

HC-7 RESCUE 38 ⁽¹⁾ 21-May-1968 (Tuesday)

SH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Det 110 Big Mother
USS Halsey (DLG-23) Routine Day ⁽²⁾ (Combat Day)
9.5 miles off North Vietnam coast
Water: 84° Air: 88° Wind: 5 knots Sea State: less than 1

Pilot – LTJG Michael V. White
Co-pilot - ENS Byron L. Dieckman
1st crew – AX-3 Christopher R. Thomas
2nd crew – AE-2 Bobby Childress

Alert received - 1640: UHF / GUARD
Vehicle departed – 1640 : 26 miles
Arrived on scene – 1651: no search required
Located survivor - 1651 : Visual with vectors from wingman
Begin retrieval - 1652: PK-2 Raft
Ended retrieval – 1653 : proceed to USS Halsey
Survivor disembarked – 1709 : USS Halsey SAR destroyer FFT – USS Bon Homme Richard

A-4F Skyhawk 154988 NF 313 ⁽⁶⁾ “Raven 313” VA-93 (Blue Blazer) USN
USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31)

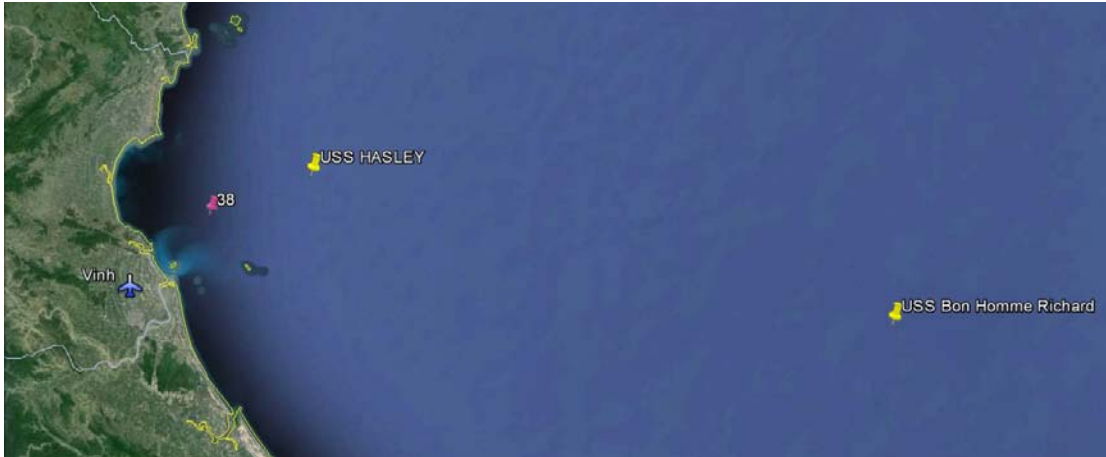
LTJG Jack A. Douglas

During a strike on a road bridge at Trang Song, 15 miles north of Vinh, one of the stacking Skyhawks was hit by automatic weapons fire. The aircraft began to trail flames from the rear fuselage and the controls started to stiffen. Lt Douglas headed out to sea and gained altitude but about 10 miles from the coast the hydraulic system failed completely and the pilot lost control. Lt Douglas ejected safely and was rescued by a Navy helicopter.

While conducting a racetrack flight path, in a pre-position area, Big Mother receive notification of a SAR over the UHF/Guard channel at 16:40. USS Halsey provides a vector of 060°, 12 miles from its location and calculates Big Mother at 26 miles from the scene. 16:51, the helo crew locates the overhead wingman and one minute later finds the survivor hanging onto his PK-2 raft. Crew observed that the survivor’s chute was clear by 35 feet, 10-10 dropped the rescue swimmer, with mask and fins, to assist. Fly past and back around to hover over the pair for a hoist pick-up. Entry into the aircraft hatch was difficult due to the position and construction of the aft M-60 mount. The aft station ICS became

intermittent and broken during the retrieval. ⁽³⁾ 16:53 Big Mother exits the area en-route to USS Halsey then arriving at 17:09 on to USS Bon Homme Richard.

“In less than an hour, just as advertised” Douglas said, “I can’t say enough for the ejection and the rescue team” ⁽⁴⁾



Near the North Vietnam coast, 19 miles, 30⁰ from Vinh, 9.5 mi off shore, 10 miles NW Hon Matt Island. ⁽⁶⁾

- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
- 2) HC-7 1968 Command Report
- 3) HC-7 Det 110 Rescue report
- 4) Pacific Stars and Stripes – 31-May-1968 “Pilot Rescue Goes ‘Just as Advertised’”
- 5) "Vietnam - Air Losses" By: Chris Hobson (with permission)
- 6) VA-93 web site – history data
- 7) Loss aircraft location data provided by: W. Howard Plunkett (LtCol USAF, retired)
- 10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam - Historian

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