should  
be beaving Right, we should get on Right  
Side of Trail, Lt, kept saying Left, kept  
moving But with caution, Fing more  
Sign, machete, Fresh cut kept moving  
Forward, shirt N/A, with sweat, I know  
we're in Trouble now, stop Lt, Sarge, and  
Bedford, Talk, say kept moving to left.  
Real: Bed Feel now, went to turn and go  
back But I can't. kept move forward,  
met up with large Trail, can see it been  
use, see dark spot on ground, like bunker  
hole, stop and call it in, BTN co, say kept  
move, start moving walk about 30 yard, stop  
and talk to Bedford, tell Bedford we should  
<sup>change</sup> we should go to the Right, Bedford and  
SARGE talk to the Lt. But he say, to kept moving  
to the Left, I start moving, moving Real careful  
I'm scared, I know we're moving right in to an  
Ambush, I kept moving the Brush look like it been  
cleared, I go about 20 meter, I feel the sting  
before I hear the sound of the Rifle I Fall  
forward start firing I know I'm hit in the

Feet, Don't know how Bad, I kept Firing, Receive Fire  
 from Left side and The Front, I Turn Look for Bedford  
 he on his back not moving, I yell for Medic  
 yell were hit. No Answer from anyone, I said  
 Damn They left us, I kept Firing, No place  
 for Cover, waiting for Fire from The Right side  
 I know rest of The guy can cover us from  
 There, no one come. I kept on Firing  
 They Firing from every where, and Rocket.  
 all I could do was kept Firing, I TURN AND see  
 SARGE come my way. I kept Firing to cover  
 him. I see him go down, I yell for medic  
 I ASK my self where is The rest of The Pl.  
 I see movement and Fire that way, they  
 go down, don't now if I hit them, more  
 Firing from 3 point, SARGE is next to me  
 we both start Firing him on The Right me on  
 The left. we kept Firing, see NVA TRYING  
 To get to us, we Fire they go down.  
 SARGE get hit Again, I don't know why  
 I have not been hit, Ammo is Running  
 Low, SARGE CRAWL Bedford. get his Ammo  
 NVA Running at us we Fire they go down

I kept waiting for Help, from the right,  
 No one come, There a Bang on top of us  
 SARGE start SCREAMING, I LOOK DOWN AND I KNOW  
 he bent bad, I yell for the medic, I Tell  
 him to shut up, Help was coming, I did see  
 The medic trying to get to us, I kept firing  
 They hit his Rifle, it explodes, I SAID DAM  
 I don't know why I was not getting hit  
 SARGE is trying to fire his Rifle, Medic get  
 to us, we ask me how bad my hit, Tell him  
 not bad, Take care of SARGE, SARGE AND  
 Medic are talking, I hear medic telling  
 SARGE, Cropper were coming, But that we  
 Need to CRAWL BACK, we kept on firing  
 I see the Gun Team moving our way,  
 on the right, SARGE yell that them to fire  
 Forward and Right, I put the last clip  
 in my Rifle, and we start to CRAWL  
 BACK, he crawling on his BACK, I pull  
 on him from his shirt, SARGE Tell the  
 men to kept on fire.

When I was there, I was afraid, I could hear firing behind me, but bullets were coming at me, I was to stand to move but I kept firing, till the Sarge started to move our way, me and Bedford.

It took a Bear man to do what he did and not give up after he was hit bad, and I can really say if not for him, I might not have made it back, but with courage that he brought that day to me, if we hadn't been there, they would of got to the rest of Platoon there would of been a lot more of men hit. Thank you for coming to help, to me the Sarge Des man made of honor.