

SYNOPSIS OF THE EVENTS PRECIPITATING THE FOLLOWING AWARDS

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The helicopter crew vectored to a position deep within Haiphong Harbor to rescue a downed Navy fighter pilot. The survivor had been located in a raft by covering aircraft one hundred yards off-shore in the narrow channel between the Isle De Dinh Vu and the mainland. As the helicopter approached the entrance to the harbor, it was taken under heavy fire by enemy AAA and automatic weapons batteries. Employing evasive maneuvers to reduce the effectiveness of concentrated fire from the antiaircraft batteries and to avoid numerous junks, the crew tenaciously proceeded toward the heart of the enemy port. As the helicopter approached the survivor, he was observed to be caught in heavy crossfire from automatic weapons located on both shores of the channel. Supporting attack aircraft eluded enemy surface to air missiles to make numerous fire suppression runs on the enemy guns so the helicopter could approach the downed pilot. In spite of these efforts, the enemy persisted in his attempts to shoot down the rescue aircraft. The survivor furiously paddled his raft in a valiant but futile effort to open the distance between himself and the enemy. It seemed that the downed pilot's capture was imminent. The crew evaluated the situation and decided that only by taking a calculated risk and proceeding immediately with the rescue could the downed pilot possibly be saved from capture. Skillfully executing a rescue approach and hover, the crew quickly snatched the downed pilot out of his precarious position and took him aboard the helicopter. After making a rapid departure from the rescue scene, the helicopter continued to be a prime target and presented the enemy with his last opportunity to thwart the success of the rescue mission. Finally, the

helicopter reached the safety of the open sea after being subjected for more than 20 minutes to all the fire which the enemy could muster.