

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

HONOLULU, HAWAII, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1960 ★★★★★

Waves Delay Nose Cone's Recovery; 'Copter Ready

Sea conditions were too rough to attempt recovery of the Discoverer XV nose cone by a parachute team or by amphibian plane today.

It appeared that a helicopter from the ship Dalton Victory would be picked for the job.

Lieutenant Colonel T. A. Ahola, commander of the recovery operation of the in-

strument capsule floating in the Pacific, radioed officials at Hickam Air Force Base that aircraft circling the area were keeping an eye on the nose cone pending the Dalton Victory's arrival.

The capsule is floating in the sea 200 miles north of Christmas Island and 950 miles south of Hawaii.

The Dalton Victory, a Pa-

cific Missile Range recovery ship, is steaming at 17 knots toward the area in which the capsule fell yesterday.

The ship was expected to be within helicopter flying range of the capsule about 4 p.m. Hawaiian time.

MEDAL WINNER

One of the helicopter is to be flown by Lieutenant Albert C. Postisil, a Moore, Montana native, who flew the helicopter that recovered the first instrument capsule from the Discoverer XIII in August.

Postisil and his crew were awarded Air Medals by the Air Force. All are Navy personnel.

Meanwhile Air Force JC-54 telemetry aircraft, a Coast Guard amphibian with Colonel Ahola aboard, and an air rescue C-54 with three para-rescue men aboard continue to circle the bobbing capsule.

The capsule fell to the sea about 950 miles south of Oahu, some 250 miles north of Christmas Island.

The para-rescue team left Hickam Air Force Base about midnight. The jumpers were to drop to the sea, place the cone on a raft and rig it for a snatch from the sea by a pickup aircraft.

The jumpers are Staff Sergeants William V. Vargas and David B. Rhody.

The jumpers were to rig a pole and line arrangement. The pickup plane, trailing a hook, would snare the line which would be attached to

However, recovery of the jumpers from the rough sea delayed the operation, Hickam officials reported. There are no surface craft or helicopters in the immediate area.

Two Air Force JC-54 telemetry search planes spotted Discoverer XV's cone bobbing in the sea 950 miles south of the Hawaiian Islands yesterday evening.

It had been ejected from its polar-orbiting satellite at 2:54 p.m., but over-shot the expected area of descent near Hawaii by about 1,000 miles and so frustrated Air Force hopes of snatching it out of the air.

If sea conditions rule out
Turn to Page 1-A, Column 4

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

HONOLULU, HAWAII, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1960 ★★★★★

Nose Cone

Continued from Page 1

the hazardous open-sea landing, the beacon and light may have to last through another night before the Dalton Victory can fish the space craft from the sea.

However, other military ships may be located in the area, about 200 miles north of Christmas Island, and directed to recover the cone.

The two Air Force planes that spotted the capsule were on station between Christmas Island and Hawaii, backstopping the main recovery effort northwest of these islands.

The radio beacon was picked up by one of these planes at 5:05 p.m., about two hours after the capsule fell into the Pacific Ocean.

The other telemetry plane's crew spotted the capsule approximately an hour later, just as the tired crews of nine Air Force C-119 cargo planes were landing at Hickam Air Force Base, discouraged that they hadn't had a chance to snare the parachuting capsule on the fly.

Discoverer XIV was retrieved that way, and Discoverer XIII, believed to be the first orbiting space vehicle ever retrieved, was plucked from the sea just outside of the 200-by-60-mile area into which it was supposed to have fallen.

The nose cone that fell yesterday was blasted off Tuesday from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on the tip of the 100,000 pound Discoverer XV rocket.

INTO ORBIT

The rocket's second stage went into orbit.

On its 17th circuit of the earth, somewhere over Alaska, the capsule was ejected and began a curving descent calculated to bring it down about 250 miles northwest of Oahu. But it overshot.

After its ejection, the capsule transmitted its signal only sporadically, adding to fears that it had been lost.

Then, at 4:15, signals coming from the Christmas Island area were definitely identified as those of Discoverer XV, according to a Pacific Missile Range spokesman.

