

HC-7 RESCUE 41 (1) 4-June-1968 (Tuesday)

SH-3A Sikorsky Seaking helo Det 110 Big Mother

USS Jouett (DLG-29) Routine Day ⁽²⁾

23 miles off North Vietnam coast

Water: 79° Air: 85° Wind: 5 knots Sea State: Calm, Vis – 12 miles

Pilot – LTJG Richard A. Wiley
Co-pilot - ENS Byron L. Dieckman
1st crew – ATN-2 Leonard J. Gonerka
2nd crew – AX-3 James A. Lawrence

Alert received - 1255: IMC aboard USS Jouett

Vehicle departed – 1300 : 300/15

Arrived on scene – 1308: Visual held by wingman

Located survivor - 1308 : Vectored by wingman

Begin retrieval - 1309: Day smoke held by survivor

Ended retrieval – 1312 : Man aboard helicopter

Survivor disembarked – 1318 : aboard USS Jouett

F-4J Phantom 155554 VF-33, “Root Beer-204” USN USS Ranger (CVS-61)

LT. William A. Simmons

LT Eric Parker Brice (KIA) Panel 60W – Row 008 BNR

When the USS America arrived off Vietnam on 12 May it was carrying the first squadron of the new F-4J variant of the Phantom to reach the theater. The F-4J was a development of the Navy’s F-4B and had a more powerful engine, strengthened undercarriage and modifications to the tail plane and wing to permit better handling on takeoff and approach. A flight of F-4Js was attacking a road intersection near Don Cay, 15 miles south of Vinh, when one of the aircraft was damaged by 37mm AAA. Lt Brice’s aircraft was hit as he was pulling up through 4,500 feet, having just dropped his Mk82 bombs on the target. The utility hydraulics failed and the controls were damaged with the throttles stuck in full military power. LT Brice managed to fly the aircraft using rudder only for control. The aircraft crossed the coast safely but about 25 miles out to sea the Phantom caught fire. LT Brice ordered his NFO to eject but the pilot’s canopy then failed to jettison and Eric Brice was last seen desperately trying to push the canopy free so that his ejection seat could fire. Sadly, this was one of many instances when Phantom front-seaters failed to escape from their aircraft. ⁽⁵⁾

12:55 the USS Jouett's IMC announces SAR alert, Big Mother crew and flight deck personnel scramble. Five minutes later the Jouett passes along a steer of 326° / 15 miles to Big Mother. 13:06 – 13:09 Big Mother located overhead wingman, who vectors the helo to the survivor, and helo crew spots a Day Smoke. Inbound approach to the survivor was difficult with the reflection on the water. Big Mother flares, 10-10 drops swimmer. Survivor entangled in his parachute. The swimmer cleared the shroud lines, prepares survivor for pick-up. Aboard the helo at 13:12, the crewmen assess the injuries of the survivor. He has a broken left leg, broken right arm, with multiple cuts and bruises. At short flight back to USS Jouett, landing at 13:18. Survivor to receive emergency medical treatment while still aboard the helo, then taken to Jouett's sick bay. ⁽³⁾



HC-7 Rescue 41 4-June-68

Pilot: LTJG Wiley, Co-pilot LTJG Dieckman
 First Crew - ATN2 Gonerka, Second Crew AX3 Lawrence



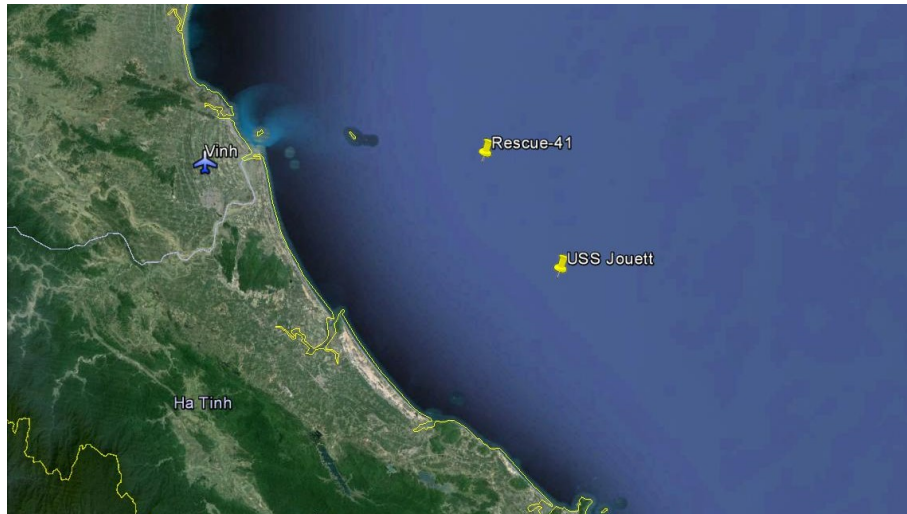
Photography By
 USS Jouett DLG-29
 Ronald J. Bain FM-2

LTJG William A. Simmons, USN is carried from the rescue helicopter, Big Mother", minutes after landing aboard the U.S.S. JOUETT (DLG-29). Dr. Robert N. Jones ducks down to avoid the exhaust from the helo engine, while assisting his patient on the way to JOUETT'S sick bay. JOUETT'S six man stretcher team anxiously carry the rescued aviator off the helo deck.

Contributed By: [Byron Dieckman](#)

Approx. 23 mile off the coast of North Vietnam

USAF Rescue Log; BM72 found Mae West and raft that looked like the had been torn up in impact of aircraft – pilot may not have got out.



- 1) Numbering as per HC-7 Rescue Log (accumulative rescue number)
 - 2) HC-7 1968 Command Report
 - 3) HC-7 Det 110 Rescue report
 - 4) Map – Google Earth
 - 5) "Vietnam - Air Losses" By: Chris Hobson (with permission)
 - 6) Photos provided by: Byron Dieckman
 - 7) Loss aircraft location data provided by: W. Howard Plunkett (LtCol USAF, retired)
 - 10) HC-7 History collection; Ron Milam – Historian
- BNR – Body not recovered.

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