

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
11TH AVIATION GROUP
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AM)
APO San Francisco 96490

21 April 1969

TO: Commanding General
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
ATTN: AVDAAG-AD
APO 96490

1. Recommend that the 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), be awarded the Valorous Unit Award for its combat operations on 6 March 1969.
2. The 227th Battalion provided the assault lift ships and the gun support aircraft for 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), in the conduct of an airmobile combat assault into a small, isolated landing zone (LZ) in the jungles of southern War Zone D. The landing zone was a three ship area surrounded by 100-foot trees. The landing surface was free of obstacles, with a small, wooded, slightly elevated knoll in the northeast corner. Well concealed, heavily reinforced enemy bunkers were positioned along the southern tree line, providing excellent fields of fire over the entire LZ. Enemy weapons now known to be in position at the time of the assault included .30 caliber machineguns, two .50 caliber machineguns, and innumerable small arms and automatic weapons firing positions. The initial lift was conducted by Company A, 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter). These aircraft were covered by AH-1G gunships from Company D, 227th Battalion. Artillery preparations was provided by tube artillery and one section of aerial rocket artillery (ARA). The two initial lifts, in which thirty infantrymen were inserted into the LZ, precipitated no enemy reaction. As the third lift was started, however, the lead aircraft and the troops on the ground came under withering fire, wounding several of the ground troops and inflicting critical damage to the lead aircraft. A subsequent attempt to reinforce the LZ failed when the second lead aircraft, despite intense covering fire by the gunships, also took numerous rounds and was rendered nonflyable. As the conflict intensified and the need to reinforce the ground troops became imperative, command of the aviation assets was assumed by the Commander, 227th Battalion upon his arrival at the scene of the action.
3. Battalion troop carriers and gunship were called to the area from a major portion of the division Area of Operation (AO). Aircraft from each of the battalion's organic companies responded to the tactical emergency, as did additional sections of ARA aircraft. Following an airstrike of napalm along the southern edges of the LZ and under the protective cover of a fusillade of 2.75" rockets, 40mm grenades, and/thousands of minigun rounds fired in closely coordinated suppression, the reinforcement was again attempted, one ship at a time.

DOWNGRADED UNCLASSIFIED BY AUTHORITY
OF COMMANDING OFFICER, 227TH AVN BN (AH)
ON AUGUST 9, 1969.

Despite the hundreds of rockets expended into the bunkered area, even as the aircraft were landing, the troop ships repeatedly took round after round of enemy fire. Without hesitation each aircraft commander, in his turn, made his contribution to relieve the pressure on the pinned down ground force. As darkness approached and further reinforcement became impossible, an aircraft commander from Company C, 227th Battalion, volunteered to make a last effort to evacuate six badly wounded infantrymen. As he successfully executed this medical evacuation, 36 enemy rounds impacted into his aircraft, critically damaging it, and wounding three of the persons aboard the aircraft. The final testimony of the 227th Battalion's dedication and perseverance came as the aircraft commander from Company B, 227th, in the face of relentless automatic weapons fire, made two separate ammunition resupply runs to the embattled forces. The dedication of the officers and men of the 227th Helicopter Battalion to the ground combat infantrymen can be no more irrefutably proven. As the crisis deepened and the position of the ground troops became more tenuous, the more intense became the efforts of the battalion to prevail over the enemy. As the situation became more dangerous, the crews and their helicopters came from throughout the division area to volunteer their efforts. Including AKA sections in support of the operation, over forty helicopters were employed and between 1300 and 1400 2.75" rockets were expended. Sufficient reinforcements and the decimation of the enemy by the awesome force of aerial firepower enabled the friendly force in the LZ to survive the night without further losses.

3. During the action briefly described above, the men of the 227th Aviation Battalion (AH) displayed unyielding, unremitting courage, steadfast determination, and an indomitable fighting spirit, true symbols of a valorous unit.

