

HC-7 RESCUE 72 ⁽¹⁾

16-Nov-1969 (Saturday)

SH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Det 110 Big Mother 78 149897

Routine Day ⁽²⁾

33 miles off North Vietnam coast

Pilot – LT

William H. Lenz

Co-pilot – LTJG

Robert F. Goodrich

1st crew – ADJ-3

Bryan L. Spurger

2nd crew – ADJAN

Michael D. Wood

A-7A 152679 “Sidewinder-406” VA-86 (bad boys) USN,
USS Coral Sea (CVA-43)

Ltjg John E. Voshell

The Coral Sea also lost an A-7 on the 15th when an aircraft on an escort mission developed an oil leak that eventually led to engine failure. The pilot ejected and was soon picked up. ⁽⁵⁾

I don't remember the names and I suspect we did not know who they were at the time. I doubt it was a classified mission but it could have been. ⁽²⁾

I have a copy of the accident report and it goes something like this. I was a nugget in VA-86 and I launched from USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) at about 10:30 (10:28) ⁽¹⁰⁾ for a 1.5 hour Iron Hand mission in A-7A BuNo 152679, call sign "Sidewinder 406". We were over North Vietnam when the engine started to lose oil pressure and I was able to get back over the Tonkin Gulf and ejected at about N18-00, W106-47 (18° 09' 18", 107° 04' 00") ⁽¹⁰⁾ [310°, 44 miles] after the engine flamed out. Crashed into the sea and sunk. ⁽¹⁰⁾ 11:04 Helicopters from USS Coral Sea commenced search for pilot. Reports received from nearby aircraft that pilot had safely ejected. ⁽¹⁰⁾ My flight lead later told me two HC-7 birds arrived on scene and "Big Mother 78" made the rescue at about 1120. The swimmer was deployed and I remember it was a fairly routine pick-up and trip back to CVA-43. 11:56 pilot recovered by helicopter and delivered on board USS Coral Sea. No injuries to pilot. ⁽¹⁰⁾

The attached picture is a charcoal drawing one of our troops (AME3 Richard Talpey) made when the helo landed on USS Coral Sea. The helo returned the next day and the ship filled it with as much ice cream as they could take on.

I sure wish I could catch up with the crew who rescued me. I figure I owe them four bottles of Jim Beam. I live in Columbia, SC and I was wondering if an old attack pilot could come to your reunion in

Charleston? Thank you, John E. Voshell ⁽²⁾

(note: HC-7 Historian phone called Mr. Voshell and Mr. Lenz, who communicated)



No HC-7 1969 Command report available... No Det 110 Rescue report available.

- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
- 2) HC-7 History Collection – email from John Voshell (12-9-2009)
- 4) Map – Google Earth
- 5) "Vietnam - Air Losses" By: Chris Hobson (with permission)
- 10) USS Coral Sea – Deck Logs

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