

STATEMENT OF Captain W. J. SELLERS 072880 USMC Concerning
Accident involving CH-46A Bureau Numbers 151930 & 151936 of
15 July 1966.

I was flying 151936, the number two aircraft in a four plane division. Major T. S. REAP was the division leader flying 151930. 1stLt C. D. BROWN was my co-pilot. We were part of a twenty-four plane strike into a landing zone bearing 288°, 11½ NM from Dong Ha TACAN. We loaded fourteen U. S. troops and departed Dong Ha at 0800 as a flight of four. I had ample power on take-off and climb out. We approached the landing area and could see the other aircraft in the landing zone. Major REAP kicked us into a column at about the 180° position and we started descending. I was flying about four rotor diameters behind the leader and a little stepped-up. Deadlock, the UH-1E TACA aircraft, came up on the radio and said that one of the CH-46's was down in the trees but out of the zone. We continued our approach and started slowing down. The zone was approximately one half mile away when I instructed the co-pilot to switch to "hover aft". The approach was down hill, downwind (approximately 4-6 knots) and when I rolled on final, I was a little high. I further reduced power to loose altitude and I started to flare to slow down. I was about to over fly the leader and I increased the flare to approximately 20° nose up. When I got the airspeed down to almost zero, I was still high and moving abeam the leader. There was a stream to my left with some trees along side so I decided to continue forward. I came to a high hover, began to settle and started losing turns. My rotor RPM drooped to approximately 90%. The generators did not go off the line because I continued to receive radio transmissions. I regained my turns by decreasing collective. I sat the aircraft down near some bamboo standing about 20 feet tall. The down wash from the rotors bent the bamboo over and kept it out of the rotor blades. Just prior to landing, I had to move the tail of the aircraft to the right, towards 151930, to keep from landing on some troops. After touchdown, I lowered the collective and the co-pilot positioned the speed trim control to AUTO.

We had been on the deck approximately four (4) seconds when the aircraft began to shake and vibrate violently. I yelled for the people to "get out of here" and immediately began to shut down the engines. The co-pilot armed the rotor brake and applied the rotor brake. I got out of the seat, helped get the guns and equipment out and made sure all the people were out of the aircraft. I went outside to investigate the damage. Both aircraft had the aft rotor blades gone and both aircraft were broken at the manufacturer's splice, just forward of the aft pylon. I saw fire in the #2 engine of 151936 and I got the fire bottle after finally locating it outside by the ramp and sprayed the CO₂ into the engine exhaust. I then gave the bottle to the crew chief and he sprayed the intake. The fire was extinguished so I continued to check the damage. The bamboo had straightened back up and there were

heavy cuts near the tops. Since my crew was out and uninjured, I checked the crew of the other aircraft. They were O K so we began to move the guns and personal gear towards some other aircraft. We loaded aboard and returned to Dong Ha.

This accident could have been prevented by executing a wave off when I saw that it was a marginal approach.

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