

**UPDATE AND/OR ANOTHER WAR STORY ABOUT CH-47B 67-18479
"THE ODYSSEY"**

**THE ODYSSEY: CHINOOK BOMBER OF C/228TH ASHB
1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION
BY: CLIFFORD J. MORLEY**

Chinooks proved to be reliable, durable and versatile combat support helicopters in the Vietnam War and I ought to know since I put in nearly 1400 hours of flight time as a Gunner, Crew Chief and Flight Engineer on them. I put in many more hours than that performing scheduled and unscheduled maintenance with the able-bodied assistance of Crew Chiefs, Gunners and the Ace Mechanics of the Maintenance Platoons with B/228th ASHB and C/228th ASHB over two tours of duty. I was primarily the Flight Engineer on three Chinooks: THE HANGER QUEEN ABORTION CH-47A 66-19036 which is another story but that was with B/228th, and with C/228th THE PUSHER CH-47B 66-19114 and THE ODYSSEY CH-47B 67-18479.



The Odyssey CH-47B 67-18479, the Chinook Bomber of Charlie Co. which took ten hits in a jungle shootout.

In their primary role as cargo helicopters Chinooks hauled just about anything and everything imaginable both inside the cargo hold and externally slung to the cargo hook. At one time or another Chinooks were also utilized as ATTACK HELICOPTERS and as BOMBER HELICOPTERS. In all my aforementioned hours of flight time I participated in only one Chinook bombing mission and it was while flying on THE ODYSSEY. I was the Flight Engineer but the Left Gunner, the Aircraft Commander, the Pilot, and the Crew Chief/Right Gunner have long ago faded out of focus so I will have to refer to them by their crew designations. This is our story about the bombing mission of THE ODYSSEY CH-47B 67-18479.

One day in mid August 1970 and prior to the jungle shootout incident we were out flying around the CAV'S AO carrying out scheduled assignments of missions and sorties to fire support bases and LZ's between Nui Ba Den and Nui Ba Ra and on over by Loc Ninh. The morning was half gone when the Aircraft Commander came on the intercom and said to us in the back something to the effect that we were just going to love the mission we had just been assigned. Evidently a vast enemy

tunnel complex was uncovered near the Cambodian border not far from Nui Ba Den and we had been given the task of bombing it with drums of Napalm. The thought crossed my mind more in the form of a question to myself: Well hell? Why not call in a B52 Arch-Light Strike and turn the whole area into a series of moon craters? Or better yet, summon up a squadron of Air Force fighter jets to unleash one of their spectacular "napalm nukes" bombing sorties so vividly and accurately depicted in the post Vietnam War cinema! Apparently, tactical and time considerations were in play so the mission was allocated to one lone Chinook THE ODYSSEY 479 and her crew, to accomplish.

In order to conduct and successfully complete this mission additional equipment would be required so we flew back to Phuoc Vinh and snatched up all the extra tie downs we could find and more harnesses. We then flew on to Quan Loi, refueled, set down near the logistics pad and shut down. The Crew Chief, the Gunner and I with some help from some of the logistics pad crews wrestled into the cargo hold of THE ODYSSEY about fourteen 55 gallon drums of napalm in two rows standing upright which took up all the cargo area from the cockpit companionway all the way back beyond the edge of the ramp and I could only slightly raise it. The blazing hot sun was approaching high noon and without our two big fans moving the sweat was pouring off all our brows. The Aircraft Commander and the Pilot in the cockpit were not faring any better as it was hotter in there. They were on the radio with the command elements of the 1st Air Cavalry Division strategizing the mission at hand. There was no room to move around inside the aircraft except to crawl over the now well tied down drums of napalm. We were probably pretty close to being maxed out as far as the internal load carrying capacity of a "B" model Chinook but that would present no problem for THE ODYSSEY. She was now officially a Chinook Bomber and we were all fundamentally one big highly explosive bomb.

We cranked up, lifted off and flew on out to the coordinates of the enemy tunnel complex which was said to be well secured by 1st CAV ground forces...we hoped! The Aircraft Commander and/or the Pilot were in radio contact with the Ground Controller as we arrived on the scene and came to a hover at about 500 feet above the jungle and the tunnel complex below. The Crew Chief and I hooked up to our harnesses so if we fell out we wouldn't fall very far. I lowered the ramp to floor level and per instructions from the Aircraft Commander we released the tie downs tipped over, rolled out and let fly two to four drums of napalm at a time. There were no fuses to set or pins to pull since Snake and Slick Gunships would take care of the ignition part and they were flying all around us as we hovered. We were sitting ducks up there and it would not have been a good thing if "Charlie" popped up somewhere and fired off some RPG's at us. It was necessary to reposition our hover several times which went on for about 30 minutes until we had let fly all the drums of napalm. When the last drum was rolled off we got the hell out of there as the Snake and Slick Gunships rolled in firing their rockets and mini-guns setting all that napalm into a raging inferno. As THE ODYSSEY 479 flew off to our next mission I looked out the back to see a Huge column of thick black smoke rising to nearly two thousand feet above the floor of the jungle.

CREDITS, REFERENCES, AND SOURCES

The combat incident report on U.S. Army helicopter CH-47B tail number 67-18479 is courtesy of Jimmy Ketcham webmaster: <http://webpages.charter.net/228th/> which he says came from and is on a CD published by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association at <http://www.vhpa.org> Gary B. Roush, webmaster. The primary elements of the report are correct i.e. the date of 09-02-1970 is well within the narrow timeframe I remember of late August or early September 1970. The ten hits from AK47 automatic weapons armor piercing rounds is exactly what I remember and where they struck the aircraft is well detailed in my account of the incident. The one injury was to the Left Gunner which was also well described in the story. The combat incident report goes on to say "While Enroute this helicopter was at Level Flight at 0075 feet and 100 knots". I will swear to this day that we were a tad lower than that and flying a bit faster than 100 knots over the jungle treetops.

Regarding THE ODYSSEY: CHINOOK BOMBER OF C/228TH ASHB: While the bombing mission I have described could not be considered a routine mission it was still just another combat support mission and one that has been at the forefront of my recollections of those days and why it is a war story I have written down. Also, it was I who named CH-47B 67-18479 THE ODYSSEY based on Homer's epic saga about one man and his fellow warriors long, difficult, and dangerous journey home after the Trojan War back in 1193BC.

The Warbird Chinook 479 was later converted to CH-47D 76-18479 and is now, in 2007, U.S. Army Training Device 01-155 the GYCH-47D Enhanced Composite Maintenance Trainer located at the U.S. Army Aviation Logistics School (USAALS) at Fort Eustis, Virginia. This information is courtesy of Pegasus CH-47 Tail Number and History List website <http://www.chinook-helicopter.com/history/history.html> and also courtesy of J. Darren Peterson who has been associated with this trainer since 1994 in the capacity of performing computer software upgrades, etc.

CLIFFORD J MORLEY
PHN 360-981-3313
OneCelt99@aol.com
Kent-Oak Harbor Washington
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SP5 Clifford J. Morley FE on The
Odyssey CH-47B 67-18479.
Photo circa 1970.

