

ADJ3 JOHN MASAVEG
FIRST CREWMAN'S STATEMENT
ANGEL 004 SH-3G/149735

On 19 March 1972, while on plane guard at approximately 1953 in the evening, a distress signal call came over the UHF radio. It appeared that a pilot in an A-7 was having trouble with his aircraft. About a minute later we were getting vectors to a downed pilot. I told the pilot I was unstrapping and going aft to ready the necessary gear needed for the rescue. After that was done, I told the pilot I had the gear ready and was coming up front to help in the search. While approaching the area we were vectored to I spotted a light in the water at 9 O'clock. At the same time the pilots spotted another group of lights which turned out to be two fishing boats. After informing the co-pilot of the light I had seen, he advised the pilot. While approaching the light, the downed pilot shot off a .38 red-green flare. I told the pilot I was unstrapping and going aft to ready the smokes. We came into a hover over the downed pilot, who appeared to be in good condition. We then proceeded about 100 feet ahead of the downed pilot and dropped a matrix light for hovering references. I informed the pilot we had a light. We then started toward the downed pilot. I rigged the hoist and got ADJ3 RUST (my second crewman) hooked up. We came into a hover over the downed pilot and I lowered RUST down the hoist using the sling. RUST entered the water at approximately 10 feet from the survivor and gave me a thumbs up. He swam up to the A-7 pilot and checked him over while we backed off to keep them out of the rotor wash. Then I got a second thumbs up from RUST and informed the pilot. I vectored the pilot to a hover over RUST and the survivor for the final pickup, RUST hooked the pilot and himself to the hoist cable and gave me another thumbs up. I started bringing them up and informed the pilot when they were clear of the water. I got them up by the cargo door and pulled them in with assistance from my second crewman. The A-7 pilot and my crewman both appeared to be in good shape. I secured the hoist and all rescue gear. When the A-7 pilot and second crewman were strapped in, I told the pilot that he was cleared for forward flight.