

SUMMARY OP THE EVENTS PRECIPITATING THE FOLLOWING AWARDS

LCDR R. D. NICHOLS	DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
LT(jg) R. GRANT	AIR MEDAL
AX3 G, W. SMITH	AIR MEDAL
AMH2 R. L. ROBERTS	AIR MEDAL

The crew flying a mission from USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) was vectored among the heavily defended North Vietnamese Fai Tsi Long Islands, to search for and rescue a downed pilot. As the helicopter crew proceeded into the rescue site among the islands, low altitude evasive maneuvers were employed in an attempt to avoid known enemy, 85 and 100mm AAA shore batteries and to stay out of range of the guns of an enemy freighter. As the rescue helicopter approached the Isle Des L¹Union, a smoke flare was sighted, and the survivor was observed to be on shore at the base of a sheer cliff which rose 400 feet up from the sea« Since the downed pilot had discarded his raft and Mae West, he was reluctant to swim out from the cliff to a point where the helicopter could drop him the rescue sling. One of the crewmen jumped into the water and swam to shore with a life raft for the downed pilot. The survivor and crewman held on to the raft and swam out from shore to the helicopter expecting to be hoisted aboard. A mechanical failure, however, rendered the hoist inoperative and the pilot hovered close to the water to make the pick-up. The crew assisted the pilot in taxing the helicopter to a position where the two men in the water were successfully pulled into the aircraft. As the helicopter retired from the rescue scene with the survivor on board, further evasive action was taken to prevent-the enemy's guns from foiling the helicopter's escape to sea and safety.