/s/Foy Rice
/t/FOY RICE
COL, INF
Commanding

Incl:

- 1 - Narrative Description (Pages 1-4)
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"A TRUE COPY"


TROY G. BAYDALA
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

AVDACG (21 Apr 69) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Award of the Valorous Unit Award

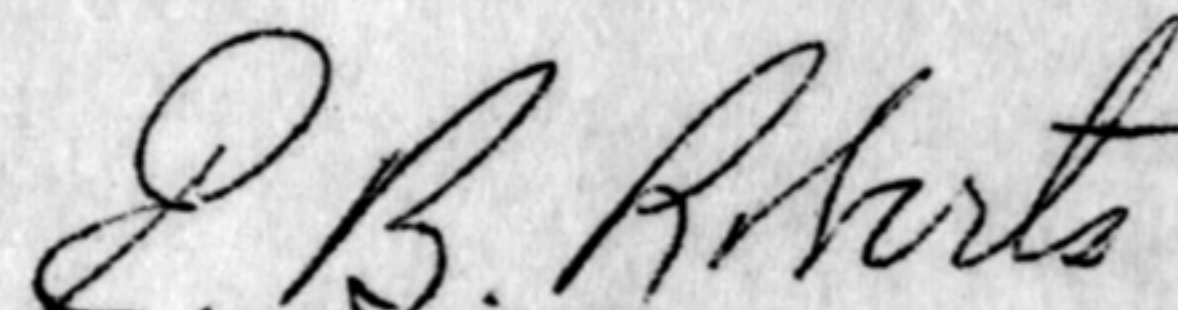
DA, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), APO 96490

THRU: Commanding General, II Field Force, Vietnam, APO 96266

TO: Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, APO 96375

1. The recommendation for award of the Valorous Unit Award to the 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) for heroism in action on 6 March 1969 has been rewritten to better describe the heroic actions of the battalion.
2. The performance of the 227th Aviation Battalion on 6 March 1969 is one of the finest examples I know of the combined application of the varied capabilities of an airmobile division aviation battalion. The actions of the battalion on that day turned what was an untenable situation into a significant military victory. This was the result of all elements of the battalion working in concert under inspired leadership at all levels and in such a manner that the numerous individual acts of valor could not be easily distinguished from the heroic conduct of the entire battalion.
3. I strongly recommend approval of the Valorous Unit Award to the 227th Aviation Battalion (AH) for heroism in the execution of its mission on 6 March 1969.

6 Incl
nc


E. B. ROBERTS
Major General, USA
Commanding

SUMMARY OF STRENGTH AND CASUALTIES

Friendly Forces

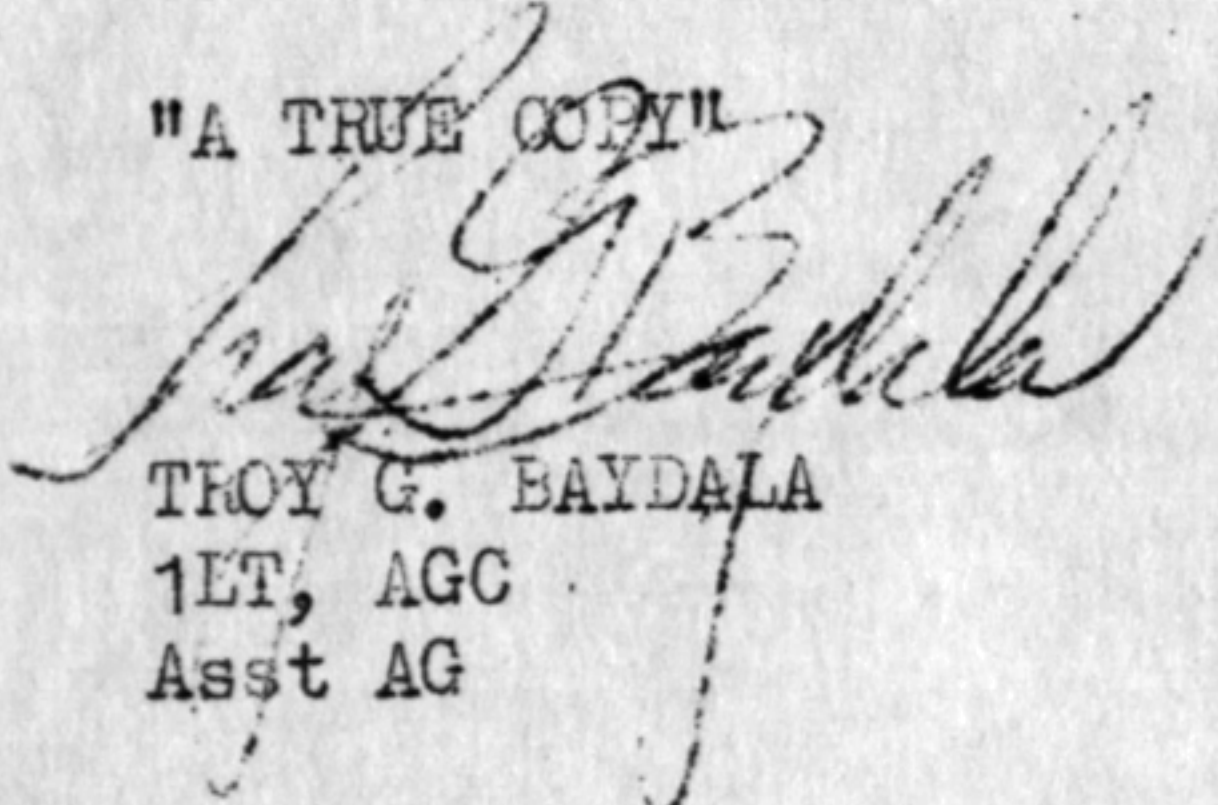
<u>Totals Assigned</u>	<u>KHA</u>	<u>WHA</u>	<u>MHA</u>	<u>CAP</u>
227th Avn Bn - 58	0	3	0	0
Co. C, 1st Bn, 12th Cav - 108	4	8	0	0

