

ARCTIC, DESERT AND TROPIC BRANCH
ARMY AIR FORCES CENTER
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

ADTB G-48
Information Course on Pacific Areas

23 July 1945

AIR SEA LAND RESCUE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

1. Introduction. When the United States entered the war the AAF had no rescue facilities which were designated as such. True, individual fields had crash boats and crash trucks, and individual organizations had performed some spectacular rescues. But, all rescue activity depended upon individual commanding officers or operations officers.

As the war progressed, the need for a coordinated rescue program was seen and the proper machinery for operating such a program was set up. Squadrons were trained as rescue squadrons, special communications nets were laid out to help the pilot in distress, radar stations were set up with the primary purpose of tracking IFF signals, long range boats were set patrolling sea routes, and yet, with all this machinery for rescue the primary factor in successful rescue is still the initiative of the individual. If a pilot in distress doesn't send out a Mayday or SOS in time, all this machinery cannot function. If a commanding officer does not train his men in rescue procedures, some of these men may be lost unnecessarily. The sad fact is that no organization, however elaborate, can do a man's thinking for him. But, and this has been proven by actual test in the Eighth Air Force, the more a man knows about rescue the less need there is for him to be rescued.

Rescue and a knowledge of the correct rescue procedure is the individual responsibility of every man in the AAF who flies or who has anything to do with operations.

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AIR SEA LAND RESCUE IN NON-TEMPERATE AREAS

1. Introduction. Army Air Force personnel in the Pacific Area are now flying over terrain varying from arctic mountains to tropic jungles. Yet, no matter what the terrain, many of the problems of rescue are fundamentally similar. Certainly, as long as airplanes fly and fight, crews are going to have to be rescued and brought back to fly again. In mountains, desert, jungle, or sea the principles of successful rescue will apply. True, the tactics of rescue will vary with the terrain but an efficient emergency communications system will be as useful in the arctic as in the tropics, speed in rescue is as essential in the mountains as in the desert, and no substitute will ever be found for training an aircrew in emergency procedure.

2. Air Land Rescue in Alaska. The following extract from the operations manual of the Alaskan Division of the ATC outlines a system of Air Land Rescue which has proved extremely successful. Most of the techniques outlined here could be used in any land area, no matter what the climate.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Operations

1. State of Alert:

a. Personnel and equipment of rescue flights will be maintained in such state of readiness that all principle elements and/or missions can be placed in operation within a period of one hour following notifi-

use of facilities of the civil airline to the extent they are made available. These requests will be confirmed in writing to this Headquarters and will be so coordinated as to relieve the U.S. Government from any and all responsibility in connection with life and property of the airline or their passengers.

7. Support Mission:

a. Medical Aid: One member of the medical parachutist unit of each flight will accompany the search element of that flight on search missions. He will act as observer and will be prepared to make a parachuted descent if necessary. The full complement of medical parachutists will be dropped to satisfy medical need when necessary.

b. Supporting equipment and supplies suitable for semipermanent hospitalization, camp establishment and maintenance will be furnished by cargo parachute as needed.

c. Kit, sustaining, three men, clothing and food, standardized seasonally, will be parachuted in such quantity as may be needed for the supply of each three man units on the ground. Each kit will supply food for three days and will be supplemented by additional supplies as needed for longer periods of time.

d. Kits, equipment, housing and implements for five man units will be parachuted in such number as may be required.

e. Planning: Plans will be laid to furnish supplies and equipment to grounded personnel adequate to the numbers of such personnel and to the season. Reserve supplies to last three days will be considered as a minimum supply level for grounded personnel.

navigational information such as fixes and courses to fly and by leading in lost planes by rescue aircraft.

The Second Air Force has pioneered in another phase of rescue work. That phase is the employment of parachuting flight surgeons as an emergency measure to take care of survivors until a ground party can reach the crash. Operating in the Rocky Mountains for the most part, sometimes landing on terrain over 10,000 feet high, these men have saved scores of lives.

b. Overseas either the Army theater commander or the Navy area commander is responsible for rescue. This responsibility is always delegated to task force or air force commanders, who in turn delegate it to lower echelons, until finally the responsibility rests on the commanding officer of a rescue group or task force. When Army and Navy units are working together, the Navy usually assumes the responsibility for rescue though they may employ Army units.

c. The Air Transport Command has been charged with the responsibility of maintaining rescue coverage on all their routes that are not covered by the theaters through which the routes pass. This responsibility has been delegated to the divisions by ATC Headquarters.

4. Organization, Training, and Equipment of Emergency Rescue Squadrons.

a. The average Emergency Rescue squadron now in the theaters consists of several OA-10's, a slightly smaller number of B-17's carrying airborne lifeboats, and a few each of L-5's and C-47's. Helicopters are soon to be added to this list. Land Rescue squadrons omit the OA-10's and the B-17's, replacing them with smaller amphibians and more C-47's.

b. Training on the OA-10's and the B-17's is given at Keesler Field, Mississippi. The course is heavy on navigation and seamanship. Graduates of this OTU have picked up 1267 AAF aircrew who would otherwise

