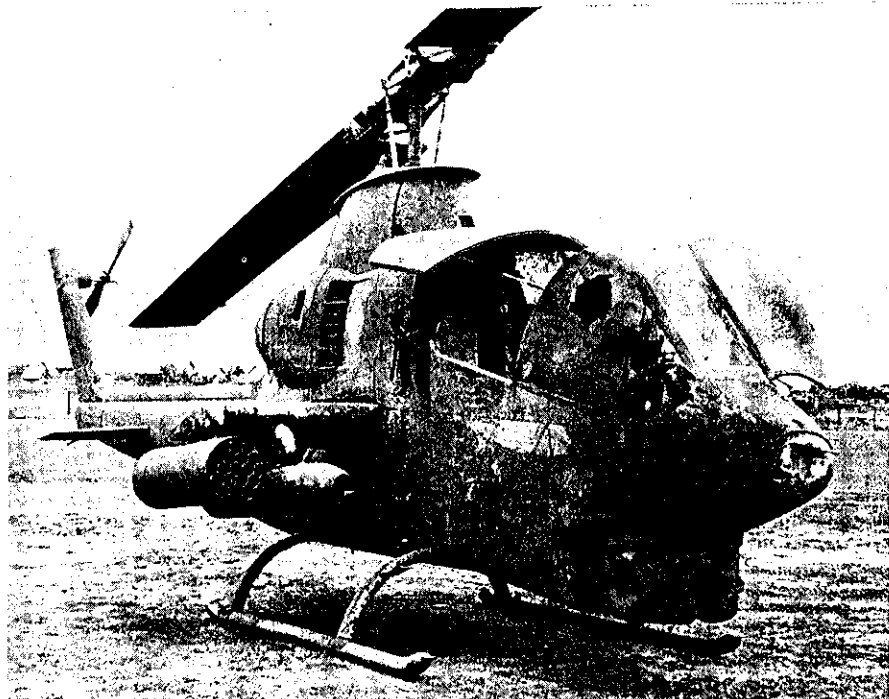




The AH-1G HueyCobra rests safely at its staging field at Moc Hoa after being engulfed in a delayed secondary explosion

The value of good aviation practices is seldom explained in a positive fashion. Usually, the opportunity to read a "grainy close the barn door" type presentation emphasizing the advantages of poor procedures here is a positive story of good practices which p

Good Safety Practices

Major Curtis J. Herrick

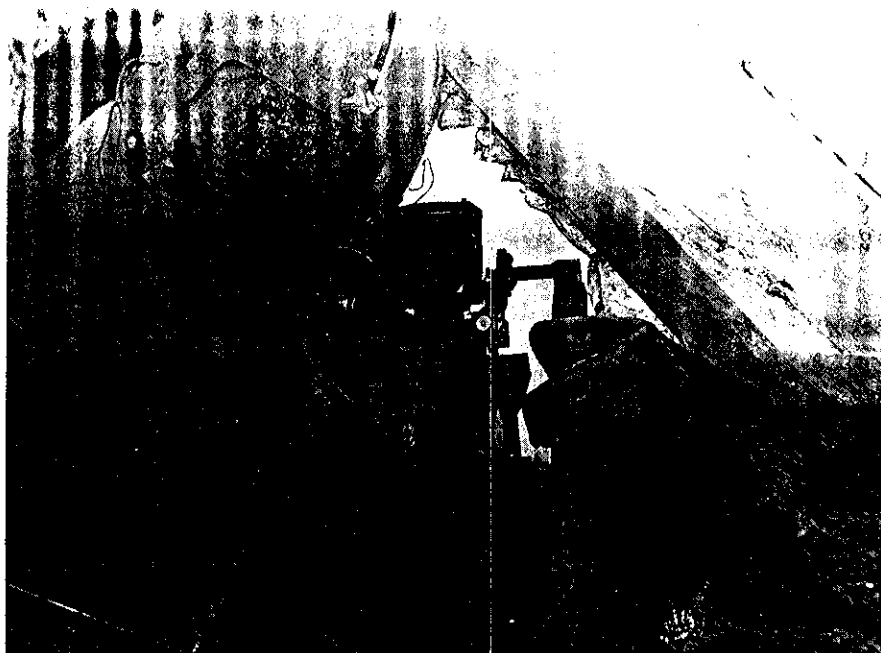
In the Spring of 1968 Major Lyle McCarty and Major John Barry were leading a dawn armed reconnaissance patrol of AH-1G HueyCobras in the Plain of Reeds south of Moc Hoa in the Republic of Vietnam. They discovered about 40 large sampans camouflaged along an infiltration route. After reporting their find, they attempted to shoot the camouflage away from one of the boats to determine the nature of the cargo. A delayed secondary explosion caused by the machine-gun fire engulfed the aircraft as it passed over the boat.

The helicopter came out of the fire ball in a 45 degree bank to the left. MAJ McCarty, the pilot, could not see. He had been struck between the eyes with a mud ball. MAJ Barry, the gunner whose eyes were protected by his

Major John Barry (left) and Major Lyle McCarty with their mud-spattered Cobra. . .



of good aviation safety is seldom exhibited in a shion. Usually we have any to read a gruesome "let's barn door" type accident on emphasizing the dis- s of poor procedures. But ositive story of conforming actices which proves that—



The damage and "mud bath" sustained by the crew and its aircraft are clearly visible in this closeup of the Huey-Cobra's cockpit

Practices Do Pay Off

Major Curtis J. Herrick Jr.



helmet visor, stuck his head out through the hole that had been blown in the mud covered wind screen. Fortunately, he was able to orient himself and regain control of the aircraft.

Although the aircraft had lost the use of its engine instruments and radios, it was able to return to the stage field at Moc Hoa.

The good practice of wearing gloves and the helmet visor down paid off. As can be seen in the photographs, MAJ Barry suffered a minor cut on his right hand but it could have been much more severe had he not been wearing gloves. The many sharp pieces of the shattered wind screen were blown over him in the cockpit. This war story illustrates how conforming to good practices can provide that little bit of extra margin of safety that can save the day.

... they're happy it's over and firm believers that good safety practices do pay off