Enemy Forces

<u>Estimated Strength</u>	<u>Body Count</u>	<u>Probable Casualties</u>	<u>Cap</u>
Estimated NVA Company	Unknown Only parts of human bodies found	Heavy	0

/s/William G. Wood
/t/WILHELM G. WOOD
1LT, FA
Assistant Adjutant

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TROY G. BAYDALA
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

LISTINGS OF UNITS ACTUALLY PRESENT AND PARTICIPATING
IN THE ACTION

PARTICIPATING UNITS

PART I. Units assigned and recommended for award of the Valorous Unit Award.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>Previous US Unit Decorations and Dates</u>
1. 227th Avn Bn (AH) (HHC, A, B, C. & D)	6 March 1969	PUC 23 Oct 65 - 26 Nov 65 MUC 1 Sep 65 - 31 Oct 66

PART II. Units attached and recommended for award of the Valorous Unit Award.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Previous US Unit Decorations and Dates</u>
None	N/A	N/A

PART III. Units assigned but not recommended for award of the Valorous Unit Award.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Previous US Decorations and Dates</u>
None	N/A	N/A

PART IV. Units participating but not recommended for award of the Valorous Unit Award.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>Previous US Unit Decorations and Dates</u>
1. 1st BN (AM), 12th Cav	6 March 1969	DUC 28 Nov to 1 Dec 44 PUC (10LC) 23 Oct 65 to 26 Nov 65 PUC (20LC) 20 Oct 66 to 3 Oct 66 VUA 31 May 67 to 1 Jun 67

