



Jungle parachutists aim for the highest trees



A jungle survival expert downs a tasty bit. His pots: bamboo stems. His food: rattlesnake



Pararescue!

By GORDON F. LEE

A combination of aviation and woodslore has produced one of history's most rugged jobs

IN the pre-war days of flight when a plane crashed—or "went in" as the airmen put it—in some remote part of the world, a flyer had only his shocked wits between him and a nasty form of death.

Today that is old fashioned. No matter how rugged or wild the land where a plane might now go down, every survivor can and probably will be rescued. And the more rugged and wild the scene of his crash, the greater are the chances that his rescuers will be a bunch of airborne frontiersmen who have dubbed themselves Pararescue Teams.

This story really begins with a routine flight high over the Nicaraguan jungle a little more than a year ago. A B-17 carrying a bunch of young soldiers was heading for the United States.

The soldiers were bound for home and leave; but before they could reach those homes the fate which governs the lives of airmen suddenly stepped in and decided that 13 of the group were to become aviation heroes and two of them—aviation martyrs.

It's hard to explain most crashes. Investigators can poke among the ruins, pick out a few shattered instruments, and make some deductions. But they rarely can be certain. It's hard to explain this crash beyond saying that the pilot got some sort of warning and ordered his men to hit the silk.

Down to the Unknown

In a desperate game of follow the leader the soldiers plunged awkwardly through the bomb bays. Their last chute was hardly clear before the stricken

plane nosed down to rip through the matted trees and smash on the jungle floor.

Safely out of the plane the men drifted downward in a fairly straight line. For a few minutes it almost looked easy. And then the trees of the Nicaraguan jungle came jabbing upward, shattering into tiny pieces any illusions of ease.

The men had no woods training to speak of. They wore low city type shoes and carried no supplies. Gathering a vicious set of cuts and fractures as they came, they smashed through, onto the jungle floor or dangled helplessly in the trees where their chutes had caught.

The heat closed in. With three separate sunstrokes its waves felled one man three times as he struggled toward a survival kit. He never reached the kit.

With no company but his own shock-crazed mind and the haunting fear of animal attack, starvation and dehydration, each soldier hung or lay or sat in the jungle.

Within hours the outside world learned of the crash. From Panama and the entire southern United States rescue outfits moved into action. They gathered at Managua, Nicaragua, nearest base to the wreckage which had been located by air.

There was no time for the conventional style of fighting the tangled jungle. Among the crash victims were injured men whose careers, both military and mortal, would end long before the ground forces could cut halfway through to them.

The only path of rescue lay over the top of the jungle—and then down. The only man qualified for the

job was a "paradoctor", a combination physician and paratrooper.

Now comes the real hero of our yarn. You'll not see much of him, but of his work you'll hear plenty. He was Dr. Pope Holliday of the Fifth Rescue Squadron. On the second day of the crash he parachuted down to the wreckage. His battle during the next ten days to save the victims makes his log vivid historical reading.

Lines from a Doctor's Log

"Pilot extremely weak and dehydrated. . . no fluids for four and a half days except dew from leaves. . . well into shock. . . impossible to locate emergency kits dropped by 'chute because of density of jungle."

(Later) "Another survivor wandered into camp. . . had followed a small stream for days. . . food consisted of two crickets, several minnows. . . other survivors reached. . . one had lost desire to live. . . another never located."

When the mission ended with a score of two dead, 13 saved, the paradoctor made these conclusions:

"Highly important that contact be made with survivors at earliest possible moment. . . dense jungle offers many obstacles even though helicopter be used. . . Parachuting has proved to be the only effective means of overcoming these obstacles!"

And that is where our story takes shape. The dividing line between old standards of rescue and new is marked by that fatal crash in the Nicaraguan jungle, for it led almost directly to the founding of the first Pararescue Team.

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Today wherever the flying might be rough, wherever a downed pilot might face death, on the desert, in the jungle or in the mountain peaks, there is a team of parachuting rescue and survival specialists standing by only hours away. The teams belong to the Air Rescue Service of the United States Air Force. In this country there are teams stationed at Air Force Bases in Michigan, Florida, Massachusetts, Colorado, California, and the state of Washington. There are also Air Rescue activities in Africa, Europe and along the Canadian coastline.

Each Pararescue Team includes a doctor, two medical technicians, and two survival experts. These men are all former Scouts, athletes, woodsmen, or hunters—men who know the wilderness and how to make it yield food and protection. The teams are ready to jump over any crash, to care for its victims, and, even though it means living on birch bark or seaweed, to bring out those victims alive.

To train these teams the Air Rescue Service has classrooms spread across the wilds of three states. Jungle survival problems as tough as those to be found anywhere in the world are worked out in the unexplored Everglades of Florida. Wild wastelands as barren as those of the Sahara make up the desert training phase which is conducted near El Paso, Texas. And in the wind-swept peaks of the Rockies above timberline the teams get snow work as rugged as any to be found in the Arctic. In these three types of wilderness each team spends weeks eating the food and finding the shelter that each region has to offer.

Survival the Hard Way

When BOYS' LIFE learned of this rugged outdoor schoolroom, which seemed in many ways like an advanced course in Scouting, the editors thought it would make a story of real interest. When they found that one of the textbooks used in the course was a Scout Handbook, they knew they had a story.

