


While treatment was in progress CTF 75 was arranging MEDEVAC to the USS CARL VINSON and HASSAYAMPA in company with CTG 770 was closing to helo range.

At first light (about 0600) on the 30th and at maximum helo range the three injured personnel and Dr Davis were MEDEVACed to the VINSON. While the helo was overhead, word was received that there would be only one helo run and all personnel concerned were to be on it. This created a problem in that there were only two stretchers with floatation gear available and SMITH and HANSEN were already in them. After they were aboard the helo, a horse collar was lowered and LAND was hoisted with that.

Subsequent evaluation aboard the VINSON confirmed Dr Davis' treatment and SMITH and HANSEN were flown to Japan for surgery, LAND was retained aboard the VINSON until she arrived in port where a fracture was finally detected.

In reviewing the incident afterward, there was no area that could have been improved on considering operational requirements. The personnel involved on the rig were completing a long hazardous job that had been conducted in safety despite the weather conditions. The wave that caused the injuries was not observed by either ship until it broke aboard; nothing like it had been encountered earlier. The shipboard response was fast and professional, the on-deck first aid even surprising in it's completeness! The assistance by CTF 75 in providing a doctor and arranging the MEDEVAC was timely and utilized all available assets to the maximum extent.

Given that seafaring is a hazardous occupation and that some accidents are going to happen despite all efforts to prevent them, this incident is a good example of what can be done in cooperation with the naval forces afloat and ashore.


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