/s/William G. Wood
/t/WILLIAM G. WOOD
1LT, FA
Asst AG

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-6-

TROY G. BAYDOLA
1LT, AGC
Ass t AG

S T A T E M E N T

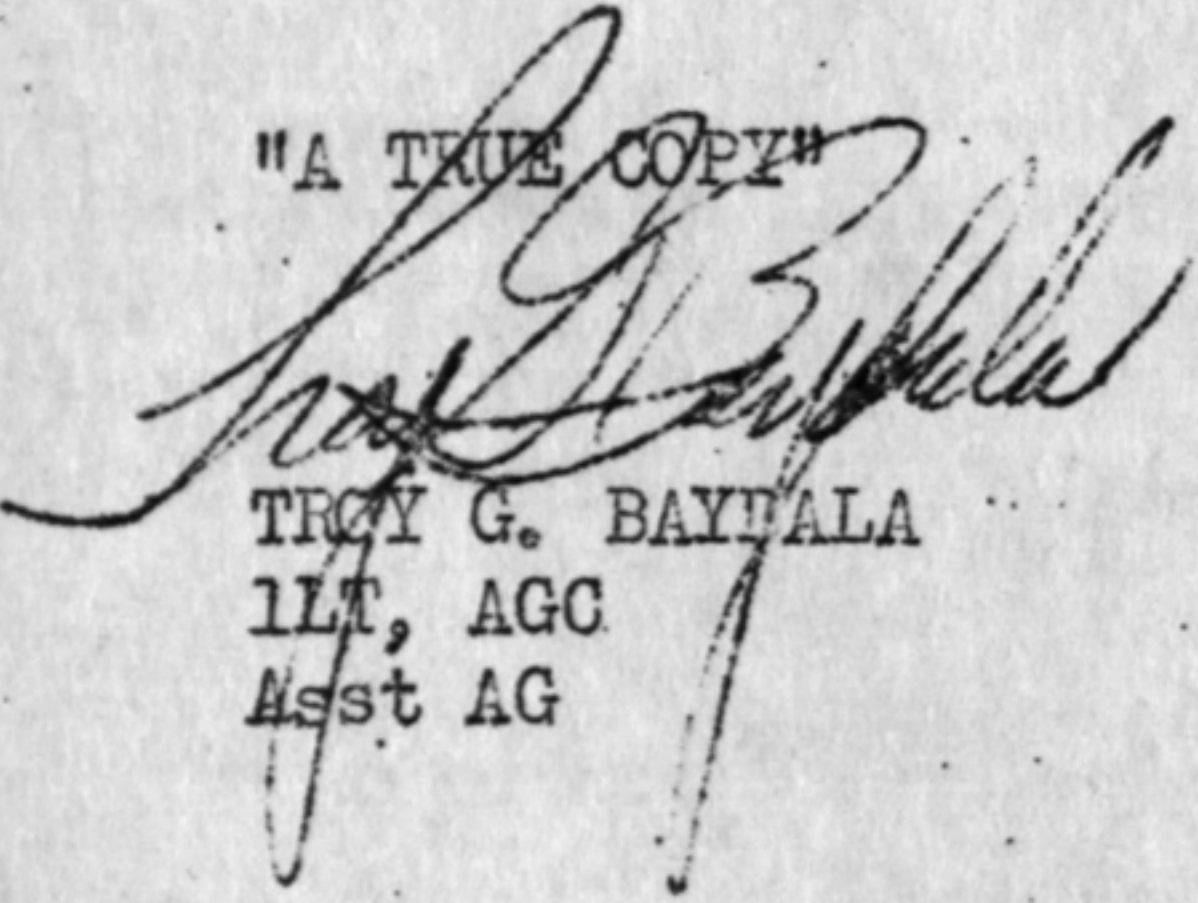
On 6 March 1969, while conducting a combat assault into YT 190206, Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry and Company A, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion were subjected to intense and continuous hostile fire from a well entrenched enemy located strategically around the landing zone. An engagement of approximately five hours ensued which precipitated individual and collective acts of gallantry by representative members of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

Completely disregarding the tremendous volume of enemy fire, members of A, B, C, and D Companies, 227th AHB, under the direction of LTC Covington, the 227th AHB commander, repeatedly entered the "hot" landing zone to bring reinforcements, resupply, fire support and medical evacuation to the beleaguered members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

Despite the enemy fire damage to seven helicopters, and the wounding of a pilot, crew chief and door gunner, the aviation element continued to support and assist the ground forces, delivering 1300 rockets (2.75 in) and over 52,000 rounds of mini-gun ammunition. The valiant and concerted effort by the members of 227th AHB forced a determined enemy to disengage, preventing what could have been the complete decimation of fifty odd members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry located in the landing zone. The intrepid and tenacious performance rendered by the members of 227th AHB in support of their ground comrades can be a continuing inspiration to every army aviator and richly deserves their designation as a valorous unit.

s/Karl R. Morton
t/KARL R. MORTON
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

"A TRUE COPY"


