

[REDACTED]

April 11, 1984

Commander
MILPERCEN
ATTN: DAPC-POS-A
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

This letter, along with its attendant documents, constitute a reconstruction of awards that were previously submitted in 1971 for service in the Republic of Vietnam and Kingdom of Laos during Operation LAMSON 719. In addition, it amplifies an inquiry submitted to your agency on 26 March 1982 by Douglas M.F. Womack.

Because I have not yet been contacted following the inquiry just noted, I have elected to write for a determination of the evidence submitted.

The disposition of the original award recommendations is indeed confusing, as I was a signatory for all of the awards contained herein. Moreover, as the Air Mission Commander for the cited operations, I took specific action to ensure that witnesses were identified and that statements were signed. For reinforcement, I point to Enclosure 1 which is a carbon copy of a statement submitted by the Aviation Officer, 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), in support of an impact award for participants on 24 March 1971. I obtained this statement, along with others, and submitted the package to my commanding officer in late March 1971. On his departure, the CO even noted on my OER (Enclosure 2, Continuation Sheet) that I had been awarded two DFCs; yet, my OMPF only reflects one.

Upon assuming the position of Executive Officer in late July 1971, I found out that, although the impact award had been confirmed by the 23d Infantry Division (Americal) Awards and Decorations Section, the individual submissions had not been made. I then drafted, signed and submitted each and every award for the participants on the 24th of March (Enclosures 3-6). Because I was then the principle witness, I did not submit an award for myself; accordingly, I have never had reason to question why they were not awarded.

The disposition of the awards for events on 18 March 1971 are even more disturbing (Enclosure 7 & 8). The actions of those involved received wide attention throughout the command and was the subject of much pride and discussion within the unit. Indeed, in view of the nature of their actions, a great deal of effort was made in support of the

*** * S T A T E M E N T * ***

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 Anhe 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, Hattler 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.

[illegible]

TOMMY C. STINER
MAJ IN
Brigade Avn Officer

ALBRICK, EDGAR J., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Silver Star
Date of Service: 24 March 1971
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For gallantry in action above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer Albrick distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, the company was conducting a tactical emergency extraction of United States Army ground forces who were on the verge of being overrun by numerically superior North Vietnamese Regular Army forces in the tri-border area of Quang Tri Province. Despite intense volumes of enemy fire, Warrant Officer Albrick skillfully guided his aircraft into and out of the LZ completing one extraction. Upon his return, the tactical situation had deteriorated rapidly. Recognizing the impending disaster, Warrant Officer Albrick charged ahead reaching the LZ for a second time. Loading more troops than was advisable, he departed into a fusillade of enemy fire. Receiving numerous hits in the flight controls and fuel cells, he forged ahead. Suddenly there was an explosion and the helicopter caught on fire and started to spin. Then, with complete disregard for his own safety, he expertly guided his burning helicopter through intense fire away from the LZ so that the extraction of the American forces could continue. Without his timely and courageous actions, the operation would not have succeeded. Warrant Officer Albrick's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Mr. Albrick was promoted to CW2 prior to his PCS from Vietnam. His current military status and address are unknown.

WOMACK, DOUGLAS M.F., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
Date of Service: 24 March 1971
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer Womack distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, a Tactical Emergency had been declared for the company to conduct an emergency extraction of beleaguered American forces who were surrounded and fiercely engaged by numerically superior North Vietnamese Regular Army forces. As Warrant Officer Womack brought his helicopter into the landing zone, he encountered heavy volumes of hostile fire and discovered that he was in an enemy cross fire. Recognizing the impending disaster to the friendly forces, and with complete disregard for his own safety, he continued his approach, identifying enemy positions and engaging them with suppressive fire. Despite overwhelming enemy strength and firepower, Warrant Officer Womack refused to abandon the mission, engaging enemy positions with devastating fire and completing numerous extractions of American troops. Through his timely and courageous actions, he contributed greatly to the overall success of the operation. Warrant Officer Womack's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Mr. Womack is presently a CW3, USAR, assigned to the 327th Aviation Company (Corps) (-), Building P-0090; Fort Meade, Maryland 20755

HARBIN, MICHAEL F., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
Date of Service: 24 March 1971
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer Harbin distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, Warrant Officer Harbin was flying his helicopter in support of an emergency extraction of United States Army ground forces engaged in heavy contact with large North Vietnamese Regular Army forces in the tri-border area of Quang Tri Province. As he made his initial approach to the LZ, he came under intense hostile fire from concentrated enemy anti-aircraft positions. He immediately warned the flight of the location and intensity of the hostile fire and, with complete disregard for his own safety, he expertly guided his aircraft in and out of the LZ under the most adverse conditions. Recognizing the impending disaster facing the beleaguered American troops, Warrant Officer Harbin refused to abandon the mission, engaging enemy positions with devastating fire and completing numerous extractions of US troops. Through his timely and courageous actions, he contributed greatly to the overall success of the operation. Warrant Officer Harbin's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Mr. Harbin is presently a CW3, NGA, assigned to the 1085th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance); Rapid City National Guard Armory; Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

