



PIA's Grumman Mohawk was acquired from Davis - Monahan Air Force Base through the federal surplus agency with little knowledge of the history of the aircraft. The Mohawk was disassembled and arrived at PIA on a flatbed trailer. The assembly of the airplane became a number one priority project and soon it was reassembled. The engines, electrical systems, hydraulics, and avionics systems were made functional and then the Airframe Department completely painted it. The Mohawk was not intended to be flown but it was to serve as a ground maintenance trainer. The airplane was a perfect piece of training equipment because it was a turboprop replacement for the Vickers Viscount given to PIA by United Airlines many years ago.

The Mohawk has been used by the students for engine run up, landing gear retraction tests, airplane inspections, and electrical system troubleshooting. An advantage of the Mohawk is that it will fit in PIA's Advanced Airframe hangar whereas the Viscount had to be kept outside. This makes the Mohawk available to the students all year long regardless of weather conditions.

Recently, PIA acquired six Westinghouse J34 jet engines. When these engines were acquired the problem of a run up test stand was solved by mounting two engines on the wings. The Airframe Department staff and students devised a way of modifying the drop-tank hangers so that they would accept the modified pylon attachment for the engines. The end result of this project was the "Super Mohawk" as seen in the above photograph.

The Mohawk began its trek from Vietnam to PIA when a 37mm shell hit the aircraft and nearly severed the tail assembly from the rest of the aircraft. The pilot, Major Joseph C. Kennedy, Jr, did not abandon the airplane but he flew it approximately 100 miles to the Royal Thai Air Force Base at Ubon, Thailand and landed safely. The airplane was dismantled and packed into a C-141 Airlifter and transported back to Grumman. The Mohawk was rebuilt and used as a flight demonstrator until it was declared surplus and acquired by PIA. Major Kennedy wrote a description of his experience which has been reproduced here courtesy of Grumman Aerospace Corporation.

### "GOD LOVE YOU GRUMMAN AIRCRAFT"

Unknown Army Aviator: "Flying is hours and hours of sheer boredom occasionally interrupted by moments of stark terror."

0600 comes early at Phu Bai - The sun is just beginning to peep over Hivan Pass, and the sounds of turning props and rotor blades continue to whine in a never ending cycle.

A normal day, a normal mission I thought - "Wonder what we will find today; bunkers, sampans, gun positions? - Hell I have been looking this area over for the past 6 months and I still find something new every day."

I was brought out of my thoughts when my flight leader said it was briefing time. The normal mission area briefing was given and then the standard aircraft mission briefing. When we were dismissed to the aircraft, I gave my aerial observer a short spiel on how I wanted him to operate the camera equipment in the aircraft since it was his first time to fly with me. Take off and climb to altitude was routine. We leveled at 8500 indicated and proceeded southwest bound to the mission area - the time was 0900 hours. The lead ship checked our flight in with the airborne command and control ship and he cleared us into the mission area. The weather was clear for a change with a visibility of 10 plus.

After flying for another 10 minutes the flight leader informed me he would start his first photo run in about 1 minute, and asked me to make a similar run one half mile to the north. Flying high and behind my lead aircraft. I started my photo run by telling the observer "camera on." The run lasted for approximately 20 seconds and I terminated it with a "camera off." As I turned back towards the lead aircraft, an old familiar "wham" plus a white fireball went by the left wing. Instinctively I broke back to the right and informed the lead ship that I had just taken fire from a 37mm gun-sight to the left side of the aircraft. I mused to myself - "Well, in the area 3 minutes and they are already after me - why me - I wasn't bothering anybody, just taking a few pictures." The excitement passed quickly as we departed the area for other photos along the LOC. As we approached a certain area off the LOC, the lead aircraft informed me to watch him closely as he was going to make an area search of a large mountain pass. I dropped to 6700 indicated and made numerous transmissions to the lead ship informing him of what was in his immediate flight path.