TRACY G. BAYDALA
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

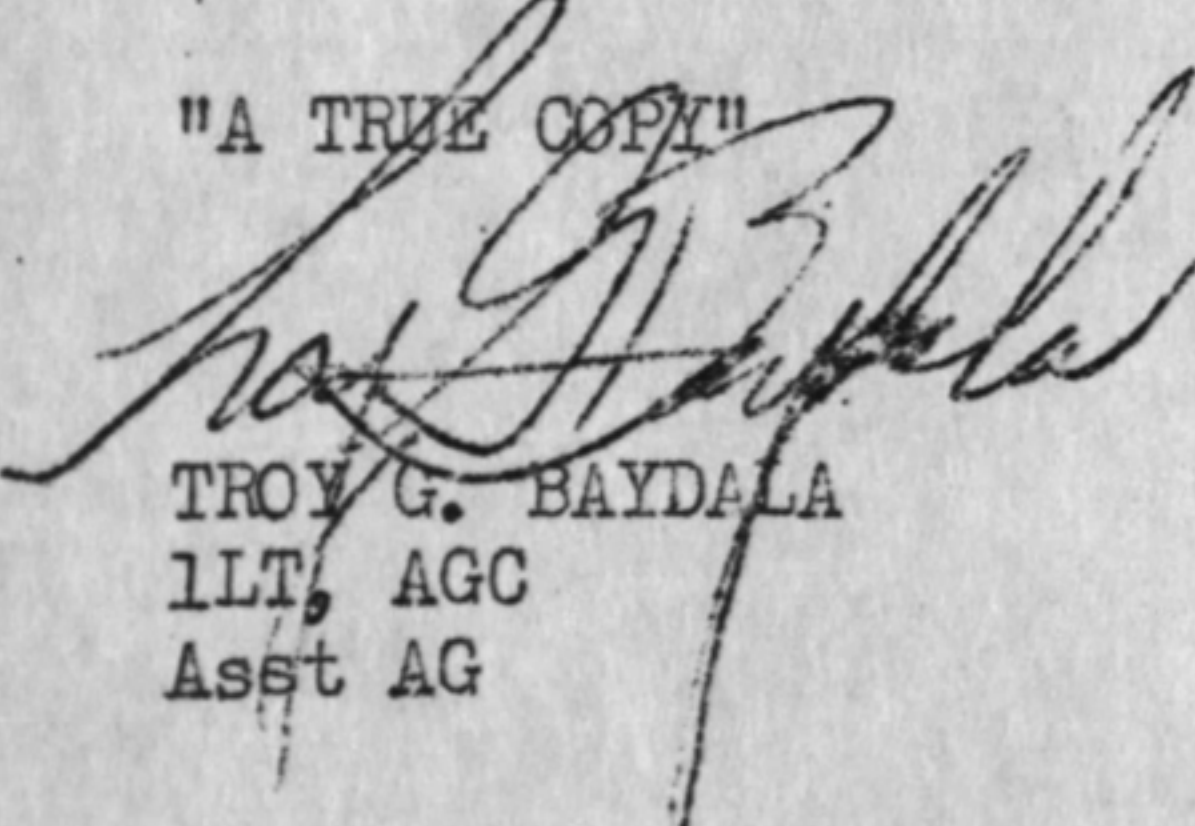
S T A T E M E N T

On 6 March 1969, I was engaged in a combat assault in support of Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Air). The enemy waited until we had placed six sorties of troops into the landing zone before they opened up from innumerable reinforced bunkers, raining AK-47 and .30 caliber machinegun fire upon us. The troops already in the landing zone were pinned down and the heavy fire made additional flights into the area extremely hazardous. Although the landing zone was large enough for three or more helicopters, we were instructed to go in single ship with a pair of gunships from Company D, 227th Aviation Battalion (AH) as escorts. On my second trip into the landing zone I was requested to pick up as many of the wounded as possible. Thus I was on the ground for approximately three minutes as the troops unloaded and the wounded were placed on board. A reinforced bunker with a .30 caliber machinegun was visible fifty yards to our front. When we received several rounds through our windshield, I turned the aircraft 180 degrees to protect the crew and wounded already on board. Although my aircraft took thirty-six hits during our short stay in the landing zone, the Cobra gunship 67-15756, with Major John A. Little as aircraft commander and Warrant Officer Richard L. Harris as pilot and gunner flew low and slow above us the entire time, providing extremely heavy suppressive fire against the hostile positions. Moments after we departed the landing zone, I was forced to land the aircraft because of extensive damage to my transmission system. The same gunship, having been informed of my possible need for an emergency landing in an insecure area, escorted my aircraft until we reached safety. The close support, the diversion created, and the outstanding suppressive firepower provided on our behalf by the crew of the gunship was most certainly a very major factor in the successful completion of our mission.

s/Paul T. Keil
t/PAUL T. KEIL
WOL AVN
Aviator

s/William G. Wood
t/WILLIAM G. WOOD
LLT, FA
Assistant Adjutant

"A TRUE COPY"


TROY G. BAYDALA
LLT, AGC
Asst AG

S T A T E M E N T

On 6 March 1969, Company A, First Battalion, Twelfth Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) entered a bunker complex and met fire from an estimated company of North Vietnamese Regulars. Company A, then maneuvered platoons to the north and to the south to determine the extent of the complex and to flank it. All platoons were pinned down. Scout teams, artillery aerial rocket artillery, and tactical airstrikes were called in to support the operation.

At 1425 hours, Company C, was combat assaulted into a landing zone (YT190-206) to reinforce Company A. The landing zone was initially green and the first gaggle lifted off without incident. The element on the ground was then taken under heavy fire by an estimated enemy company dug in on the southeast and southwest sides of the landing zone.

