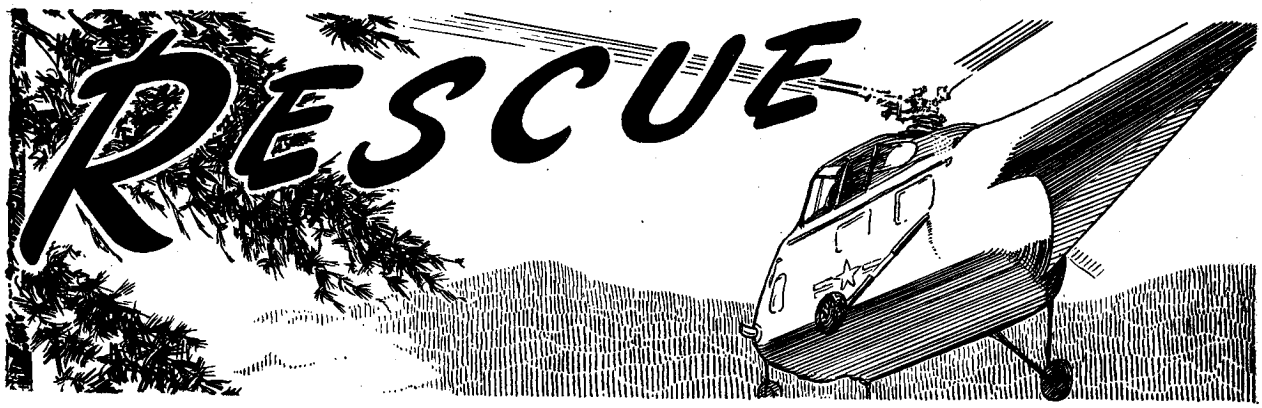
DECLASSIFIED



The usually discomfiting and always hazardous wartime experience of keeping alive miles from friendly forces in a wilderness honeycombed with enemy troops can be considerably shortened, the following narrative reveals, if you're lucky enough to have some air cover and if a helicopter has a reliable bearing on you and thinks it can pick you up and take you home. Even when the situation is made less bad by these modern conveniences, having to survive practically under the enemy's guns is bound to provide some apprehensive moments. The downed flyers in this story—Maj. Dwain E. Lengel, Capt. Eugene V. Pointer, and TSgt. C. E. Gricks, all Marines—were on a rescue mission when their HRS–1 helicopter cracked up, considerably altering their condition, as Maj. Lengel put it, "from rescuers to awaiting rescue".

The chain of circumstances which led to their involuntary and highly dangerous camping trip in the Korean north began when Ens. Harlo E. Sterrett, TF–77 pilot from VF–653 aboard the *Valley Forge,* was hit by small-arms fire in making a rail cut near Hapsu, North Korea. He was seen to bail out and land near his burning plane on the western slope of a hill. His mates gave him air cover, and and an HO3S helicopter from TF–77 was dispatched by the Force commanding officer, RAdm. John Perry, to try to pick him up. Low on fuel and operating in marginal weather, the helicopter was forced to retire without him.

A day after Sterrett went in, a second tragedy struck the operation when the downed pilot's close friend, Ens. Roland G. Busch, crashed and was killed as he tried to locate Sterrett's position.

RAdm. Perry asked the assistance of Marine Helicopter Squadron 161 (see page 11) which was based in South Korea. He believed the Marines' HRS–1 helicopters, because of their higher performance than that of the HO3S, would have a better chance of making the rescue.

Two helicopters commanded by Maj. Lengel were detached to CTF–77. They landed aboard the *Valley Forge,* where RAdm. Perry gave them the word on Sterrett's predicament and the conditions they were likely to encounter if they went in after him. As it turned out, they never found Sterrett. What happened to the Marines of the rescue team is told below by Maj. Lengel.

AFTER ADMIRAL PERRY had given me this information, he asked for my opinion whether or not I thought it feasible to attempt this rescue. I informed the Admiral that we considered an attempt feasible and if possible would like to make it early in the morning. I felt that the wind condition as well as the lower temperatures early in the day would give us better performance from the helicopter. I mentioned to the Admiral that it was policy that the helicopter was not sent in till the downed pilot was in sight. The Admiral was aware of this and stated that we would not be sent in unless a definite sighting was made.

