

Sunday, February 17, 2013

Dear HC-7 Historian:

First, I must apologize for this mix-up. I promised to send you something relating to my connection with HC-7, however, I have started having headaches of unknown cause. In the period where I was incapacitated my desk got rather scrambled and as papers got shifted around I lost the page with your e-mail address.

Fortunately, the lost address reappeared a week later and I am now able to send you my personal and military history. Mention of the UH-46As is contained in the history and the brief that I was HC-7 first Executive Officer. (This lasted a bit over a month since I had orders in hand to report to Pensacola duty.)

After you read the enclosed personal and military history, please contact me and I will provide info as needed.

Cdr. James E. Waldron, USNR Retired

12617 Meghans Bay Court  
Richmond, VA 23233-3344  
Phone: 804 364-0118

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Waldron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

## First H-46 Water Rescue

Hi Ron:

Thanks for the message. Sorry for the typing error. The old brain is playing me tricks.

Here is a bit of UH-46A history, which may be of interest, because it tells of the first UH-46A overwater rescues. I find that I am of late a poor historian and even though I have an office full of pictures and written matter, I am finding it difficult to locate anything I might need. Here is my story, for better or for worse, but the facts as I recall them at age 87.

Following our two aircraft flight from the Vertol Factory at Philadelphia International Airport to Ream Field, California we started intense training of our pilots and crewmen. I don't have the dates but I remember that we were sent to the USS Sacramento (AOE-1) to acquaint both our H-46 crew and the Sacramento's cargo handling crew.

We were in the process of delivering palletted cargo from the USS Sacramento to another ship in the area. I had just completed my first cargo run and was in a hover over the Sacramento flight deck when I heard, over the radio, that a UH-2 had experienced engine failure and had crashed into the ocean nearby. I immediately signaled the crew to disconnect my aircraft from the cargo on the flight deck.

I was told by radio that the UH-2 had crashed off the port side of a carrier nearby. Once free from my palletted cargo I headed toward the crash site. The crash was about one half a mile away and I was able to see it almost immediately.

I am not certain how many men were in the water when I arrived over the crash site but I feel certain that it was at least six men. We had not as of then practiced water rescues but we had practiced lifting men using the internal hoist equipment of the H-46. I remember that I made five rescues

at this crash site and delivered them back to the aircraft carrier a few miles away.

It was obvious that the H-46 was not designed for air/sea rescues due to the lift arrangements. As the pilot in command, I had to communicate with a man lying on the floor of the helicopter for all my in-flight control adjustments. Also, the radio which had been relatively quiet when the crash occurred became overloaded with communications from several ships in the area and a second UH-2 from the carrier. This UH-2 pilot positioned his helicopter behind my hovering helicopter and I almost backed into him. One of my aircrewmen was looking aft from over the lowered ramp of the H-46 and advised me not to back up.

When I had completed my lifting of the five survivors of the crash I flew to the flight deck of the aircraft carrier and off-loaded the survivors. Then I returned to the USS Sacramento (AOE-1) where I resumed my cargo lifting practice.

This was the first overwater rescue made by the first UH-46A helicopter. This rescue took place in July or August of 1964.

Best wishes, Jim Waldron (email 2-23-2013)

Brief Personal History  
of  
**Commander James E. Waldron** USNR Retired

**May 19, 1925** I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Summer 1941** I took my first solo in a privately owned Taylorcraft aircraft.

**June 19, 1944** My first Navy solo was made in a N2S Stearmen aircraft.

**April 19, 1945** I completed Basic Flight Training at NAS Pensacola. During Basic Flight Training I flew the N2S, the SNJ, and the SBD type aircraft.

**July 29, 1945** I next took operational fighter pilot training at NAS Melbourne, FL. and I was transferred to Glenview, IL for actual carrier landings.

**Aug. 2, 1945** I then took aircraft carrier training (inflight and classroom) at NAS Glenview, IL

**August 14, 1945,** I qualified in making six aircraft carrier landings aboard the aircraft carrier USS Wolverine. These landings were made in the F6F Hellcat.

**October 8, 1945** I was assigned to VF-97. Grosse Ile, IL. World War II ended.

**October 15 1945**

Transferred to Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 21, NAS Norfolk, VA. Tasked with ferrying aircraft types F6F, TBM, SNJ, TBY, FM2, SBF, N2S, SB2C, and F4U.