This force was armed with two .50 caliber and one .30 caliber machine guns, and numerous automatic weapons and B-40 rocket launchers. A total of eight sections of aerial rocket artillery were on station for the action, expending their ordnance principally on the southwest side of the "hot" landing zone. A tactical airstrike was called in later in the afternoon, followed again by aerial rocket artillery, and supporting gunships from the 227th Aviation Battalion. Then an attempt was made by the lift ships from the 227th to reinforce the element on the ground. Direction of landing was changed twice during the day, trying unsuccessfully to avoid the .50 caliber machine guns. Throughout the operation, seven aircraft were declared non-flyable because of extensive battle damage suffered in the landing zone. Five of the helicopters did successfully insert a total of thirty additional infantrymen into the hazardous position. The last helicopter piloted by Warrant Officer Paul T. Keil, not only inserted six fresh troops but evacuated six critically wounded as well. Although the aircraft was hit over thirty times, the pilots were still able to remove the wounded from the landing zone.

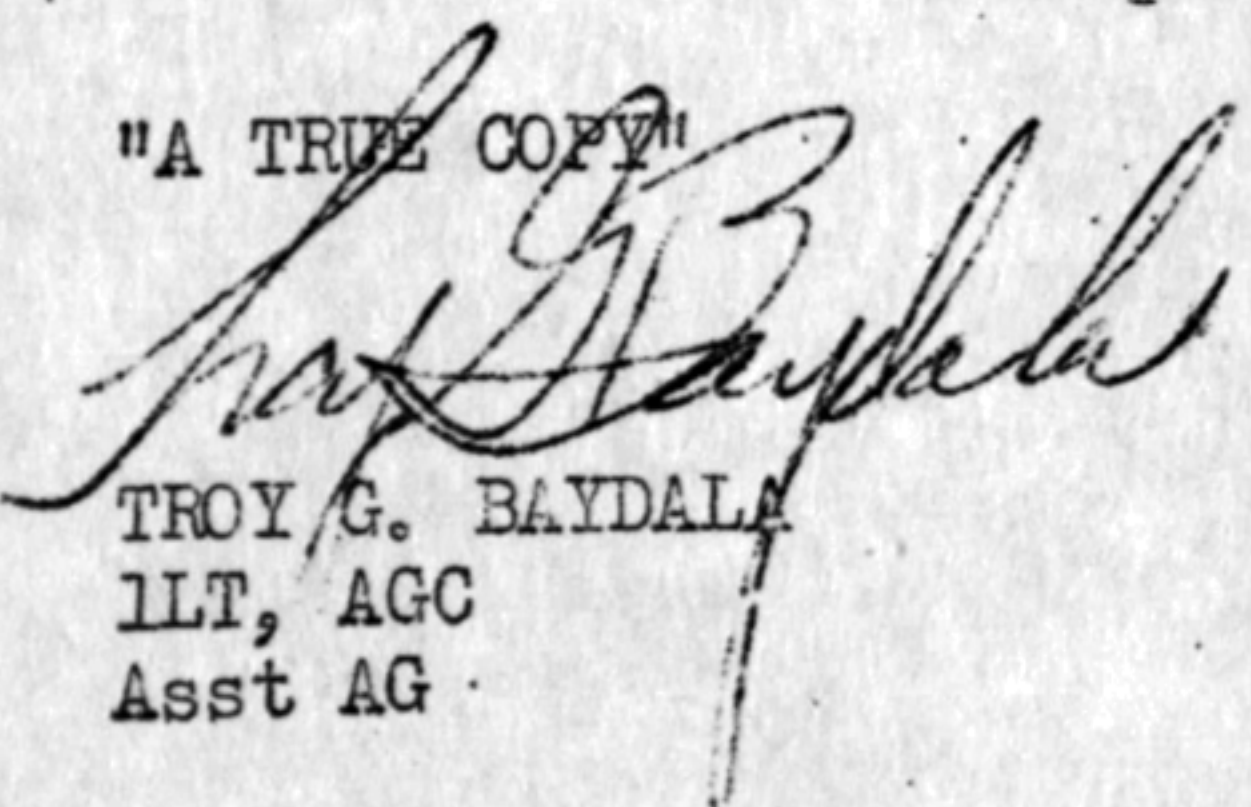
The support received from the 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter) during this operation was outstanding. The flight leader, and gunship company commander worked as real professionals. The presence and participation of the Aviation Battalion commander, particularly at critical moments, made my job much easier. I felt the whole operation was a real team effort. The men who were fighting on the ground had the opportunity to see the First Team acting as a team under extremely difficult combat conditions. They certainly appreciated what they saw.