A roving reporter who had the strange idea that it would be fun to eat snails, sleep in cactus beds and pitch his tent on a mountain sky hook, donned a pair of old pants. He boarded an Air Force plane and inside of one week had camped in the training sections of the jungle, the desert, and the mountains. Looking battered under his sunburn and rubbing a collection of aches and bites, he returned.

"Yeah, you can survive in those places," he groaned. "But take it from me, fellas, ya have to want to live awful bad to do it!"

Here's his tale:

Deep in the Everglades "Air Force 7191" came in low, buzzed an abandoned strip to scare a herd of half wild cattle off the runway, and then set down. Except for a squall that had caught us 10 feet above the runway at Tampa and had made us scot back up into the air with a blinded windshield, our trip from Washington had been perfect. We had flown "Victor Fox Roger." In Air Force lingo this means we could see the ground and trace our course by air maps held on our laps.

From the co-pilot seat I had watched Lieutenant McCarley, our young flyer, as he fingered the tiny dials that controlled our automatic pilot, and had listened in on the phones as he made hourly "position reports" to the landing fields which passed beneath us. Occasionally we would come to a rain squall. Then Mac would switch back to manual control and weave our twin engine C-45 in and around the billowing clouds like a soaring hawk.

Pararescue!

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Snake Bite or Lightning Bolt

But to get back to the Everglades. We set our plane down on the deserted strip and taxied off onto a soggy field where we chocked the plane against any winds which might come up. A guide who looked more like Daniel Boone than a soldier was waiting for us. We plodded down a dirt road that rapidly faded into a low grade path through the swampland.

Presently we stopped. Overhead a vulture was circling. On each side of the path there were black puddles. Dead bunches of moss hung from the trees. "Nearly there," said the guide.

"Nearly where?" I asked innocently. So far as I could see we were standing in a backdrop for a Dracula movie.

"Camp," said the guide. He handed me a web belt from which a machete hung. "Put it on," he said. "The machete is your best pal out here."

That was when the first Everglade mosquito struck. I had been squatting on one heel, and the seat of my trousers, drawn tight, offered a splendid target.

ANOTHER feature about PARARESCUE work will appear next month. Don't miss the story of an Air Rescue search and of camping in the country where you roast in the daytime and freeze at night in the desert air.

Like other Everglade mosquitoes I was to meet intimately during the next several hours, this one was rocket equipped and wired for sound. Like a shot I straightened and clapped a hand to the wound. The jungle was growing dark. It was then that I felt the first twinge of doubt over this survival business.

"Look, Mac," I said hopefully. "How about a good air-cooled room back in Tampa? We can get a nice cool glass of lemonade and you can tell me all about Tarzan and this jungle life and—"

Mac was firm. He said, "No."

"But suppose a snake gets us or something!" I squeaked.

The guide was without mercy. "More chance of being hit by lightning than of getting snake bites!" Safact."

A Jungle Spread

This was small comfort but we moved on. By the time we had slushed through the last puddle supper was ready. Camp looked like a scene out of Robinson Crusoe. The men were whiskey. In the shadows was a thatched shelter. Set upright in the fire were tall cylinders which turned out to be the only cooking pots in camp. They were sections of bamboo stalk.

"We start off with an *hors d'oeuvre* of coleslaw," said a woodsman, filling my mess kit with what looked like chopped cabbage. I tasted it. It was cabbage!

"Right out of the palm tree," said the cook. "We call it the cabbage palm. Dig it out of the stalk and cook it or eat it raw."

Next on the menu was the meat dish. "How about a little jungle salt?" I cracked.

Someone held out a paper on which there was a dark powder. I tasted it. Salt! "Charcoal from palm fronds."

"Okay, Chef," I said. "Now gimme some pepper." I was going to catch these boys yet.

"Pepper coming up," was the reply.

Another paper was handed me. Sure enough the black powder tasted like pepper. It had been made from burned bamboo.

The meat had an outdoorish tang. After the long plane ride I was really digging in. "Good," I muttered around a mouthful. "What is it?"

Our guide poked at the fire. "Rattlesnake," he said quietly.

I choked on my mouthful and my mighty appetite fled. The Pararescue man was a little hurt. "Gosh, if you think that's bad, you ought to taste water moccasin," he said.

Other choice items on our menu were water hyacinth which tasted like asparagus, snail broth which tasted like snail broth, frog legs, possum, and alligator tail.

Supper over, we settled down, swung at mosquitoes, and relaxed. I was amazed that so many jungle plants were edible. "How about poisoning?" I asked.

"Just follow the triple rule," was the answer. "Any plant can be eaten unless it has a bitter taste, a soapy taste or discolored juices."

I whipped out a notebook. "Tell me more," I demanded. "Gimme some jungle slogans."

In a matter of minutes I had crammed my notebook with easy sounding phrases that had cost years of misery and scores of lives to put into words. Here are just a few:

"The greatest killer is fear. Even if it means lying down and closing your eyes, force yourself to be calm. Purify all jungle water by boiling, using halizone or iodine drops. Keep mosquitoes away even if it means wrapping in a hot blanket."

"Cook all fresh water animals. Salt water plants and most salt water animals are edible raw. Any fur bearer is edible but should be cooked in case it has been a scavenger."

