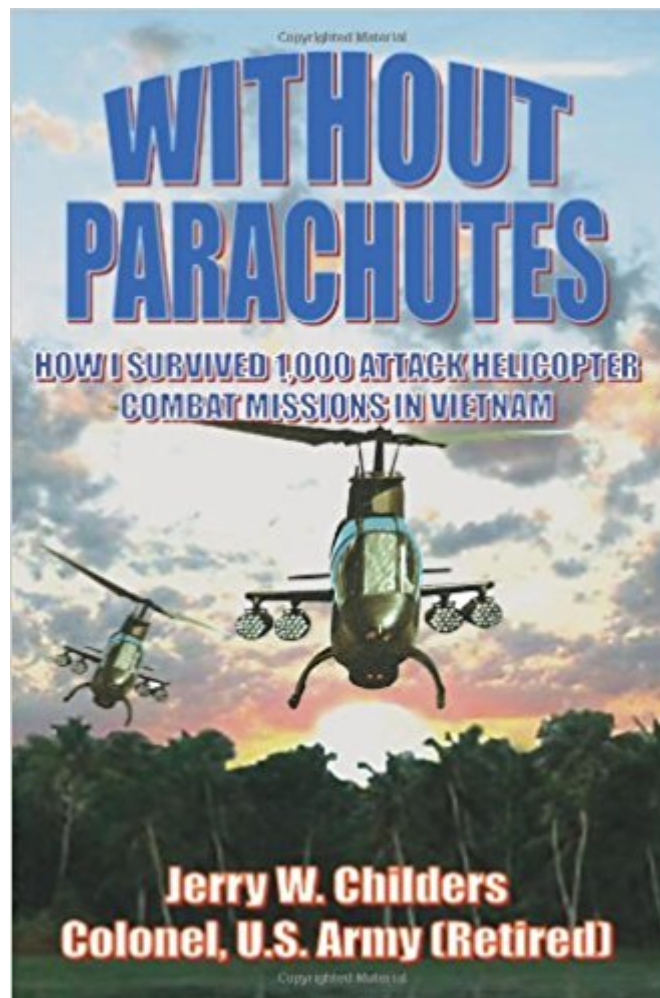




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Without Parachutes: How I Survived 1,000 Attack Helicopter Combat Missions In Vietnam



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Colonel (Retired) Jerry W. Childers was instrumental in pioneering UH-1 Huey and AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter combat tactics. He spent three years in Vietnam spanning the period 1964-1973. Between tours he was a production test pilot at the Bell Helicopter Plant and a fixed wing instructor pilot. He subsequently served at all staff levels in the Army including a tour with the Director of Plans and Operations in the Pentagon. He commanded the 18th Corps Aviation Company in Vietnam, the 25th Combat Aviation Battalion in Hawaii and the Combat Aviation Brigade of the 7th Infantry Division in California. He attended every level of Army schooling including the Army War College. He served for almost two years as Chief Of Staff of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and capped his career as the Director of Operations and Plans for the U.S. Army in the Pacific. His combat awards include the Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross (three awards), Bronze Star Medal (three awards), Air Medal (forty seven awards), Purple Heart Medal and several Vietnamese awards for valor. After retiring from the Army he taught accounting and business administration courses at Hawaii Pacific University and other colleges.

I enjoyed this book very much. I served on the Cobra New Equipment Training Team (NETT) with then Cpt Childers. I remember being taught the 12 cardinal rules for survival and credit the rules for my survival in 1.8 tours in Vietnam. The .2 of a tour was spent flying a scout OH13 helicopter where the rules didn't apply. (A scout pilot is just lucky to survive.). There was something about Cpt Childers that set him above his contemporaries even as a junior officer. We knew he was destined for senior Army aviation leadership. I was the Aviation Safety Officer for the 25th Aviation Battalion just before Col Childers assumed command. His description of the safety training needed for overwater operations in Hawaii brought back memories. While on Cobra Nett then Cpt Childers proceeded me on R&R to Hawaii. He came back appearing rested and relaxed and told me smiling "you have to go to the Hanalei Plantation Hotel in Kauai? The beds are so big - they are like a playground". I went to the Hanalei Plantation (no longer exists) when it was my turn for R&R. Cpt Childers was right. The beds were big.

Jerry Childers provides the reader with a straightforward narrative of his military career and an extensive perspective of early gunship flying in Vietnam, both in modified UH-1 Hueys and AH-1G Cobras. In 174 pages he describes his full military career beginning with an introduction of his

upbringing, and closing with his retirement in 1990. He provides important facts throughout the book, but holds back on emotions, anecdotes and descriptive elements found in many other books of this genre. This reads more like an essay when one considers his multiple tours flying in the tough environment of Vietnam. Having flown hundreds of combat hours in the AH-1G myself (Vietnam, 1972), I personally know there is much more to tell about the heat of battle, the confusion, the concerns, and the sometimes crazy nights in the airconditioned bar trying to review and figure out how we pilots and crewmembers survived the daily attention of enemy fire. Colonel Childers should return to his story and enrich it with more details--certainly most Vietnam readers would appreciate his added reflections. This book provides a great deal of information about how the AH-1G became the first fighter-like helicopter in the world specifically designed as an attack helicopter. Jerry was a pioneer in the design and creation of tactics; for that reason alone, this short book deserves a read.

I buy this genre of book for my husband who flew helicopters in Vietnam. While he enjoyed this book, he felt it was more of an autobiography of the author than an account of the war itself. He did recommend it to his friends who also flew helicopters.

Terrific reading for any lovers of the Viet Nam Helicopter war. It would make for a nice addition to your collection of Viet Nam aviation books. A good read.

As a former Huey door gunner in Vietnam, this book rings true and familiar. Quick delivery.

Colonel Jerry Childers, the author, is authentic and accurate. What he said, he did. All of his tours in Vietnam were different and required adapting to vastly changing circumstances. He does not attempt to write a history in a broad sense. He tells his own story without analysis of the big picture. He uses humor when appropriate and stark reality for more serious events. His frequent reference to the "Cardinal Rules" is based on his experience that they work to prolong the lives of helicopter crews and troops on the ground. They certainly did.

A leading edge book on the evolution of the armed helicopter in combat by a man who flew the missions and actually developed the tactics for armed helicopters. A book about true heroes who served their country and did their duty while creating and developing techniques where none existed before. Three tours in Vietnam and surviving to write this book is something to read about!

We never know how we will react when faced with unthinkable danger, reading this book gave me a realist look into the war behind the headlines.. Jerry told his story with true understanding of what an impossible war we were in .. if you have ever wondered what our wonderful guys and gals are facing everyday in our new wars.. this book will make you stop and think.. Much to my disappointment he didn't tell much of the funny stuff that happened. (then again.. war isn't much fun). Maybe he will write a sequel:) .. Anyway.. get the book, read it.. I know you will never look at war the same .. ML

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