

Air Ministry News ServiceAir Ministry Bulletin No. 6317CATALINA GUIDES TRAWLER TO SEAMEN'S RESCUE

A Hudson aircraft of Coastal Command on anti-submarine patrol first sighted a raft far out in the Atlantic more than 250 miles west of the Scottish mainland.

As he swept low over the raft tossing in a heavy sea, the pilot saw a man fire a Very light. The Hudson signalled the raft's position, and early the following morning a Catalina flying boat of Coastal Command went out to locate it again and to stay with it until a rescue ship came up.

After less than five hours flying the Catalina found the raft, and again a Very light soared into the air as one of the survivors made certain that the flying boat should not miss him.

The pilot of the Catalina said that a man stood up and waved vigorously, and then, certain that he had been seen from the air, squatted down again.

A signal indicating that the raft had been found was sent off and the Catalina began to look for a ship.

Soon a trawler was sighted on the horizon. The Catalina flew towards it and signalled by lamp, asking the trawler to steer a course for the raft.

Back went the Catalina to the raft, circling round and round, waiting for the trawler to come up and pick up the survivors.

The raft, the Catalina crew noted, was almost square. It was coloured brown, white and green and showed up very well against the water.

In the centre a number of boxes had been piled up, and perched on top of them was a short pole with a blue pennant attached.

The one man visible appeared to take little interest in the Catalina after he knew he had been sighted. He sat quite still and did not look up as the flying boat flew round at 50 feet taking photographs.

In one corner of the raft was a small pile of white and dark coloured blankets which appeared from the air to be folded over someone stretched at full length on the boards.

When the trawler came into view the man on the raft fired another Very cartridge and sat down immediately, apparently too exhausted to remain on his feet longer than was necessary to fire the signal.

There was a heavy swell running, said the Catalina captain, and at times he could see the trawler's bows come right out of the water. But the ship skilfully manoeuvred close to the raft and three or four men climbed down and helped the survivors on board.

The trawler flashed its thanks to the flying boat: then as the Catalina swept past for the last time, having seen the rescue safely accomplished, the trawler's lamp blinked, "Ok. Ok".

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NOTE: The two survivors on this raft, Eric Andreassen and Eric Carlstedt, have now landed in this country.