The 'Gator Grunts

We finally knocked off, for a night alligator hunt was scheduled. The last thing I wanted was to poke around in those black swamps stirring up sabre-toothed bulls, but I gave a brave, hollow laugh and out into the sluggish bayou we tramped.

Now when you're hunting 'gators, you creep along the edge of the stream with a spot light worn on your forehead. When you hear the deep grunt of a 'gator, you flash your light in his direction. If the beam catches his eye, it will reflect like the amber lens of an automobile fog lantern, giving you a momentary target.

We had over-under guns, rifle on top and shotgun on the bottom. Like a troop of ghosts we crept along the marshes. The stars were covered by light clouds—ideal for the hunt. For an hour we saw nothing. I was about to relax when at my heels there sounded a deep rumbling grunt that four hundred bullfrogs all straining at once couldn't equal. It was a 'gator.

I didn't drag any monster out of his lair by the tail, but I did the next best thing and during our prowl managed to dig interesting information from each member of the team. Each one was a real naturalist with a knowledge of the jungle that never came from books.

Each was a volunteer in this pararescue business and as enthusiastic about it as a kid on the last day of school. They told me that for both jumping and camping they preferred the jungle to mountain or desert. The tall trees make for idea jumps. The chute catches high in the branches and allows the jumper to leave

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himself on a 75-foot rope which is carried in the leg pocket of each jump suit.

Before joining the Pararescue Team, they said, each man had been through the Paratrooper School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Then, using the methods of the famous Forest Service “Smokejumpers,” each had taken specialized training until he could hit a 200-foot target from a jump 1200 feet up.

An expert, they said, would find the jungle to be the easiest place in the world for survival. For the beginner, though, with the ever present dangers of heat exhaustion, animals, and panic,

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the jungle could be deadly. A crash victim who wished to avoid a short cut to death would always follow certain rules of jungle etiquette, they said. He would always stop traveling before dark. He would keep far enough away from water to avoid the denser swarms of mosquitoes. And he would never follow game trails. Certain animals, it seems are touchy over trail ownership and resent very keenly any intrusion.

Well bushed, we all returned to camp. We spent a good night in the swaying jungle hammocks in spite of the mosquitoes whining outside the screening.

Build Strong Muscles

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for your neck muscles if you try to shift your position so that your chest faces the ground. But you must make the turn without the aid of your hands.

Limbering Up Drills

Another of their favorite maneuvers seemed to be the one-legged stork squat. Perhaps you remember this one. To do it, you stand erect, raise one leg out straight before you and bend slowly to assume a sitting-on-your-haunches position similar to a catcher's squat. Then, raise yourself back to the standing position again, balanced on one foot all the time. Repeat this exercise with the other leg extended out before you. This again is a fine limbering up drill and a builder of most of the leg and torso muscles.

If you are an athlete who needs loosening up work, try doing the “over the hurdles” sit. It is the position in which a good hurdler clears the bars, but you do it right on the ground, with one leg curled back under you and the other leg extended out on the grass in front of you. If you vary this by bending forward several times you will also give your abdominal muscles a bit of additional exercise.

Many outstanding athletes had developed such tremendous stomach muscles that they gave the appearance of softness. One of the most famous of such men was Turk Edwards, a tremendous tackle in college, and the terror of pro football for a great number of years. He is now coaching at Washington.

One newcomer to professional football ranks had heard many stories about Turk's prowess. Consequently at his first sight of Edwards, the new fellow was somewhat disappointed. “Why, he's nothing but a fat man,” the rookie told his teammates, “I can handle him easily.”

Several plays later he called for some help in a huddle.

“I'm blocking the whole left side of the Washington line,” he complained.

“What do you mean, you're not even taking care of Turk Edwards,” his outraged teammates objected.

“Well, who do you think is the left side of their line,” the chastened end replied.

Turk Edwards was deceptively fast and agile and no one who knew him ever took him lightly. At any rate, it was not a mistake which a player was liable to make twice—if he survived the first experience.

Fabulous Bronko

Of the same type was the fabulous Bronko Nagurski, who doubled as tackle and back, winning All-American mention in both positions. His muscular development was up high and, to the unpracticed eye, it might look as though he had a stomach hanging over his belt. But it was all muscle as any man who played against

him can testify. He had speed to go along with that brawn and was an all-time great in the football hall of fame. He was an outstandingly powerful man in an era full of powerful players.

Bronko Nagurski came from the farming country of Minnesota. A man who played against him once gave directions for locating the Bronk. He told a news writer, “Just go out to Minnesota and every time you see a fellow working in the fields, ask him for directions to the nearest town. If he points with the plow, that's Nagurski!”

Men like Edwards and Nagurski are blessed with a tremendous physique to begin with. Yet even they need regular training habits for conditioning themselves to peak playing efficiency. They only emphasize the necessity for an individual program for every athlete.

Special Drills for All

A passer or punter needs different conditioning from a guard. Even two punters may need a different set of training rules. One may have hyperacidity in his system and be stiff every time he comes on the playing field. Some kickers I have seen needed 20 minutes of warming up before they even touched a football. Then they would begin tapping the ball with their foot—barely kicking it for 20 yards, and gradually increase this effort until they were getting the maximum distance. I have always encouraged this kind of care for the benefit of the individual. It helps to control the power by sharpening accuracy. After all, it isn't how hard you can throw or kick a ball—it's where you throw or kick it that counts.

