

Staff Summary Sheet

To	Action	Signature (Surname), Grade, Date	To	Action	Signature (Surname), Grade, Date
1 SAF/MI	COORD	<i>[Signature]</i> 7-14	SAF/US	COORD	<i>[Signature]</i> 7-17-00
2 SAF/GC	COORD	<i>[Signature]</i> 7-14	5 SAF/OS	SIG	<i>[Signature]</i> 7/18/00
3 SAF/LL	COORD	<i>[Signature]</i>	AF/CL	ACC	Approved by AF/CL 18 Jul 75

Grade and Surname of Action Officer
Colonel Chmiola

Symbol
SAF/MIB

Phone
487-3138

Suspense Date

Subject

Medal of Honor—Airman First Class (A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger—The Next Step in Staffing

SSS Date

6 July 2000

Summary

- Purpose.** To obtain SAF/OS signature on letters to Congress supporting the award of the Medal of Honor to A1C Pitsenbarger under the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, section 1130 (extract at Tab 2).
- Background.** At the request of Congressman Boehner, the Air Force reviewed a recommendation to posthumously award the MOH to A1C Pitsenbarger for heroic actions in Vietnam in 1966. After review by the Air Force Decorations Board and senior civilian and uniformed leaders, SAF/OS recommended approval and requested USD (P&R) assistance is further staffing of the MOH recommendation (Tab 3).
- Discussion.** After review of the MOH package, OSD action officers indicated that two additional items were needed to begin final OSD staffing: (a) the coordination/concurrence of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and (b) copies of the SecAF letters formally notifying Congressman Boehner and the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees of the SAF recommendation to waive the statutory time limits and approve the award. These letters are required under the provisions of 10 USC 1130. We have obtained CJCS coordination (Tab 4) and have prepared appropriate letters to the HASC and the SASC for SAF/OS signature. Upon release of these letters, copies will be provided to OSD along with Gen Shelton's concurrence, so that OSD may proceed with MOH staffing through DoD GC, USD P&R, and OMB before SecDef/White House review.
- Recommendation.** SAF/OS sign the attached five letters (Tab 1) notifying Congress of your recommendation to approve the MOH for A1C Pitsenbarger.

[Signature]
JOE G. LINEBERGER
Director
Air Force Review Boards Agency

Tabs

1. Proposed Letters (5)
2. Extract 10 USC 1130
3. SecAF Memo, 15 May 00
4. CJCS Memo, 5 Jul 00



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

The Honorable John A. Boehner
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3508

JUL 19 2000

Dear Congressman Boehner:

At your request, the Air Force considered a proposal to award the Medal of Honor to Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger under the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Section 1130. The Air Force Decorations Board and my senior civilian and uniformed staff reviewed the case and submitted it to me with their recommendation. After giving your request careful, personal consideration, it is my determination that the award of the Medal of Honor is warranted to recognize Airman First Class Pitsenbarger's gallantry and that the time restrictions should be waived by law. On 5 July, General Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred with my recommendation.

I have forwarded my recommendation to the Under Secretary of Defense. Similar letters have also been sent to the chairman and senior minority member of the Committee on Armed Services in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Thank you for your efforts and concern on behalf of this brave American whose courage and initiative in the heat of battle merit the recognition bestowed by the Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Sincerely, 1

A handwritten signature, likely of William H. Pitsenbarger, is written in dark ink. The signature is stylized and appears to be "W. H. Pitsenbarger".



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

The Honorable Floyd D. Spence
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6018

JUL 19 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you requesting a waiver of the statutory time limitations to award the Medal of Honor to a true American hero. Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger displayed gallant and intrepid actions by placing himself in harm's way to rescue others during hostile fire near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam on April 11, 1966. He died in that action and was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross.

Title 10, United States Code, Section 1130, requires that I provide you with my recommendation concerning the award of a military decoration when the authorized time for approval of the decoration has passed and review of the matter is requested by a member of Congress. On March 24, 1999, Congressman John Boehner submitted a recommendation to consider awarding the Medal of Honor to Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger under the provisions of 10 USC 1130. The Air Force Decorations Board and my senior civilian and uniformed staff reviewed the case and submitted it to me with their recommendation. I gave this request careful, personal consideration, and it is my determination that the award of the Medal of Honor is warranted to recognize his gallantry and the time restrictions should be waived by law. On 5 July, General Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred with my recommendation. I have forwarded my recommendation to the Under Secretary of Defense.

