



# Little Green Bugs

by **Jim Schueckler**

My first day as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, probably January 10, 1969:

I was assigned as Peter Pilot to one of the most experienced Aircraft Commanders. Everything was going just like flight school; quick briefing, we marked our maps, wrote down frequencies, preflight the aircraft. Just like flight school.

Crank up the birds, pick up the grunts, take off in formation, head for the Landing Zone, the LZ.

On final approach, the Aircraft Commander took the controls and said, "Stay on the controls with me, but **I** will do the flying, understand?"

"OK, you've got it." ("Just like flight school." I think to myself.)

Some noise and smoke in the LZ; we dropped off the grunts.

Neat! Just like flight school. Just like I expected.

After the formation was back at cruising altitude I asked the Aircraft Commander about the one thing that I hadn't seen in flight school:

"What were those little green bugs?"

"What little green bugs?"

"When we were on final, and down there in the LZ, there were little green bugs."

"Are you kidding me?"

"No, there were a whole lot of little green bugs, and they were going REAL fast."

"You **MUST** be kidding me."

"No, they were there, real fast and real straight."

"Those were tracers."

"TRACERS? But they were coming TOWARDS us!"

"Yes, they were coming 'towards' us!"

"Do you mean they were SHOOTING at us?"

"Yes, they were 'shooting' at us." (smugly)

"Oh." said I, the humble newbie.

While we were refueling, the crewchief said on the intercom,

"Sir, I think we better shut down to see how much damage we have; some of those little green bugs bit us back here. (snicker)"

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