On this question of warming up, you must bear in mind the example of athletes such as Glenn Cunningham who warmed up for a length of time which would completely exhaust the average athlete. Find out by experimentation just how much warming up you need to do your best work, and stick to the schedule which is best for you.

If you lack physical development to begin with, then you must exercise over a long period to build your muscles before participating too violently in competitive sports activity. Most boys seem to have trouble finding an exercise for use in strengthening the muscles of the neck. I have found through years of use that there is no better way to build your neck muscles than to use the principle of resistance. Stand before a friend, have him place the palm of his hand against your forehead, and press your head against the resistance of his hand. Then, have him do the same for the right side of your head, then back of your head, and finally the left side of your head. One of my football players gained two collar sizes in one year through the use of this training technique. You can use the pressure of your own hand working alone.

Early next morning after the last mosquito had got in his last nip we returned to the abandoned strip. “Air Force 7191” roared down the runway, took off and headed over the Gulf of Mexico for the desert country of Texas.

Until now our trip had been without mishap, but the moment we landed at Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, we found an atmosphere of tension. Four Navy jets which had taken off for California were an hour overdue. The Air Rescue Service had been alerted. When we entered the operations room, the preliminary search was just getting under way.

Resistive exercising can put muscle on any part of your body. The legs may be developed by lying flat on your back, drawing the legs up against your chest, and having a teammate lean against them. Now, your job is to push his weight straight up by lifting your legs. Finish by lowering him slowly back to the original position.

The Resistive Exercises

For the development of the torso and arms there is a fine series of exercises which you can do almost anywhere when you have a few minutes to spare. Simply place your right fist into the palm of your left hand and push hard, trying to drive one hand through the other. Then, reverse the procedure, pushing with your left fist into the palm of your right hand. As you push, allow your hands and elbows to drift high, then low in front of your body so that the strain is first on your chest, then abdominal muscles.

Now, work on the opposing set of muscles by gripping your right wrist with your left hand and pulling as hard as you can, trying to break your own grip. Repeat with the right hand doing the gripping. You can see that you are using your own strength to build your muscles.

Repeat these exercises behind your back to get some work for your back muscles and some additional work for the less frequently used muscles in the back of your upper arm. Some of the better known professional strong men swear by these exercises, claiming to have used them from boyhood to build the magnificent physiques you see pictured in magazine advertisements. Of course, I want you to realize that I am not advocating that you become that type of strong man. I feel that the most impressive set of muscles in the world are useless without speed, maneuverability, coordination, and agility. You can only become a well balanced athlete and man by working on all aspects of physical development at the same time.

Competitive Spirit

Finally, I want to stress again the quality of competitive spirit. I have noticed in friendly competition against football coaches like Tuss McLaughrey of Dartmouth, and Dick Harlow, that they are great competitors. In playing handball, golf, or squash they are just as aggressive and determined to win as they are in coaching football. It is just the healthy man's desire to get the most out of what he is doing. Even though they are not champions in the particular game they are playing at the moment, they play to win because they don't like to lose. I'm in favor of boys not liking to lose. It makes them try harder to achieve the really worthwhile things in life.

Pararescue!

By GORDON LEE

Out in the land where life is measured by the amount of water in a canteen, four jet planes disappeared from a trackless sky.

THREE pilots were gathered around a large wall map in the Operations Room of Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, Texas. Beside them a radio "squawk box" crackled with a steady flow of static and occasionally barked out a short message.

A fourth pilot, seated at a desk, muttered into a phone. He didn't seem to be getting happy news. There was a tight feeling in the air. Occasionally the windows would shake as a heavy plane took off, all propellers biting in huge chunks of air, over our heads.

I cornered a man and asked what was going on. In an undertone he gave me a rapid briefing. It went like this:

At Air Force headquarters in Washington there is an outfit known as the Flight Service. Every military plane, before taking off on a cross country trip, must file a "flight plan" telling its destination, amount of fuel and estimated length of hop. These plans go direct to the Service.

During flight each plane calls the nearest ground station every hour to give a "position report." This information also is forwarded to the Flight Service so that at any given minute that outfit knows the exact location of every plane in the air.

Now then, should any plane fail to give a position report, or fail to announce its safe arrival at destination, Flight Service begins to worry. If an hour goes by with still no word, the Service will call on the radio squawk box we had seen and alert the Air Rescue Service. The squawk box was part of an open circuit guarded 24 hours a day and reaching across the country to connect each Air Force Base and Air Rescue outfit. The circuit bears the mysterious title of "Plan 62."

This was where we came in. Four Navy jets which had taken off for California were now an hour and 15 minutes overdue. I looked around, expecting to see pararescue teams adjusting their picturesque helmets and pilots dashing out of ready rooms like in the movies. I was a little disappointed at the quietness of the room, especially when four flyers might be dying "out there" some place. I spoke of it to Mac, our pilot on this 15,000 mile aerial survey of the Rescue Service.

"This is one outfit that doesn't rush!" Mac spoke with emphasis. "Where do you want them to rush to?" he asked and then went on without waiting for any wild answer I might give. "Between here and California there are thousands of square miles. The jets may be down in any of four states. We can't begin an air search on such little information. And we won't send a pararescue team barreling off in one direction till we're mighty sure their real mission isn't 500 miles the other way."

