

HC-1 - Angel

Birch,

Sorry to hear about your partner. I can only imagine how close you were to such a fine and intelligent animal.

Can't help Howard this time.

I have confined my research to combat losses, so I don't have anything about the one off Kadena in 1964.

The combat loss in 1967 picked up by "Angel 41" almost certainly means a carrier plane guard helicopter from HC-1. It was common for HC-1 plane guard dets to be numbered to match the hull number of the carrier they rode for a couple of years in the 60's, and was also common to use the call sign "Angel" and the hull number of their carrier, so "Angel 41" could have been from Midway. I think HC-1 also used Angel. It was a common name for a Navy plane guard rescue helicopter.

The position is pretty far to the northwest of Yankee Station though, which was down around 17N-109E. 54 miles northeast of Dong Hoi would be in the neighborhood of 100 miles from Yankee Station and almost as far from South SAR (up off Vinh at roughly 19N 106E), the rescue destroyer or DLG with a CSAR det aboard. Not hard to imagine an airborne plane guard being sent to the rescue if the CSAR birds were busy or down, or the PG helo was on a logistics run up to North or South SAR.

Wish I could tell you more about that rescue, but I have nothing on it from the CSAR point of view; it would not have been classified as a combat rescue by Navy definitions. While a combat loss for the AF, the rescue was benign for the Navy, not contestable by the enemy.

Last year, I could have quickly determined if it had been HC-1 and given the crew names if it was, but, unfortunately, all the HC-1 rescue plaques about 25-30 of them, each with about 150 little brass tags with the date and names of the rescue crew, the only comprehensive list of HC-1 rescues, were sent to the recycling by an HC wing chief who was cleaning out a room to become the HC Wing wardroom in Building G. He didn't know what all those plaques were, and told to clean the room up/out, got rid of them. What a tragedy! I could have killed him when I went looking for them. I had copied the Korean War brass plaques (took four hours of writing) and delayed doing the Vietnam era plaques because of the time it was going to take. Could kick myself but who would have dreamed they would be trashed.

Book draft goes to the editor in another week or two with luck. Then don't know how long publishing will take. Probably Spring 2007.

Best regards, Tom Philips