"(LE) - LATE ENTRY"

-- OPERATION THUNDERHEAD --

HC-7 RESCUE 134[1]   5-June-1972 (Monday)

HH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Det 110   Big Mother #67   151556
USS Long Beach (CGN-9)   Combat Day [2]
10 miles off North Vietnam coast

Pilot – LT   **James S. Kelly**
Co-pilot - LTJG   **Early "Hank" H. Frazier**
1st crew – ADJ-2   **Richard J. Tinsley**
2nd crew – ADJ-3   **Jimmy C. Keeney**
3rd crew – LCDR   **Edwin Towers –** observer (O-in-C, Op
Thunderhead - code name "Black Beard")

Rescuees

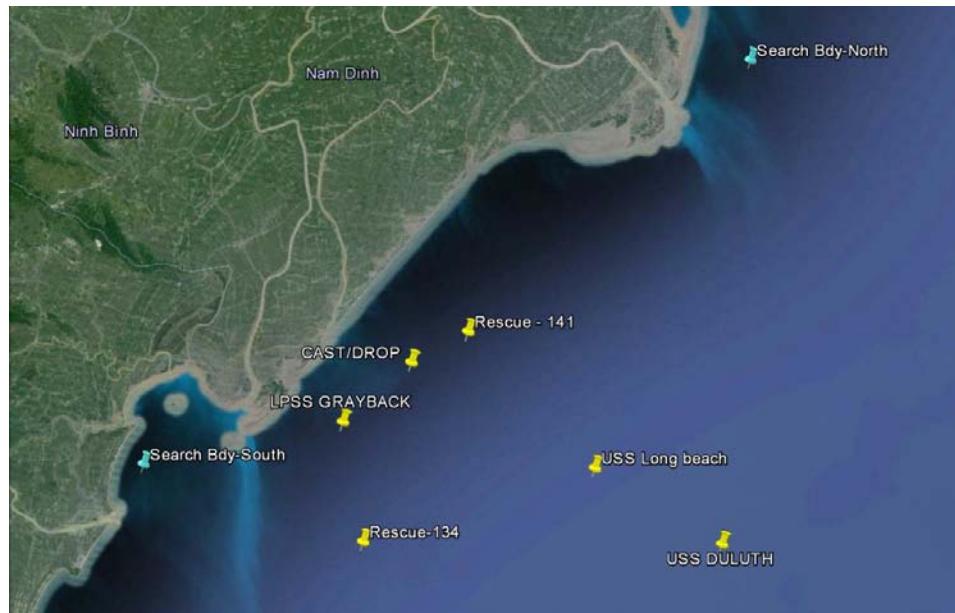| LT.	Melvin Spencer "Spence" Dry	SEAL Team One
CWO1	Phillip L. "Moki" Martin	SEAL Team One
LTJG	John Lutz	UDT-11
FN	Thomas Edwards	UDT-11

NO RESCUE REPORT for 134 on file

CODE-NAME "BRIGHT LIGHT" –
The Untold Story of U.S. POW Rescue Efforts During the Vietnam War

Operation Thunderhead; (in brief) [A,B,C,D]

Two years of clandestine planning, the surveillance operation begins Tuesday, May 30, 1972. Several POWs were to escape from the prison located in Hanoi. Their plan was to float to the sea via the Red River, some 100 miles. SR-71s, at noon, produced two sonic booms signaled that assistance waited off the coast. With the USS Grayback (LPSS-574) submarine, USS Long Beach (CGN-9) guided missile cruiser, and USS Harold E. Holt (DE-1074) a fleet escort and the helicopters of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron SEVEN (HC-7), Detachment 110 readied to receive the "Agents". Searching daily, three to four surveillance flights conducted along the estuaries by two dedicated HC-7 helo crews, based aboard USS Long Beach.   Their flight path scheduled for 10 miles off the coast, or closer when points of interest were seen. On a few occasions, the NVA would fire their shore batteries, trying to score a helo. [6] Searching for a signal of either a red or a yellow item, the "Agents", would receive assistance.   To provide assistance the USS Grayback launches a Swimmer Delivery Vehicle (SDV) with SEAL (2) and UDT (2) members. They were to establish an observation post on an island in the mouth of the Red River's main channel. Under the cover of night, the USS Grayback, sitting in 80 feet of water, the conning tower just under the surface launches the team at 2:00 am June 4th. [c] After struggling with the ocean currents, near dawn, the SDV's batteries are dead. The USS Grayback, sends a short message to USS Long Beach "Briarpatch Tango", the prearranged signal that the team requires rescuing. At 07:20, 5 June the SAR mission is initiated for the SEAL/UDT team. Guided by the radio signals from the team, the vectors provided from USS Long Beach to direct the helo to their area. [5] Pickup completed at approximately 08:23H. [5] **"THIS RESCUE "** At the request of the team, the helo crewman, uses the mini-gun to sink the SDV.   Returning to the Long Beach, the flight deck was cleared of all non-essential personnel, the helo lands and the team is escorted to officer's area for isolation, debriefing and rest. The team prepares to return to the USS Grayback. (data continued – see HC-7 Rescue 141, 6 June 1972)

Jim Keeney - *NARRATIVE*

We had been looking for these guys for a few days, when we spotted them, they were surrounded by junks. We went in and I was dropped in the water. One by one I pulled them off their mini sub and put them into the horse collar and sent them up the hoist. I spent along time in the water getting these guys into the horse collar. I rode up with the last guy and they had us sink their mini sub, with the mini gun. "Poor Condition – these guys had been in the water for several days." [several hours as determined from declassified Message Traffic]

1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
2) HC-7 Rescue Log
3) HC-7 Det 110 Rescue report - NONE
4) Map – Google Earth
5) Declassified "Operation Thunderhead" messages
6) "Hank" H. Frazier's – June 1972 flight Log
10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam – Historian

References:
A. "Code-Name BRIGHT LIGHT" by: George J. Veith
B. "Hope for Freedom – Operation Thunderhead" by: Edwin L. Towers, LCDR USN retired
C. "Operation Thunderhead" – by: Kevin Dockery
D. "Never Fight Fair" by: Orr Kelly

(Compiled / written by: Ron Milam, HC-7 Historian -   HC-7,   2-1969 to 7-1970, Det 108 & 113)