FULBROOK, JIM E., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Distinguished Flying Cross
Date of Service: 24 March 1971
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer Fulbrook distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, Warrant Officer Fulbrook was flying his helicopter resupplying Allied forces in Quang Tri Province. Monitoring the company radio frequency, he heard that members of his unit were coming under heavy enemy fire in the tri-border area. Discharging his supplies, he immediately flew to their aid. Upon reaching the troops in contact, Warrant Officer Fulbrook instantly recognized that the American ground forces were on the verge of being overrun by a much larger North Vietnamese Regular Army force. With complete disregard for his own safety, he made numerous passes over the concentrated enemy anti-aircraft positions, drawing intense volumes of enemy fire away from the helicopters in the LZ while simultaneously directing gunships to the enemy positions he had located. Although he was repeatedly exposed to deadly enemy fire, he refused to abandon his position until all troops and aircrew were extracted. Through his timely and courageous actions, he contributed greatly to the overall success of the operation. Warrant Officer Fulbrook's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Dr. Fulbrook is presently a CPT, MSC, assigned to the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory; P.O. Box 577; Fort Rucker, Alabama 36362

FULBROOK, JIM E., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Distinguished Service Cross

Date of Service: 18 March 1971

Theater: Kingdom of Laos

Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For extraordinary heroism at great risk of life as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Kingdom of Laos. Warrant Officer Fulbrook distinguished himself on 18 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, the company was conducting an emergency resupply of retreating South Vietnamese ground elements in a valiant attempt to consolidate forces, encourage a counterattack, and prevent total annihilation of the Allied Force. Firebase Delta was completely surrounded by a large North Vietnamese Regular Army force and a decision had been made the day before to forgo further airmobile evacuation of the wounded as the mounting helicopter losses were too great. Warrant Officer Fulbrook was flying his helicopter as high ship (downed ship recovery) for the resupply operation when the flight returned to Lang Vei, Vietnam for refueling. Knowledgeable of the fate of the litter wounded remaining on Firebase Delta, Warrant Officer Fulbrook volunteered to attempt a rescue. As he began his first approach to Delta, intense volumes of small and heavy automatic weapons fire were directed toward his craft. Determined to reach the LZ, he expertly performed evasive maneuvers to avoid the enemy fire and successfully reached the escarpment on Firebase Delta. As the litter wounded were taken aboard, enemy mortar shells, targeted on the LZ, began exploding around Warrant Officer Fulbrook's helicopter. With complete disregard for his own safety, he courageously maintained his position until the wounded were secured and then made his departure through the mortar barrage. On his second approach to Firebase Delta, he requested that the LZ be moved 100 yards south to confuse the enemy gunners. He was met with an even increased intensity of automatic weapons fire as he performed evasive maneuvers on his approach. Upon reaching the new LZ, mortar rounds began exploding in adjustment that rapidly enveloped his helicopter. He narrowly escaped injury when a mortar round exploded to the left front of the helicopter as the craft lifted from the LZ. After dropping off the wounded, Warrant Officer Fulbrook volunteered to evacuate wounded South Vietnamese from LZ Hotel prior to refueling. Mortar fire adjustments had targeted LZ Hotel, inflicting injuries and effectively eliminating the ongoing extraction of troops. His approach into and departure from LZ Hotel with the wounded were executed so swiftly that the North Vietnamese gun crews did not even have time to engage his aircraft. At dusk, the situation at Firebase Delta has gravely worsened. Monitoring the ARVN Marine FM frequency, he overheard an interpreter state that the handful of garrison troops could not sustain the inevitable NVA attack and might have to leave the litter wounded behind. Without hesitation, he immediately volunteered to attempt another rescue. Despite being warned that there would be no helicopter gunship cover or tactical fighter support, he insisted on making an attempt. Because the two LZs previously used on Firebase Delta were now targeted by enemy mortars, he requested that a smoke grenade be used at a third and false location to confuse the enemy gunners. Considering the risk, and as a

precautionary measure, both pilots in the helicopter were on the controls with Warrant Officer Fulbrook directing the approach. As he began his rapid descent, the NVA heavy machine gunners realized there would be no air cover and began using tracers. Green 12.7mm tracers enveloped the rapidly descending helicopter from at least three sources at such an intensity that the Air Mission Commander instructed Warrant Officer Fulbrook to break off the approach. Ignoring this warning in light of his life saving mission, he courageously and expertly defied the enemy and successfully reached the LZ. Upon touchdown, mortar rounds began impacting around the aircraft. Ignoring the Air Mission Commander's warning to take off, he maintained his position until all wounded were safely on board. Departing through an intense mortar barrage and heavy automatic weapons fire, Warrant Officer Fulbrook successfully departed Firebase Delta. His extraordinary heroism in face of grave danger resulted in thirty-one South Vietnamese troops being evacuated, all of whom would have died had it not been for his efforts. Warrant Officer Fulbrook's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Dr. Fulbrook is presently a CPT, MSC, assigned to the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory; P.O. Box 577; Fort Rucker, Alabama 36362