Your support of this request will be appreciated. A similar letter has been sent to the ranking minority member of your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely of the Secretary of the Air Force, is written below the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized and appears to be "F. M. ...".



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

The Honorable Carl Levin
Senior Minority Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

JUL 19 2000

Dear Senator Levin:

I am writing to you requesting a waiver of the statutory time limitations to award the Medal of Honor to a true American hero. Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger displayed gallant and intrepid actions by placing himself in harm's way to rescue others during hostile fire near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam on April 11, 1966. He died in that action and was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross.

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Your support of this request will be appreciated. A similar letter has been sent to the chairman of your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "F. H. Shelton", is written below the word "Sincerely,".



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

JUL 13 2003

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Senior Minority Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6018

Dear Congressman Skelton:

I am writing to you requesting a waiver of the statutory time limitations to award the Medal of Honor to a true American hero. Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger displayed gallant and intrepid actions by placing himself in harm's way to rescue others during hostile fire near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam on April 11, 1966. He died in that action and was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross.

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Your support of this request will be appreciated. A similar letter has been sent to the chairman of your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely of the Secretary of the Air Force, is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized and appears to be "John M. McQuinn".



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

JUL 19 2000

The Honorable John Warner
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you requesting a waiver of the statutory time limitations to award the Medal of Honor to a true American hero. Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger displayed gallant and intrepid actions by placing himself in harm's way to rescue others during hostile fire near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam on April 11, 1966. He died in that action and was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross.

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Your support of this request will be appreciated. A similar letter has been sent to the ranking minority member of your committee.

Sincerely,

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OSD APPROVAL

14 SEP 00



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

200 SEP -8 AM 8:55

FORCE MANAGEMENT
POLICYMIL
9/3/00

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THRU: Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) *R. Sept 13, 2000*

FROM: Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management Policy) *SEP - 7 2000*
Prepared by: Capt Amy Boehle, ODASD(MPP)OEPM, 695-6312 *Aug 9/6/00*
Date Prepared: August 23, 2000 *per 9/30*

SUBJECT: Medal of Honor (MOH) Recommendation for then-Airman First Class
(A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger, United States Air Force - ACTION
MEMORANDUM



PURPOSE:

For Secretary of Defense to approve the recommendation of the Secretary of the Air Force in order to request Legislative Reference Service (LRS) to process the enclosed package for congressional authorization for upgrading the Air Force Cross awarded to then-Airman First Class (A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger, United States Air Force

DISCUSSION: The Secretary of the Air Force has recommended upgrading the Air Force Cross awarded to then-Airman First Class (A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger, United States Air Force to a Congressional Medal of Honor for heroic acts during the Vietnam War (Tab A). The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurs (Tab B).

Since this award was not made within three years after the date of the act justifying the award, legislation is required to waive time limitations. Sections 1130, 8741, 8742, and 8744 of Title 10, USC, pertain (Tab C). Further, the commendation requires staffing with OMB. Legislative Reference Service (LRS) is responsible for doing this and processing Departmental Legislative initiatives. To support this request, the prepared draft bill and sectional analysis for LRS is enclosed at Tab D.

The Secretary of the Air Force has notified the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee; and Congressman Boehner of his support for this upgrade (Tab E).

The proposed citation and summary of action is attached.



