

missions, when one of the GIB got a confirmed kill, they would secure a red smoke grenade to the skid, pull the pin and then the flight of slicks or gunships would do a fly over the company area... trailing smoke. Letting our support guys on the ground know which helicopter had made the kills.

While flying in the tropical jungles and mountains of Vietnam, Foreign Object Damage and blade strikes were major problems. During the rainy season red clay would collect in the soles of the jungle boots of everyone who flew in the huey. During the dry season you had to deal with the red dust, both of which would foul external seals and compressor turbines. ~~When the rains stopped you had to deal with thick red dust.~~ The 130-foot, triple canopy jungles of Vietnam were so dense that holes 50 to 60 feet in diameter had to be cut, blown with C-4 plastic or leveled by a 2000 pound Air Force bomb called a "Daisy Cutter" so that the helicopters 48 foot main rotor blade would clear while descending into and coming out of the tight one ship LZ. It was real scary and extremely dangerous, hovering down into a hole, only inches from trees and stumps. The entire crew was vulnerable... sitting targets the entire time. The 188th pilots, ~~with out~~ ^{WITHOUT} hesitation, went into those holes and on occasion when things were real tight, anything that came in contact with the main rotor blade or the tail rotor blade would be chewed up.

OPA

~~...as the result of a ground command...~~