

SIGNS OF A REALLY BAD PZ MISSION

PRE-TAKE-OFF:

- It is raining too hard to see if the fog has cleared.
- The ground unit's organic aviation company can no longer muster sufficient extraction birds.
- The Brigade Chaplain is at the mission brief.
- The Intelligence briefing indicates 'light' expected enemy contact.
- On leaving the mission brief, you note:
 - The S1 is typing requests for aircrew replacements,
 - The S3 Air is erasing lines from the flight crew board,
 - The Chaplain wants to touch you with some water,
 - Your fellow aviators seem to be dividing your things,
 - The First Sergeant salutes you for the first time,
 - Your company commander smiles for the first time since your problematic demonstration in POL last week of that reverse-spin WP grenade toss.
- Your assigned-aircraft is the company hanger queen.
- Maintenance has cleared the aircraft for a "one-time only" flight before correction of those pesky Red-X's.
- The copilot is pending FEB.
- A recess in the crew-chief's courts martial enables him to make the flight.
- The gunner has completed his testimony against the crew-chief.
- Both are sitting behind you with loaded weapons.
- As you depart, the ground crew is painting a new aircraft number on your revetment space.

OVER THE PZ:

- You have to turn up the receiver volume to hear the whispered PZ radio call that the *"PZ is COLD"*.
- The reassuring PZ radio transmissions are distorted by inexplicable background popping and screaming.
- There are two or more C&C birds;
 - Both are above 5,000 feet and rapidly climbing.

- Everyone else has turned off the C&C frequency.
- There are twice as many gunships as usual.
- The TAC AIR stacked more than three high.
- The FAC has been shot down.
- The gunships and TAC AIR are "Bingo fuel, RTB in 5".
- An Air Cavalry troop operating several miles away is industriously ignoring the operation and appears to have turned off 'Guard'.
- There are multiple large burning objects in the PZ.
- On short final you still can't see anyone in the PZ.

IN THE PZ

- The PZ guides are kneeling rather than standing,
- The troops hurrying to load on your bird are walking backwards.
- They are firing full automatic and throwing things,
- Once loaded they continue firing and throwing things.
- There is enthusiastic pounding on your seat back and loud yelling of "GO, GO, GO!"
- Your crew-chief and gunner are firing non-stop.
- The copilot remarks on the "funny-colored" tracers.
- There seem to be more colored lights on the cockpit display than usual.
- The copilot opines that the lights could be related to that hammer-like banging on the engine compartment.
- The windshield suddenly becomes difficult to see out of.
- You note a warm feeling on your pants legs; however, the pleasure of the moment is spoiled by an annoying odor.
- The non-stop high-pitched panicky screaming on the intercom that has been interfering with your thinking is giving you a sore throat.
- There seem to be a lot more troops in the PZ than the pick-up number indicated in the briefing.
- Most of the onrushing enthusiastic PZ crowd seems to be wearing uniforms that you cannot exactly recall seeing in the post clothing sales store.