

for suppression fire from two A-1 "Electrons" who had showed up to cover us. They did the job quite nicely.

Andy Dyess and Ernie were now in the water trying to detach the body from the coke fittings on the chute and hook up the hoist cable quite gingerly since the body was gasdly. When they believed that it was free they signaled me to take in the cable. As I reeled in the chute billowed in the rotor wash. One of the coke fittings had snagged. As the chute billowed and began to fill, I had no choice but to pickle the cable with the shear bolt on my collective. At that point, I almost laughed as I noticed that the mortar rounds that had been steadily creeping toward us began to move away. As a 14 yr old cadet at LaSalle Military Academy I had made the same mistake- putting the mortar spot corrections in backwards and realized that the enemy now attempting to kill us had made the same mistake. While they puzzled with their mortar spots, I turned my attention to my guys in the water. I now had no hoist with which to recover them. Giving the controls to Skip I un-strapped and climbed out on the little ledge along which the door ran along the starboard side of the UH-2 and crouched down to grab the guys by their belts as Skip put the A/C gently in the water. With a little help from me, they were able to reach tie down rings in the floor of the cabin and pull themselves in one -by-one. As soon as they were in, Skip lifted us off and headed us out to the gulf while I strapped in and the crewmen caught their breath.

As a young lieutenant, so results oriented, I was angry that Ernie and Andy had not accomplished the body recovery. Later HM-2 Gene Bliss began a program of introducing aircrewmen to handling corpses. I doubt anyone had to deal with one so mutilated as Lt. Perry. As I remember these two aircrewmen now, my abiding thoughts are of their great courage in the face of enemy fire, to go into the water and make the attempt. I wish I could now recommend each of them for the Silver Star I believe they deserve it. Fritz Meyer- Original Message -----

[Note, data following added by Ron Milam: LCDR Richard C. Perry, died August 31, 1967, from Hostile fire, Air Loss, Fixed Wing, Pilot, North Vietnam, Body Recovered, ]