

FROM: Roy A. Davis, Col, USAF (Ret)
AC-119 Gunship Association/VP
12888 W Brookhart Way
Peoria, Arizona 85383

SUBJECT: Additional Board Information

TO: The Honorable Mark Kelly
United States Senator
2201 E Camelback Rd. Phoenix AZ 85016

Dear Senator Kelly

19 May 2022

BLUF: The information below is new and may be of interest to the Decorations Board adjudicating Stinger 41. I would appreciate it if you would pass this on.

Background: On 18 April 1972 a C-130, call sign Manta 75, was shot down while attempting a low level airdrop of palletized ammunition near an Loc. Damage to the aircraft was caused by AAA to the right engine and right wing. Bailout was ruled out and the airplane crash landed. All crewmembers survived. The surviving crewmembers attest to the fact that all six were awarded the Silver Star in 1972. The pilots of the rescue helicopters were also awarded Silver Stars, albeit 45 years later using Article 10—Section 1130 (Congressional route).

Two weeks later an AC-119K gunship, call sign Stinger 41, was shot down while attempting to destroy a short airdrop of palletized ammunition near An Loc. On their third attempt to establish a firing orbit, Stinger 41 was hit by AAA. Damage to the aircraft was caused to the right engine and right wing. The aircraft was able to maintain flight only with both pilots at the controls. The pilot gave the “abandon the aircraft” command. When all were out, with the exception of the jumpmaster, the pilot ordered the copilot to bailout. The copilot exited the troop door at 300 feet AGL, pulled his D-ring, hit the trees, and fell to the ground suffering injuries requiring over 50 stitches. The airplane rolled over and crashed with the pilot, navigator and jumpmaster aboard. The jumpmaster’s duties required him to stay with the airplane until all others had bailed out. He was unable to bailout. These three sacrificed their lives to save others.

These two missions are very similar. The award packages for Stinger 41 were submitted and lost. If their awards were adjudicated in 1972, as they should have been, they would most likely have been awarded at the same level as Manta 75

V/R



Roy A. Davis, Col, USAF (Ret)
royadavis@yahoo.com
(253)549-2044

