

EYEWITNESS STATEMENT OF  
Warren Stamereilers  
Concerning events of 3 April 1969

On 3 April 1969 I participated on a night raid in Kien Hoa province in South Vietnam with my unit, Company B, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The company commander, Captain Perkins, asked for 9 volunteers and specifically asked me to be the machine gunner on the raid. I didn't want to volunteer but when he asked me, I agreed.

After a briefing at the operations room of the helicopter unit, we departed and after a long flight, the 2 troopships landed at night next to a small hamlet. I immediately followed the captain and then ran to the left with Sgt Ed Eaton where I grabbed a woman hiding in a hole but was told to let her go.

I then turned towards where Captain Perkins was, about 75 feet to my right near 3 bamboo hootches. Right then a guy ran out of a hootch but the captain told me not to shoot him--because identification was difficult in the dark and he may have been an unarmed older boy.

Shortly after, the captain told the raiding party to return to the paddy and reform for extraction. I ran with him back along a dike and then to the paddy. The mud was very thick and it was difficult to move but we split into 2 chalks, one for each helicopter.

I was with Captain Perkins and Sgt Eaton in the first chalk. The captain told us all that when the helicopters landed, to board immediately because we could hear Vietnamese in the woodline to one side of the paddy and near the hamlet to our front.

As the helicopters landed, Cobra gunships strafed near the woodline and hootches, but the VC opened up on us with many automatic weapons and their tracers turned the world green that night. Our ship got into the air and I sat in the middle of the helicopter. The captain took headcount and then told us that a man from the other helicopter was missing.

We made an approach back toward the LZ from the opposite direction and I

faced left, towards the woodline. I sat next to the aircraft gunner and he told me to take his place if he was hit. As we neared the ground, I couldn't see what was happening ahead but I could see automatic weapons fire coming from a hootch. I began firing at it and hit it because it began to burn from my tracers. I tried to continue to fire but noticed that the floor in front of me was rising and I had to depress the muzzle lower and lower. Then I realized that the helicopter was rolling over and then it hit.

I let go of the M60 and ended up between the pilots in the cockpit and followed one of them out as he climbed through the broken plexiglass.

I heard a muffled cry and crawled across legs sticking out from under the aircraft. I didn't know who it was. I tried to find someone to help me. Then I heard someone firing and it was Ed Eaton firing at the VC. I asked him to help but not sure if he did because he was firing and was the only to do so.

Four or five of us began to rock the airplane and I grabbed the legs and pulled the man out from under the aircraft. It was the captain and he was in bad shape but was talking.

Meanwhile, Sgt Eaton crawled up on the left skid and began firing at the enemy who were getting closer and whose firing was increasing. But Eaton's firing was keeping them from overwhelming us. I couldn't find my M60 and only had my .45 pistol.

I tried to treat the captain and eventually got him a few feet further from the aircraft. The gunships made a couple of gun runs but they soon ran out of ammunition and only Ed was firing at the enemy.

One of the gunships landed to our front, with his tail towards the enemy and the pilot motioned to us. Green tracers came toward us but several ran toward the aircraft and climbed up on the winglets. I tried to carry the captain but he told me leave him and get out. I set him down but went back toward the tail of our downed aircraft. The gunship left with several of the party. Ed continued to fire and then when a 2d gunship came he ran to it. But as it turned to depart, he jumped down and ran back to the captain and stayed with him. I heard him shoot after he was beside the captain and believe he hit several enemy who came near the aircraft.

I was back near the tail with a couple from the aircraft crew. I don't think that Ed or the captain knew we were there. I was determined not to leave the

captain but was trying to stay behind cover near him, because enemy fire was hitting all over the aircraft and in the area near Ed and the captain.

Soon another huey landed and the colonel and someone else jumped out and dragged the captain to that helicopter and also loaded on the wounded pilot and the door gunner. Just before it left I ran up to the colonel and asked if I should go out with him. He told me to get on a Cobra gunship that had just landed near us. I got on one side and the gunner held me as I stood on the skid. I think Ed and someone else was standing on the skid on the other side. They flew us to a rearming point about 20 minutes flying time away.

Later I was flown to Dong Tam and rejoined the company. I never saw the captain again.

Ed Eaton demonstrated the highest order of heroism as he fought off the enemy. He was the only one firing back because most of rifles and all the machine guns had been lost or damaged in the crash. He fought them off and we all survived because of extraordinary heroism.

Signed

Warren Stamereilers