

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST, OR USE ON CLUB TAPES
BEFORE 00.30 D.B.S.T. (i.e. FOR MORNING PAPERS) ON
WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1943

THIS EMBARGO SHOULD BE RESPECTED OVERSEAS BY PREFACING
ANY MESSAGES FILED WITH THE EMBARGO

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No.10392

LIBERATOR PILOTS - SIX DAYS IN DINGHY

Waterless and adrift in a dinghy for six days, the two survivors of a Liberator aircraft which had been shot down, were picked up by an Australian Coastal Command Sunderland, which alighted on the sea off the Bay of Biscay.

One of the two men, an airgunner, died later, but the Liberator's captain, a pilot officer, is in hospital and will recover.

The Liberator, on U-boat patrol in the Bay, had been attacked by five Ju.88s and had crashed into the sea. The captain said he was thrown clear.

"I saw a dinghy floating and swam to it," he told his rescuers. "Then I saw two more men in the water and dragged them into the dinghy. One of them had a smashed arm and he died that night. We buried him overboard. We had no water or food in the dinghy those six days were hell."

The Sunderland, which was captained by F/Lt. Geoffrey Rossiter, an Australian, first saw sea-markers in the water and soon sighted the dinghy. There were two men in it, one lying on the bottom and ^{the} other waving to the rescuers.

Another Coastal Command aircraft, a Whitley, also sighted the dinghy and the Sunderland and remained over the spot as long as possible to give additional protection.

The Sunderland's log tersely describes the rescue:

- "11.15 - sighted dinghy with two men six to eight miles away from sea-marker. Investigating and circling.
- "11.48 - Whitley sighted.
- "11.50 - Whitley signalled 'U-boat in area'.
- "11.59 - Sunderland to Whitley: We have signalled for permission to land and am awaiting.
- "12.02 - Sunderland to Whitley: We should like ^{you} to stay in area if we land.
- "12.04 - Whitley to Sunderland: Will remain as long as possible.
- "13.04 - Whitley to Sunderland: Setting course for base. Don't leave the lads behind.
- "14.32 - Waterborne two miles away from dinghy. those six days
- "15.10 - Picked up survivors of Liberator. Captain and airgunner.
- "15.28 - Airborne.
- "15.47 - Sunderland to base. Dinghy crew aboard need urgent medical attention."