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Le document suivant est extrait d'un microfilm que j'ai acheté à la base aérienne de Maxwell aux Etats-Unis. Le coût par microfilm est de \$ 30. En m'aidant à acheter d'autres microfilms vous permettrez au site de diffuser encore plus d'informations sur le rôle des différents 'Troop Carrier Groups' lors de l'opération «Neptune».

FAITES UN DON – UTILISEZ LE BOUTON PAYPAL - MERCI



SEA RESCUE NOTE NO. 100

Ditching of C.47 (Dakota aircraft) at
0010 hours on the 6th June,
1955 in position 50°N. 03° W.

(The following is based on U.S.A.A.F. Air/Sea Rescue
Narrative No. 4.)

1. Introduction

This aircraft was used in operations on D-day and carried a crew of 6, which included a Radar operator, in addition to 18 paratroops.

2. Events preceding ditching

(a) The aircraft was hit by flak on reaching the French coast, after passing between two of the Channel Islands. The port engine was damaged but the starboard one remained. This latter rapidly commenced to burn out on account of the excess power required to maintain flight.

(b) The pilot, realising that a forced landing was inevitable, issued orders to prepare for ditching. All loose equipment, including parachutes, was jettisoned. It was the wish of the pilot to ditch off the German held islands because he had been fired upon by friendly vessels in the Sicilian operation. The co-pilot, however, favoured ditching alongside a naval vessel, if possible. The latter course was decided upon and the Radar operator successfully located a vessel.

(c) V.H.F. distress calls were made on the Air/Sea Rescue distress channel and to the other planes in the group. These were not received probably because of the low altitude from which the messages were sent. An M.F. signal was also transmitted but no reply was received from the M.F./D.F. Station, again probably because of the low altitude. The I.F.F. was turned to "broad" ten minutes before ditching.

3. Ditching

It was still dark and the final approach was made with the aid of landing lights from 100 ft. at 100 m.p.h. Full flaps were used until just before alighting, then the flaps were raised completely. The touchdown was made between 85 and 90 m.p.h., without power, directly into the swell. The aircraft was landed level laterally, and into the wind with the tail well down. The final impact was moderate, the only apparent damage being to the Radar aerial and the cowlings of the right engine which broke off during the impact. The aircraft came to rest in a tail high attitude at about 45°. There was approximately 1 ft. of water in the cockpit and 6" of water in the cabin when the last man left the aircraft which floated for 20 minutes and then sank nose first.

4. Events succeeding the ditching

(a) All personnel except the co-pilot left by the cargo door. He remained in the cockpit signalling to the destroyer with a torch. Eventually he climbed out of the upper escape hatch, caught a rope thrown by the destroyer and walked off the wing into the boat without getting wet. The rest of the crew and the paratroops inflated their Mae Wests before leaving the aircraft. The emergency equipment carried comprised two type A.3 rafts and one 'J' type dinghy.

(b) The paratroops had assumed ditching stations in their normal flight positions, viz. in the bucket seats with safety belts fastened. This proved to be quite satisfactory and no one was injured during the ditching. Excellent discipline was displayed by the paratroops. No one moved from

/his

his seat until ordered by the Stick Master. Then they got up six at a time and jumped from the rear door into the water so as to avoid any damage to the life rafts. All personnel were in the life rafts for 10 - 15 minutes at most before being picked up by the destroyer. They suffered very little from the immersion and no steps were taken to overcome this discomfort until aboard the destroyer.

5. Remarks

(i) This incident was one of the 14 successful ditchings by C.47 aircraft during the same 24 hour period. From the characteristics and construction of this aircraft, one would expect it to be a good ditcher and events on D-day have supported this theory.

(ii) Although the pilot in this instance was fortunate in making a successful ditching it might have been less so in more adverse weather and sea conditions. There is no justification for raising the flaps just before ditching. It involves another operation at a very critical time and is definitely wrong. Apparently the Dakota is such a good ditcher that even raising the flaps just before touching down can be done without mishap.

(iii) Conditions of neither wind nor swell were stated. Thus it is difficult to comment on the aircraft having been landed in the swell. In the absence of any mention of wind it is presumed that it was light or moderate in which case ditching should have been made parallel with the swell in accordance with normal recommended practice. Normally these aircraft will be fitted with ditching belts. In the absence of these it was correct to use the lap belts. That part of body in the line of flight should also be braced as far as possible against any solid part of the internal structure.

(iv) It is assumed that as the aircraft was tail high at an angle of 45° the cargo door was so high above the water as to make boarding the dinghies difficult. This alone could justify allowing the paratroops to jump into cold water in darkness and so risk being carried away and drowned, and/or the dangers of exposure following complete immersion. The fact that the destroyer was so near should have permitted the risk of dropping into the dinghies with the consequent possibility of damage.

(v) Radar equipped aircraft have a distinct advantage during this type of operation when intelligent use is made of the apparatus provided. Locating the destroyer was probably contributory to the complete success of this incident.

(vi) The Co-pilot deserves a great deal of credit for the part he played in getting the pilot to ditch near the destroyer and remaining to signal her to pick them up.

A.S.R.2.

September, 1944.