U12406 /00

Staff Summary Sheet

To	Action	Signature (Surname), Grade, Date	To	Action	Signature (Surname), Grade, Date
1 SAF/MI	COORD	<i>De Meane</i> 5 <i>Stenger</i> 4	4 SAF/US	COORD	<i>De Meane</i> 10-12-99
2			5 SAF/OS	SIGN	
3 AF/CC	COORD	Disapproved by CSAF	6		

Grade and Surname of Action Officer COL SHUMARD	Symbol SAF/MIB	Phone 857-5342	Suspense Date
Subject Medal of Honor Reconsideration--Airman First Class (A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger			SSS Date 20 September 1999

- 1. Purpose.** To obtain SAF/OS approval of a recommendation to USD (P&R) to posthumously award the Medal of Honor (MOH) to A1C William Pitsenbarger for his heroic actions in 1966 during the Vietnam War.
- 2. Background.** Earlier this year Congressman Boehner wrote to SAF/OS (Tab 2) requesting approval of the MOH under the provisions of 10 USC 1130 (extract at Tab 3). A1C Pitsenbarger had been posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) in 1966 for his extraordinary heroism in risking his life to save others near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam, on April 11, 1966. As the MOH is the highest military honor awarded for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, approval of Mr. Boehner's recommendation will require the coordination/concurrence of CJCS, SecDef and the White House. Criteria for the MOH and AFC may be found in the law (extract at Tab 4).
- 3. Discussion.** A1C Pitsenbarger's heroic actions were in the finest traditions of military service and most worthy of the special honor afforded by the MOH. The current recommendation package (Tab 5) includes key eyewitness accounts for the Army members on the ground during the actions that may not have been available to the Air Force leadership when they considered the original award submission in 1966. (This could not be confirmed, as no file copy of the original recommendation could be found after a thorough search of AF files). Further, approval of only the second MOH awarded to an Air Force enlisted member would send a strong, positive signal to our enlisted force during this time of enlistment and retention challenges.
- 4. Recommendation.** SAF/OS approve and sign the attached memorandum (Tab 1) recommending approval of the MOH and seeking USD (P&R) support obtaining final approval.

Joe G. Lineberger
JOE G. LINEBERGER
Director
Air Force Review Board Agency

Tabs

1. Proposed Memorandum
2. Congressman Boehner letter
3. Extract of 10 USC 1130
4. Criteria of MOH and AFC
5. Recommendation Package

99-21274

1ST TRY – 20 SEP 99

NOTE: The following statement is presented in a chronological narrative depicting the events as they occurred and leading to the lowering of A1C William H. "Pits" Pitsenbarger to the jungle floor to assist in the evacuation and treating the wounded and survivors of Charlie Company of "Big Red One". Hopefully this presentation will provide the reader with glimpse into and perhaps a clearer understanding of the vital and heroic actions taken by A1C William H. "Pits" Pitsenbarger on that fateful day that his sacrifice to help wounded Army soldiers would be ultimate. This narrative can only portray the events as witnessed and recalled by the pilot of Pedro 73, Captain Harold D. Salem, USAF. This statement and statements provided by eyewitness survivors Army 1st Lt Martin L. Kroah, Army 1st Lt John A. Libs, Army Sgt. Frank C. Navarro, and others will provide the reader with a more complete and clearer prospective that indeed: A1C William H. Pitsenbarger distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force, near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam, on April 11, 1966.

STATEMENT

Let's go! It was 1507 hours, 11 April 1966, at Detachment 6, 38th rescue and Recovery Squadron, Beinh Hoa Air Base, Republic of Viet Nam.

We had just received word at our helicopter rescue detachment that Charlie Company of the 1st Infantry Division, "Big Red One" had suffered many casualties during an encounter with the Viet Cong. They were surrounded by the enemy and help by friendly ground forces was many hours away. The jungle was very dense and the only way to get the wounded medically evacuated, was to hoist them out using our Rescue helicopters.

We knew that area well. Our crew had spent a large part of the night before trying to get in and extract the wounded but we were held on orbit close by. Charlie Company of "Big Red One" had been engaged in fierce combat with approximately 500 Viet Cong soldiers. We watched as air strike after air strike pounded the area. Yes, we knew that area well. We now were being called back in again.

Within minutes after receiving the call for assistance, two HH43F Rescue Helicopters, Pedro 97 and Pedro 73 lifted off the pad at Beinh Hoa AB and headed for the pickup site. While en route our crew discussed the mission and what may lay ahead. It was going to be a tough one. Airman Pitsenbarger "Pits" said he didn't feel good about this one—we all agreed—none of us did.

