

Photo Hiking Journal

Newberry Mountains Sikorsky HH-3E #65-12781 11/30/12

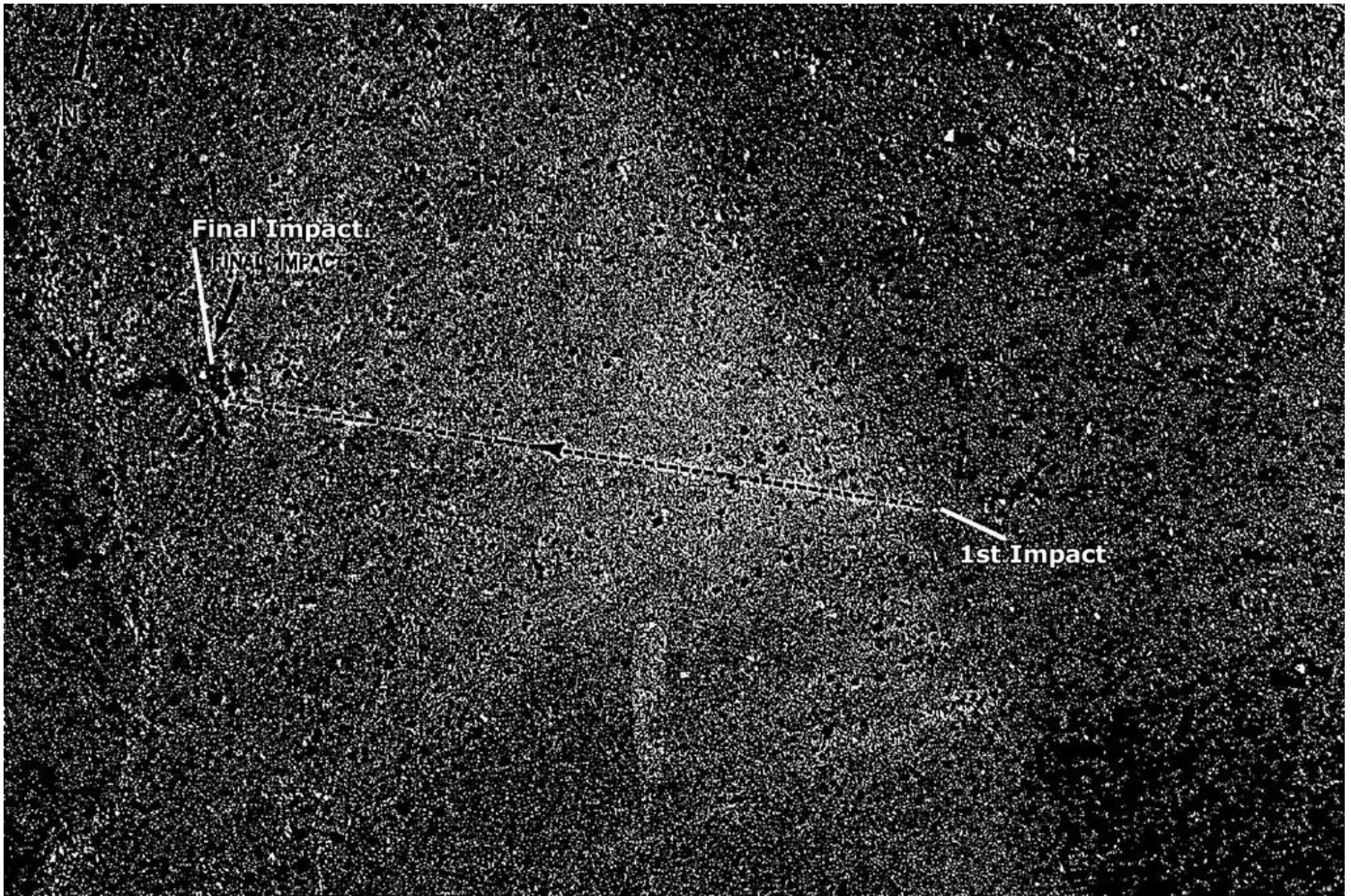


Newberry Mountains Sikorsky HH-3E #65-12781

- On 9/1//88 the Sikorsky HH-3E #65-12781 with the California Air National Guard, 129th ARRG from Moffett Naval Air station, California was on a local two day search and rescue training mission with the 27th Tactical Air Support Squadron. They departed George Air Force Base at 9:07am to participate in the first exercise scenario, a simulated survivor pick up with an OV-10 Bronco escort. The scenario was conducted in the northwest sector of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Reservation restricted area R-2501N. One OV-10 pilot was on board the helicopter as an observer, another was playing the survivor role on the ground. After a routine pick up, the HH-3E departed the range, returning back to George AFB. While leaving the training area, the aircraft struck a ridge ten feet below the crest. The aircraft became airborne again for 450 feet before impacting the back side of the same ridge. After the second impact, the aircraft rolled to the left and started burning. The impact forces and fire destroyed the aircraft killing all six crew members.

