

STATEMENT

On 8 April 1972, while participating in an aeromedical evacuation mission in Binh Dong Province in the Republic of South Vietnam, I witnessed several heroic acts that asserted the professionalism of a crew of an AH-1G helicopter, call sign Sabre 20.

Events leading up to the actual need for the performance of an aeromedical evacuation provide the basis for expressing this statement of the bravery and professionalism of the AH-1G helicopter crew. Due to recent enemy build ups in the area of interest the security of this region was indefinite. A complete evacuation of the village of Bo Duc was underway because of the enemy build up near the area. Enemy troops had concentrated themselves in a rubber plantation southeast of the village.

Our medical evacuation crew was on standby at Song Be. During the early part of the afternoon we were called to evacuate a crew from a downed OH-6. We responded immediately and were soon on station over the village of Bo Duc. The evacuation of the village created the need for several aircraft in the vicinity of the pickup site. When we arrived on station we were advised that Brawney 65 was the air mission commander. Therefore, he was advised that we were on station and ready whenever he felt we could get into the site and pull the patients out. Brawney 65 suggested that we hold off until he could provide gunship cover for us. The area was worked over by gunships before we endeavored to evacuate the downed crew. Sabre 20 was attached to us for completion of the mission. As Sabre 20 came on the site he took control of the situation and maintained a highly skilled and professional control throughout the entire mission.

Sabre 20 made several passes over the extraction site and provided our crew with the necessary information to locate and successfully extract the crew. During the operation Sabre 20 provided excellent cover fire as well as guidance. The cover fire that Sabre 20 laid down around the pickup site proved to be quite accurate. The suppression Sabre 20 put down was so close that the enemy was forced to keep their heads down, and the enemy was not able to fire upon us successfully. The deadly fire of Sabre 20 was continuous throughout the extraction. I feel that the actions of Sabre 20 were the determining factors in the success or failure of our mission. We picked the patients up without receiving fire.

When we had pulled the patients into the aircraft we returned to Song Be to refuel and transfer the wounded crewmember onto another aircraft for further evacuation. Sabre 20 escorted us back to Song Be to refuel also. After refueling Sabre 20 and our aircraft returned to the extraction site to complete the mission. An eight man team had been inserted to secure the area around the downed aircraft, so we proceeded to pull them out also. As before, Sabre 20 took complete control of the situation and laid down a high volume of successful suppressive fire. We were able to extract the team without any incidence due to the professional actions of Sabre 20.

The unhesitating and accurate response to the situation by Sabre 20 is truly a reflection of merit on their unit and the individuals.

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