New American

"Fix Bayonets": The Story of Operation Shiny Bayonet, the First U.S. Air Cavalry Battle of the Vietnam War, with Vietnam Veteran Bob Martin, U.S. Army, Retired

In October 1965, Bob Martin, a 19-year-old private first class, received his baptism under fire in Operation Shiny Bayonet, the first Air Cavalry battle of the Vietnam War. This took place one month before the better-known Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, made famous by the 2002 Mel Gibson movie, We Were Soldiers. Under heavy enemy fire and with most of his platoon dead or wounded, Martin continued to fight and tend to the wounded. With complete disregard for his own safety, he covered the wounded with his own body and dragged them to safety. Among those whose lives he saved were then-Lieutenant Colonel Robert Shoemaker (later to become a four-star general and commander of the United States Army Forces Command) and CBS News correspondent Morley Safer. For his bravery and gallantry Martin was awarded the Silver Star Medal. He served four combat tours in Vietnam, serving in the 101st Airborne, 1st Air Cavalry, Special Forces, and 173rd Airborne. He was interviewed by Bill Jasper, senior editor for The New American.
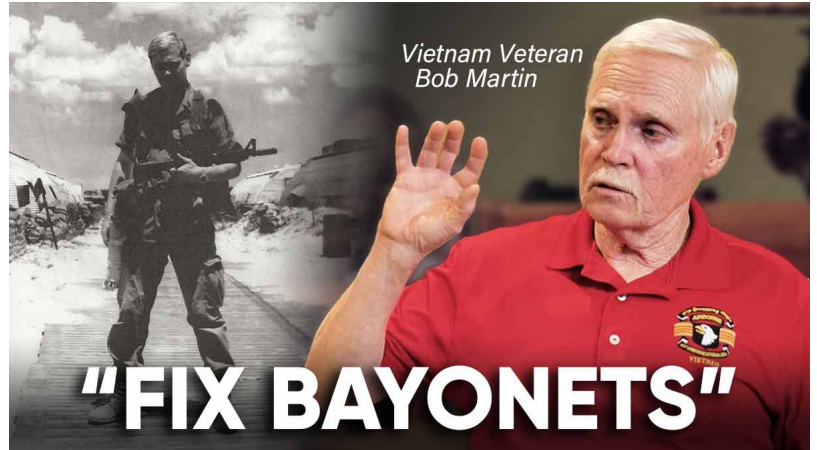
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