We were in Pedro 73 and our crew consisted of four people: A1C William H. "Pits" Pitsenbarger, Rescue and Survival Specialist; A1C Gerald C. Hammond, Helicopter Mechanic and primary hoist operator; Captains Dale L. Potter and Harold D. Salem, Rescue Crew Commanders' who alternated the pilot seat each day. Our crew had flown many rescue missions together. We fully respected and trusted in each other and were to the point where we could anticipate each other's actions. This was especially helpful when the going got tough. Potter was not with us today. He had been sent to Siagon to procure stokes litters. Major Maurice Kessler had elected to fill in for Potter as co-pilot.

Both Rescue helicopters arrived on-scene at 1545 hours and made contact with Sidewinder 23. He cleared us to begin the rescue effort and advised that Charlie Company had been severely hit. There were approximately 33 survivors left out of a company of 180 men and that most of the survivors were wounded. Pedro 97 was primary bird for the day and they positioned themselves to move in for the first pickup. The jungle below was very dense with a triple layer of canopies; the upper canopy was close to 150 feet tall, with the second layer at 100 feet and the lower at approximately 50 feet. There was a small hole in the lower canopy that would be just large enough to "snake" a stokes litter through. To make the recoveries, it was going to be necessary to hover in a conclave area with 100-foot trees below and 150-foot trees towering on all sides. The hover reference point would be a large tree that would be within 3 to 5 feet from the rotor tips.

Pedro 97 moved into the hole and completed a stokes litter pickup. They pulled out to transfer the patient from the stokes litter to a folding canvas litter in the cabin. There was only room in the chopper for two litter patients.

Pedro 73 then moved into the hole for a pickup. Hammond snaked the stokes litter down through the trees and into the hands of some survivors below. The survivors appeared to be having a tough time trying to figure out how to get the next patient into the stokes litter and ready for pickup. Once they figured out how to rig the sling assembly, they placed a wounded soldier, stretcher and all in the stokes litter. They reattached the sling and gave us the thumbs up for hoisting. The stretcher had been made from a pancho and two long tree limbs.

They had done the very best they could under existing conditions; however, it really complicated the pickup because the stretcher poles extending out of the stokes litter on both ends caused the stokes litter to continually get hung up in the trees below. When the stokes litter was finally hoisted up near the cabin door, both Pits and Hammond had to swing the stokes litter out far enough and away from the chopper before they could bring the patient in feet first. It had been a real struggle. They were finally successful in getting him part way in the helicopter, with part of the stokes litter and stretcher poles still sticking outside. We had no choice but to pull out of the hole and head for Binh Ba with only one person aboard. There was not enough room for another person.

It had been an exhausting pickup. It took almost forty-five minutes to complete. This pickup took twice as much time as normal. While in a hover you are a "sitting" duck for enemy ground fire so you try to keep the hover time as short as possible. You also reduce your window of opportunity for more pickups and we didn't want to do that.

While en route to the Army Field Hospital at Binh Ba, we discussed the pickup and all agreed that there had to be a better and faster way to hoist those people out of there. We couldn't afford to waste any more time. It was a very hostile area and we knew we had to make every minute count if we were going to successfully get the rest of the wounded and survivors out of that Hellhole. We had no direct communications with the people below, except through hand signals. We really couldn't advise them on how to speed up the process nor to help them evaluate the extent of injuries. Hopefully, some of the wounded could be sent up on the forest penetrator, which was much faster, but certainly couldn't be used for hoisting the critically wounded.

None of us were pleased with last pickup but Airman Pitsenbarger (Pits") offered his solution to solving the problem: Capt'n, I've got an idea that might work! Capt'n, on our next trip in why don't you put me down on the ground. Once I'm down there I can really help out. I can show those guys how to rig the stokes litter and load it right. It's a wonder we didn't drop and lose the last guy out of the stokes—those guys put him and that homemade stretcher in the stokes litter and worst of all, they never even strapped him in! A couple of times when the stokes popped loose after it had been snagged in the trees it started to spin and wobble--- I thought we might lose him for sure— but, thank God, we didn't. Capt'n, if you will just put me on the ground I can get everything organized and it will really help us speed up the pickups. In between pickups I can help some of the wounded and determine who needs to come out first. Maybe we can send some of them up on the penetrator. It will be much faster and you can put more people in the bird. I know we can do it! It will make a difference!

