

Gary Griffin: I have been lucky enough to never have had a flash back, or anything like that until I was at a men's Cursillo retreat (Catholic four day retreat). I was in Bradford Vermont 1992 on the first break of the weekend. The incident below was recalled in an almost movie quality while I was gazing at Holstein Cows grazing in a pasture.

We were in the south flying a company commander back to his unit. Greg [Craig] Bixby was the Crew Chief and I was flying gunner. In route we heard a medivac request from the CO's unit. Not hearing a response our pilot (can't recall who the pilots were) made them aware we were in route and would do a drop off and pick up. Shortly after the call a medivac ship came on-line and took the lead. We were watching the ship closely as we had never been to the LZ. They were several hundred yards ahead of us and about 100 ft. below us. As soon as they dropped below the ridge line a .51 Caliber opened up and the rounds hit their ship dead center. A person was thrown out of the right side door, the rotor blades broke away from the transmission and the aircraft tumbled to the ground. I did not actually see it hit as we took evasive action and were quickly flying-map-of-the-earth. I did see 51 Caliber Tracers coming from the opposite ridge line but they weren't even close.

I had asked myself the unanswerable question many times, "why them and not us?" I did not receive a definitive answer to that question, but I came to know that the weekend I was on was a gift, an opportunity to connect in a profound way with the spiritual. Long story short in 1999, after 5 years of study, I was ordained a Catholic Deacon at the Cathedral in Burlington Vermont. Life as we know it puts us all in many places and spaces and it is only with the passage of time we see the rose beneath the thorns.

Typical day for the Crew Chief:

0500 Chow
0530 Pre-flight check
Review Log Book
Pull filters
Check rotor linkage
0600 Pilots arrive
Pre-flight
Crew Chief replaces filters
Crew Chief outside Aircraft while Huey fires up
0630 Take off
0700 – 2200

- If command & Control:
 - Bore holes in the sky, refuel every 2.5 hours, relieve bladder pressure, repeat till commander gets hungry (lunch, c-rat stove grilled what's-it) or commander gets sleepy (back to base)