Casualties for 6 March 1969

A Company - 2 KIA; 9 WIA

C Company - 4 KIA; 9 WIA

"A TRUE COPY"


TROY G. BAYDALA
LLT, AGC
Asst AG

s/George L. MacGarrigle Jr.
t/GEORGE L. MACGARRIGLE JR.
LTC, INF
CO, 1st Bn, 12th Infantry

STATEMENT

On 6 March 1969, the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion became engaged in a combat operation in which the collective heroic actions of the individual crewmen involved resulted in the battalion becoming eminently qualified for the valorous unit citation. In this action, to which crews from each of the organic companies contributed a decisive share and which was directed by the 227th Battalion Commander, the lives of at least 30 infantrymen were saved. Essentially, the act was a matter of the aircraft crews flying their helicopters into devastating fire, time and time again, to reinforce helplessly pinned down infantrymen, extract wounded, and to resupply the troops with desperately needed ammunition.

The action began with elements of Company A and Company D, 227th Battalion, making a routine combat assault into a small landing zone (LZ) east of Bien Hoa. After the initial lift into the LZ, the inserted members of the First Battalion, Twelfth Cavalry came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire from bunkers located along the eastern, southern, and western peripheries of the LZ. Initial ground contact resulted in multiple numbers of friendly casualties. Attempts to reinforce the troops in contact resulted in the lift aircraft receiving heavy damage from the bunkered weapons. As the battle developed, additional aircraft were called. More battalion aircraft arrived from throughout the division area of operations (AO), including helicopters from each of the battalion's organic companies. These aircraft were intergrated into the flight as they arrived and as others were damaged. A total of 15 aircraft from four companies sustained battle damage as a result of the action. As I arrived at the scene of the action, I took direction of the assault. From that point, virtually all instructions came from me or my subordinate commander, Major John Little, Commander, Company D, 227th Battalion.

Although the SKYTROOPERS in the LZ fought desperately, they were helpless before entrenched weapons of an estimated reinforced NVA company. Since the LZ was isolated from alternate LZ by hundreds of meters of jungle, reinforcements were directed into the same LZ. Despite an airstrike and rocket attacks by Company D Cobra gunships and innumerable sections of aerial rocket artillery (ARA), in which almost 1400 2.75" rockets were fired, subsequent assaults into the LZ were stubbornly contested by the NVA with heavy volumes of fire. Reinforcing troops of the 2/12th Cavalry aboard 227th troopships, covered by suppressive fires of 227th and ARA Cobra rockets, 40mm grenades, and miniguns, were doggedly fed into the embattled LZ for several hours. The action halted only after nightfall had made further helicopter operations into the LZ impossible.

There was no final determination of the casualties inflicted on the enemy, since the friendly ground force was too weak to venture out of their defensive perimeter to make an assessment. The NVA evacuated their dead and wounded during the night, leaving only pieces of human bodies scattered throughout the embattled area. Friendly casualties were six dead and 18 wounded. There is little doubt, however, that the 30 members of the 1/12th Cavalry, initially lifted into the LZ, would have been annihilated had it not been for the superb courage and dedication of the officers and men of the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

In 1967 I directed a combat assault of an Assault Helicopter Battalion under virtually identical circumstances. As a result of that action, that battalion was awarded the valorous unit citation. Comparatively, there was better battalion-wide representation and equal demonstration of collective valor in the 227th action of 6 March 1969. At no time did any crewman falter, any aircraft commander hesitate, or any gunship pilot cease to press the attack. The more desperate the infantryman's plight became, the more vigorously the members of the 227th pressed their efforts. There is no way these men and this unit could have done more.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 227TH AVIATION BATTALION (ASLT HEL.)
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO San Francisco 96490

