

CBI Pararescue

Lt. William Diebold CBI Air Transport Command WWII

1352nd Search and Rescue Squadron

Jump missions typically did not have confirmed SAR objectives. Rescuer would parachute in, usually come into contact with natives, and the natives would usually lead him to the survivor. It usually took several days to walk to the survivor. Then medically treat and plan the best way out. Natives carrying litters was the most common exfil method. However rafts were occasionally used. One time they built a runway for a SEL to use to recover the survivor. Then the rescuers would walk out. That could take several days to several weeks. None of the men who did para rescuing had any parachute training or survival training. Their first jump was a mission jump. Nor did they have any dedicated parachutes. They used whatever was available. A few of them were static line paratrooper rigs but most were aircrew parachutes that required pulling a ripcord.

Jump mission SAR for Lt. G. Collins

Sept 6-13 1944

First Diebold jumped in, found survivor in bad medical situation and request a doctor jump in.

Major (Dr) William (Bill) Spruell jumped and treated the survivor.

Second jump mission in early October 1944 to signal panels near a hut. Diebold jumped in but it was a false alarm. After the second mission, Diebold's commander decided that he needed a teammate to go with him on future missions. TSgt James Brenner volunteered to do parachute rescue with Diebold

Third jump mission to signal panels. Diebold jumped in and found Johnny Beug the radio operator. Johnny told Diebold that another parachute from his aircraft had landed nearby. The second survivor was the flight engineer Corporal Peter Ercig, and he decided to try and walk out. Took Diebold and native trackers 3 days to find him. Then it took a couple weeks to litter the Corporal out to civilization.

Fourth mission was a jump to a downed fighter pilot. He was found deceased and was buried.

Fifth mission was in response to a native runner who came in with information on a found but injured aircrew member. The SAR location was in Tibet and it was high in the mountains. After landing from the jump, natives told them it was a 10-day walk through jungles and up/down mountains to the survivor. When they arrived, the survivor (TSgt Marvin Jacobs) was in need

of urgent medical care and it was decided to request a doctor parachute in to save his life. Doc Austin Lamberts made his first parachute jump. After landing, 2-engine cargo planes began air dropping medical and survival gear. That was followed by air drops of food and individual maintenance gear. It took a few days to stabilize the patient but then they had the problem of how to get the survivor out. It was over 200 miles of up and down mountain climbing and jungle trekking. Their best option seemed to be to clear a runway on a nearby ridgeling and land a single engine aircraft to recover the survivor. It took 3-weeks to complete an 800-foot rough landing strip but it worked. An L-5 aircraft was able to land and the survivor was successfully flown out to a hospital.



A second L-5 picked up the doctor but almost crashed on takeoff. No further flight ops would take place from that remote runway. The pararescuers had to walk 200 miles back to civilization.