At approximately 0945 hours, I felt the aircraft pitch violently as if being run into by a Mac truck. I immediately started a left turn and transmitted to the lead ship I had been hit with some type of ground fire. As I scanned the instrument panel the cockpit filled with smoke and the observer was looking at me with an expression that said "What do we do now, Major?" By this time the flight leader had made his 180° turn and acquired me visually. He said to turn north as there were flak bursts all over my tail, and I was burning aft of the speed boards very badly. By this time, I had cleared the cockpit of all smoke by opening the airvents. All engine instruments were in the green, and the other gauges were also functioning properly. The hydraulic pressure gauge caught my eyes as it flickered and both needles dropped to "0".

During this time the aircraft was still burning and I had gone to the "Emergency Position" on the transponder. The lead aircraft initiated the MAYDAY call that I was hit and would probably have to eject at any time. Now this was news to me as everything looked okay in the cockpit except the loss of hydraulics. I finally got in a word edgewise and asked my lead just how bad the damage was. He pulled up along side and said there was a hole in the fuselage aft of the speed boards about the size of a large wash tub. He also added that he could see daylight on the other side. "Great" I thought. "That's all I need - an airconditioned fuselage."

At this time the Chief Search and Rescue ship made contact with us and asked for location, altitude, and extent of damages. Up to this point things were going pretty good and I sat back to listen to my flight leader relay the needed information. Lead then made a statement that got my immediate attention, "The hole is so big, I don't think his tail section will stay on the aircraft, get someone here fast as they will probably have to eject at anytime." This bothered me a tad as both my observer and I had our seats at full elevation when we were hit, and due to the fire the seat was now inoperative and could not be lowered. I pressed my head back against the seat and found that the primary firing handle of the ejection seat was hitting me in the back of the neck and it could not be used safely. I informed my observer that we would have to use the lower firing handle if we had to eject, and that if the tail fell off we would have about 1 to 3 seconds to get out of the aircraft before the nose pitched over in an uncontrollable dive.

This now brings up a point which makes one in my position feel outstanding. When the MAYDAY was called, it was as if the war stopped. The guard frequency was so filled with transmissions of air force strike aircraft who wanted to help that the Search and Rescue shop had to clear the air except for the ships in my immediate area.

I had four ships escorting me to Ubon, Thailand where I luckily landed without a mishap. The tail stayed on and I was lucky and happy to be on the ground safe and sound. When I saw the damage that 37mm had done to the aircraft, I thought "God love you Grumman aircraft, I'll never curse you again." The hole was as big as my lead said it was plus two other holes on the opposite side and underside similar to the one he had observed. The round had been a direct hit that had exploded inside the aircraft aft of the speed boards. I still think of it today, and think how lucky I am. Thank God for people like Crown, Nail, Misty, Grumman Iron Works and the ever loving SPUD who I would follow to the depths of hell and back again.

JOSEPH C. KENNEDY JR.  
MAJ, FA



CHARLES LABBY is and has been a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania all of his life. His work is devoted entirely to painting pictures of airplanes and he accomplishes this with natural skills as an artist and without formal art training. Mr. Labby's interest in airplanes did not begin until he was in his mid thirties and when he was attracted by an unairworthy World War II trainer. The airplane was the Fairchild PT19. Since the first work on the PT19 Mr. Labby has done numerous aviation paintings and, even though he does not consider himself a professional, he has sold many of them. Usually, he does not copy his subjects but does them from memory. He admits that sometimes this results in technical errors. Mr. Labby owns and flies the PT19 which was rebuilt with the assistance of Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics students. Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics is honored in having the privilege of displaying photographs of such beautiful renderings in its calendar and arrangements have been made to continue this display of Mr. Labby's work in the years to come.

### PIA CALENDAR

The photographs used for this calendar are reproductions of original oil paintings painted by Charles Labby exclusively for use by Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics. These paintings were selected from Mr. Labby's library of airplane paintings and no attempt was made to select a group of airplanes for any particular period.

Production of the calendar was done by the PIA Printing Department under the direction of Frank Bria. The artist is Michael Andrulonis.