A meeting was arranged for 1900. The air group commander, the staff operation officer, the commanding officer of VF–653 and other interested parties were present to work out the details of the rescue mission.

LCdr. Cook Cleland, CO of VF–653, felt that if they arrived over the rescue area prior to 0800, the visibility would be such that the ResCAP would probably not be able to see the downed pilot. In view of this, it was decided to launch the first ResCAP of four planes (F4U–4's) at 0730 and the helicopter would be standing by for immediate launch. The staff intelligence officer gave a flak briefing as well as a general intelligence briefing of the area. The flights on rail cuts in this area had been receiving small-arms fire but no automatic

[redacted]

DECLASSIFIED

[redacted]

weapons were known to be in a radius of approximately 10 miles of the rescue area. Since the terrain on the way into the area required us to go to 7,000 feet, I decided to cross the beach at that altitude and remain above the level of small-arms fire.

The first four planes of the ResCAP were to be launched at 0730 and the other four at the same time the helicopter was launched. Two of the second division of ResCAP planes were to remain approximately 200 or 300 feet above the helicopter where they were to do the navigating.

An AD-3N was to be stationed high above the rescue area to act as radio relay in case communications were poor.

It was decided that HR-1 would be the helicopter to make the rescue attempt with myself as pilot, Capt. Pointer as dual pilot, and TSgt. Gricks as crew chief.

HR-13, with Capt. Lesak as pilot, Lt. Wessel as dual pilot, and TSgt. Du Brey as crew chief, was to remain aboard and back up the operations as conditions required.

On 29 May after the first ResCAP was launched at 0730, I stationed myself in air plot to await word on our mission. The rest of the crew of HR-1 manned the plane on the hangar deck in readiness for immediate flight.

Pilot Sighted—At approximately 1000, the flight leader of the ResCAP made the report that they had the downed pilot in sight and that he had withdrawn into the edge of the woods. This location was by the clearing where he had been spotted two days before. CTF-77 at this time made the decision to launch the helicopter for a rescue attempt.

At 1030, HR-1 was launched with approximately 6,390 pounds gross weight with 850 pounds of fuel. At this time the rescue area was approximately 72 miles from the force on a bearing of 342 degrees. We proceeded to climb out, making a right hand orbit until we arrived at 5,000 feet indicated altitude. At this time, Cherry Tree [code name for *Valley Forge*] advised that they were launching the second division of the ResCAP.

Penetration of the beach was made at about 7,000 feet and an airspeed of 70 knots indicated with Birdcap Seven navigating. He steered us by visual reference to the ground away from any possible flak areas.

At about 1125 we sighted Birdcap One's division and Birdcap Five and Six [escorting aircraft] circling high around the rescue area. We let down to approximately 200 feet above the plateau and continued onto the rescue area. I requested Birdcap Leader to have his flight stay fairly high and leave Birdcap Seven and Eight down to cover us as we entered the area. Birdcap Leader complied with this and had part of his flight make diversionary runs on adjacent areas. This strategy was excellent because it drew no unnecessary attention to the rescue area.

The Search—From his high cover position, Birdcap Leader directed us in to the area where the pilot had been sighted that morning. We observed this area from approximately 50 feet above the terrain. Sterrett never made an appearance. We then proceeded to the spot where the second aircraft had crashed. We flew several searches from the crashed aircraft up toward the top of the plateau. It was in this area that Ensign Sterrett had been sighted on the 27th and, since he had been told to proceed to the high clear area, we assumed he might be in this general vicinity.

At one time I thought I saw a person next to the woods and, upon investigating, it turned out to be an ox. TSgt. Gricks then called on the interphone, stating that he thought he had seen a yellow object moving in the general area down the slope from where the second plane had crashed. We made about four orbits over this area and neither TSgt. Gricks nor Capt. Pointer was able to sight this object again.

Our fuel supply was now down to 425 pounds, so we were preparing to proceed on course to return to the ship.

One of the Birdcap called and said he had sighted an object in an open field. This field was over the nose of a ridge approximately 200 yards from our position. We proceeded over the hill and upon approaching the field I saw the object. It appeared to be a round yellow disc about 16 inches in diameter.

