



Without Parachutes: How I Survived 1,000 Attack Helicopter Combat Missions In Vietnam

Jerry Childers

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This book straps the reader into the cockpit with an attack helicopter pioneer as he recalls three years of Vietnam combat and a quarter century of flying Army aircraft. He arrived in Vietnam in 1964 and volunteered to join the world's first attack helicopter company. The Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company (UTT) had deployed to Vietnam in 1962. It came equipped with the U.S. Army's brand new UH-1 Huey, a helicopter originally designed as an aerial ambulance. The crews, not happy with a passive combat role, began experimenting with ways to strap guns on their aircraft and attack the enemy. Through a deadly process of trial and error the pilots pushed their machines to the edge. Mistakes were made, crews were lost and lessons were learned. These lessons evolved into combat tactics and became fondly known as the 12 Cardinal Rules of Attack Helicopter Combat. Upon joining the unit the author learned about the rules. He studied them and on his first day in combat, developed his own 13th rule. Over his ensuing three years in Vietnam, the rules, especially the 13th, helped him survive over one thousand combat missions. This book provides the reader with a cockpit level view of dozens of those missions and describes several additional near disaster situations encountered by the author during over 25 years flying Army Aircraft. The author is successful in striking a balance between the grim realities of combat and the often humorous aspects of life among a group of high spirited aviators who fly into the jaws of death daily without a parachute on their back. He suggests that the 13 rules, although developed during a different war and at a different time, are applicable to armed helicopter combat operations in the 21st Century. The book contains about 200 pages and is nicely illustrated with 50 photographs.

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