

SYMOPSIS OF THE EVERTS PRECIPITATING THE FOLLOWIHG AWARDS

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AIR MEDAL
Navy Commendation Medal
Navy Commendation Medal
Navy Commendation Medal

The crew, flying an unarmored ASW helicopter, embarked in the USS KEARSARGE, intercepted a "MAYDAY" from an aircraft over the North Vietnam Mainland and immediately proceeded toward the distress signal to render assistance. After arriving on the rescue scene, a close area search was initiated from the coastline seaward. Finally, a search aircraft found the survivor and marked his position with a smoke light. The rescue helicopter proceeded to the smoke light, which was about three miles off-shore, and spotted the survivor. Although an automatic approach is usually employed for night pick-ups, the crew decided to use a manual instrument approach to a hover in order to expedite the rescue. As the helicopter hovered for the pickup. The crew knowing that the downed pilot's floatation gear restricted his movements making it impossible for him to swim and grasp the rescue sling, skillfully maneuvered the rescue sling directly into the fighter pilot's hands. The survivor had difficulty getting into the sling which necessitated a prolonged hover, but was finally hoisted aboard the helicopter which then cleared the area.