

copy of notes goes to High Rank Novel officers b-1 HAL-3 1st Skypers
R W Spencer. ✓

In recent years, I have had the privilege of listening, attentively, to numerous extremely professionally presented discourses relating to the "advancement" of attack helicopter concepts -- Bell, Sikorsky -- the whole gamut. I have been most impressed with the sophistication and progress with forward firing "super" accurate weapons systems -- I am most dismayed that survivability (percentage of loss) and the proven system have been either ignored or overlooked.

I cannot statistically document the following statements; however, they are based upon 14,000 hours of personal observation -- UH-1B Gunships:

1. Rarely, even in the heaviest (Tet '68) opposing fire -- 50 cal, 12.7 etc., were hits ever sustained in the "firing," "attack" runs.
2. It is totally impossible for a wingman ("light fire team concept") to deliver covering fire in support of the "lead" aircraft with any type of "restricted" forward fire weapon, XM-60, chin 30 mm or otherwise --
3. Fire teams frequently operate independently, beyond "Dustoff"/"Medivac" operational environs.
4. "Tigers" need Medivacs.

If we total 1+2+3+4 the sum is:

1. The 6 o'clock has to be covered to survive.
2. Each aircraft must have, however limited, some capability to help a buddy.
3. The best weapon is the aft firing gunner.

Solution:

(→ CONCEPT IS PURE DESPERATION)

1. Study the Japanese fighter pilot predicament in WW II.
2. Extend/lower the Cobra skids 12" (approximate).
3. Extend/compartmentize belly 12" - 14" by 32" by 7'.

4. Armor plate belly -
5. Install 180° free-swing 50 cal, single mount machine gun similar to TBF/TBM.
6. Install gunner on stomach.
7. Convert to "slick," "medivac" configuration by removing gunner -- to accept, at least, pilot/co-pilot of one gunship in the "stomach" area.

In summation, may I go on record as saying the second greatest weapon in HA(L)-3 was the dedicated door gunner. The first was the experienced Navy pilot who could hit effectively/well without having to overfly the target. Aggressiveness was the result of being able to "pick-up" your buddy. The record:

900:1 PBA/KIA

2800⁺ SAMPANS/JUNKS Sunk/Damaged

2600⁺ Bunkers Damaged/Destroyed

Combat damage ^{WAS} sustained ^{BY} all units within the first 24 hours of Tet '68 yet 100% fire team availability throughout Tet. ~~WAS MAINTAINED~~.

97 Purple Hearts -- First Year, 73% gun availability -- First Year.