The Crash—I was flying the helicopter at this time. We were circling the object at about 30 feet and 40 knots indicated airspeed. Capt. Pointer saw a red object on the ground up the slope from the yellow disc. We were proceeding down the slope when I felt the helicopter begin to lose turns. I immediately started to milk the collective to try to regain my turns. The RPM-indicator needle was showing about 2,150. I tried to nose the plane down the slope to pick up some additional airspeed and RPM. The RPM was now down to about 1,900. We were moving down the slope at about 40 to 50 knots indicated. There was a tree stump about six to eight feet high and a foot in diameter directly in our flight path. There was insufficient control to avoid this stump, and we hit it with the bottom forward portion of the cabin.

The helicopter nosed over, and as the rotor blades dug into the ground, the 'copter rolled over on the right side.

[redacted]

Capt. Pointer and I both began to call for Gricks. We were concerned over his condition as he was not secure in the cabin. Both of us in the pilot's compartment released our seat belts and shoulder harnesses and proceeded to leave the helicopter through the left-hand pilot's compartment window. TSgt. Gricks had crawled out of the cabin through the main cabin entrance and was waiting to help us from the helicopter.

The helicopter was lying over on the right side with the forward part of the main cabin resting on a large rock. This left the main cabin access door about a foot from the ground. The tail cone had been sheared off and had been thrown over the main cabin and was down the slope approximately 10 yards.

At this point our status changed from the "Rescuer" to "Awaiting Rescue."

In our preflight briefing, we had covered our course of action in the event we were forced down in enemy territory. I immediately secured the URC–4 radio from the cabin and proceeded up the slope approximately 10 yards from the wreckage. Radio contact was then established with Birdcap Leader. He was advised of our crash and that we were all uninjured.

I advised Birdcap Leader that we were proceeding up the slope and that if he wanted to contact us by radio to fly over and wobble the aircraft wings.

We had the following equipment with us when leaving the scene of the crash: one URC–4 radio; two canteens, full of water; two .30-cal carbines and approximately 100 rounds of ammunition; one .45-cal Thompson sub-machine gun, and approximately 200 rounds of ammunition; two .38-cal pistols, and approximately 24 rounds of ammunition; three survival vests; two life vests; two first-aid pounches; one first-aid kit; one pair of 7 x 50 field glasses; one map case, with pencils and three unmarked maps of the area.

Each of us was wearing a set of Marine Corps issue dungarees; Capt. Pointer and myself were wearing Marine Corps field shoes, new style, and Sgt. Gricks was wearing a pair of Army combat boots.

Orientation—We proceeded to walk up the hill in an easterly direction. The slope was fairly steep and at this altitude we tired easily. We would walk for three to five minutes and then have to lie down and rest. After we were about 100 yards from the aircraft, we entered the trees and the undergrowth was very thick.

During the time we were proceeding up the hill, the ResCAP aircraft were still in the area but at no time did they attract any attention to our area. They were making diversionary runs on various surrounding hills.

Upon reaching the top of the ridge, we walked in a northern direction along the ridge for approximately 50 yards. We came to a trail. I was rather disoriented by now and, upon reaching the trail, started down it in the same direction we had just come up. After proceeding for about 10 or 15 yards, I realized this was wrong. We then retraced our steps back to the top of the hill.

Since the undergrowth was so thick, we decided to call Birdcap Leader and have him try to locate our present position. We were in a small opening about ten yards in diameter. I called on the radio and Capt. Pointer and TSgt. Gricks waved the yellow life jackets to help the pilots in locating us. By the use of the radio, we vectored two aircraft over our position. After being spotted, we asked them to fly over us in the direction of the nearest clearing. Birdcap Leader advised that we were then within 100 yards of the clearing. One aircraft continued to make low level runs over us to show us the way.

(After being rescued, we were informed that while we were climbing the hill, away from the scene of the crash, a North Korean officer was seen on the railroad track about a mile away from our position. This officer was dressed in complete uniform, boots, white gloves and shoulder boards. Two of the ResCAP aircraft made a low run on him and he waved. On the second low run, he fired his pistol at one of the aircraft. Birdcap Leader refused aircraft permission to strafe him, because he did not want to stir up the local population any more than necessary.)

Upon reaching the edge of the clearing on the opposite slope of the hill, we spread the two life jackets in the small bushes so they could be seen from above only. Birdcap Leader spotted us and proceeded to leave the immediate area, still remaining in radio contact.

