

Lt. Col. George Berg's story: transcription text of video

Thank you. The story is very emotional. Let's start from the beginning. The mission was extracting a team of personnel from an airfield in Viet Nam that was under siege. They had surrounded some Marines. Anyway, the mission was to extract the team of Marines, have radio contact with them at the end of the runway and the plan was for the aircraft to roll to the end of the runway as rapidly as possible, taking down fire all the time. And when we got to the end, we would turn the aircraft around rapidly and drop the ramp to have this team climb on board rapidly. The team of 5 Marines was well hidden and came out of hiding and got on board and we started down the runway feeling as though we had it made. But the enemy also found the range of the runway and they were walking mortars down the runway. We had no choice but to take off to chance getting in-between the mortar rounds. Didn't quite make it. One mortar round hit the tail of the aircraft and blew it completely off. The airplane steered completely to the right and that put us through a minefield that we had planted there. But anyway, we blew up about three mines. Thank goodness we did not have fire. The copilot was real cool during this whole episode stating "Well, that was great Boss. What are you going to do for an encore?" Well, the idea was "I'm going to lead you back out through the minefield" which was no problem because we had cut ruts through the minefield with the aircraft's tires. So we clamored out the back and down the treads and an aircraft was supporting us up above. It was a smaller aircraft and also a transport seeing the trouble that we had. It descended rapidly. Did the same things, landed on the same runway, went to the end of the runway, came up to what was left of our aircraft. We now had 10 people to evacuate and we all scrambled. I don't remember running quite that fast before or after but we all got on board. "Let's get this thing airborne" which he did and we climbed out and everyone felt really safe. Being the commander, senior officer on board, feeling very cocky, I thought to myself, "we've got it made," but I started to shake so bad. I couldn't control it any more. Thank God, we all made it back to Danang and that's the end of the story. There were no heroes involved except those poor guys who were under siege for a long time. But we finally got them out of there and we're thankful for that.