

Chapter 14. Mr Cameron  
May 18, 1972 SHORT! 57 days and a wake up.



I am so short I have to have a ladder to climb into bed.

We have a bird down just south of Lane.

Not all of the wrecks were caused by battle damage. Mr Cameron test flew 626, a 1<sup>st</sup> flight Huey fresh out of maintenance. Apparently either the engine oil or fuel line quick disconnect came loose. In any case he had to autorotate in. He aimed at a rice paddy, but misjudged a bit and hit the dike instead of the paddy. This put a serious wrinkle into the airframe. He was not

injured, but quite shook up.

When we showed up, we found the UH1 wrapped around the dike, close to some banana trees. We rigged the Huey for sling load, but the banana trees prevented the Chinook from getting low enough for us to reach the hook. We had no choice except to chop down the trees. We then hooked up to the Chinook and hauled it back to Lane.

After the Chinook was gone, we were approached by the owner of the trees who took umbrage at our destruction of his trees. We tried to explain to him that he could come to Lane and get paid, but he wanted to get paid before we left. The language difference made negotiations difficult, so finally we decided to just go. Well Mr farmer decided to hold on to our skids as we were lifting off. He held on till we were about 6ft in the air before he thought better of it and dropped off. I later asked Maj Jones if he had any claims for banana trees. He did not recall any, so our instructions were probably not understood.

When we got back to Lane, the Huey was waiting for us. The skids were all busted up, and somebody got the bright idea to make a "broken skid" award for Mr. Cameron. The army has a broken wing award where skillful piloting saves an aircraft that might have otherwise crashed.

We sawed off the front of the skid and polished it. We also found a nice walnut stereo case and cut out a notch to fit the skid. We went to the photo shop and got a plaque made up. Tom went up to HQ and typed up some official sounding orders for the broken skid award. Mr Cameron had been up to the Officers club

soothing his wounded ego when he was summoned to the maintenance shack for an "award".

He was brought up to attention and read the orders. He had this confused look (supplemented by application of alcoholic beverages) and was handed the broken skid award.

Somehow I think we may have been more amused that he. The crash shook him up and he never flew as a pilot again.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, EAGLE BATTALION (PROV)  
APO SF 96485

SPECIAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 1  
EXTRACT

18 may 1972

2. TC 439 Following individual is awarded as indicated

CAMERON, ALEXANDER P. 273-34-6456 CW2 129th AHC APO SF 96485

AUTH. 129th maintenance and unscheduled recovery team

AWARDED: BROKEN SKID AWARD

THEATER: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

REASON: 626, 851 and others to follow

NOTE : This is awarded as a token of our appreciation for a little extra bussiness and good handling of broken aircraft

NOTE 2: the following regulations apply;

1. m AR 675498746359787.4557683

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

PAUL T. NICHOLLS  
spl. <sup>adm.</sup>  
ncoic <sup>placed.</sup>