Position Established—Capt. Pointer and I then decided that our present location was suitable for a pickup. We asked Birdcap Leader to advise the ship that we considered our position suitable for a rescue and that such attempt be made as soon as possible. We also suggested that they advise the pilots of the rescue helicopter to come in as light as possible and not bring a crew member. I considered the cause of my crash to be the fact that I had gotten in such a position that I was out of the wind and had too little forward airspeed. This information was passed on, and the suggestion was made that another rope ladder be constructed and that the helicopter make a low pass, maintaining forward speed at all times.

The time was now approximately 1330. We opened one of the emergency ration cans from the survival vests and had lunch. Because of our limited supply of water, we rationed ourselves to a swallow each after lunch.

While we were waiting for the rescue helicopter to appear on the scene, we remained inside the woods at the edge of the clearing so as to be unobserved.

The pair of combat boots TSgt. Gricks was wearing had been half-soled. The half sole and heel on his right boot had been torn off by a rock during our march up the slope.

DECLASSIFIED

His boot was therefore unsuitable for any long walking over rough terrain.

At approximately 1500, a *Corsair* flew over and wobbled his wings. Radio contact was established, and he advised that he was being relieved on station in 15 minutes by Cherry Tree Nine.

Waiting—Cherry Tree Nine appeared on station and established communications. Lt. Wessel then came on Cherry Tree Nine's radio and broke the sad news to us that we would not be picked up that day because the weather was closing in at the ship. He advised that a rescue attempt would be made as soon after sunrise on the morning of 30 May as weather would permit.

A method of authentication was agreed upon so the ResCAP that found us could positively identify us and prevent the possibility that we had been captured and were being used in a trap. This authentication would consist of the ResCAP leader asking: "Dwain, what is your daughter's name?" The reply was "Judy". If radio communication was not established we were to make a "J" out of panels on the ground.

Lt. Wessel then asked if we needed any more equipment. Our answer was that we would appreciate some water and more rations. The ship had already anticipated our needs, and two AD's had five survival- and one water-bomb.

The first AD was vectored in for his drop. The release was a little high, and the chute carried the bomb over the hill and away from our position. The next drop was made at a lower altitude but the chute did not open. We observed this bomb as it fell into the woods approximately 100 yards from our position. The other bombs were then dropped and all fell in an open clearing within 200 yards of us.

After the drops were made, the AD's left the area and for the first time since being down we were without air cover.

We then decided to set up our position approximately 300 yards southwest of our present position. The spot selected was in a densely wooded area with trees 20 to 30 feet tall and dense undergrowth. We left our life jackets hidden in the brush because we felt they were no longer of any use to us.

We went to our new position by moving along the edge of the clearing, trying to remain concealed at all times. There were two native houses located across the valley and slightly lower than our position. We had not observed anyone in this area, but did not want to run any unnecessary risks of being observed.

New Camp—Upon reaching our new camp site at approximately 1600, Capt. Pointer stayed with our equipment and TSgt. Gricks and I moved out to start recovery of the survival bombs. The first bomb we recovered was the one that had fallen in the wooden area. The chute had not opened on this bomb, so the equipment was scattered along an area about ten feet by 100 feet with part of the equipment remaining in the bomb. The stock for the carbine was so badly shattered that it was unusable, and the PRC–7 radio was also damaged. We retrieved all of the equipment from this bomb and carried it back to our camp site.

The other bomb was in the middle of an open clearing. TSgt. Gricks and I moved through the woods until we were as close as possible to the bomb. Then we moved out in the open and carried the bomb back into the edge of the woods. This gear was also returned to our camp site.

We spent approximately half an hour moving through the woods trying to find the rest of the bombs; TSgt. Gricks finally sighted a bomb out in the clearing approximately 150 yards from the position of the second bomb we had recovered. This one was on the nose of the hill. TSgt. Gricks and I were unable to carry this bomb up the hill, so we opened it on the spot and removed the gear. TSgt. Gricks observed another bomb down the steep slope lying next to a large rock. It had rolled down the slope and the camouflaged chute had become wrapped around it, making it very hard to see. After recovering the equipment from the third bomb, we returned and recovered the equipment from bomb number four.

It was now around 1830. We were exhausted and immediately made preparation to settle down for the night.