**June 30, 1946** Released from active duty.

**May 20, 1946** During the period of time following my first tour in the Navy I flew with two fighter squadrons. Squadron one at NAS New Orleans, LA and the other at NAS Denver, CO. As a Reserve Officer I flew the aircraft types F8F Bearcat, the F 6F Hellcat, and SBI- aircraft.

**Aug. 20, 1951** I was ordered to helicopter flight Training at NAS Atlanta, GA and Ellyson Field, Pensacola, Florida. Ellyson Field was the base where naval aviators learned to fly helicopters. Upon completing helicopter flight training I was designated as Navy Helicopter Pilot No. 679.

**Dec. 19, 1951**

I was assigned to Helicopter Utility Squadron TWO (HU-2) as a seagoing helicopter rescue pilot. During this two-year tour of duty, I served aboard the USS Siboney, the USS Coral Sea, the USS Bennington, the USS Palau and the USS Tarawa. During these assignments I flew the SN.1 and FUJI) helicopters. During this tour of duty, I rescued nine men from ocean waters.

**May 20, 1954**

Reported to NADC Pensacola for duty in instructing Navy pilots in flying helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. I flew instructional flights from NAS Pensacola and HTU-1, Ellyson Field and NAS Whiting Field.

**Oct. 3, 1954**

I flew rescue missions following a devastating hurricane which hit the small country of Honduras. Honduras on Oct. 10, 1954. The banana fields were damaged due to high winds and rain. This

operation was carried out from the helicopter flight deck of the USS Monterey. Numerous rescues were made flying Piaseki HUP helicopters, which had originated from Ellyson Field, Pensacola.

**May 4, 1954 to May 20, 1954** I was temporarily assigned to an Officers Selection Board at the Navy Department in Washington, D.C.

**Jan, 10,1955** I attended a two week course in special weapons at NAS Norfolk, Va.

**May 22,1956**

I was ordered to Air Development Squadron SIX, NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island to fly naval aircraft in support of Operation Deep Freeze. This 16-month assignment required that I winter over on the Antarctic Continent. I was housed, while on the Antarctic Continent, at NAF McMurdo Sound and at Little America FIVE Station. I made two landings at the South Pole as co-pilot in a R4D aircraft on skis. I was awarded an Air Medal for a rescue I made of a seriously injured scientist.

**Aug. 11, 1956 to**

Flew from NAS Quonset Point, RI to Sondrestrom, Greenland 1956 to test ski landings on Greenland Ice Cap. I participated in this one-time operation flying as co-pilot in the R4D and the U F - I aircraft. I then flew as copilot in the ski-equipped R4D aircraft from NAS Quonset Point, RI to Wigram Field in New Christ Church, New Zealand.

**Oct 17, 1956**

When the weather between New Zealand and NAF McMurdo Sound Antarctica improved, we took off and flew from New Zealand to NAF McMurdo Sound, Antarctica a flight lasting 16.5 flying hours. We carried JATO rockets on our R4D aircraft to help us get airborne while when taking off with an extremely loaded aircraft.

**Oct 17, 1956 to Oct 19, 1956**

During this period as copilot on ski-equipped R4D aircraft I flew from Quonset Point, RI to Christchurch New Zealand and from New Zealand to NAF McMurdo Sound, Antarctic Continent in support of Operation, Deep Freeze. I remained in Antarctica for 16 months. I also flew the UC- 1 Otter and the H04S helicopter during my stay in Antarctica. During this period of time I flew 125 airborne hours over the Antarctic Continent in the R4D, the UC-1 aircraft. and the HRS helicopter.

**May 3, 1958 to 1960**

I was transferred to Naval Air Station, Port Lyautey, Morocco and was assigned to the Operations Department. I also worked for six months as Station Personnel the Personnel Officer for the Naval Air Station. I flew the HUP helicopter and the Station R4D during this tour of duty.