From 650 miles to the north of the floating capsule the Dalton Victory, a Pacific Missile Range recovery vessel, headed for the signal.

At that point, chances for recovery were calculated by a Pacific Missile Range official to be "on the low side of 50-50."

Now chances are considered "good," if either the radio or light signals remain in operation at night.

The Sunday Advertiser

★ ★ ★

105TH YEAR, NO. 35,118

HONOLULU

SEPTEMBER 18, 1960

15 CENTS

Etiquette Cost U.S. Discoverer Nose Cone

By JAMES CUNNINGHAM
Advertiser Aviation Editor
Copyright, 1960, The Honolulu
Advertiser

Military Etiquette — not weather—cost the U.S. a real chance to recover the vanished and scientifically precious Discoverer XV satellite nose cone.

This is the feeling of officers and airmen of the disappointed 76th Cunningham Air Rescue Squadron, based at Hickam AFB.



They had hoped to pick up the floating capsule—thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of a revolutionary new recovery technique, developed right here on Oahu.

The 76th has coupled the arts of parachuting and SCUBA frogmanship. The re—the capsule to the raft. This done, the frogmen could rig it for snatch by a low-flying aircraft or ride it out until a surface ship came to the rescue.

But jump orders came too late.

First crack at recovery was reserved for a Coast Guard plane—operating under Air Force orders and pro-

grammed to employ a different pick-up technique.

The Coast Guard SA-16 amphibian hoped to land on the open ocean near the capsule and haul it aboard.

The Rescuemaster circled the capsule with the SA-16, while the Coast Guardsmen appraised the chances for a safe landing in the choppy seas.

COLONEL BRENNER was under instructions to keep his jump door closed until he received a green light from the Air Force's Ballistic Missile is a rescue technique now receiving Washington notice as an air-delivered method for recovering as-

tronauts to be returned from outer space.

THE SYSTEM has worked well in over 100 practice exercises at the Keehi Lagoon.

When the errant Discoverer capsule strayed into the South Pacific—beyond immediate reach of regular air and sea catchers—the 76th saw its first opportunity to display the value of its home-grown technique in a real-life rescue.

So, an SC-54 Rescuemaster—with three crack parachute-frogmen aboard—left Hickam at 1 a.m. Thursday and reached the capsule at dawn.

THE CREW—headed by

The Sunday Advertiser

★ ★ ★

105TH YEAR, NO. 35,118

HONOLULU

SEPTEMBER 18, 1960

15 CENTS

Etiquette Cost U.S. Discoverer Nose Cone

76th commander Lt. Col. F. G. Brenner—could see the 100-pound space vehicle bobbing in the water below.

The parachute-frogman team was raring to jump: Master Sergeant Earl L. Linford, Staff Sergeant William V. Vargas who is an Islander, and Staff Sergeant David D. Rhody.

The jumpers were in their rubber "wet-suits," masks and flippers. Around them hung packages containing scuba tanks, respirator and an inflatable one-man life raft.

They were to parachute from 1,250 feet, inflate the raft when they hit the water

and dive from it in case of the capsule.

SCUBA GEAR enables the frogmen to swim rapidly beneath the ocean swells.

The objective was to secure Division headquarters, via Hickam.

His parachute-frogmen were not to go into action until the Coast Guard amphibian was called off.

Crucial minutes flew by as the two planes—together with Air Force electronic spotting aircraft—circled and waited.

Shortly after 8 a.m., the Coast Guardsmen decided that an amphibious landing would be too hazardous to attempt.

More critical minutes passed.

THE RESCUEMASTER kept circling. The crew waited breathlessly. Finally, the clearance came to jump.

The clouds were scattered. The capsule jiggled below—a speck on the waves—but in full view.

Brenner relayed the jump

order.

The door swung open and the parachutists prepared to leap.

But suddenly there was nothing to jump for.

The capsule had vanished. The orders had come too late.

THE RESCUEMASTER stuck around until noon. But the Discoverer XV never reappeared.

THEY WERE disappointed. But they feel it will be only temporary.