The survival gear that we now had, in addition to what we had removed from the helicopter, consisted of: three Navy sleeping bags; three Navy winter flight jackets; three parka hoods for the jackets; four pairs of Navy winter flight trousers; 12 pairs of cushion-sole socks; 12 pairs of heavy wool socks; four six-inch sheath knives; two .30-cal. carbines; one pair of aviator's winter flight boots; six pairs of woolen drawers; five Navy survival ponchos, blue on one side, red flourescent on the other; one axe; 12 cans of rations; and two packs, Navy manufactured.

There were numerous other items of equipment including first-aid packets; waterproof matches; compasses, wrist-type as well as the type on the end of the match boxes; plastic canteens; woolen gloves; insect repellent; mosquito head nets; rain hats, olive drab on one side, yellow on the other; signal mirrors; and other miscellaneous survival equipment.

Follow the Book—At this time, we committed our first big survival mistake. We had all heard survival lectures in the squadron, and Capt. Pointer and I had been through the Pickel Meadows survival school. The construction of a shelter is considered one of the first things to be done in a situation such as ours. We were very tired, however, and assumed that by placing our sleeping bags close together and covering them with ponchos we would remain dry. This assumption was wrong, because the earth was covered

with about six inches of dead pine needles and humus. When it started to rain, we were amply protected from above, but the water ran down the hill and it had soaked our sleeping bags from below by morning.

At approximately 1930, just after it had begun to rain, we heard what apparently was a rifle shot in the distance. We also thought we heard some voices. By now, we were fairly tense and even the smallest noise seemed to us an unfriendly one.

We were going to have a guard, and one of us was to remain awake at all times. As it worked out, however, the three of us remained awake most of the night.

We turned in to our sleeping bags with all our clothing on and our weapons handy. By this time TSgt. Gricks had replaced his combat boots with the aviation flying boots from the survival bomb.

In order to increase our water supply, we dug a shallow hole and placed a poncho in it to catch rain water.

Gr-r-r-r—It rained throughout most of the night. We could hear various types of small game throughout the woods. Along about 0130 I heard something moving through the brush and it sounded as if it was fairly large. From the noise this animal made, it sounded as if it was a member of the cat family.

The next day, in discussing the night's happenings, it turned out that all of us had heard these sounds at about 0130. Capt. Pointer remembered from a survival lecture that a type of tiger was known to inhabit North Korea and Manchuria. We assumed this was what we had heard.

The URC–4 radio was our most valuable piece of equipment. In order to keep it dry, we wrapped it up in a poncho, because in case we did have to move from this area, the radio would prove invaluable in informing people where we were going.

We arose at about 0445 on 30 May and it was still raining lightly. We immediately began construction of a lean-to shelter.

Home—There were four small trees forming a rectangle about six feet by eight feet. These were used as the corner supports. We built the framework by weaving the saplings together in ten-inch squares. The shoe strings from Sgt. Gricks' discarded combat boots were used to fasten the corners. The top of the frame was then covered with a layer of pine boughs, so that the bottom of the poncho, being red, would shine through.

Two ponchos were placed in the framework, secured at the corners, and covered with another layer of pine boughs as camouflage.

The completed shelter was about four feet high at the front which faced east and 18 inches at the back. We put all of our equipment inside the shelter and then had breakfast.

We refilled our canteens and two other plastic canteens from the rain water which had accumulated in the poncho. This water was purified by the addition of Halazone tablets.

Expecting the Worst—We had every reason in the world to believe that as soon as the weather permitted, a rescue attempt would be made. We had ample provisions and equipment to remain in the area for some time. We formulated a group of plans to cover various possible situations. Briefly these were:

1. To remain in our present area for five days of good weather; if no rescue attempt was made, to attempt to walk out to the coast. Capt. Pointer's suggestion that we proceed 10 miles north along the high ground before heading east to the coast was adopted. This route would take us away from any populated areas. Also, the enemy would probably assume that we would walk out to the southeast, the closest route. Deception was our main consideration in choosing Capt. Pointer's plan.

2. In case we were observed by enemy troops, we planned to have our equipment so arranged that we could make an immediate withdrawal.

3. If the enemy group was small enough, 10 men or less, we would try to eliminate them. If this was successful, we would then move to a new position in the general area.

