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Depart Azores	0105	20 January 45
Arrive Casablanca	0700	20 January 45
Depart Casablanca	1210	20 January 45
Arrive Tripoli	1825	20 January 45
Depart Tripoli	1925	20 January 45
Arrive Cairo	0045	21 January 45
Depart Cairo	0155	21 January 45
Arrive Abadan	0705	21 January 45
Depart Abadan	0845	21 January 45
Arrive Karachi	1500	21 January 45
Depart Karachi	1650v	21 January 45
Arrive Gaya	2230	21 January 45
Depart Gaya	2300	21 January 45
Arrive Assam	0130	22 January 45
Depart Assam	0240	22 January 45
Arrive Myitkyina (North)	0415	22 January 45

It was 1545 (Indian War Time) on January 22nd when the C-54 arrived at Myitkyina. American Air Lines crews had taken it as far as Casablanca and from there on it was flown by crews of the Air Transport Command. The pilot in charge on arrival at Myitkyina, who had taken over the airplane at Karachi, was Captain Anthony F. Story of Troy, Missouri. The total elapsed time from Wright Field to Myitkyina was 74 hours 35 minutes. Actual flying time from Wright Field to Myitkyina was 53 hours 10 minutes. The trip was uneventful.

The helicopter was unloaded from the C-54 immediately after its arrival at Myitkyina. It took about two hours to complete the unloading and the parts were then trucked to a parking apron occupied by aircraft of the Tenth Air Force Air Jungle Rescue Unit.

The members of the expedition, who were all extremely tired as a result of their trip, were disappointed to learn that the men they had been sent over to rescue had been evacuated from the spot where they had been forced down.

It was decided, however, to go ahead with the assembly of the helicopter as rapidly as possible in the event that another emergency

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The helicopter had no radio and, since Captain Peterson and Lt. Steiner were unfamiliar with the country, it was decided that the aircraft would be escorted by two L-5's of the Air Jungle Rescue Unit. The pilots of these light planes, who stayed with the helicopter until the rescue was accomplished, were: T/Sgt William H. Thomas, 24, of 8125 3rd Avenue, South Birmingham, Alabama, and S/Sgt Gibson L. Jones, 27, 809 Dartmouth Avenue, Bessemer, Alabama. Both of these men had a large amount of experience in air jungle rescue work.

At 0800 on January 25th the helicopter party received their final briefing from Lt. Kenney. The plan was for the L-5's to lead the helicopter to Sinkaling Hkamti, a strip on the west bank of the Chindwin river approximately 120 miles northwest of Myitkyina. At Sinkaling all aircraft were to refuel and proceed to the mountain that lay between two areas of unsurveyed territory about 60 miles to the northwest. All aircraft, including an L-5 photo plane, took off from Myitkyina between 0900 and 0915.

The helicopter flew at tree top level and was extremely difficult to see against the jungle background. The average air speed of the helicopter was about 60 miles an hour while that of the L-5's was 30 to 40 miles faster. Consequently, the L-5 pilots were forced to circle continuously to keep the helicopter in sight.

For the first half hour the flight was over fairly level country, and the helicopter became visible for a little while when it came out of a low lying cloud bank. The terrain grew increasingly rugged, with a succession of ridges covered by impenetrable jungle along the line of flight. Because of the helicopter's limited ceiling

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alone for the mountain top, preceded by Sgt. Thomas in his L-5. The flight to the mountain took approximately one hour. Small sandbanks in the narrow valleys between the ranges were the only possible landing places for the helicopter. Except for rocky peaks all of the terrain was covered by thick jungle.

The weather station where Captain Peterson landed was in the midst of a circle of high peaks and was located on a razorback mountain on which a rough strip about 250 feet long had been built. It was impossible for an L-5 to land on this strip. On both sides of the razorback the mountain fell off steeply to narrow valleys 2500 feet below.

By this time there was considerable turbulence and the helicopter had run short of gasoline. Captain Peterson therefore decided to stay on the Mountain for the night. Lt. Steiner, who had flown as an observer in Thomas' L-5, returned to Sinkaling.

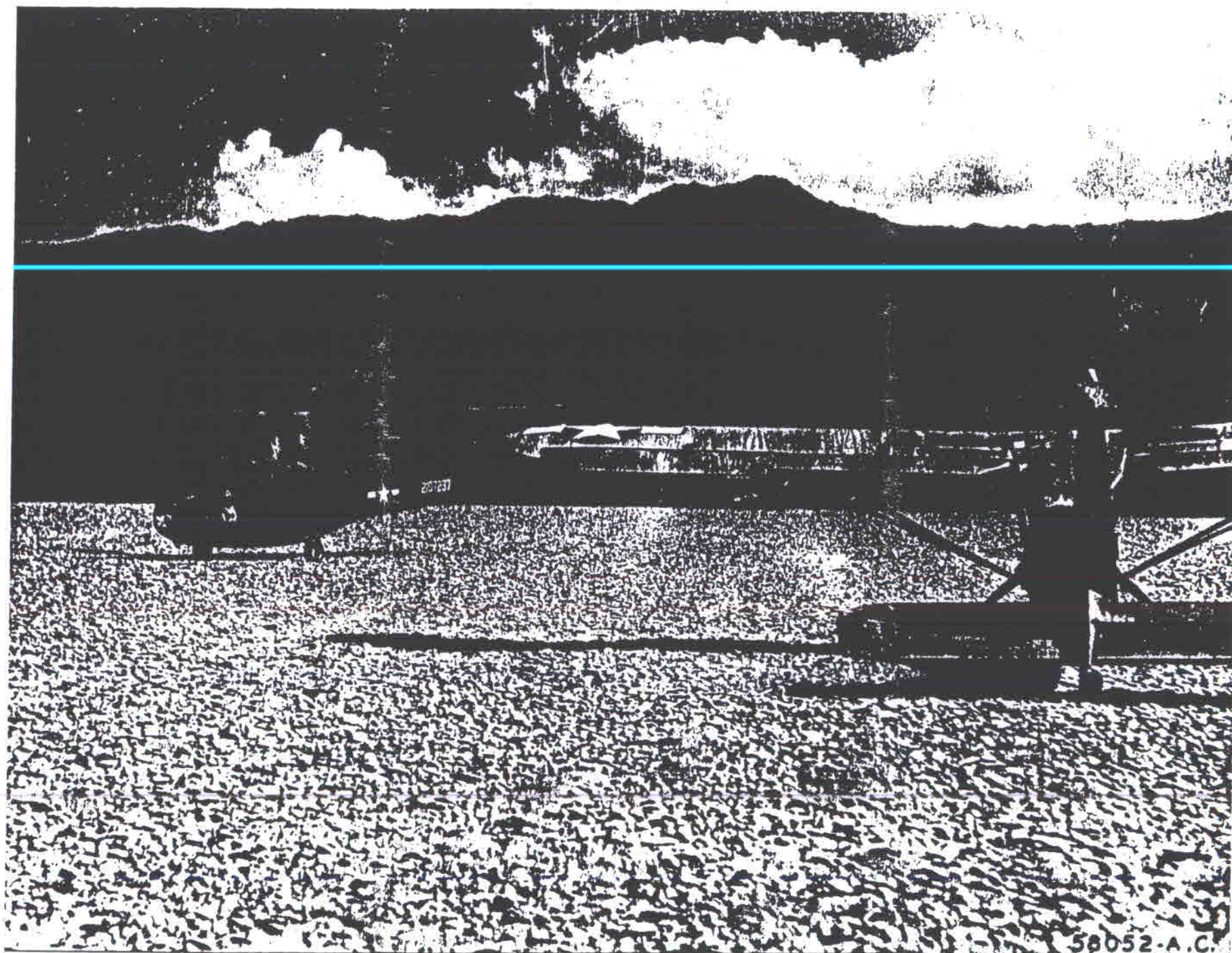
The next morning the two L-5 pilots took off from Sinkaling, flew to the mountain and circled it for an hour while they dropped fuel and messages to Capt. Peterson. There was obviously some difficulty, since Captain Peterson did not take off at once. Finally the Magas on the mountain secured some white cloth, with which Captain Peterson spelled out OIL. The liaison aircraft then returned to Sinkaling, loaded up with oil, and flew back to the mountain, where they dropped the fuel to Captain Peterson.

Immediately after refueling he took off from the mountain in the helicopter with his patient aboard and flew him to the Sinkaling strip. The patient was Pvt. Howard Ross, 21, of 565 Willow Avenue,

RESCUES

(over)

Burma Theatre and Eastern Air Command (S.E.A.)
No obj. to Pgh., 20 May 1946, WD, DPR. Copied
24 July 1946.



58052-A.C.

430290

recovered
Chatter L-5

November 20, 2003

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Mr. Herb Mason
HQ AFSOC / HO
229 Cody Ave. - BLDG 90382
Hurlbert Field FL 32544-5312

Dear Herb:

Thank you for the information you shared today re the Hartman flight and the offer to send a CD of data. As promised, enclosed is a copy of the AAF document re the Peterson flight. This document was discovered with the assistance of Larry Wilson of the Air Space Museum when I visited the library years ago.

The URL for my site is - members.cox.net/eholmes333. Click on the History bar for the listings of "firsts" I've complied thus far. My emphasis has been mostly on Aeromedical uses. Again, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely:



E. M. Holmes, III

Enclosure

CBI Rescue History

1352nd Army Air Force Base Unit (ICD, ATC) (490 NY) - Mohanbari, India

1352nd AAFBU



Search & Rescue GI

KCTezgaon, India 20 Dec 44-? 45

Mohanbari, India ? 45-25 Dec 45

1382nd AAFBU (Search & Rescue) at Mingan Apt

10th Air Jungle Rescue Squadron

The first helicopter (a YR-4) at the 10th:

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by 1st Lt. Leo J. Kenney, Commanding Officer of the Air Jungle Rescue Unit of the Tenth Air Force,

escorted by two L-5's of the Air Jungle Rescue Unit

The first American helicopter saw action in Burma in late April 1944. Pilot Carter Harman was the first in any combat theater to evacuate an individual by helicopter. The experiment lasted about a month, according to Connor's research.

The 10th Air Force Air Jungle Rescue Unit operated in Burma in early 1945, and the 8th Emergency Rescue Squadron operated in China. The mission in China was to rescue pilots downed while flying transports over the Himalayan mountains. That unit in China rescued 43 people, Connor reports, but generally not under combat conditions.

American No.1 Air Commando Group and its Commanding Officer, Colonel Philip Cochrane. The unit had been formed specifically to work with Ord Wingate's Long Range Patrol Group, [\(24\)](#) and in June 1944 it already included four XR-4 helicopters in a total fleet of some 395 aircraft.

No.1 Air Commando's wartime employment of rotary-wing aviation in the first ever combat rescue, by US Army Lieutenant Carter Harman in an R.4B, of three British soldiers and a pilot from behind Japanese lines in March 1944.

Harman rescued a total of eighteen men from the jungle before the end of the war, a statistic also alluded to in the JICA report of September 1944, while another pilot, Lt. Murdock of the 10th Air Force Jungle Rescue Detachment, made numerous similar rescues.

Philippines: On June 16, 1945, the first R-6 helicopter arrived in the Philippine Islands, so Cowgill and another pilot left the 5th ARU ship to uncrate and construct the new machine. When Cowgill, as unit commander, flew the new helicopter to his ship late that day, he learned that fellow pilot Lt. Louis A. Carle performed several single-soldier rescue missions near Antipolo, Rizal Province, Luzon.

In the beginning weeks, when a plane was down, the first available transport crew went in the first available aircraft to conduct the search. This quickly proved unsatisfactory.

At Chabua, Capt. John L. "Blackie" Porter, a former stunt pilot, started "Blackie's Gang" with two C-47s. His gang carried Bren .30-caliber machine guns. The copilot carried one in his lap, while the other was kept in the cargo area. They sometimes carried Thompson machine guns and hand grenades. In 1943, virtually every rescue of crew members was due primarily to the efforts of Blackie's Gang. One of the first of Blackie's rescue missions was a search for the twenty crew members and passengers, including CBS correspondent Eric Sevareid.

After many such successes, the US created a special search-and-rescue organization with Captain Porter as its commander. He was lost in action in December 1943 while on a search mission.

Another area that needed improvement, as far as General Tunner was concerned, was the search-and-rescue capability, which he called "a cowboy operation." He appointed Maj. Donald C. Pricer, a Hump pilot, as commander of the unit and assigned to the job four B-25s, a C-47, and an L-5, all painted yellow. One of the first tasks was to pinpoint all known aircraft wrecks in the theater, the better to eliminate "duplication of work, for, after all, aluminum was scattered the length and breadth of the route."

It was during this period, moreover, that the helicopter was introduced into the theater and began to prove its potential as a rescue vehicle [see "*The Skyhook*," *July 1988 issue*, p. 104].
