

# HC-7 RESCUE 143<sup>(1)</sup> 8-Apr-1975 (Tuesday)

HH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Big Mother  
HC-7 NAS Imperial Beach Routine Day <sup>(2)</sup>

39 degrees – wind light & variable – unlimited vis - Desert mountainous terrain

**Pilot – LT Joseph M. Lopresti (HC-7)**  
**Co-pilot - LT Hill (HC-1)**  
**1<sup>st</sup> crew – AMH-1 Loren (nmn) Hammon (HC-7)**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> crew – ATC Hoffay (HC-2)**

10:35 - Prepositioned for SAR exercise – Observed parachute – no beacon signal on guard  
10:35 - departed one mile  
10:40 - arrived on scene  
10:40 - located survivor  
10:40 - manual approach to hover after low pass  
10:45 - departed (40') hover  
11:00 - survivor walked off A/C – NAS Fallon, NV <sup>(7)</sup>

Back-up helo HC-1 SH-3G

F-8J Crusader 149139 VF-194, (Red Lightnings) USN – NAS Miramar

**Lt. William G. Hester <sup>(6) (7)</sup>**

Due to engine failure, the Crusader crashed on the NAS Fallon gunnery range Nevada. <sup>(5)</sup>

During climbing turn to downwind, after live strafing run, aircraft experienced severe compressor stalls, loss of power and high EGT. Wingman observed tailpipe fire. The pilot was unable to maintain either altitude or airspeed. Systems were safed and pilot ejected using face curtain at 1000 feet AGL and 130 knots. 20 mm - 324 rounds loaded, 130-140 rounds cooked-off. Aircraft crashed in open area and burned on impact. <sup>(7)</sup>

Pilot experienced engine problems on training mission (air to ground gunnery). Enroute to NAS Fallon he ejected at 130 KIAS at 1000 FT AGL. Wingman flew low CAP and observed rescue helo in vicinity of downed aviator almost

immediately after he reached the ground. During rescue phase CAP aircraft unsuccessfully attempted radio contact with helo on 243.0 (Guard). (7)

### Engineering Investigation.

Disassembly of N2 compressor revealed pieces of what appeared to be an aluminum quick disconnect fitting (positive identity unknown) lodged in the 15<sup>th</sup> stage stator assembly. (7)

As far as a #143 goes, you already know it was the last HC-7 rescue. We were on a detachment providing CSAR training support for airwing weapons training at Fallon, Nevada. It also was to provide training for HC-1. The F-8 was coming off a weapons run when the pilot experienced an engine failure. We were pre-positioned on the NAS side of the mountain and heard the pilot radio his difficulties. He said he was going to eject, and shortly after we begin looking for him we spotted the chute. We actually saw him land on the ground. The area in which the pilot landed was very hilly and rocky, so we decided to make the recovery with the hoist. We made our approach and deployed the aircrewman. After he hooked the pilot up, we retrieved them both and returned to base. The pilot was uninjured.

I hope this is helpful.

Thanks again for getting in touch with me      Joe LoPresti (email 12-18-2015)



- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
- 2) HC-7 Rescue Log
- 3) HC-7 1973-1975 Command Report
- 4) Map – Google Earth
- 5) “Forgotten Jets” - [www.millonmonkeytheater.com](http://www.millonmonkeytheater.com)

6) [www.ejection-history.org](http://www.ejection-history.org)

7) Navy Safety Center Report with HC-7 Rescue report – received 7-19-2023

10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam - Historian

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