

In August 1971, Captain McCracken became Executive Officer of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron Seven (HC-7) at Naval Air Station Imperial Beach, California and in July 1972 assumed the duties of Commanding Officer. During this tour he accomplished his 20th rescue, assisted in an opposed night overland rescue, provided HH-3A "Big Mother" combat SAR services to the Seventh Fleet Task Force operating off the coast and over North Vietnam and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

In September 1973 he received orders to Chapman College, Residence Education Center, San Diego, California where he participated in the U. S. Navy's College Degree Completion Program. While at Chapman College he presented a paper "Beyond the Drugs" to the Annual Sociology/Anthropology Research Conference at the University of Santa Clara and earned the Bachelor of Arts (cum laude) in Social Science.

In September 1974 Captain McCracken reported to NALF Imperial Beach, California as Administrative Officer. After temporary duty under instruction at COMNAVSURFPAC he reported aboard the USS Tripoli (LPH-10) in March 1975 as Air Officer while the ship was undergoing a nine month ROH. While on the USS Tripoli he participated in the following operations/exercises: MAULEX 2-76 (Twin Dragons III), LANDEX 3-76, RESCUEx 3-76, Typhoon assistance to Guam and Beacon Cherry (Korea).

He transferred from the USS Tripoli in May 1977 and assumed the duties as Commanding Officer, Naval Reserve Center, San Diego, California in June 1977. He coordinated and supported the activities of 59 Naval Reserve Units with an officer/enlisted allowance of 2209 pay billets drilling at ten drill sites around San Diego County. These Naval Reservists support and augment active San Diego units and would be mobilized in the event of a national emergency or war.

During his naval career, Captain McCracken has been credited with the rescue of twenty personnel, five under hostile fire conditions. He has been awarded the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, Air Medal, Air Medal with Numeral "7", Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation with Combat "V", Navy "E" Ribbon, Vietnamese Air Gallantry Cross with Bronze Wings, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation with 4 Stars, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Meritorious Unit Citation with Gallantry Cross, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Palm, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Scroll, National Defense Service Medal and the Humanitarian Service Medal with Bronze Star.

Captain McCracken is married to the former Janice Willene Griffin of Quitman, Georgia. They have four children Jeri, Elaine, Raymond and Susan. After retirement, he and his wife started and operate a small business producing wooden children's room accessories and continue to reside in Chula Vista, California.