

As the armament officer for the Spiders, I used to spend most of my days off helping the crew chiefs and door gunners boresight and test fly their weapons systems on their assigned aircraft.

They'd come and get me when their aircraft were just coming out of maintenance or had just completed some work on the gun system and it need<sup>ed</sup> to be flown and test fired for accuracy.

Yes, in those days accuracy for the rockets were just how close they were to the grease pencil "X" on the right pilots position but more importantly was-it gave the enlisted crew a chance to fly and fire the mini-guns or 40 mm from the left pilots position and check for accuracy through the flex gunsight. (In those days, there was no rule about having two qualified pilots (officers) in the pilot seats...I

just flew by myself with the door gunner and crewchief.)  
*Dick Green and I*  
We usually went out to the beach (north of Hue) or to a free fire zone and pick out a target and fire. Then we would go back readjust the pods or re-boresight and rearm and go back out and retest.

Well one bright sunny afternoon, we had just finished refueling and rearming a ship and were sitting around drinking some hot beer just outside the armament tent and were watching the grunts across the dirt

hot road in the next rice paddy start to line up for a (rare for them)  
lunch being served from a field mess tent.

and At the time, all of our slicks and gunships were out on missions  
wearing since it was my day off, I was basking in the hot Vietnam sun  
my usual boxer shorts and flip flops and sucking on some adult  
beverage that would take the edge on being miserable in the 'Nam.

in While I was sitting next to the tent with the door gunner and  
crewchief practicing our gook squat and looking at the poor grunts  
full combat gear waiting in line that was at 10-25 feet separation  
broad between each grunt.....we received a direct mortar attack!!!!In  
LZ daylight at 12 o clock in the freaken afternoon at our home base  
Sally!!!!

of US At first I couldn't believe it. I was looking at bits and pieces  
waiting Army infantryman flying through the air where they had been  
for a taste of a hot meal seconds before.

the The three of us helicopter types were as flat as we could get on  
made rice paddy floor but after the first barrage of incoming fire, we  
a beeline for the only flyable ship in the reventments.

had While I was running to the aircraft, it became obvious that this  
never happened before but it was probably the best time to stage a  
ship, mortar attack. Our helmets and Chicken plates were still in the  
the crew was still dressed in their jungle suits, but in my haste,  
I was still in ~~BOXER SHORTS~~ and flip flops.

bold I knew, as I heard from the next wave of incoming rounds, that the  
sooner I cranked and got up the better the chances were that the  
daylight attack would stop.

throttle OK, into the right seat, hitting the start button just after the  
blades were untied and putting my helmet on while rolling the  
to full RPM. If "CHUCK" is looking at Sally and sees us  
cranking-WE  
will be the next target.

back to As I clear the reventment I call the grunts who are now firing  
clear the west where the rounds have come from. I doglegged north to  
think their gun target line and start heading west on an azimuth they  
the rounds are still coming from. They have an azimuth but the  
distance puts the source of the attack just into the hills west of

LZ

Sally.

I stayed low level and flew as fast as the thing would go and as I breached over the first hill line the left side doorgunner opens fire.

I looked over my shoulder and banked left to see what he was shooting

at and there they were....about 4 mortar tubes with troops in uniforms

looking up at us in utter disbelief (their eyes were wide eyed to the

point of being round.) The door gunners tracers were hitting right into their position and our presence was such a shock they hadn't started to shoot back-yet.

I continued a turn but since I had no backup aircraft and I was out

there alone, I threw the aircraft into a dive to get some cover behind

some other hills beacuse now they were starting to shoot back.

I called the grunts and told them to adjust the fire to the north about a mile and to tell me when the first rounds were inbound to the

VC. This gave me a little time to get setup for a gun-run with the minis and rockets. Seconds later I got the call "shot out" from the base camp. I swang into a position to observe and start a gun run.

I had one of the crew jump<sup>place</sup> into the right pilots seat and arm the minigun

system. I saw the US rounds hit the top of the hill but did not get

into the valle<sup>h</sup>y were the VC position was. I told them to hold their

fire for a few and we did a solo diving gun run on our target.

I had the crewchief set up to shoot one gun at a time and while he was

firing away I got us into a good rocket position. I had him stop and I

fired rockets at the target and as I broke he and the other crewmember

hit the area with minis and doorgun.

We were HOT SHIT!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We were killing the shit out of Charlie and

loving every minute of it. It was a doorgunner/crewchief/pilots wet

dream come true. When we started to run low on ammo, we had the artillery start up again and after awhile it was obvious it was

all over. we made an estimated body count looking at what we could see

from the air. Then it was time to head back for fuel and <sup>to</sup> rearm.

When we landed at the refuel/rearm pad I saw Major Jack O Johnson walking over towards us. I was waiting for a pat on the back but

when the Maj saw me getting out of the helicopter with nothing on but boxer

shorts, flip flops, helmet and chicken plate he was pissed. I was orally reprimanded on the spot. I was told to see my platoon

leader

for further details. Well I did and I found out later that the Maj  
was not aware of what we had just done. He thought I was out screwing  
around and flying out of uniform-smile.

This event was one of the most memorable events of my life and I  
actually spoke to the Major some 30 years later. He does not  
remember  
the event but apologized for it after I told him about it-smile.

Poor  
guy had so many other things going on in his life at the time this  
little event was "no big thing". At least I didn't get a article

15  
but I did get counseled-grin!

④

CW5  
By JOE WALKER (Retired)