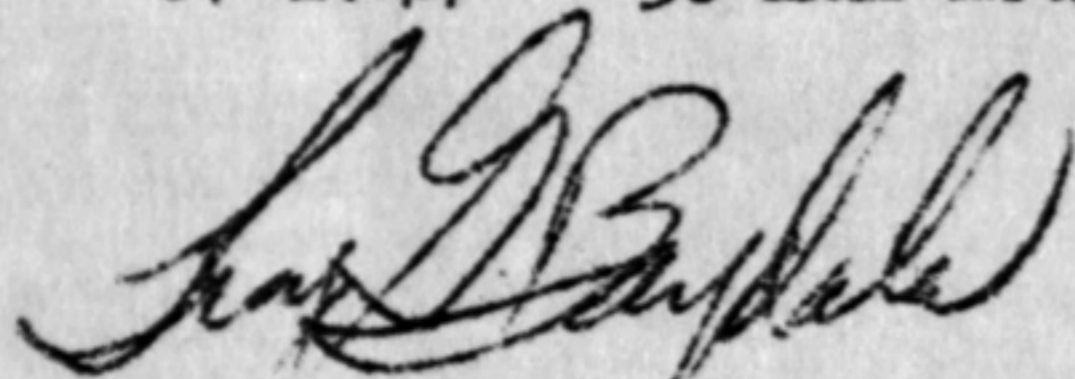
AVDAAV-AH-AMO

2 August 1969

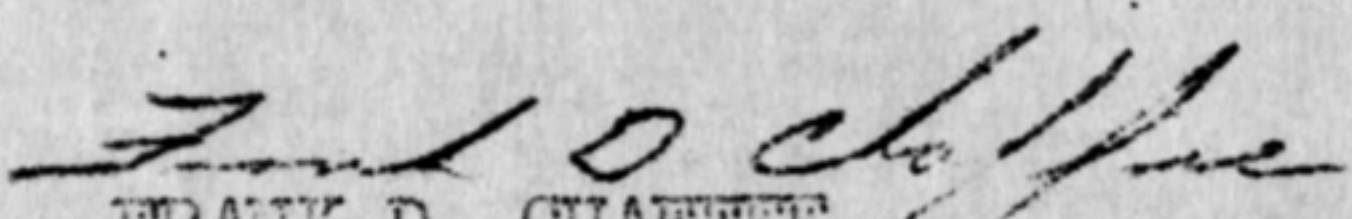
S T A T E M E N T

On 6 March 1969 while taking part in mission 3J20, the following aircraft were hit by hostile fire, requiring the following amount of work to return them to a flyable status:

67-17392 - 450 man hours to repair
67-17424 - 850 man hours to repair -
68-15251 - Stateside evacuated - ARADMAG
68-15354 - 600 man hours to repair.
66-16294 - 250 man hours to repair
67-17776 - 400 man hours to repair
68-15228 - Stateside evacuated - ARADMAG
67-17816 - 300 man hours (new eng) to repair
60-17798 - 100 man hours to repair
67-17799 - 50 man hours to repair
67-17756 - 75 man hours to repair
67-1740 - 25 man hours to repair
67-17442 - 30 man hours to repair



TROY G. BAYDALA
1LT, AGC
Asst AG



FRANK D. CLAFFEE
CPT, TC
In Aircraft Maint Officer

26 MAR 1970

MH-SO(17 Mar 70) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Valorous Unit Award

AS

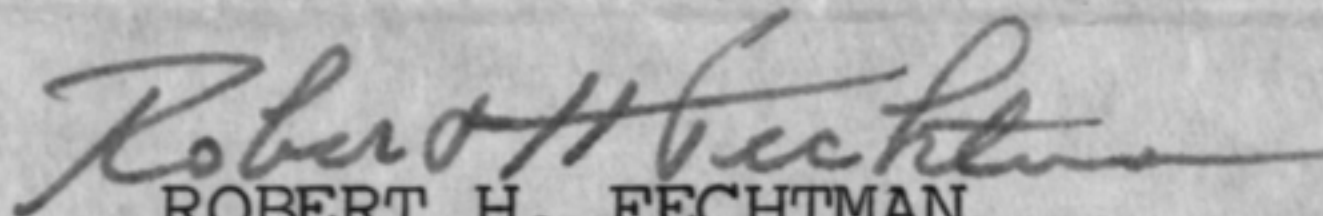
DA, Office, Chief of Military History, Washington, D. C. 20315

TO: Commanding Officer, U.S. Army Support Center, Philadelphia, 2800
South 20th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101

1. This is to certify that the 227th Aviation Battalion is entitled to a Valorous Unit Award Streamer embroidered BIEN HOA PROVINCE.
2. A copy of the general orders announcing this award is inclosed.

FOR THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY:

1 Incl
nc


ROBERT H. FECHTMAN
Colonel, MI
Chief, Historical Services
Division