

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS PRECIPITATING THE FOLLOWING AWARDS

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The helicopter and crew vectored from USS RANGER to a position near the vicinity of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. The pilot had been located three miles inland from the coast in an area which the enemy defended with numerous AAA and automatic weapons batteries. As soon as the helicopter crossed the shoreline and headed toward the survivor, these enemy batteries opened fire and threw up a continuous, heavy barrage of flak in an attempt to prevent the rescue. In spite of the heavy enemy opposition, the crew persistently flew inland returning the enemy's fire in kind with machine guns. Skillfully utilizing evasive tactics with excellent results, the helicopter crew soon visually sighted the pilot. No enemy troops were observed in the close proximity of the survivor, although a continuous rain of enemy tracers indicated their presence nearby. The crew landed their helicopter about fifteen feet from the Air Force pilot between a hedge row and a low ridge which offered some cover from the enemy. The survivor ran and boarded the helicopter which immediately departed the area. As the helicopter retired toward the shoreline, the enemy once again brought his weapons to bear in a determined effort to prevent escape to the sea and safety. With skill such as only training and experience can provide, the crew thwarted the enemy's final effort by adeptly maneuvering to avoid the barrage of fire.