

Statement of Second Lieutenant Joseph A. CIALONE II 094395, United States Marine Corps, attached to and serving with Company M, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division (Rein) MAF

On 21 July 1967, the second platoon, minus, was sent west on Route 9 to investigate a possible enemy ambush. The platoon made contact, came under heavy small arms fire, and asked for reinforcements. I arrived with the remainder of the company shortly thereafter. We immediately linked up with Staff Sergeant MEIER and the rear of the second platoon. The point squad and the platoon commander were forward and out off from the rear.

As the other two platoons were being deployed, the entire company began taking mortar rounds. Before the mortar attack had ended, the company had taken at least 200 rounds incoming. Throughout the mortar attack Staff Sergeant MEIER directed the movement and the return fire of his men. The platoon commander had been wounded, thus Staff Sergeant MEIER was in command of and maneuvering what was left of the platoon.

At one point during the mortar attack Staff Sergeant MEIER got a fix on the mortar positions and ran through the open during the attack to ~~the~~^{our} 60MM mortar positions. At this position, he directed effective countermortar fire which silenced one of possibly four 82MM tubes firing at us. He then sprinted back up the road to the point of contact.

There he continued to organize the remnants of his platoon. One squad leader had been killed; the machine gun squad leader had been killed; the platoon commander lay in the middle of the road, a bullet through each leg; and the remaining squad leader had just been shot in the corner of the right eye, thoroughly disabling him. Staff Sergeant MEIER gathered fire teams and organized assaults up the road to the position of the crippled point squad. At least two machine guns were firing straight down the long axis of the road. Nevertheless, Staff Sergeant MEIER maneuvered successfully these small units through and around this heavy fire, at a time when it seemed obvious that anybody who tried to move would be immediately shot.

Time after time Staff Sergeant MEIER executed these small unit assaults down the road; each time returning with a wounded man, who prior to that time had been out of reach completely.

This was about the time I was medvaced; therefore, the only thing I know about his death is what I heard. I would like to state that the circumstances of his death typify his spirit. He was at the rear of the column when help arrived in the form of 40MM tracked vehicles. Staff Sergeant MEIER had brought himself and most all of the men out of the killing zone, but he climbed aboard the lead tank and went back forward. His aggressiveness and courage would not allow him to stay in the rear while there was a battle going on.

ENCLOSURE (2)

He never lost sight of his mission as a Marine infantryman: to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy.

From the vehicle he directed fire into the enemy positions until he received the wounds from which he eventually died.

JOSEPH A. CIALONE II

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