

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 dowstream.

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 Bannington, 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. Bannington, early last night ~~misses~~ ~~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."

mained a mystery, however, as the pilot was immediately put under sedation.

He told this broken story, which was related by Undersheriff Gene Cox:

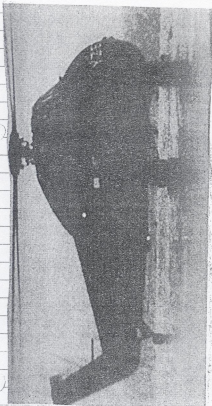
The plane went down at Camp Grant, near McCann, about one mile upstream from where the North and South Forks of the Eel River meet.

He (the pilot) was under water for what seemed like five minutes. When he popped to the surface, he inflated his life jacket and climbed on the helicopter to try and rescue the others aboard.

Then the helicopter sank. Currents carried him two miles downstream, where he washed up on a bank.

Lupton said that "we suspect engine trouble as the cause of the crash but we won't know until it is investigated."

According to Army Maj. David Bell, the pilot was rescued by Richard Peck, a Hiller Aircraft Corporation test pilot



Shown on the flight deck of the carrier USS Bannington is the ill-fated U.S. Marine helicopter, just before it took off on a rescue mission, only to crash 25 miles southeast of here. The pilot was rescued, but four other are presumed dead.

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