



EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO KNOW IN LIFE, I LEARNED AS A HELICOPTER PILOT IN VIETNAM



- a. Once you are in the fight, it is way too late to wonder if this is a good idea.
- b. It is a fact that helicopter tail rotors are instinctively drawn toward trees, stumps, rocks, etc. While it may be possible to ward off this natural event some of the time, it cannot, despite the best efforts of the crew, always be prevented. It's just what they do.
- c. NEVER get into a fight without more ammunition than the other guy.
- d. The engine RPM and the rotor RPM must BOTH be kept in the GREEN. Failure to heed this commandment can affect the morale of the crew.
- e. Cover your Buddy, so he can be around to cover for you.
- f. Decisions made by someone above you in the chain-of-command will seldom be in your best interest.
- g. The terms Protective Armor and Helicopter are mutually exclusive.
- h. Sometimes, being good and lucky still is not enough.
- i. "Chicken Plates" are not something you order in a restaurant.
- j. If everything is as clear as a bell, and everything is going exactly as planned, you're about to be surprised.
- k. Loud, sudden noises in a helicopter WILL get your undivided attention.
- l. The BSR (Bang Stare Red) Theory states that the louder the sudden bang in the helicopter, the quicker your eyes will be drawn to the gauges. The longer you stare at the gauges the less time it takes them to move from green to red.
- m. No matter what you do, the bullet with your name on it will get you. So, too, can the ones addressed "To Whom It May Concern."
- n. If the rear echelon troops are really happy, the front line troops probably do not have what they need.
- o. If you are wearing body armor, they will probably miss that part.

- p. Happiness is a belt-fed weapon.
- q. Having all your body parts intact and functioning at the end of the day beats the alternative.
- r. If you are allergic to lead, it is best to avoid a war zone.
- s. It is a bad thing to run out of airspeed, altitude, and ideas all at the same time.
- t. Hot garrison chow is better than hot C-rations which, in turn, is better than cold C-rations which, in turn, is better than no food at all. All of these, however, are preferable to cold rice balls, even if they do have the little pieces of fish in them.
- u. Everybody's a hero ... on the ground ... in the club ... after the fourth drink.
- v. A free fire zone has nothing to do with economics.
- w. The further you fly into the mountains, the louder the strange engine noises will become.
- x. Medals are OK, but having your body and all your friends in one piece at the end of the day is better.
- y. Being shot hurts.
- z. "Pucker Factor" is the formal name of the equation that states the more hairy the situation is, the more of the seat cushion will be sucked up your butt.

It can be expressed in its mathematical formula of S (suction) + H (height) above ground) + I (interest in staying alive) + T (#of tracers coming your way).
- ab. Thousands of Vietnam Veterans earned medals for bravery every day.
A few were even awarded.
- ac. Running out of pedal, fore or aft cyclic, or collective are all bad ideas.
Any combination of these can be deadly.
- ad. There is only one rule in war: When you win, you get to make up the rules.
That is why you talk to Oakland Center all the way to Japan.
- ae. C-4 can make a dull day fun.
- af. There is no such thing as a fair fight-only ones where you win or lose.
- ag. If you win the battle you are entitled to the spoils. If you lose you don't care.
- ah. Nobody cares what you did yesterday or what you are going to do tomorrow.
What is important is what you are doing - NOW – to solve our problem.

ai. Always make sure someone has a P-38.

Uh, that's a can opener for those of you who aren't military.

ak. Flying is better than walking. Walking is better than running. Running is better than crawling. All of these, however, are better than extraction by Medivac, even if it is technically, a form of flying.

al. If everyone does not come home, none of the rest of us can ever fully come home either.

am. Do not fear the enemy, for your enemy can only take your life. It is far better that you fear the media, for they will steal your HONOR.

an. A grunt is the true reason for the existence of the helicopter. Every helicopter flying in Vietnam had one real purpose: To help the grunt. It is unfortunate that many helicopters never had the opportunity to fulfill their one true mission in life, simply because someone forgot this fact.

ao. If you have not been there and done that...

you probably will not understand most of these.

