

Roadrunners Give Outlaw 14 New Skids!

George Prescott was one of the many outstanding maintenance technicians in the 150th Maintenance Detachment known as the “Roadrunners”! During that first year in Vietnam, there were dozens of acts of innovative genius that seemed to become commonplace when it came to keeping the combat helicopters flying.

This is one such story, as told by George Prescott.....

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“This is my recollection of an incident that happened to Outlaw 14 at An Khe. I don't recall the exact date or the names of the crew, but it occurred in July 1965. We were away from our home base of Vinh Long for several weeks, supporting operations in the vicinity of An Khe.

As I recall it, Outlaw 14 was resupplying an artillery outpost in our area of operation. The crew had delivered water to the men at the outpost and took on a number of empty metal Gerry cans. As it was re-told to me, as the pilot pulled the aircraft up, the empty cans banged together so loudly that the pilot thought he had taken a hit so he immediately slammed the chopper down hard, spreading and flattening the skids.

The test pilot for the 150th, **Paul Lasseter**, was flown to the Artillery outpost and flew the damaged bird back to An Khe. Now this next part I witnessed, and participated in, as did several members of the 150th.

After Outlaw 14 was flown back to An Khe, Paul held it at a hover while members of the 150th piled dozens of sand bags up for the chopper to sit down on. It was pouring rain and the only area immediately available was full of unexploded mortar rounds from a previous war involving the Japanese.

As we piled up more bags, Paul would ease her down and we would signal as to whether there were enough bags. After several tries, we got enough bags down, Paul eased her down again but we found that the pile needed to be adjusted so the chopper wouldn't tip over. After a couple of more attempts, we were all successful and the chopper was set down.

Shortly, a new set skids was obtained and Paul wound her up again, brought it to a hover and held the hover while we went underneath. Laying on the sand bags, in the down-draft from the rotors, in the rain, and working as quickly as we could, we finally removed the damaged skids. All the while, Paul kept the ship hovering above us while we replaced the damaged ones with the new ones. I was in awe at Paul's flying ability! He kept the ship absolutely still while we performed the work. And, he was sweating profusely while performing this feat in a heavy downpour.

Some of those who took part were **Pete "Gator" Fredriksson, Curtis "Tex" Fair, Spec. 5 Rudy** and myself. As I indicated, I know there were others but I just don't recall who they were, after 36 years.

To add to this, that night I removed my soaked shirt and hung it on the front pole of our tent where some of us slept (in an old bomb crater). During the night, Puff would keep us lit up with flares that created an eerie orange pall over the area. During the night, I awoke to see what appeared to be a man standing in our tent doorway and woke Rudy whispering that I thought a gook was about to frag us. Instantly about ten M-14 bolts slammed shut and flashlights were turned on to reveal my shirt still hanging where I had left it. Needless to say there were some disgruntled expletives uttered.

The following day, my shirt had dried so put it on and went to chow. I was standing about half way up the line when I felt a tickle on my left arm. I looked to see what was causing this discomfort and to my horror, a greenish-black scorpion was crawling down my arm, apparently having taken up residency in the rolled up sleeve of my shirt during the night. I yelled SCORPION!! and people scattered. I flicked the thing off of my arm and went to the head of the line.”

Respectfully;

George S. Prescott

Former crewleader of the “crescent wrench crew”, 150th Trans. Det