Bakersfield Negative

"Well, what then?" I asked, feeling properly rebuked. Mac pushed his cap back on a wet forehead. "Right now we're calling each field between here and their destination. We're finding out what sort of guy the leader of those planes was. If we don't get word of some sort soon, we'll ask radio stations and newspapers to send out bulletins. We're alerting the search teams here and getting our equipment ready."

The officer on the phone paused a minute. His face was streaked with dust and sweat. "Bakersfield, negative," he muttered. He wiped his hand on his trousers and picked up the phone again. "What will you do if it gets dark?" I asked Mac.

"Wait," was his reply. "Without definite information on where a plane might be, a night search out here is mighty tough. All you can look for is a fire of some sort and you'd be surprised at the number of fires you find in strange places at night time. We'd wear ourselves out chasing false leads."

Mac went on. "Tomorrow morning, if we're still heard nothing, we'll start an air search. At the same time our boys take off, planes from Hamilton and March Fields in California will get into the air. Before we're through, we may have (To page 45)

Above: Pararescue teams pack nylon let-down ropes then stand inspection before jump at crash scene.

Left: A desert camp. Simple tarp tent offers all that crash victim needs: sunshade and windbreak.



a rope ladder that fluttered from the rail high above.

"Fend off," he called to Micky. "We'll bounce against her sides if we're not careful."

Micky obediently grabbed the boat hook and held the *Pelican* away. One by one the wet, shivering fishermen stumbled to the side and grabbed the ladder. Each one before he climbed slowly upward turned to Tip and smiled, half sadly. "Thanks, mister."

And Tip, at ease for the first time in many hours, smiled back and nodded.

"Smoother seas next time. We may be needing you some day, you know." When the last one was safely aboard, the officer again spoke to Tip.

"Well done, *Pelican*. That was handy work. We'll report you by radio."

He lowered the megaphone, stepped back two paces from the rail and saluted primly. The screw of the *Manitoba* churned and the freighter turned toward Seattle. As she stood away from the *Pelican* three short blasts from her whistle gave Tip and his ship the traditional salute of passing ships but added honor was the dipped ensign.

"That's for us, mister," Micky grinned up at Tip. "Kind of makes your heart turn over, uh?"

Tip only nodded and turned back to the wheel to follow in the wake of the disappearing freighter. His face was haggard and his eyes were bloodshot from lack of sleep and hours at the wheel.

The excitement which had sustained him so long was gone.

"Rustle some chow," he suggested to Micky, tiredly. "Make it sandwiches of canned meat and some fruit. We can eat it standing up."

Micky nodded agreement and in a few minutes had the food ready. The trio of guests, strangely silent in the cockpit, ate gratefully. Too weary to talk, Micky leaned against the pilothouse bulkhead and munched away with Tip. Suddenly startling them from their drowsiness, the radio crackled into life.

KEPA CALLING THE PELICAN. ATTENTION THE PELICAN. THE MANITOBA JUST REPORTED YOU. THANKS PELICAN. FINE WORK. CAPTAIN COURT. COAST GUARD AND HARBOR PATROL EXTEND THEIR THANKS. KEPA SEATTLE.

Tip almost dropped his sandwich in surprise.

"Jumping jib booms," Micky exclaimed, "you're famous people now!"

Tip swallowed hard and something that looked suspiciously like tears from tired eyes were quickly brushed away. "Shut up," he muttered sheepishly, "let's get home."

The return trip seemed endless but the canal locks finally loomed up and the *Pelican* entered.

"Hey, you," Swede Lundeen, head tender, called down to Tip. "I heard about you over the radio. All the radios in town got it on and the paper'll be full of it tonight! Some goin', I say, mister!"

Micky climbed to the deck and shouted

back to their old friend. "He's modest and won't talk."

Lundeen grinned widely and the *Pelican* left him behind to run through Salmon Bay to Lake Union where in the shadow of an old four-masted schooner Tip warped into berth. Avoiding the eyes of the boys, Lee, Roberts and Lawson gathered up their duffel and jumped to the float as the bow touched. Micky followed with mooring lines and Tip cut the engine.

He stuck his head from the pilothouse window, and calling to the men, mustering as cheerful a grin as he could.

"So long. Sorry it wasn't more pleasant."

The men dropped their luggage to the float and snapped to attention smiling. Their hands went up together in nautical salutes.

Even as the astonished boy, eyes gleaming, returned the salute, he heard them chorus:

"Hi, sailor!"

With smiles of comradeship and admiration they saluted again, waved jauntily and hurried away.

Surprised and pleased by the tribute, Tip gazed after them. Under his breath he told himself, "They called me sailor!" Then alert again, cap at rakish angle on his head, he shouted to the staring Micky. "Shine everything up in Bristol fashion, mister, we're going ashore."

"Aye, aye, sir," Micky returned. And two grinning boys moved briskly.

Pararescue!

(Continued from page 15)

equipment all the way from Westover Field in Massachusetts."

The feelers of the Rescue Service were at work on a thousand mile front, and for the moment there was nothing we in this hot little room could do but count the minutes. This was the famous "sweating it out" process.

"How about civilian planes?" I asked Mac, trying to break the heavy silence. "You fellas look for them, too?"

"Bet your life we do!" he said. "Our job is air rescue no matter who or what's gone down."

