

HC-7 RESCUE 78 ⁽¹⁾ 5-Apr-1970 (Sunday)

SH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Det 110 Protector
USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) Routine Day ⁽²⁾
86 miles off North Vietnam coast

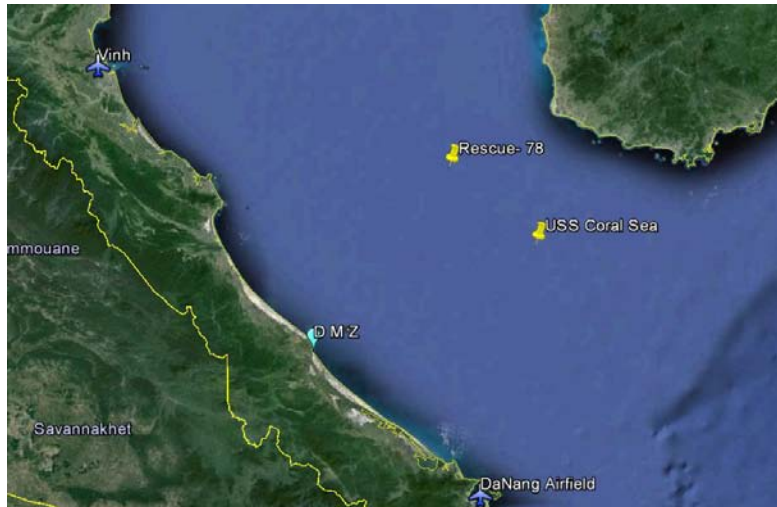
Pilot – LTJG Allen C. Wehry
Co-pilot - LCDR Raymond L. Johnson
1st crew – ADJAN Arthur M. Clendaniel
2nd crew – ATN-2 Joesph Toto

F-4B Phantom 152325 NL-103 Switch Box-103 VF-151, (Vigilantes) USN,
USS Coral Sea (CVA-43)

Lt Thomas J. Terrill
Lt Curtis Henry Cropper (KIA) (Panel 12W – Line 096)

When returning from BARCAP mission a Phantom crashed following an accidental fire and explosion that led to the loss of control. Both the crew ejected over the Gulf of Tonkin about 90 miles northeast of Dong Hoi. The aircraft was diving at high speed and the force of the ejection stunned both men. Lt Cropper, the NFO, appeared to be unconscious when he hit the water and he was unable to inflate his life jacket or release his parachute. The parachute quickly sank beneath the waves taking Lt Cropper with it. Lt Terrill was eventually rescued from the sea. ⁽⁵⁾

At 07:35, USS Coral Sea releases the USS Parsons (DDG-33) to depart the formation for independent steaming exercise. 07:52 the USS Coral Sea receives a report that the pilot and RIO ejected from VF-161, the aircraft crashed at sea, position 18°10'N 108°00'E. 07:53 Big Mother helo dispatched to the SAR scene. ⁽¹²⁾ While on a logistics run to NSAR, PROTECTOR helo vectored to the SAR scene. ⁽¹⁰⁾ 07:54 the USS Coral Sea receives a report that two good parachutes were sighted. 08:12 the SAR helo is on the scene, 08:22 pilot Terrill has been picked up. 08:24 USS Parsons is ordered to proceed to the SAR scene. 08:52 SAR helo and pilot Terrill arrive aboard USS Coral Sea. Pilot had sustained moderate injuries the extent of which are not known. 09:32 received report from sickbay that injuries by LT T. J. Terrill included two broken bones in his arms and a severe sprain in leg. USS Coral Sea continues flight operations, and Vert-Rep from USS Mars. At 22:00 the SAR effort for LT C.H. Cropper is terminated, Presumed dead. The USS Parsons returns to carrier formation at 23:01. ⁽¹²⁾



- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
- 2) HC-7 Rescue Log
- 5) "Vietnam - Air Losses" By: Chris Hobson (with permission)
- 10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam - Historian
- 12) USS Coral Sea – Deck Logs

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