

HC-7 RESCUE 7 ⁽¹⁾ 17-NOV-1967 (Friday)

UH-2A Kaman Seasprite helo DET 108
USS Coontz (DLG-9) Routine Day⁽²⁾
40 miles off North Vietnam coast
Water: 80°, Air: 82° Wind: 5/11 Sea: Calm/ 1 ft.

Pilot – LTJG Timothy S. Melecoski
Co-pilot - LTJG James P. Brennan
1st crew – AE-2 Willie B. Pettit
2nd crew – ATN-3 John H. Bevan

RF-4C Phantom 65-0899 “Academic” 11 TRS, 432 TRW,
USAF Udorn, Thailand

MAJ. Raymond F. Ross - HC-7 Rescuer
Capt. Fleming C. Hobbs – rescued by USS King

Maj Ross and Capt. Hobbs, call sign “Academic” returning from a photographic reconnaissance mission at Bac Giang, when a SAM exploded just underneath his aircraft, immediately headed towards the coast, he and his navigator ejected.⁽⁵⁾

1224: alert received from bridge over phone circuit - aboard the USS Coontz (DLG – 9)
1225: rescue reported at 20 miles
1235: arrived on scene completed systematic search of area
1238: expanding search area
1239: cited flare (night smoke)
1242: rescue was effected
1247: aboard USS King

Remarks: trained crewman was put in water to aid survivor. He made sure pilot was free from parachute before attaching rescue sling.

USS KING's: helo launched at 11:35 - for preposition flight. Aboard USS KING, at 12:10 - an emergency beacon signal was heard, bearing 260°T. At 12:12, - 260° T, distance 9 miles (20°-00', 107°-00E) a large splash in the water observed. 12:16 - look-outs observe two chutes in the air, bearing 170°, ship increases speed to 25 knots to close on position. 12:19 - Captain has the conn 12:29 - USS KING recovers pilot Capt. Fleming C. HOBBS, USAF, pilot appears uninjured. 12:36 - other pilot visually signaled 800 yards off starboard quarter, SAR helicopter from USS Coontz (DLG-9) making pick-up. 12:39 pilot aboard helicopter. 12:42 - recover SAR helicopter from USS Coontz. Rescued pilot name Maj. Raymond F. ROSS, 11th Tactical Recon Squadron. 12:48 secured flight quarters. 13:01 -USS Coontz making approach for relief of NORTH SAR.⁽¹²⁾

USS COONTZ's HELO: 12:05 the Coontz stations the helo detail. 12:21 Clementine is launched, 3 minutes later the ship receives an IFF steer of 045° at 15 miles.⁽¹³⁾ At 12:25 - flying on a steer given by radar control for 20 miles. 12:26 the ship's look-outs observe a white smoke at 040°.⁽¹³⁾ 12:35 - the helo crew begins a systematic search of the vectored area. After 3 minutes the search area is expanded. 12:39 - a night flare is seen, swimmer placed in water to assist pilot out of chute. 3 minutes later the rescue was affected. Exiting the area, the crew flies to the nearest landing platform, USS King (DLG-10)⁽³⁾ landing at 12:42⁽³⁾ A textbook rescue.⁽¹¹⁾ Clementine returns to USS Coontz at 12:51.



Notes from Rescue Report: an UH-2B in the area, Pilot (ROSS) had no "D" ring, used horse-collar sling.⁽³⁾

Historian Note: The HC-7 rescue log indicates that two persons were rescued. This is incorrect as shown within the Det 108 report and the USS KING's deck logs. **ONE RESCUE** by HC-7

Notes: (not in order)

- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
- 2) HC-7 1967 Command Report
- 3) HC-7 Det 108 Rescue report
- 4) Map – Google Earth - Loss aircraft data provided by W. Howard Plunkett (LtCol USAF, retired)
- 5) "Vietnam - Air Losses" By: Chris Hobson (with permission)
- 10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam - Historian
- 11) Kaman Rotor Tips – March-April 1968
- 12) USS KING – Deck Logs
- 13) USS Coontz – Deck logs

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