He walked to the wall map. Between us and California the map showed vast stretches of empty space.

"Sometimes there are 70 planes in on a search," he went on. "We hit the high spots first—mountain peaks and large areas—with large planes like C-47s and converted B-17s. Then we break the areas into sections for a detailed search with L-5s and with H-5s, the 'copters. We work with the Scouts, the Civil Air Patrol, and the sheriff's office, the National Ski Patrol, and just about every kind of rescue outfit there is."

"Fresno negative," the officer on the phone made another check on his list. "Looks like you reporters might get a real story here," Mac said grimly.

Another plane thundered overhead and then there was silence. I was digesting all this new information. "Why do you care what sort of bird the pilot is?" I asked.

"We play detective," Mac said. "We find out what the weather was like over the pilot's course. We check up on how good a pilot he was. We find out whether or not he was a daredevil, and we add it all up."

He'd Had It

"I can give you a good example," Mac went on. "Back in Tennessee last year a civilian AT-6 was missing. We checked and found that during the war the flyer had been a fighter pilot. His friends said he was a regular 'Hot Shot Charlie.' He'd just finished fighting a duel as a

matter of fact—that sort of guy. The weather was low that day, and after checking a few more facts, we decided the flyer'd be just cocky enough to try running under the low ceiling. We checked the nearest high peaks on our maps. When our planes got into the air, we knew where to search. Spotted him in 20 minutes."

"Alive?"

Mac shook his head. "He'd had it." In Air Force jargon that meant the flyer was dead.

"Small civilian planes like that are troublesome," Mac continued. "They don't file flight plans. Nobody knows where the pilot took off for, and sometimes nobody misses him for several days or a week. . ."

This Stuff Is Rugged

Just then there was an explosion at the duty officer's desk. The captain slammed the phone on its receiver, raised both fists into the air and howled a howl of pure rage. In a minute the entire office was in an uproar. A sergeant interpreted for me.

"Found the jets!" he shouted over the noise. "The captain's mad because they'd been safe all this time but hadn't filed an arrival report from the emergency field where they put down. Some vocabulary, huh!"

The captain's language, we could see, was mostly a sign of relief. The tension which had gripped the entire room was swept away with the force of his shouts. More than half of Air Rescue's alerts end in this fashion but the grim tragedies in which the remaining alerts often result more than make up for the false alarms.

That afternoon we headed out for a touch of desert camp life. We hadn't far to go. The desert is in El Paso's back yard.

It was hot, hotter than the jungle in which I had spent my first days with the Air Rescue Service. But there were no supersonic mosquitoes. As our jeep caravan jolted along one of those desert

trails that come from nowhere and seem to be going the same place, I asked one of the survival men just what he meant by the word "desert."

"Well, this is desert," he said. "See those six-foot tufts of grass with the sand piled up around them? Those are boondocks. We call this area 'boondock desert'. But whether you're in lava areas, arid mountain tops or out in the dunes of the Sahara, you'll get roughly the same conditions as you find here."

I asked him about the chief dangers for a man on foot in the desert.

"Heat exhaustion, mostly," the expert said. "Then comes blindness from sun and blowing sand, overindulgence in food and water while the supply lasts, and, of course, there's always fear. I've seen fear shatter men completely out here. This stuff is rugged. It'll eat you up."

"But how about cactus plants?" I asked. "I've always heard that there is enough water there to keep a man alive indefinitely."

My informant, who was sort of a military Gabby Hayes, grinned. "You've been hearing the wrong things," he said. "Might get a moist chew or two from cactus, but without real water out here, you'll be a dead man in 24 hours. As an absolute minimum, we figure on a canteen a day per man."

"Not much to go on," I was getting thirsty already. "Any tricks to getting along on so little?"

"Easy when you're used to it," he answered. "The trick is to drink only early in the morning and late in the afternoon when your body holds the moisture longer."

The Handy Yucca

The jeep came to a bumping halt and we stepped out into the blinding light of a white wilderness. We could easily have been in the heart of the Sahara. I was glad for my "surplus" sunglasses. Of course, we had been briefed on how to make an emergency pair by cutting slits in cloth and tying it across your eyes like a bandage, but after all the grim

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Pararescue!

By GORDON LEE

Your BOYS' LIFE reporter takes part in the rugged and very grim adventure of locating a plane that had crashed during the winter and helps paint a big yellow X on the rock where the bodies were found

WE circled Denver and dropped down onto the strip at Lowry Air Force Base ending our flight from El Paso. As we taxied toward the Air Rescue Service buildings, we could see signs of hurried activity. A "weasel," sort of an open-air tank, was being loaded onto a ten wheel truck. A group of men were tossing heavy packs into another truck and on the outskirts of the group, looking like a busy mother hen trying to round up a brood of wanderers, buzzed a busy jeep.

We hurried into the Rescue Control office and were whisked into a sort of ready room. An officer stood on a small platform before a large map of the surrounding mountain area and as he spoke to the gathering of rugged men before him, we were able to piece together the reasons for the frenzied preparation outside.

Last December, he said, a dramatic but grim radio conversation had taken place. A DC-3, flying over a particularly treacherous stretch of the Rockies, had called in to report severe turbulence.

The ground radio had called back, asking for a position report. It got this answer, "My position is . . . !"

