

A. Generally, your work day would start, depending on the mission, getting up at 3:00 in the morning to do your preflights, get your mission, anywhere from 3:00 to 5:00. Generally, it wasn't much later than that unless you had a real slack day or you had the day off. The first thing you'd do is get out of bed and shave; they wouldn't let you get by without doing that. From there you'd grab your gear and you'd go out to the aircraft to preflight it. Usually that was done in the dark. Rain or shine we preflighted the aircraft, because it was a necessary item. That was back before they had dust particle separators on the intake of the engine, so you'd have to take the filters out and clean them. That's just part of preflight, but it was kind of a time consuming process.

Q. Did you know you were gonna have a mission the night before?

A. Yeah, generally they'd get the missions in by 8, 9, 10 o'clock in the evening, and you just checked the board. You could see the aircraft number, who you were flying with, what outfit you're gonna be working for. Maybe there was a combat assault set up, and you'd have a briefing that night. Where, who and all the particulars, kind of a scenario of what they wanted us to. You'd be down in the company area.

Q. How many missions would you have in a day, or did it vary a lot?

A. It varied a lot. I think my longest day, now this is flying time, was a little over 13 hours. And that was just flying time, not counting the time you sit taking on gas or sitting down to eat chow, you know, that was flying. That was from sunup to sundown. It would vary a lot. Sometimes you'd finish a mission working for an outfit and you'd go home and you'd get another one laid on you.

Q. You didn't expect it...?

A. No. Something would come up and you'd go handle it. A lot of your resupply was out there by yourself and single shift, didn't have any gun cover. If you got shot down, they'd call somebody and try and get you out, but a lot of working by yourself was probably as risky as combat assaults. A lot of times, that's when you'd get hit too, you know. I know my first mission, that day in the bad weather, we were working for an outfit and we were resupplying them. We ended up looking for some NVA they thought they had shot. So the slick pilots over there, what we called the slicks.....

Q. The "slick" was a nickname for troop carrying ship?

A. Yeah. We called resupplying "ash and trash". But it was such a changing thing, you know. In one day you could haul ammo, food, you could haul dynamite, blow LZ's and stuff, equipment, haul people out of the field to the base camp, we hauled dead people, hauled wounded people. When I talk equipment, it was just all kinds, you know.

Q. Uh huh, mostly for infantry, artillery?

A. Yeah. You know, if it was an infantry outfit, it was basically infantry gear. We hauled mail. (laugh) Anything the troops would need, we'd haul. The food would be C-rations or hot chow. Ice cream, you had to be pretty quick with that, fresh fruit, hauled quite a bit of that, especially on holidays. You'd work, basically until they released you or until you were done resupplying.

Q. Did you ever have any free time that you knew was gonna be free time? I'm not talking about R&R or something, but during your normal day?

A. Yeah, you wouldn't really know until the night before when your name didn't appear on the board.