WOMACK, DOUGLAS M.F., [REDACTED], WO1, Aviation
71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 23d Infantry Division,
APO 96374

Award: Distinguished Service Cross

Date of Service: 18 March 1971

Theater: Kingdom of Laos

Authority: (To be inserted)

PROPOSED CITATION: For extraordinary heroism at great risk of life as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Kingdom of Laos. Warrant Officer Womack distinguished himself on 18 March 1971 while serving as an Aircraft Commander with the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On that date, the company was conducting an emergency resupply of retreating South Vietnamese ground elements in a valiant attempt to consolidate forces, encourage a counterattack, and prevent total annihilation of the Allied Force. Firebase Delta was completely surrounded by a large North Vietnamese Regular Army force and a decision had been made the day before to forgo further airmobile evacuation of the wounded as the mounting helicopter losses were too great. Warrant Officer Womack was flying his helicopter as high ship (downed ship recovery) for the resupply operation when the flight returned to Lang Vei, Vietnam for refueling. Knowledgeable of the fate of the litter wounded remaining on Firebase Delta, Warrant Officer Womack volunteered to attempt a rescue. On his initial approach to Firebase Delta, he encountered deadly volumes of small and heavy enemy automatic weapons fire. Upon reaching the escarpment on Firebase Delta, enemy mortar rounds, targeted on the LZ, began exploding around Warrant Officer Womack's helicopter as the litter wounded were taken on board. As the helicopter lifted from the LZ, he narrowly escaped injury when a mortar shell exploded to the right side of the helicopter. On his second approach to Firebase Delta, he requested that the LZ be moved 100 yards south to confuse the enemy mortar crews. As he descended, the automatic weapons fire was even more intensified. He expertly and skillfully maneuvered his helicopter in a zig zag manner, successfully evading the intense anti-aircraft fire, and confusing the enemy mortar crews as to his intended point of landing. Upon reaching the new LZ, mortar rounds nonetheless began exploding in adjustment that rapidly enveloped his helicopter. With complete disregard for his own safety, he courageously maintained his position until the wounded were safely on board and then made his departure through a maze of mortar and heavy automatic weapons fire. After dropping of the wounded at an Evacuation Hospital, Warrant Officer Womack volunteered to evacuate wounded South Vietnamese troops from LZ Hotel prior to refueling his helicopter. Mortar fire had targeted the landing area at LZ Hotel, inflicting casualties and effectively cancelling the ongoing extraction of Allied troops. He executed a high overhead autorotation approach, surprising the NVA mortar crews, and evacuated the wounded soldiers before the enemy could even engage his aircraft with firepower. At dusk, the tactical situation at Firebase Delta had rapidly deteriorated. Monitoring the ARVN Marine FM frequency, he overheard an interpreter state that the handful of garrison troops could not sustain the inevitable NVA attack and might have to leave the litter wounded behind. Without hesitation, and despite being warned that there would be no helicopter gunship cover or tactical fighter support, Warrant Officer Womack turned his helicopter toward Firebase Delta. Anticipating the enormous risk, and as a

safety precaution, both pilots in the helicopter were on the controls. As the helicopter began its rapid descent, the NVA heavy machine gunners immediately recognized that there would be no air support and instantly started using tracers. As the helicopter rapidly descended through murderous fire erupting from at least three 12.7mm anti-aircraft positions, he monitored critical instruments and ignored warnings from the Air Mission Commander to break off the approach. Upon touchdown, mortar rounds immediately enveloped his helicopter. Despite the pleas from his Air Mission Commander to abort, Warrant Officer Womack remained in the LZ until all wounded soldiers were safely on board. Departing through an intense mortar barrage and heavy automatic weapons fire, he successfully departed Firebase Delta. His extraordinary heroism in face of grave danger resulted in thirty-one South Vietnamese troops being evacuated, all of whom would have died had it not been for his efforts. Warrant Officer Womack's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

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CURRENT PERSONAL DATA: Mr. Womack is presently a CW3, USAR, assigned to the 327th Aviation Company (Corps) (-), Building P-0090; Fort Meade, Maryland 20755