SALEM: Pits, you really have a good point, but I don't want to take the chance of losing you! You are really needed here. With you gone it limits us to one stoke litter pickup at a time. It is really a "hot" spot down there. Are you really sure you want to go down? PITS: Yes sir! Capt'n, I can really make a difference! SALEM: Hammond, what do you think, can you make it alone back there? HAMMOND: Yes sir. Capt'n, I agree with Pits—something has to be done---that last pickup was a bitch, I thought that we were going to lose that last guy out of the stokes litter! Those poor guys on the ground are going through Hell. Most of those guys probably have never even seen any of our rescue gear and much less know any of our procedures. Pits could really help, even though I really don't want to see Pits go down there!

SALEM: Ok, I'll think it over! You both make some make some good points—we have to get those guys out of there, soon! Before the VC hit them again. I thought it over and over again as to whether Pits should go down. I finally decided we should give it a try.

SALEM: Pits, Hammod, we will be ready to go into the hole in about 5 minutes. Ok Pits, I'll go along with you—lets give it a try! I'll put you down on a couple of conditions. Just as soon as you have things under control down there, I want you back up here, and the other is, if we give you the signal to come up—come up! Ok? PITS: Yes sir. That's great, I know it will make a difference. I'll get my stuff ready to take down with me. SALEM: Pits, any second thoughts? PITS: No sir--none--I'm ready, I'm taking all of the splints and medical bag with me. I'm taking my M-16 with me. Ready when you are!

We wished Pits good luck. I maneuvered the helicopter in to the pickup hole as Hammond strapped Pits on to the penetrator and disconnected his mike cord. I took my last glimpse of Pits as Hammond swung him out of the cabin. Pits had a big grin on his face and held onto his medical kit in his left hand and his M-16 rifle in the other. He motioned to us with his right hand clutching his M-16. I said a silent prayer for him. I have a feeling the rest of the crew said a prayer for him too. We just never talked about it. Down he went as Hammond snaked him down through the trees to the wounded and survivors waiting below. I'm sure they were surprised to see someone come down into their Hellhole.

Hammond hoisted the penetrator back up and sent a stokes litter down to Pits. Pits quickly showed others what to do and took part in loading the next patient into the stokes litter. Hammond hoisted him up without a hitch. I pulled out of the hole and Pedro 97 moved in for another pickup. We proceeded to Binh Ba, where the patient was transferred to the field hospital. We refueled the bird as quickly as possible and headed back to the pickup point.

With Pits now on the ground attending the wounded and getting things organized, Pedro 97 was able to make a patient pickup using the stokes litter and two patients using the penetrator, which was much easier and faster. With Pits on the ground, he had really made a difference! He really helped speed up the whole rescue process! If we could keep up this pace we stood a better chance of getting everyone out to safety.

As we were re-entering the pickup point we were notified by SideWinder 23 that the VC had launched a mortar and small arms attack on Charlie Company. Pedro 73 held in orbit close by and was soon joined by Pedro 97.

We finally received word from Sidewinder 23 that the firefight had been neutralized and it was clear to go back in. Pedro 97 would go in first. He had a Medic aboard and he could assist in the on-board patient transfer from the stokes litter to a folding canvas stretcher. In the event the area became "hot" again, Pedro 73 would go in and try to get Pits out. Pedro 97 went back in and was able to complete two stokes litter pickups in a very short period of time. Thanks again to Pits, he really was getting everything organized! He was medically treating the wounded and determining which wounded should be sent up first. Pits said he would make a difference. He really had!