4. If the helicopter arrived for a rescue attempt, we would try to carry the following equipment with us in case we were unfortunate enough to go down again: three carbines and ammunition, two canteens, one map case, three first-aid kits, and one pair of field glasses. The rest of the weapons were to be disassembled and buried in the woods around our camp site.

The equipment for a hasty withdrawal consisted mainly of two packs obtained from the survival bombs. We put first-aid packets, dry socks and underwear, and half the rations in each pack, along with other equipment that we felt would be of use.

While Capt. Pointer and Gricks were doing this, I went out into the woods to retrieve a camouflaged parachute from one of the survival bombs. We were going to use this to build an extension to the side of the shelter so we would have more room to store our equipment.

Along about 1430, the rain stopped and breaks in the overcast appeared.

At 2000 we thought we could hear voices in the distance. Then for several minutes we heard blows being struck on what sounded like a metal object. We surmised that someone had found one of the survival bombs and was trying to force the lid off it. We heard no further signs of human activity that evening.

Sleep—We were able to rest better on our second night. However, one of us remained awake to listen for any possible enemy activity in the area. Trains were heard twice during the night. We mentally noted the times in hopes that we could make the information available to CTF–77 at an early date.

At about 0500 we heard an aircraft above the overcast. We immediately got out of our sleeping bags, set up the radio, and tried to make contact. It sounded like a twin-engine aircraft on a northerly heading. Radio contact was not established. About 15 minutes later, what probably was the same aircraft flew over on a southerly heading. Again a futile attempt was made to communicate.

Help from the Air—Aircraft were heard directly overhead at 0800. I could hear the flight leader on the radio having his division get into a left-hand circle. They then started to let down into the valley where we were. As soon as the flight broke through the overcast, radio contact was established. The method of authentication previously arranged was carried out.

DECLASSIFIED

We reported to the flight leader that we had not observed any new troop activity in the area and as far as we could determine no enemy equipment had been moved in.

At 0820 the ResCAP advised us that the rescue holicopter, HR–13, was on the way. We began to make preparations to leave. Excess weapons were taken apart and buried. A florescent panel was placed along the edge of the woods to mark the position of our camp, so that perhaps after our rescue the equipment could be destroyed by napalm.

We remained in the edge of the woods until we had the helicopter in sight. We then moved down the slope of the hill about 300 yards to the Northeast where there was a cleared area. Sgt. Gricks laid out one of the fluorescent panels at the spot from which we wanted to be picked up. Capt. Pointer was standing by with a yellow smoke flare to give the wind direction. I was in contact with the helicopter, directing it in to our position.

One pass was made so they would see how the helicopter was going to react and what forward speed they would have to maintain. Capt. Lesak advised that on the next pass they would try to pick up one of us.

Gricks Makes It—Sgt. Gricks was to be the first one rescued. As the ladder came by his position, it was moving along the ground at about 10 or 12 miles per hour. He managed to get onto the ladder one-third of the way from the bottom.

The helicopter then proceeded out over the valley at as slow a speed as practical. Gricks was about half way up the ladder when they went by our position for the second time. One rifle shot was heard; it sounded as if it had been fired from the ridge behind us and to the north. Sgt. Gricks had dropped his carbine and other gear. When he was about 10 feet from the top, I saw him kick off his heavy flight boots. By the time the helicopter came by again, Gricks had reached the cabin. Capt. Lesak advised by radio that Sgt. Gricks said to tell us to come up as light as possible.

The helicopter was again in position for a pickup. Capt. Pointer caught the ladder, but it gave a swing and, after moving a few feet, it threw him to the ground. The wind may have died down a little, because the speed of the ladder along the ground seemed faster. On the next approach, Capt. Pointer made a good catch and was on the ladder facing in the direction of flight. His additional weight caused the helicopter to sink a few feet and, before it could lift him, he was dragged along the ground for about 20 yards.

By the time they came around again, Capt. Pointer was half way up the ladder. Capt. Lesak advised that he was very low on fuel and for me to try to get on the ladder the next pass.

I managed to secure the bottom rung of the ladder but after being carried for about a hundred yards I dropped off. I would never have been able to get my legs over a rung to support my weight.

I ran back up the slope and asked Capt. Lesak if he could make one more pass before heading out for the ship. The answer to this request was in the affirmative.

