

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EYEWITNESS STATEMENT

On 21 February 1968 the 1st and 3rd Platoons of Company D, 2d Bn(Abn) 501st Inf, came under heavy automatic weapons fire from a well fortified enemy position. Fighting was so fierce in the trenchlines and bunkers that the 2nd Platoon, which was in reserve and evacuating the wounded, had to be committed. SSG Sims led his squad to the top of a hill and laid down a heavy volume of fire to allow the company commander and the artillery forward observer to cross more than 150 yards of open rice paddy and a small river. After the command group had reached the trenchline SSG Sims used fire-team fire and maneuver to bring his entire squad across the open terrain. Upon reaching the trench line SSG Sims again employed his fire power to maneuver his squad all the way to the very front and by use of heavy automatic weapons fire was able to relieve the pressure from the 1st Platoon. At this time I told SSG Sims to take his squad across the woods and link up with the 3rd Platoon and try to relieve some pressure from them. SSG Sims started to move forward when a North Vietnamese lunged from a bunker. With a fierce blast from his M-16 SSG Sims killed the North Vietnamese. At this time two more enemy began to retreat, and SSG Sims and his squad cut them down as they attempted to retreat. SSG Sims again began to move his squad through withering fire to link with the 3rd Platoon. After moving approximately thirty meters SSG Sims noticed a burning hut which was filled with ammunition. He quickly moved his squad around the building and had only withdrawn some twenty yards when the building exploded sending bricks, concrete, and shrapnel into the air. Two men had been too close to the hut and were injured. SSG Sims had two of his squad help carry the wounded back and again attempted to link with the 3rd Platoon. As

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Continuation of EYEWITNESS STATEMENT)

SSG Sims moved some 25 yards he accidentally tripped a well concealed booby trap. Realizing that he was so close and that the lives of his men were in extreme danger, he violently yelled, "Get back! Get back!" and then threw himself on the device, equal to twice the force of a fragmentation grenade. SSG Sims willingly sacrificed his life to save the lives of his men. It is my firm belief that had SSG Sims not attacked the position with the force and enthusiasm he displayed, the 1st Platoon and company headquarters might well have been destroyed. SSG Sims saved the lives of at least three of his squad and two of the company headquarters by absorbing the shock of the blast himself. His actions were with complete disregard for his own life in the interest of his men and his mission. SSG Sims made the greatest sacrifice a soldier can make in the defense of his fellow soldiers, and no mark of tribute can be too great.



CLEO C. HOGAN
1LT, Infantry
Commanding (Co B, 2/501)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY