



Vol. 1, No. 1

Published by India China Division, Air Transport
Command Jan. 18, 1945

Search, Rescue Squadron, Friend of Hump Crewmen



This shot conveys the incredibly rough terrain which is the province of Search & Rescue. The wreckage which has been located, shown by the circle, is dwarfed to nothingness by the 4-mile-high peak it rests on, one of thousands.



Panels dropped from a rescue plane spell out the story of tragedy for three crew members and request medical attention for a fourth. A doctor will jump from the next plane with necessities perhaps including blood plasma or even whole blood.

From thousands of square miles of jungle so dense that men may wander for days within the sound of each other's voices and be unable to join forces, and from the deepest gorges and highest peaks of Asia, the ICD's Search and Rescue Squadron now is bringing out to safety more than 75 percent of those who bail out or crash-land on Hump flights.

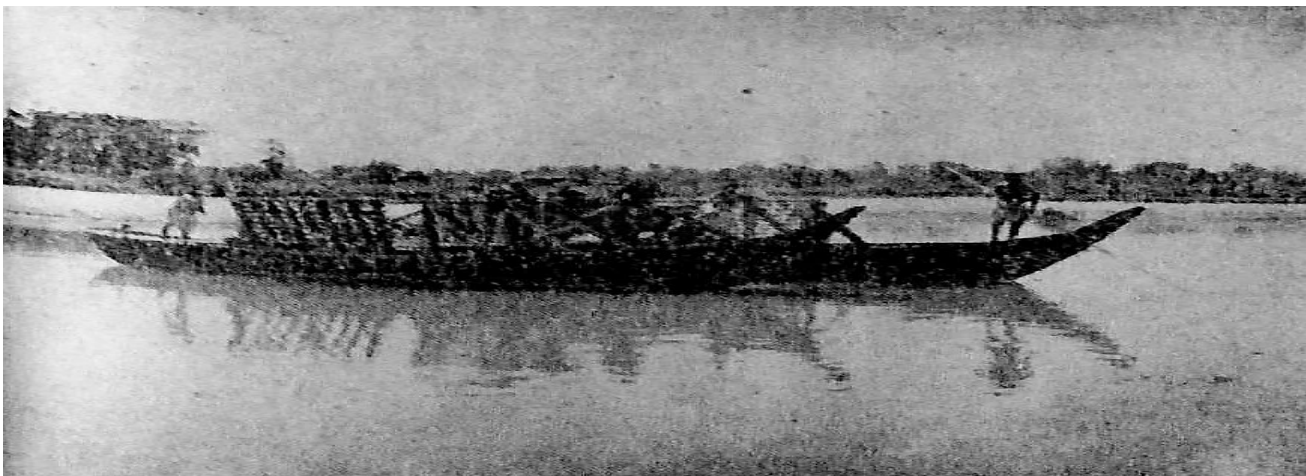
The squadron began, in a sense, when Hump flying began, but in the early days search for downed fliers was haphazard, limited by operational difficulties and lack of equipment. The famed "mass jump" of September, 1943, involving Eric Sevareid, of the Columbia Broadcasting System, several State Department representatives, and others, did much to stimulate innovation. Twenty of the 21 parachutists walked out alive, after a month of feverish anxiety. The innovations were retained and rapidly improved under the daring leadership of the late Capt. John L. Porter and his pioneering group, famed as "Blackie's Gang." Working hand in hand with Division Intelligence, they gradually spread through the Hump area a network of communications involving crew-sightings by regular Hump fliers, reports from aircraft warning stations, advice from combat supply and service units, and liaison with missionaries and other English-speaking residents, who in turn trained hill people to act as lookouts.

Fear of Jap interception and Jap ground patrols was a great bugaboo at the outset of Hump travel, as was lack of information on the native tribes, consequently dreaded. Today the tribesmen are known as mostly well-intentioned people, capable of genuine helpfulness to search missions, and the Jap menace has abated to the extent that the squadron may concentrate almost entirely on its ever-present enemy, the fearful terrain.

The photographs on this page, taken by ICD photographers, show some features of the thrilling work which goes on 24 hours a day to save the lives of scores of highly trained fliers sent out by ICD and other organizations to fly the Hump and forced down, by engine trouble or bad weather, in its "500 miles of hell."



Burmese making their way through nearly impassable jungle with supplies needed by survivors. Organization of ground parties to penetrate far into the jungle is a major duty of ground rescue officers at various "Hump-Springboard" stations of ICD.



Across a river in Burma a jeep is ferried to help in bringing through the wilderness a party of searchers. L-5's, bombers, horses, human backs, even a rubber life raft on one occasion, have been employed by searchers in bringing back bail-outs.
