



Dana Stewart's Crew 10/44 Pueblo, CO Standing left to right: Harry Mackler-B, Dana Stewart-P, Robert Reed-C/P, and Daniel Miller-N, Front row: Darrell Johnson-N/G, Odis Johnson-E, JW Delk-T/G, Walter Nilson-R/O, Allan Davidson, U/G, and Louis Galgano-B/G.

Editors Note:

In April we received a letter from England. Norman Franks wrote he is preparing a story on RAF rescue operations in the Adriatic Sea and was particularly interested in an incident that took place on May 3, 1944. It seems that an RAF "Walrus" (seaplane) of 293 squadron had picked up three men of the 484th bomb Group on that date. A subsequent letter (immediately below) was received outlining in detail how a Walrus effected a sea rescue, read on.

Surrey, England
Dear Bud:

Sincere thanks for your letter of 25 May and for the addresses of other BG Associations. I have already had very good letters from Robert Karstensen of the 451st and today Lyle McCarty of the 459th, so I am more than pleased. Will I make it three with one from Robert Cutler of the 460th? We'll see.

Thanks too for the listing of the 15th AF units, which I am delighted to have and am sure will prove very useful. As requested I enclose a photo of a Walrus doing its job, ie: picking up some downed flyer in a dinghy. Once the pilot had landed, his crewman would pop up in the front 'gun' position with a long pole and hook, attached to a

rope. The pilot would endeavor to taxi as close as possible often awkward if the sea/weather was bad - and the crewman would hope to tag the dinghy rope with his hook, bearing in mind that often the rescuee(s) would be beyond helping themselves. Once tagged, the crewman would let the dinghy drift back under the wing to the rear hatch, atop of the rear fuselage. If there was only one crewman, he would then dive back to the rear hatch and often needing superhuman strength as the men, as mentioned, might be beyond helping and be pretty water-logged too!

And of course, when picking up bomber crews of anything up to ten guys, the pilot would already be more than aware he was not going to be able to take off again, so would have either a long taxi back, or a taxi and rendezvous with launches that might or might not be on their way. The main thing was to get the men out of the water and into the amphibian, with some warm blankets and soup.

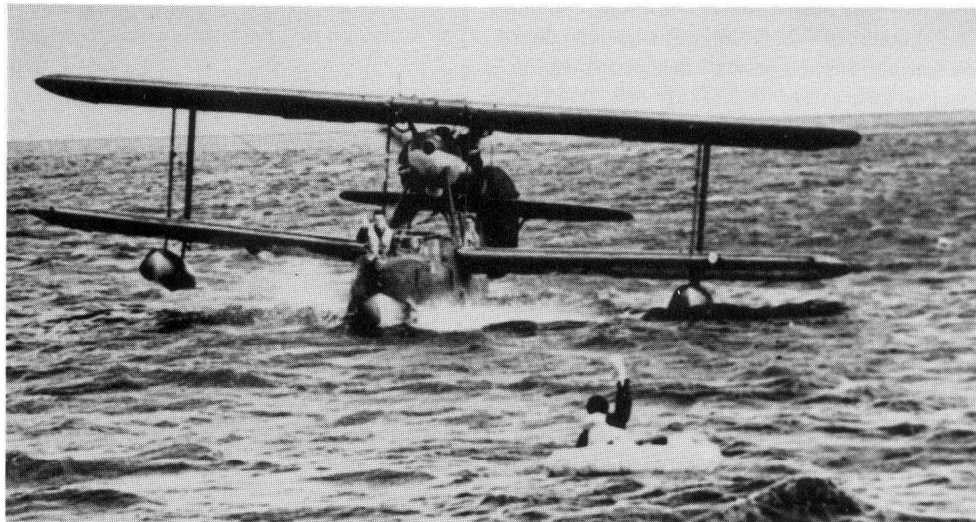
This picture is posed of course, but you can see a second crewman in the rear hatch area. There are also a number of occasions when a wing float would dig in and either be ripped off or damaged and fill with water. On these occasions, at least one crewman, and sometimes one of the rescued men too, would have to climb out onto the far opposite wing to keep the damaged wing out of the sea. But it usually worked.

So again, best wishes and thanks.

My reply following gives more information on this incident.

Norman L R Franks
Morden-Surrey, England

Dear Mr. Franks:



RAF Walrus in a practice rescue

Thanks for your letter of April 9, 1995. In regards to the incident you report that took place on May 3, 1944, I can verify that indeed it did happen as you describe, but my source says it was an RCAF Walrus that effected the rescue of three airmen from the 484th Bomb Group, 824 Squadron and may have taken place May 4,

1944.

On May 3, 1944, the 484th Bomb Group flew a practice mission to reacquaint crew members with formation flying and to practice pin point bombing. While this type of mission could not duplicate combat conditions exactly because there was no opposition, and live bombs were not used, it was a method of increasing the crews proficiency.

The crew led by 1st/Lt William Abbey in a B-24 Sq. No 21 "Rum