

Subject: Re: The focus of the VHPA 2000 directory history

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 1999 12:15:12 -0600

From: "George Miller" [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mikes,

What did A Company do with the pentagons with the red stripe? I know they kept the same pocket patch, just changed 200th ASHC to A/159.

George

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Sent: 23 November, 1999 10:52

Subject: Re: The focus of the VHPA 2000 directory history

> Mike,

>

> 159th Hooks had a screaming eagle centered on the aft pylon under the

> rotorhead and complete aircraft number on the trailing side of the aft pylon

> and slightly lower than the screaming eagle. C Company (Playtex) had a blue

> triangle on both sides of the forward pylon. I think the other two companies

> used a red triangle and a white triangle....(not sure about the white, and I

> can't remember which was which for the other two companies.) The last three

> digits of the aircraft number were painted in black on the nose of the aircraft.

>

> As for the unit history of C /159th, originally formed as the 293rd Medium Helicopter Company.....MHC at Ft. Sill in early 1968 and departed for Danang

> on December 30th 1968 via USAF C-141s. I was on the second bird arriving at

> Danang about 10:30pm on 31 December. Two or three Pachyderm Hooks picked us

> up at Danang and delivered us to our new home at Phu Bai where we landed at

> about 2345hours...just in time to watch every grunt on the perimeter fire

> everything they had to celebrate the new year. The unit history is several

> inches thick.....all typewritten. I'll dig it out and copy it all for you

> and send via snail mail. I was the unit historian for part of the time until

> my infamous landing on the side of the mountain at FB Erskine in the Ashau

> Valley. That story is on the Heli-Vets home page and I have copied it here

> for you.

>

> How to Land a CH-47C Chinook Inverted
>
> (and live to crawl away from it)
>
> By: Mike Maloy, former CWO-2
>
> I arrived in country on December 31, 1968 and the Chinooks from
> Pachyderms, A Co. 159, ASHB, 101st Airborne picked us up at Danang and
> dropped us at Phu Bai at about 2350 hrs. just in time to watch the
> perimeter light up like the 4th of July. I was with C Co. 159 ASHB,
101st.
> Playtex. We spent the next couple of weeks building hootches and bunkers
> and filling sand bags, and of course, constructing our company O Club, a
> top priority, and getting AO orientation from the guys in Pachyderms and
> Varsity.
>
> The last week in January a bunch of us were sent TDY to Dong Ha and
> eventually the Rockpile up by the DMZ to support the Marines in the north
> end of the Ashau.
>
> On February 10, 1969 Captain Kelly Williams was the A.C. and I was the
> pilot. Our aircraft number was 67-18501. We had been flying
> combat re-supply missions all day into LZ Erskine in the north end of the
> Ashau valley in I Corps and on the last three or four approaches we were
> getting mortar fire when we approached the LZ and had to break off our
> approach and go around several times because of sporadic enemy fire. We
> were delivering ammo and food into the LZ and taking out wounded.
>
> At approximately 1700 hours we went back to Dong Ha to refuel and all the
> Chinooks were going to head back to Phu Bai. While refueling we were
> notified by Marine Division at Vandergriff (or the Rockpile---I'm not sure
> which it was) that they had one more load of 105mm ammo to go out to
> Erskine and four Marines who needed a ride back to Erskine. Williams told
> them that we would take the passengers and the load and then head for Phu
> Bai from LZ Erskine. After refueling we picked up the four Marines and
> then picked up the load of approximately 10,000 pounds of 105mm ammo in a
> sling load and headed back to Erskine.
>
> During the day we had problems with the beep sticking several times but it
> always seemed to fix itself before it became a serious problem so we
> continued to fly missions.
> At approximately 1750 hours we were on final approach into Erskine with
the
> slingload and Marine passengers and me at the controls, when we saw a puff
> of smoke and dust on the LZ and the Marine on Erskine told us to go around
> because they were taking mortar fire. We circled out into the Ashau
valley
> and made a second approach with me at the controls in the right seat. We
> still had the four Marine passengers on board.
>
> I shot my approach to the ground with the slingload and set the load down
> but didn't get it where they wanted it and they asked us to move it.
> Because of the altitude, the heat, the 10,000 pound slingload, and the
fact
> that we had just refueled, we were very heavy and we had to shoot the
> approach to the ground rather than bringing it to a hover. At that point
> Williams took the controls and said he would move the load. He told me
> that with the periodic enemy fire he didn't want to stay over the LZ any
> longer than necessary. We took off from the LZ with the slingload and
made