When Pedro 97 pulled out of the hole, Pedro 73 went in for another pickup. Hammond spotted Pits, he was signaling for a stokes litter. Hammond hooked it up and began lowering to Pits. We could hear enemy fire down below but Pits was ignoring it and kept motioning for us to continue lowering the stokes litter. When the stokes litter was just a few feet above Pits, all "Hell" broke loose! We were getting hit hard by enemy ground fire. The helicopter lurched from the rounds hitting the bird—it suddenly yawed severely to the left and at the same time we experienced a sever loss in rotor Rpm causing the bird to begin a slow decent. I was able to control the yaw with full right rudder and then realized I had no control over the engine---we had apparently had taken hits in the throttle quadrant or the fuel control and in the flight controls.

My immediate concern was to keep the chopper flying and not hit any trees that were just a few feet away from the tips of the rotor blades. Hammond kept the stokes litter going down while signaling for Pits to grab hold of the stokes litter when it came within reach so we could pull him out. I was able to keep the helicopter fairly steady now using full right rudder. Finally, the rotor Rpm began to increase and stopped our decent. Again, our main concern was to try some way to get Pits on board! He must have known that we were taking heavy ground fire! Hammond was now frantically motioning to Pits to get him to try and grab onto the stokes litter but Pits continued to give Hammond the wave-off and appeared to be hollering for us to get the Hell out of there! This was his second wave-off! Without any hesitation Pits elected to stay on the ground with the wounded Army survivors of Charlie Company!

Not knowing how much longer the bird was going to hold together and the fact Pits that had elected to stay on the ground, we had to get out of there and get this bird on the ground as soon as possible. As I began to maneuver the bird up and out the pickup hole, the stokes litter became snagged in the trees below. We were now "tethered" to the trees. Hammond said it was really hungup and there was no way he could get it loose. I flipped on the emergency release switch and cut the cable. The cable fell away and we began our gradual pull out. We headed for a small clearing we had spotted earlier. It was about 2 clicks away. We became concerned that if I set her down in the clearing, we would probably be up to our armpits in VC. At this point, I guess we would just have to take our chances. Upon spotting the first clearing we spotted another one further away and we headed up for it. As we got closer to the second clearing we could see Binh Ba several clicks away and decided to take a gamble the bird would continue to stay together and get us there. We didn't know how badly the flight controls or rotor blades has been hit, so I felt it was best to not make any abrupt flight control movements and was as gentle on the controls as possible. I made a long shallow approach to a running landing. The bird held together and we arrived in one piece. Our chopper was now out of commission and would be for some time.

Now what about Pits? Somehow we just knew that one of our choppers would get him out. After escorting us to Binh Ba, Pedro 97 headed back to the pickup point to try to continue with the rescue and to get Pits out. He also requested another rescue crew on scene.

Upon arriving back at the pickup point Pedro 97 was advised by Sidewinder 23 that there were 7 more known casualties and Pits was still on the ground. Before Pedro 97 could maneuver into the pickup point Sidewinder 23 advised that no more pickups could be attempted at that time because the area was again under heavy enemy contact. This time the enemy was also too close to the survivors for any close air support to be called in. Artillery was directed in and the pickup point soon became fully encircled by artillery fire. Pedro 97 maintained a close orbit and was soon joined by Pedro 43. Shortly after dark Sidewinder 23 advised Pedros' 97 and 43 that no more extractions could be attempted and advised the Pedros' to return to home base.

The next morning, 12 April 1966, we learned that Pits did not survive. He had paid the ultimate price! He had been killed at approximately 1930 hours on 11 April 1966.

We would later learn that remaining survivors, Army 1st Lt. Martin L. Kroah, Army 1st Lt John A. Libs, Army Sgt. Frank C. Navarro, and US Army 4th Class F. David Peters, Daniel L. Kirby, Phillip J. Hall and Gallen Summerlot, were able to give eyewitness accounts about the most demanding, courageous and heroic actions that A1C William H. "Pits" Pitsenbarger, USAF, had taken to help fellow service men survive while on the jungle floor with Charlie Company.

I firmly believe the heroic actions taken by A1C William H. Pitsenbarger on April 11, 1966 are most deserving of our nation's highest award for valor, the "Medal of Honor." The medal he was originally nominated for on 16 April 1966.

Respectfully,

HAROLD D. SALEM
Lt Col, USAF (RET)