

ON 28 APRIL 1975 I RECEIVED WORD FROM THE CHIEF PILOT THAT WE WOULD COMMENCE A BINGO HOUR AT 1330L. THE FIRST PICK UP WAS [TWENTY MILES NW OF V17] WHICH CONSISTED OF [EIGHTEEN REFUGEES] AFTER TAKING THEM TO THE [VANCOUVER LPD II] DROPPING THEM OFF, AND REFUELING, WE WENT BACK TO [V193] PICKED UP ANOTHER LOAD, STOPPED AT [V173] REFUELED AND PROCEEDED TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE [VANCOUVER LPD] DROPPING THE PASSENGERS OFF AND REFUELING, WE PROCEEDED BACK TO [V17] BECAUSE OF DARKNESS.

AFTER GETTING A BRIEFING THAT NIGHT FROM A [40A CUSTOMER AND 40B CUSTOMER] THINGS WERE STILL UP IN THE AIR ON JUST HOW THE [40A CUSTOMER] PLANNED ON BEING EVACUATED (SOME BY RIVER AND SOME BY AIR OR ALL BY RIVER OR ALL BY AIR).

THE NEXT MORNING WE COMMENCED MOVING [40B CUSTOMER EMPLOYEES] AT NO TIME DID THE [40A CUSTOMER] TRY TO EVACUATE ANY OF HIS PEOPLE OR HIS EMPLOYEES. AFTER COMPLETING TWO TRIPS TO THE [BARBOUR COUNTY LST 1198] HAULING 28 REFUGEES EACH TRIP, THE SITUATION DETERIORATED TO SUCH A POINT THAT IT WAS FELT THAT THE CUSTOMER HAD TO BE PRESSURED INTO MOVING AMERICANS [AND TCNS.]

ON ARRIVAL BACK AT [V17] THE [40A CUSTOMER] HAD DEPARTED WITH HIS EMPLOYEES AND 21 AMERICANS IN A BOAT AND WAS BEING DETAINED OUT ON THE RIVER. WHILE ALL THIS WAS GOING ON AND TRYING TO GET THE [40B CUSTOMER] ROUNDED UP, WE MANAGED TO GET FUEL IN THE [SHELL] COMPOUND AND AT NO TIME DID WE DRAW FIRE FROM THE LOCALS. AFTER APPROXIMATELY A 45-MINUTE DELAY, WE GOT THE [40B CUSTOMER] ABOARD TWO CHOPPERS AND THEN PROCEEDED TO FLY THEM TO THE [BARBOUR COUNTY.]

AFTER DROPPING THEM OFF, WE WENT TO [V32] TO ASSIST IN THE EVACUATING OF [083 C-47 CREW AND PAXS IF NEED BE] AFTER ARRIVING

AT [032] OUR CHOPPER PICKED UP [JOHN FORD AND THE LORAN PEOPLE] WE PROCEEDED BACK TO DROP THEM OFF ON THE [BARBOUR COUNTY] REFUELED AND THEN PROCEEDED TO [SAIGON] TO ASSIST.

UPON ARRIVING [SAIGON] WE ASSISTED SHUTTLING PEOPLE TO THE PICK UP POINT WHERE THE [CH-47S AND 46] WERE WORKING. WHEN MY FUEL REACHED 500 POUNDS, WE DEPARTED WITH A LOAD OF REFUGEES. UPON ARRIVING AT [05] I WAS DIRECTED TO THE [U.S.S BLUE RIDGE] AFTER ARRIVING AT THE [BLUE RIDGE] AND SEEING THE STATE OF CONFUSION AND HOW LONG IT WOULD BE BEFORE WE COULD LAND, I ASKED FOR [A VECTOR TO ANOTHER SHIP] AFTER BEING VECTORED TO THE [U.S. S. MIDWAY AND LANDING SAFELY AND HAVING FLOWN 15 MINUTES ON A 20-MINUTED FUEL WARNING LIGHT AND THE TIME BEING AFTER 1900L WE SHUT DOWN, AND SECURED.]

[CAPTAIN R. W. HITCHMAN, JR.]
AIR AMERICA, INC.