Whether the pilot chose just the wrong moment to glance at his maps or whether an unusually strong downdraft picked just that second to suck him to destruction, no one ever knew. The plane could not be contacted again, and it was assumed that it had crashed.

Immediately after this the weather "socked in." For three days howling blizzards kept all planes on the ground. High in the peaks where the missing plane was estimated to have come to grief, 36 inches of snow fell. When the skies cleared, search planes immediately took to the air. Although the supposed victim was a civilian craft, the Air Rescue Service worked as long and as hard as any other search group. But nothing was found. It was finally agreed that what wreckage might be left of the ill-fated plane was buried under snow which would not thin off till spring.

That was where we entered the picture. For now spring had come and only hours before our arrival a wandering flyer had spotted wreckage high on Navaho Peak, due west of Denver.

The wreckage was fresh. This means its location was not marked by a little tab on the wall maps of the Air Rescue Service where complete information on

every known wreck is kept. The Service also paints large yellow crosses over old wreckage so that search planes, spotting it from the air, will not think they have come upon a new accident scene. There were no yellow crosses on the wreckage just found.

Navaho Peak is a snow-capped giant of some 13,000 feet, its rocky heights obscured alternately by dense fog and sudden blizzards, whipped along by 60-knot winds. For rescue work, the wreck couldn't have happened in a worse spot. It was reported to have occurred in a chimney-like hollow some hundred feet down from the very peak.

Because violent weather prevented parachuting, land rescue teams were going to have to work their way up along knife-like rock edges which led from halfway up the mountain.

The briefing ended and we clumped from the ready room with newly acquired mountain ski boots feeling like lead weights on our feet. The gear had already been loaded and in a matter of minutes we were roaring out of the base in a caravan consisting of one radio equipped jeep and the two trucks, one carrying the weasel. The trucks would go as far as possible and then unload the weasel which, with its tank-like treads, would be able to inch along over terrain where no other machine could venture.

A Rescue Mission Begins

We climbed the winding mountain roads rapidly, passing through scattered showers and rumbling past tourists who peered from their car windows at our grim procession.

We thundered through the town of Nederland, a sleepy clump of wooden buildings with false fronts, looking like a movie cow town. In its high mountain valley it nestled dejectedly and seemed to be dreaming of its past as a rip-roaring silver mine town. At any other time I'd have liked to stop to prowling its streets and snoop into some of its dusty stores, but today we stopped barely long enough to gas before moving on.

Then we were above timberline. The trucks spread out over the dead rocky country, growling in low gear around hairpin turns that hung 10,000 feet over nothing and which had me gasping (To page 52)



High above timberline a jeep-towed radio trailer provides contact between land and aerial rescue teams.



A land rescue party battles heavy snow during search for a pathway to the fatal mountaintop crash scene.



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Pararescue!

(Concluded from page 13)

more than once for the door.

Our driver was a cocky little sergeant who carried a knife in his paratroop boot and a row of combat ribbons across his chest. He handled the giant machine like a veteran. During a quiet stretch of roadway I asked just how he had joined up with this restless outfit.

World-wide Guide

The sergeant grinned. He threaded the truck along a crumbling stretch of road which seemed pasted to the side of an almost vertical drop. "I come from Canada," he said finally. "Been in the woods all my life and I like it."

He paused as the rear wheels hit a slippery boulder. The truck skidded till the outer tire of one double wheel dangled over empty space. I was half-way out the door, but there was no place to jump to. I gritted my teeth and pushed back into the bucket seat.

The truck straightened itself and the sergeant continued as though nothing had happened. "I want to be a world-wide guide, a man ready to lead expeditions up the Congo or into arctic tundra country—or any wilderness region in the world. Way I see it, this outfit is one of the best training courses I could get. I've had jungle, desert and arctic camping experience all thrown at me at once and by real woodsmen."

As we drove, I looked back through the rear window at the packs in our truck. Among the Army rucksacks I spotted several packs on frames which bore the seal of the Boy Scouts of America. This wasn't the only piece of Scout equipment I met up with during my tour of the Air Rescue Service. Several chutists preferred the Scout cook kit over their own. And back in the jungle, earlier on our trek, we had found many a rescue man who swore by the Scout snake bite kit.

Death in the Peaks

At the base of the cliff we made a permanent camp. From here we tried for three backbreaking days to fight our way up to the scene of the crash. Fog cut our vision to less than 40 feet. The slippery, almost vertical rock slabs were deadly.

On two o'clock of the third day the weasel battled to a position about a mile from the supposed wreck scene. It could go no further. The ground team piled out and inched on upward by foot. At four o'clock they reached the chimney.

What they found was far from pleasant. For two hundred yards up and down the crevasse wreckage was strewn. The crash had been so violent that it was difficult to identify any part of the plane except for one propeller that leaned from a pile of rubble like a lopsided monument.

Our mission was ended. We had learned the last half of that position report which had broken off in the middle seven months before.

Working down the slopes the team located the bodies, not a very pleasant experience especially for your Boys' Life reporter. With ropes they lowered them down the cliffsides, not daring to relax for a second lest one turned ankle increase the already grim tragedy. Before they left the chimney, they broke out a large tin of deep yellow paint. A rescue man climbed a large boulder and on its top, where it could be seen by any plane flying overhead, he painted a large yellow "X." Another pin point marker was ready to go up on the wall maps of the Rescue Service.

