

STATEMENT

At approximately 1815 hours on 24 March 1971, a heavy scout team from C Troop, 2d of the 17th Cav contacted a large enemy force in the vicinity of coordinates XD 6748. One scout aircraft was shot down. The second scout aircraft maneuvered to determine the fate of the first aircraft and was also shot down. A UH-1H attempted to land elements of the aerial rifle platoon in the vicinity and was also shot down. An AH-1G, attempting to suppress the area, was virtually destroyed by fire from two .51 caliber gun positions. A rifle company was alerted to move and the 71st Assault Helicopter Company, which was supporting the brigade, were out on 10 separate support missions. I issued an alert call on the company UHF for all aircraft to assemble for an emergency combat assault. Within 20 minutes, the entire flight was assembled and loaded with troops. These troops were inserted in the vicinity of the downed aircraft in the face of extremely heavy enemy fire. Three of the lift ships sustained disabling hits during the insertion but completed the mission and limped back to B Med at Khe Sahn to drop off their wounded. Some of these crews eventually obtained replacement aircraft and rejoined the action. At about the same time that the first insertion was taking place, a platoon from the 4th of the 3d encountered extremely heavy contact in an area approximately 40 kilometers away. It was readily apparent that reinforcements were necessary to prevent annihilation of this small unit. The flight was contacted and diverted in the air to the Pick-up Zone where they airlifted a platoon sized element into the second contact area. This was accomplished under heavy fire. The troops in the first contact area were again so heavily engaged that it was necessary to redirect the flight to reinforce the ground troops which were inserted earlier. This was accomplished expeditiously and the flight refueled, rearmed, and then returned to the second contact area to finish the insertion there. By this time the ground force had reached the downed aircraft in the first contact area, so the flight was called in to extract the dead and wounded. After this was completed, they extracted the company. The hostile fire was so heavy that 6 gunships were used continuously to cover the aircraft going into and coming out of the Landing Zone. Even though sustaining hits each time, the crews continued repeatedly until all personnel were extracted. One helicopter, Rattler 11 and crew, was particularly noteworthy. His helicopter sustained so many hits that it was literally shot down in flames. The pilot, skillfully, guided the burning aircraft to a stream bed and sat it down in such a manner, that no one was injured. The entire flight, throughout the day, demonstrated courage and a sense of urgency that credits the United States Army's airmobility concept. It is difficult to single out individual acts of heroism since the entire flight was one continuous heroic endeavor from morning till night. I recommend that every crewmember, involved in this action, be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his contribution to an effort that undoubtedly averted two disasters.

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? CALL SIGN →
"BATMAN"

TOMMY C. STINER
MAJ IN
Brigade Avn Officer

1/5th MECA

7155 after action report doesn't show the loss of either UH-1 that Albrich lost in flames. Also, Mike Sloniker's records don't show 2 OH-6's lost that day - but the date was confirmed thru comparing

Flight records before 6
even 11-5-71, in T-3