**1960**

I was next ordered to report for duty at the Naval Air Development Center, at NAS Johnsville, Pa. where I was assigned to work in the Anti-Submarine Laboratory. While there I flew the H-3

helicopter, the HO-4S helicopter, the R4D aircraft, and the P2V aircraft. My job entailed working with civilian engineers in developing antisubmarine equipment and the testing of the same. It was here that I flew many developmental flights carrying and testing breadboard designed instrument flight packages which helped new weapons to be evaluated. Besides the UH-46A, I flew the Kaman H-2 helicopter and the UH-34G helicopter during this assignment.

### **1962**

I was transferred next to Helicopter Combat Support Squadron One (HC-1), at Ream Field, San Diego, CA for duty involving flying rescue helicopters aboard aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific. I completed the training for nighttime overwater rescue training, when the project called Vertical Replenishment was given to the squadron and I was assigned to run this new program. Besides myself three other officer pilots were assigned to the Vertical Replenishment project, as well as 10 enlisted men.

We were sent to Philadelphia, PA for ground school training in the UH-46A helicopter, we remained in Philadelphia for over a month in completing this course of instruction.

On August 20, 1966, we started flight training at Philadelphia International Airport in the new UH-46A helicopter. On October 7, 1966 I accepted two new UH-46A helicopters (Bureau Numbers 152490 and 152192) for HC-1 and we departed on the same date for NAS Ream Field in the new aircraft.

### **September 1967**

The new detachment was assigned to transfer from HC-1 to HC-1 Detachment Atsugi, at the Naval Air Station, Atsugi, Japan for a three-year tour of duty. We were tasked with developing techniques for transferring cargo between ships in the Western Pacific using the new UH-46A. Rotating the two UH-46A flight crews to ships every 6 weeks or so made the job run smoothly. Besides the transferring cargo to ships operating in the Western Pacific we started flight operations in and near the coastline of Viet Nam. I made two VertRep cruises aboard the USS Mars (AFS-1) with the UH-46A.

**1968** After about six months in Japan I was reassigned as Officer in Charge of HC-1, Detachment Atsugi, which was tasked with providing helicopter support for ships operating in the Western Pacific with helicopters and helicopter maintenance support. We started cross-training of Detachment Atsugi pilots in the UH-46A helicopter and they soon became proficient in both the H-3 as well as the UH-46A.

During my Atsugi tour I flew the H-2 Kaman helicopter and the UH-46 helicopter. One the test conducted using the UH-46A for heavy lifting. We lifted and carried four A-3 aircraft (without engines) from Tokyo Bay to NAS Atsugi, a distance of about 20 miles. While the tests proved to be a success it soon became impossible to fly these flight routes because houses were being built in quick order and we could not continue our heavy lifts without overflying civilian-owned houses. Should the aircraft commander of a heavy lift helicopter flight find himself in a situation where it was necessary to jettison his load it could be catastrophic.

About two months before I was scheduled to be transferred to shore duty, I received word that I had been selected as a Commander. I also learned that HC-1, Detachment Atsugi was to be designated a squadron, called HC-7. Commander Lloyd Parthemer was assigned as the Commanding Officer. With a month left on my three-year Japan tour, I was temporarily assigned to the new squadron as Executive Officer.

Besides the UH-46A, I flew the Kaman H-2 helicopter and the UH-34G helicopter during this assignment.

Next, I was ordered to report to Helicopter Training Unit ONE at Ellyson Field, Pensacola, FL. I was assigned to be Aircraft Maintenance Officer of HTU-1 Ellyson Field, Pensacola, FL. During this tour of duty, I flew the TH-57A, the UH-34G and the SNB aircraft. On May 21, 1969 I received BUPERS orders to transfer to Amphibious Operational Training Unit, at Little Creek, Virginia, where I became the Unit's Executive Officer.

**1968** I departed from HTU-1, Ellyson Field on transfer to Amphibious Operational Training Unit One, Little Creek, Va.

I flew the H-3 helicopter during this tour of duty. I made one shipboard training exercise aboard the USS Raleigh. I was assigned as the Chief Examining Officer for this training exercise.

**Dec. 31, 1969** I made my last active duty flight in the Navy in a Sikorsky SH-3A helicopter.

**June 30, 1970**

I received retirement orders from the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C. I retired from the Navy on June 6, 1970. My last military flight was in an SH-3A helicopter was 3.8 hours and it was on Dec. 3, 1969. I retired from active duty in the Navy on June 30, 1970.