> a tight 360 degree pattern to come back to the LZ. I doubt that we ever
> got above 60 or 70 knots during that 360 and we were never very far from
LZ
> Erskine and had it in sight the entire time.
>
> As we approached Erskine the third time with the slingload, and while on
> short final (about 150 yards from the perimeter of the LZ and at about 35
> knots) we experienced a beep failure on No. 1. I followed through with
> emergency procedures for a beep failure and Williams said he was going to
> dive down the side of the mountain to try and gain airspeed and save the
> load. As we dove down the side of the mountain I saw that we were losing
> rotor rpm to the point that it was critical. When the rpm hit about 200 I
> yelled at Williams to punch the load off, and almost immediately
afterwards
> I told the flight engineer to release the load and at the same time I hit
> the emergency release switch. When nothing happened and we still had the
> load I recycled the switch 3 or 4 times.
>
> To this day I can recall all the way through flight school being told that
> if a switch doesn't work, recycle it. Unfortunately, with the emergency
> release switch, it operates on compressed air and by recycling it all I
was
> doing was bleeding off a little bit of air pressure each time so it never
> blew the hook open. I was told some months later that the Army made an
> amendment to the TM-55 Chinook operator's manual advising pilots not to
> recycle the emergency hook release switch for this reason.
>
> The flight engineer was never able to reach the manual release handle on
> the hook because we were bouncing around so much due to extremely low
rotor
> rpm.
>
> The load never released and according to the report I saw back in 1969
when
> I got out of the hospital it stated that the load finally caught in the
> tree tops and pulled us into the ground nose first. My last recollection
> of the rotor rpm was that it was passing through 170 and going down fast.
>
> When I regained consciousness I was hanging upside down in my shoulder
> harness and the entire cockpit was gone except for my seat and Williams in
> his seat. The instrument panel, cyclic stick, pedals and center console
> and overhead console were all gone. I couldn't see or talk very well
> because I had a lot of blood in my eyes and all over my face and I was
> choking on blood and bone in my throat. I tried to take my flight helmet
> off but it took me several tries because my left jaw bone was sticking out
> through my neck and the chin strap was tangled around the bone. Once I
got
> the helmet off I looked back through the companionway and all I could see
> were flames.
>
> I knew we had almost a full load of fuel so I yelled at Williams and told
> him we had to get out immediately. I saw him undo his shoulder harness
and
> fall down into the jungle and then I did the same. Kelly got up and ran
> and I tried to but when I got to my knees the nerves in my back were
> pinched and I fell flat on my face. I tried several times to get up and
> couldn't so I started crawling away from the aircraft. I made it about 20
> feet from the aircraft and then the crew chief saw me and came back and
> dragged me away as the aircraft blew up.
>
> WO-1 Gene Collings from Playtex was notified by the Marines on Erskine

that

> we had gone down in the jungle and he came back from somewhere near Camp
> Eagle and tried to pick us up from the jungle but couldn't get to us
because
> of the
> trees. We crashed about 300 yards down the mountain from the LZ and the
> marines sent a squad down to us to provide cover from the VC. They set up
> a small perimeter around us and I recall hearing them firing at the enemy
> occasionally while we waited for a rescue aircraft. We were so far away
> from the LZ that the Marine squad opted to stay there with us rather than
> try to carry us back up the mountain to the LZ. After what seemed like a
> couple of hours a Marine CH-46 was able to get in and pick us up and take
> us to the hospital ship Repose.

>

> The entire crew got out alive with me being the most seriously injured.
> Unfortunately three of our four Marine passengers were killed when they
> were thrown from the aircraft before impact due to violent gyrations
caused

> by extremely low rotor rpm. Apparently they were not strapped in.

>

> I suffered simple fractures of the upper and lower right jaw, simple
> fracture of the upper left jaw, compound fracture of the lower left jaw,
> compression fractures of six vertebrae in my lower spine, loss of a
tooth,

> and numerous cuts, and burns. They had me in surgery all that night and
> when I came to the sun was just coming up and I could see the beginnings
of

> daylight through the porthole in our room on the ship. Four days later I
> was transferred to Danang and about 12 hours later was flown to Tripler
> Army hospital in Hawaii. I was there for 30 days and then transferred to

> Brooke Army Medical Center in Ft. Sam Houston where I stayed until May
when

> I was released for convalescent leave.

>

> After getting out of the hospital I was stationed at Ft. Benning, Georgia
> for two weeks at which time I called the Pentagon and requested immediate
> reassignment back to Vietnam. I arrived back in Vietnam on July 4, 1969
> and completed my second tour with Playtex "C" Company, 159th ASHB, 101
> Airborne Division.

>

> For the history of our old Chinooks you can find most of them at the
> following site:

> <http://www.flippers.net/history/historya.html>

>

> More later,

> Mike Maloy

>

> In a message dated 11/23/1999 6:21:24 AM Central Standard Time,
> mike.e.sloniker@lmco.com writes:

>

> << Good.

> Can you send via email? What is the format? I want to include the
C/159

> hook, call sign in Laos was Regard that was blown away during Lam Son
719.

> One of the family members has been in touch. I have a quick piece from
the

> LS 719 tapes of a hook call sign Regard talking in Laos.

>

> Gary Jones and Roy Lowery were in my FA officers basic course in
August-Sep

> 67. They were part of the load that formed up the Varsity. I am in
contact
> with Lowery.
>
> Additionally, Joe Kline has many pictures of 101st aircraft with the
proper
> insignia on the forward pylon, or was it the aft?
>
> I specifically want the story of your crash.
>
> We need to make this shit hot for hooks. With this directory we can get
in
> the 228th and the 159th in I Corps from 68-72.
>
> I wrote a piece for the VHPA directory called "Under the Hurricane" which
I
> will include because it shows the reason why the Hook was the lifeline
for
> the field artillery.
>
> Thanks.
>
> Please send data to sloniker@erols.com or
> 8220 Walnut Ridge Road
> Fairfax Station, Va 22039.
>
> Mike >>
>