No one was very talkative, and it was

not until hours later that we felt like resuming the subject of mountain survival lore.

I found the favorite shelter of the mountain chutists to be a paratepee which is just what it sounds like—a tepee made from parachute silk. Next in preference came a snow drift cave, which could be scooped out in four minutes time and which with a tiny fire, could be surprisingly comfortable.

Below timberline a desperate mountaineer can always dig a trench, climb in and cover himself with pine boughs. Above the line he has to find shelter in the lee side of boulders.

Remembering the priceless value which the jungle had placed on his machette, and the desert man on his shoes, I asked what one single item was most vital in the peaks. The answer was unanimous. A wind break. Icy timberline or arctic blasts are easily capable of stealing a man's insulation and of freezing him on the spot.

Avoid the Great Killer

Like the jungle and desert men, too, the mountaineers have their rule book. Here are a few extracts: "Conserve your strength. In the thin air of the high altitudes it's easily spent. Even though you feel no thirst, drink water heavily. Whenever you pause for a break, start melting snow for drinking water. Even though you feel no moisture your sweat on a mountain top just as profusely as in the jungle."

If a Pararescue Team has jumped in the high peaks, it does not attempt to bring out survivors. Its job is to keep those survivors alive at the scene of the wreckage and to wait for a Land Rescue Team to make its way up from the bottom. The reason for this is simple. Seen from above, with its treacherous gullies and chimneys hidden, a mountain side looks easy to descend—fatally easy. Only the ground team which has inched its way up from the bottom can chart a safe route back down again.

The rules for a flyer who might become an arctic or mountain crash victim are fairly clear cut. He must stick by the wreckage. If he has jumped and has seen his plane go in, he should make every effort to reach it. This is because it is much easier to spot a crashed plane from the air than it is to find one lone man. The flyer should make smoke signals and should mark his location by laying out regular patterns in the snow with pine boughs. And finally, above all, of course, he must avoid the great killer—whether it's in the jungle, desert, or mountain—fear.

Shortly after that our mountain trek ended. For my soft bones it was none too soon. You can't dig a hip hole in the slopes of the Rockies. They dig hip holes in you. And then there's the wind. Our first night's camp had a violent interruption for me when a playful 60-knot gust ballooned my tent, ripped it out by the pegs and carried it and me on a mad, bouncing trip down the slopes of

the unfriendly Rocky Mountains.

We mounted our trucks and started back down the tortuous roadway. I sat next to a husky chutist whose neck measured some 19 inches. In our discussion of the hazards of mountain jumping he told me that the team sometimes had to jump down below timberline where there were trees large enough to break the force of the fall. Then they would climb back to the crash scene.

"How do you get out of the plane?" I asked. "Do you draw straws or push the smallest guy out first?"

Buffalo Air Lift

The jumper grinned. "It's a science," he said. "You see, in each team there's a jumpmaster who takes command of the plane, pilot and all when they come over the crash. He leans from the open doorway of the plane and drops three spotter chutes to test wind direction and velocity. When he's set, the jumpmaster tells the pilot just when to cut his engines. He taps each man when it's his turn to go, and usually he himself is the last one to jump."

"Get many wild jobs in this outfit?" I asked.

"We get all the wild ones. During the Big Horn National Forest fire we dropped supplies to the fighters. During the Florida hurricane we came down to give first aid at each field as soon as the storm had left it. And when the floods were breaking in Oregon, it was our gang that rode the dikes in radio jeeps to report break-throughs."

The Sergeant was a former Scout. "We still do good turns," he said. "Our latest was dropping hay to starving buffalo last year on their winter range. We were picking hay from our ears for a week."

Our return to Lowry was uneventful. We climbed back into faithful old Air Force 7191 and flew instrument from Denver back to Washington, D. C. where our aerial 15,000 mile survey of the Air Rescue Service came to an end.

But I didn't stop hearing from the outfit. Three times since our journey they have made headlines in every paper across the country. There was the dramatic pick-up of the downed airmen from a Greenland ice pack. There was the aerial mercy work when blizzards smashed normal communications through the central west and there was the International Air Show rescue at Idlewild Airport in New York.

This last was one of the most spectacular. A Pararescue Team was circling the giant new airport ready to make a demonstration jump before thousands of spectators. Just before their stunt on the schedule a low flying photographic plane crashed on the strip. An ambulance set out at once for the downed plane, but before it was halfway there, the Pararescue Team in perfect Drop formation had come down and pulled the flyers from the burning wreckage.

It wasn't part of the schedule. They jumped because of habit, the habit of the Air Rescue Service of helping those in need wherever disaster strikes, whether it's in the heart of the wilderness or, as in this case, only 15 miles from the largest city in the world.

Another Angle to Angling

(Continued from page 8)

sold right there on fly fishing. Most of them forget about worms, grasshoppers, spinners and what have you and concentrate on those delicate feathered lures. And by the time they are ready to move on up the valley into the mountains at Camp Abreu they have all caught their first trout on flies and are fast becoming

ardent anglers.

At Abreu where the stream comes tumbling out of the canyon the fishing is even better. The stream is stronger and so are the fish. There are more of them, too, and the hiding places they seek out behind boulders are more numerous and therefore the trout are protected