Four Feared Dead In Second Copter Crash!

Pilot Survives Crash In Eel River at McCann; Local Man Is Missing

A Marine helicopter with five persons aboard crashed early yesterday afternoon into a deep section of the Eel River at McCann.

The pilot, Marine Capt. Richard Gleason, 32, of Tustin, survived and is in "satisfactory" condition at Redwood Memorial Hospital in Fortuna.

Gleason was rescued by an Army helicopter after current carried him two miles downstream.

One person on board the downed helicopter may have been a civilian, according to Marine Lt. Col. Edward Lupton. There were persistent rumors last night that the civilian was a prominent Eureka businessman.

Lupton said that the craft was on a photographic mission to the Southern Humboldt area when it crashed. It carried a crew of three from the aircraft carrier USS Bennington, plus a military photographer and a civilian observer.

The helicopter took off from Murray Field yesterday morning.

Military personnel last night refused to identify the four remaining persons aboard the downed craft.

Five members of the sheriff's marine posse, accompanied by a doctor and two medical corpsmen from the U.S.S. Bennington, early last night, raced five miles to reach the reported location of the crash. The search party found no trace of survivors, according to Undersheriff Gene Cox.

A skin diver did not go down in the river, which Cox says is extremely deep at that point, because of darkness.

The searchers returned to Garberville and plan hike to the scene again at daylight tomorrow.

A low ceiling in the afternoon and then growing darkness prevented landing of helicopters near the location.

According to Lupton, the pilot of the craft was flown to Redwood Memorial Hospital in Fortuna with "very minor injuries."