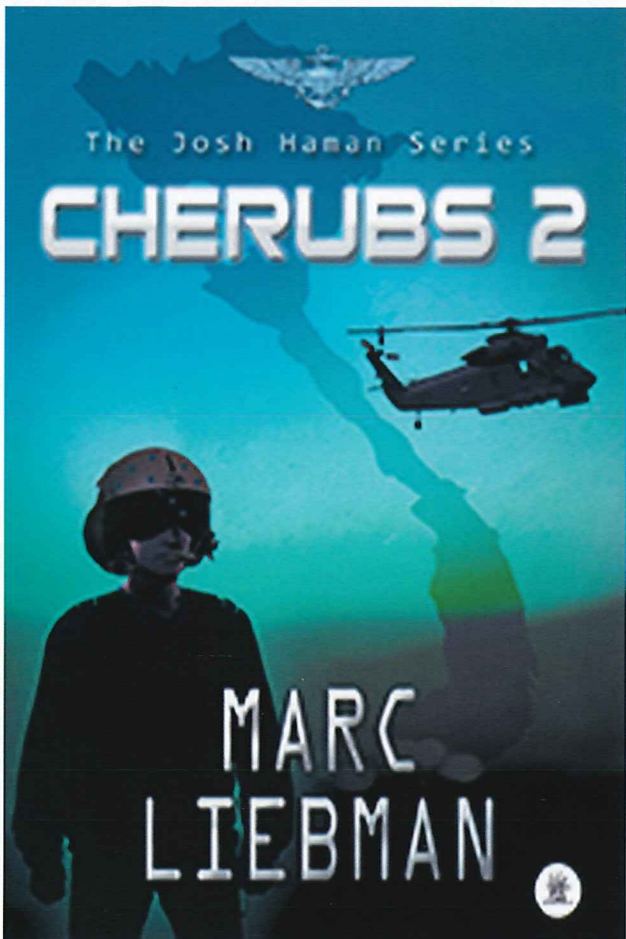


Cherubs 2 Book Review

Article by Cmdr. (ret) John Ball, USN



Cherubs 2 by Marc Liebman

Fireship Press; Tucson, Arizona; 2015; \$19.99.

This is a fast-paced novel about a junior officer helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. With an engaging plot, realistic flying scenes and a number of sub plots that keep things interesting, the latest in the author's Josh Haman series will make unrestricted naval aviators feel as if they were right there in the helicopter.

Set in the early 1970s, our hero, young Josh Haman, is a nugget helicopter pilot, sent to the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) to join a Search and Rescue (SAR) squadron. Hurriedly sent on his first detachment, he is faced with an officer-in-charge who wants to play it safe. Shortly, Haman is faced with a career-impacting decision when a successful rescue under fire cements his reputation as a "good stick" and a daring, innovative young aviator. The main plot only gets better. Though at times stretching plausibility, the storyline includes Haman inserting SEALs into enemy territory multiple times. Through it all, Haman and his loyal crew survive a number of hair-raising operations, and end up with medals!

The author is a retired Navy captain and aviator who flew combat SAR in Vietnam. The author's naval aviation and helicopter background lend credence to the dramatic flying scenes in this page-turner. The realistic descriptions of helicopter and ship operations made this reviewer feel as if he were right there; a refreshing change from many military novels. Even the radio transmission jargon was believable.

This reviewer quickly became absorbed in the book. The sub-plots were interesting and each one provided another reason to keep reading. The venues ranged from the Pentagon to Moscow to Laos, while the characters included a disgruntled Navy lawyer, Russian and Chinese diplomats and a love interest for our hero. The characters are believable, the events fast-paced and the dialogue and flying scenes realistic. The author deftly uses italics as an enjoyably successful method of capturing the thoughts of characters. Lieutenant Josh Haman is a likable hero. There is even a humorous account of his role in a chief's initiation.

However, the publisher apparently left the author face down in a rice paddy; there are a number of typical editorial and proofreading errors that mar this otherwise terrific novel. At the end of the book is a short history of Navy SAR, a list of call signs, air wings and ships active during the Vietnam War and a glossary of terms for the layman.

Any helicopter pilot or crewman will find this book realistic and absorbing and will not want to put it down. Naval veterans of Vietnam will recognize the locations, ships, aircraft and the frustrating progress of the war in Southeast Asia. I highly recommend this thriller to all hands. 🍵



BOOK REVIEW

NAVAL HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION, INC

The Navy Helicopter Association, Inc was founded on November 2, 1971 by the twelve rotary wing pioneers listed below.

The bylaws were later formally written and the organization was established as a nonprofit association in the State of California 11 May 1978. In 1987 the bylaws were rewritten, changing the name from Navy to Naval to reflect the close relationship of the rotary wing community in the Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy, from initial training to operating many similar aircraft. NHA is a 501 (C) (6) nonprofit association.

NHA Founding Members

Capt. A.E. Monahan
Capt. M.R. Starr
Capt. A.F. Emig
Mr. H. Nachlin

Cmdr. H.F. McLinden
Cmdr. W. Staight
Mr. R. Walloch
Cmdr. P.W. Nicholas

Cmdr. D.J. Hayes
Capt. C.B. Smiley
Capt. J.M. Purtell
Cmdr. H.V. Pepper

Objectives of NHA

Provide recognition and enhance the prestige of the United States Naval vertical flight community.

Promote the use of vertical lift aircraft in the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Keep members informed of new developments and accomplishments in rotary wing aviation.