

STATEMENT

While performing an aeromedical evacuation mission in Binh Dong Province in the Republic of South Vietnam on 8 April 1972, I witnessed several acts of heroism and professionalism on the part of the crew of a AH-1G helicopter, call sign Sabre 20.


I think that the significance of these acts lies within the tactical situation which surrounded them. For several days, enemy build ups in the area had been noted. This build up necessitated the complete evacuation of the village Bo Duc which was some two kilometers from the contact area. Enemy troops had concentrated themselves in a rubber plantation just southeast of the city. The plantation provided excellent cover and camouflage for the troops. The enemy was well dug in and well equipped with various caliber weapons.

In mid-afternoon, I responded to an urgent request for a "down bird". After receiving a frequency and an approximate location, we headed out to the pickup site. Upon our arrival in the vicinity of the pickup location, I noted the presence of several aircraft. Brawney 65 was the air mission commander. I advised 65 that Med six was on station and prepared to start the extraction. We were advised by 65 to hold off until the area could be worked over. After several gunships had expended, Sabre 20 came on. What impressed me so was the professional manner in which this aviator handled his given situation. He took complete control of the operation and from that point forward, the success or failure of the endeavor rested with Sabre 20.

After making several runs in the near vicinity of the crash site, Sabre 20 advised that the personnel on the ground were ready to be extracted. After saddling up with me, Sabre 20 started his approach and simultaneously began laying down suppressive fire. The cobra broke off just prior to my getting to the pickup site. During the entire period of the extraction, Sabre 20 initiated very close and accurate fire. Pass after pass was made until the patients were safely on board the aircraft. I am confident that it was the deadly fire of Sabre 20 that kept the enemies head down and allowed us to accomplish our mission.

After the patients were extracted, Sabre 20 escorted us back to Song Be to transfer the wounded personnel to another aircraft and to refuel his ship. Upon completing refueling, both aircraft returned to the contact site to continue the mission. Eight ground troops remained on the ground to be extracted. Again Sabre 20 saddled up and took me in to the pickup site. Throughout the extraction of the ground troops, Sabre 20 placed precise fire around my aircraft. Enabling us again to extract the troops and depart safely.

Throughout my two tours in this country, I have had numerous occasions to utilize cover birds. Never before have I had a cover bird apply more accurate and effective fire than that delivered by Sabre 20. The aerial professionalism displayed by this aviator and crew reflect great credit on their unit and on the individuals.


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