Maj. Terry A. Nelson, pilot
Lt. Col. Leslie E. Spencer, co-pilot
SrA. Steven E. Courtney
SSgt. Steven E. Carlyle

1Lt. James K. Dooley, passenger
1Lt. Patrick L. Henry, passenger



- This photo copied from the accident report shows where the HH-3E first struck just below the ridge, then carried 450 feet over and down the other side.



- Looking back at my truck as I start the hike to search for the HH-3E crash site. In the past few years, every once and a while, I would go over the information that I gathered on this accident trying to figure out the location. I finally thought that I had it narrowed down to a particular ridge.



- After hiking for about two hours, I came upon this piece of fiberglass on the ridge. At this point I was pretty sure that I found the site, but looking around, couldn't see any other pieces of wreckage.



- Hiking another 50 feet along the ridge, found this piece.



- Looking down the slope, I saw where the helicopter first struck the ground, just barely below the ridge. This photo of the impact area was taken from below looking up at the ridge.



- There were a lot of small pieces here.



- The one piece looks like its marked FUEL PUMP. Must be from the cockpit.



- This piece of fuselage skin was accordioned by the impact.



- Standing on the ridge with the impact area to my back. This is looking down where the helicopter should have ended up after striking the ridge, but I can't see any sign of it. I figured that most of the wreckage would have been removed, but something that large must have left a trace.



- As I hiked down, started finding small pieces scattered on the slope.



- A foil label showing terminal connections.



- A piece from one of the windows.



- Small electrical component.



- Looks like an actuator for a fuel shutoff valve.



- Found the place the HH-3E ended up after striking the ridge. The burned debris cover an area about thirty feet long.



- This green piece of plastic looks like its from one of the overhead windows.



- BNC connector.



- This spot had a lot of electrical connectors and switches.



- A switch and coaxial connector.



- This six foot diameter mound of melted aluminum in the burned area looked like concrete.



- Close up of the melted aluminum.



- A seatbelt buckle can be seen in this photo. Along the edges, there were some partially melted pieces.



- This was a largest piece of wreckage at the site, it's about a foot long.



- Another seatbelt buckle.



- Folding pocket knife. Finding this knife and the seatbelt buckles reminded me about the four man crew and two OV-10 Bronco pilots that lost their lives at this site. Sometimes I forget these things when I'm at a crash site, but certain things tend to remind me.



- Found about ten of these .223 blank rounds.



- When I found this part, I didn't have a clue what this part was from. David, who saw the photo indemnified it as a part from the crew oxygen system.



- One end of this steel braided hose was embedded in the aluminum.



- More partially melted pieces.



- More melted pieces.



- Closer view of the melted pieces.



- This ten inch long piece of aluminum was melted onto the rock.



- Another view of the melted aluminum.

Decided to continued on past the burn area in the direction of flight to see if any pieces were thrown in that direction.



- This small rib looks like it might be from one of the main rotors, but I don't know what type of construction was used on them.



- Piece of a control linkage.



- This looks like it might be a .308, but not sure if its connected with the crash site.



- Headstamp on the bullet.



- When I saw this from a distance, thought it was a old rusty beer can. Turned out to be an unused smoke grenade.



- Close up of the pin on the smoke grenade.



- When I first saw this, it looked like a green piece of plastic. Looking at the other side, it had lettering on it, but it was all reversed. Looks like a piece of tape that lifted the lettering off a label.



- With the photo flipped, the writing can be read.
EDO Fiber Science Division. The manufacture date is 5/3/85, no idea what the label would have been on.

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- This is an interesting looking part. The arm has a gear on the left side and an adjustable counter weight on the other. The two parts on the shaft have nuts for adjustment with set screws to lock them in place. No idea what this part is from.



- Another view of the same part.



- Looking back at the site before starting the hike out. The burn area is near the center of the photo with the ridge in the background. Turned out to be an interesting micro site.