This time the ladder was a little bit lower. I managed to grab the second rung with my hands and to get my left leg on the bottom rung. I then climbed up a few rungs, put both legs through and sat down.

The Flyaway—Capt. Lesak and Lt. Wessel proceeded out on course at about 6,000 feet. When they observed that Capt. Pointer and I were just sitting there, they increased air speed to about 60 knots.

Gradually Capt. Pointer and I managed to work our way higher up on the ladder. Our hands became very cold and numb. We were afraid our grip might be lost, so movement was very slow. At this altitude with the wind whipping around, it was very cold.

Sgt. Gricks was hanging out of the side of the plane trying to pull me up the ladder, but our combined weight plus the slipstream made this impossible.

Capt. Pointer managed to get up the ladder just under the cabin and shortly after managed to get inside. I then continued my climb. When I had climbed to a few feet under the cabin, the heat from the exhaust was sufficient to warm my hands and make climbing easier. Upon reaching the cabin door, I had insufficient strength left in my arms to pull myself in. Sgt. Gricks had my jacket by the collar but was in a weakened condition himself and was unable to pull me in. Capt. Pointer also was trying but was of no help.

I finally managed to get my right leg onto the last rung below the door, gave a big kick and rolled into the cabin. Capt. Pointer and I had been on the ladder for about 12 minutes.

Sgt. Gricks had on the earphones, and Lt. Wessel advised that we would soon pass over the coast and land on the cruiser *St. Paul.*

Upon arriving on the *St. Paul,* we were welcomed aboard

by the executive officer. The CPO's took Sgt. Gricks to their mess, and the executive officer took the officers to the wardroom. The C. O. of the Marine Detachment was there, and I requested that he procure a pair of shoes for Sgt. Gricks.

The ship's medical officer prescribed and furnished the standard "treatment" for the three of us.

After HR–13 was refuelled, we proceeded back to the USS *Valley Forge,* landing aboard at about 1200 on the 31st of May, approximately 50½ hours after our takeoff.

THE SCORE IS FOUR TO ONE

IN ENCOUNTERS with MIG–15 aircraft in the Korean war, Navy fighters have racked up a score of four Migs shot down against a loss of one Navy fighter. Credit for the first Navy-downed Mig of the war goes to LCdr. W. T. Amen, flying an F9F–2B on 9 Nov. 1950 as skipper of VF–111 from the carrier *Philippine Sea.* First Mig of the war to be shot down was killed by an Air Force fighter one day earlier. On 18 Nov. 1950, LCdr. W. E. Lamb and his wingman Lt. R. E. Parker of VF–52 operating from the *Valley Forge* got themselves one Mig and the same day Ens. F. C. Weber of VF–31 flying from the *Leyte* also brought one down. These shoot-downs are the confirmed results of many encounters over a period of several weeks in which carrier strikes of AD's, F4U's and F9F–2's from Task Force 77 were operating against objectives near the Yalu river.

Top Score—This three-to-one tally was top score for UN forces until the advent into the fight of numbers of AF F–86's which were brought into the area to hunt the Mig. During this period, no Navy carrier aircraft were lost to Mig opposition, and the score at that time of three to nothing represents an exchange rate as nearly perfect as can be attained.

A fourth Mig was downed 10 Sept. 1952 when Capt. J. G. Folmar and Lt. W. L. Daniels, of the Marine *Checkerboard* Squadron from the *Sicily* got one. The Marines were on a bombing mission in *Corsairs* when they were jumped by four MIG–15's.

The shoot-downs are even more impressive when it is considered that the carrier strikes on which the Migs were killed were made against ground objectives heavily defended by AA fire, and the Mig kills were merely incidental to the main operation. In the time since the first three kills, the Korean air war has been apportioned in such a manner that normally carrier-aircraft targets are not in Mig territory. Thus, encounters have been reduced in number. The one Navy fighter lost was a shore-based Marine Corps aircraft presumed lost after a MIG–15 encounter.

The Navy fighter record against the MIG–15 substantiates in a most reassuring way the conclusion drawn by Cdr. W. N. Leonard, USN, who wrote for the August 1952 NA BULLETIN a detailed explanation of a newly worked out set of tactics for jet fighters. The record to date backs up his contention that "the menace of sweptwing interception should be interpreted . . . so that straightwing jet operators will feel no unreasonable risk when taking on sweptwing opposition."