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## Hughes OH-6A 66-17795

**This prestigious aircraft has an amazing story and with thanks to Curt Knapp and his 'History of 795' we have been able to piece together her proud and dynamic history.**

The LOH or 'Loach' won an army competition in 1965 for a new turbine powered light observation scout helicopter. By 1968 the LOH was the primary scout/observation helicopter used throughout Vietnam. Often teamed with an AH-1G Cobra attack helicopter these hunter/killer teams were very effective in fulfilling their mission

**12<sup>th</sup> April 1968;** Purchased by the US Army



**19<sup>th</sup> May 1968,** Accepted in Qui Non, Vietnam from the Hughes Tool Company and flown by WP1 Bill Savedge to the 801<sup>st</sup> Maintenance Battalion at Camp Eagle for acceptance inspection. On the acceptance flight an explosion blew out the overhead glass so it was 'fixed' with army tape.

Turned over to 2nd Brigade Aviation section, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division at LZ Sally – The mission was observation and taxi piloted by CW2 Curt Knapp. 795 was the only OH-6 from May to September and took every mission; Observation to personnel transport to logistics. Once even an attack mission.

- Lt. Col. Hunt and a body guard found 2 men in a paddy field armed with a submachine gun, they were split up and shot although when 795 was almost on top of one, a grenade was thrown at the underside of 795, luckily it was a dud.

**August 1968;** a high frequency vibration in 795 started a crack on the top of the 45-degree stabilizer fin at the attachment point. The tail rotor blades were balanced and the transmission was changed (6<sup>th</sup> August 1968).

**10<sup>th</sup> August 1968;** 795 was 'hooked' to the 801<sup>st</sup> Maintenance Battalion due to this problem.

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1968;** 795 was flown to Camp Evans where a Hughes technician diagnosed a tail rotor gear box problem.

**September 1968;** the original engine was changed out of 795 by the Aviation Section Maintenance Team.

- 795 never operated with a partner when Curt Knapp flew her. Once a call of 'Enemy troops in the open' was received. 795 let a 'gaggle of gunships' up a riverbed into the foothills in Vietnam. The 'enemy troops' turned out to be GIs taking a break beside a stream and were thankfully identified in time.
- 795 was never hit with bullets during this time in Vietnam, although 10 bullet holes were found in her at a later date.

CW2 Kurt Knapp and CW2 Bill Savedge left in December 1968 after a year of combat in Vietnam – the overhead glass panel still had not been replaced by this time!

795 continued with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division until November 1970.



**December 1970 – January 1971;** On loan to AVSCOM (United States Army Aviation Systems command) St Louis, Mo.

**February 1971 – June 1971;** Assigned to Directorate for Maintenance, Sharp Army Depot.

**July 1971 – September 1971;** Assigned to Lexington Depot located in Avon, Kentucky.

**October 1971 – October 1972;** Assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Cavalry, 795 had changed her role. She had been fitted with a mini gun, painted with a white 'skunk stripe' down her back; 'Kill or be killed' on one of the doors and the nickname 'Wargasm' on her side.



**March 1972 – May 1972;** She was with F troop of the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Armoured Division in Phu Loi.



**October 1972 – November 1972;** Loaned to West Point Flying Club, NY City

**December 1972 – April 1973;** Bailed to Hughes Aircraft, Culver then assigned to US Army Aviation Systems Test Activity, Edwards Air Force Base, CA. (January 1973)

**May 1973 – August 1973;** On loan to NASA, Langley Research Centre, VA

**September 1973 – November 1974;** Assigned to the directorate for Maintenance, Sharpe Army Depot

**December 1974;** Assigned to US Army National Guard, Virginia then Tennessee

**1992;** Released from military service and registered N992CH to the Homestead Police Department, Florida

**30 January 1996;** New C20C engine installed and certificate of airworthiness issued for N992CH.

**1997 - 1999;** Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF) to promote, preserve and restore historical helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. 795 was acquired by the AAHF Tara Airfield, south suburban Atlanta. The Aircraft was restored to flyable condition and liveried in the original markings of 2/17 Cavalry, which served with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne (air assault) division in Vietnam.

795 was used in displays and demonstrations to give future generations a sense of how the aircraft operated, what they sounded like and what their capabilities were. The aircraft performed extensively with the Sky Soldiers Demonstration team where it was flown by Army Aviation veterans.



**16<sup>th</sup> April 2000;** An accident occurred at the Ben Epps Airport (AHN) Athens, GA, USA, she suffered a heavy landing. 795 was repaired with new components, going on to complete many army displays with the Sky Soldiers.





**2012;** Exported to South Africa where she flew approximately 150 hours in 9 years, hangered along with a Hughey in a private collection. Painted in a desert storm livery using base coat and matt lacquer PPG Aviation products, 795 also received her new High Skid Gear and New HTC MR blades at this time.



**February 2021;** 795 goes back on her Nreg N992CH @ JBS Helicopters UK.