ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND FOLLOWING THE CRASH OF JAVELIN XH. 836 - BY SQUADRON LEADER F.S.W. JOLLIFFE

On Monday, 3rd December, 1962, Wg. Cdr. Smith and I took off in "OSCAR" (XH.836) for a H.L.P.I. and E.C.M. sortie. Airborne at 0805 hours we had levelled in cloud at 36,000 ft, speed .85M, and were turning onto 260° under G.C.I. instruction when there was a tremendous explosion and the aircraft pitched violently nose down. Wg. Cdr. Smith just had time to call "Hang on!" when the aircraft pitched again into the semi-inverted position. At this I ejected. The time was 0815 hours.

The ejector seat worked perfectly. However, the symphony of noise from explosive decompression, slipstream, seat gun and engines, combined with the colossal push on the backside, was stunning and stupefying. I am sure I remained fully conscious throughout this phase and when I was able to collect my scattered wits, found myself falling through cloud in the seat and rotating slowly. I had snagged the right leg pocket of my overalls during the ejection. This pocket, which had been filled to bulging point with emergency rations, was ripped wide open and empty. My left leg pocket, which only held my first aid pack, cigarettes and lighter, was intact. My "bone dome" had come off - although the chin strap had been fastened. My oxygen mask had become displaced and I found myself gasping for breath. This I cured by re-positioning the mask and snapping down the emergency toggle.

Still in cloud I reached for the manual over-ride 'D' ring and was recalling the "D.O.D" sequence when I separated from the seat automatically, just about at the cloud base 10 - 11,000 ft.

Together with the jolt of the main canopy opening I received a hefty crack across the nose from the metal end of my P.E.C. which effectively closed my right eye. My vision was quite blurred but I was able to approximately pin-point my position and although I was quite close to the East coast it was quickly apparent that I would not be lucky enough to land on the beach or in the sea, but was fated to go into the jungle some 2/3 miles inland.

I looked around for my pilot but couldn't see him. I saw a thick column of grey black smoke blossom from the jungle to the North and realised this must be "OSCAR". I scanned the sky anxiously for the Wing Commander and called even louder, but seeing nothing and having no answer the horrifying possibility that he was still in that burning Javelin filled me with abject gloom. This depression remained until I later heard the remarkable story of his short stay in the trees from my rescuers.

As I came closer to the tree tops I lowered my dinghy pack. The effect of lowering this pack was to set up a violent oscillation which was still increasing when I hit the jungle roof. Consequently I wound up hanging semi-inverted. My legs looped in the dinghy pack lanyard which was caught in one tree. The rest of me was supported by my harness, the rigging lines and canopy being tangled in a tree behind me. I decided to cut the dinghy lanyard to free my legs and allow myself to swing into the trees behind me. However, no sooner had I severed the lanyard than there was a great crashing and rending of timber and I found myself on my back on the jungle floor (some 100 ft below my original perch) underneath a mass of foliage, branches and parachute. Luckily the ground was very swampy and cushioned my fall. The time was 0830 hours.

After wriggling and crawling out of this mass of greenery I was delighted to find that I had an almost full packet of cigarettes and my lighter, so while I checked for possible injuries and gathered my senses I was able to have a cigarette. My nose and head were bleeding but the former quickly stopped while the latter was eased when bandaged. Other than a sore chest and aching back I seemed to be in pretty good shape.

On checking around things looked very favourable from a survival aspect. I was not badly injured, I had all my survival gear. I knew where I was - give or take a few miles - and was certain that our "playmate" or the G.C.I. controller would have given the alarm and set R.C.C. into action. So I made my plan.

I decided to stay put for 24 hours and watch the progress of the search aircraft. If it became obvious that I had been located I would not move, but if, after 24 hours, I estimated that my position was still unknown to them I reckoned it would be as well to set out due East for the coast, or due West for the main road.

Having waited one hour I switched on my "SARAH". In the meantime I had arranged my canopy as a shelter, inflated my dinghy and checked my kit. I was in dense secondary jungle, which was verging on mangrove, and outbound sorties of some 200 yards on the cardinal headings from my position proved that the jungle was equally dense all around and that the "roof" cover was 6/8ths. So the chances of being seen from above even by a helicopter were very slight, and from an aircraft absolutely nil.

After a couple of hours, during which I was happy to hear the engines of a searching Shackleton, the initial elation at being alive and in one piece wore off slightly and the aches and pains began to set in. I found, rather frighteningly, that I couldn't see at all well. It was barely possible to read the smaller print on items of survival kit. Additionally any movement seemed to require alot of effort, sitting or lying down was painful, and I found myself spending more and more time simply standing still. Rain fell continually and everything was soaking wet, which frustrated any attempt to light a fire. Wood chopping with the almost useless Wilkinson knife was a tiresome business and although I had a plentiful supply of fire making tablets I was handicapped by a lack of dry paper and finally gave up trying to start a fire.

The searching Shackleton moved much closer to my position and when on a North Westerly heading passed right overhead. It seemed to be "spot on" on that heading but the other runs passed well away from overhead, however, I stood by with a signal rocket and waited. Sure enough the Shackleton was soon heading in from the S.E. again and as it approached I fired the rocket. However I had misjudged its speed of approach and the rocket burst well

behind it. My second attempt shortly after was more successful, in fact I felt I must almost have hit the aircraft !, but it went on its way without any indication of having seen the burst and my morale dropped a couple of notches.

Towards nightfall I made my arrangements for the hours of darkness. I inflated my dinghy fully, including the floor and canopy, and dried it thoroughly with the sponge. I attached my "SARAH" to it with the battery inside and the speech unit easily available. Then I fixed my McMurdo light in position with the battery cell close to a puddle ready for immersion. I had a long drink of purified water and refilled the plastic container and popped in a couple of purifying tablets. It was difficult to make myself comfortable in the dinghy but I was at least quite warm and after taking a morphia lozenge the pain in my chest and back eased considerably.

When darkness fell I immersed the McMurdo light cell and in the light of this little lamp, which was surprisingly bright, I started to consider my plan for the next day.

I was sure that the search had my position approximately plotted but realised that my chances of being seen from the air were very slight. Physically I was beginning to feel more pain and movement was growing more difficult, and it seemed reasonable to assume that this would grow worse. Therefore I needed to move as soon as possible.

I felt sure after studying my map that I was closer to the coast than the Mersing road, but that I couldn't be more than four miles from either. However, the difficulties of moving through mangrove would be greater than I was likely to encounter heading inland. Also I stood a chance of meeting any search party that came in from the road and it was always possible that there would be a timber track between me and the road. So on balance I decided that 270° would be my heading.

I smothered my face, hands and wrists with "anti bug" cream and put a generous dollop of Bruludine on my forehead and other scratches, then tried to sleep. It was a fitful sleep and

whenever I heard aircraft nearby I switched on my "SARAH" again. The low buzzing of this equipment was very reassuring and a great comfort.

I was awake at dawn and after a breakfast of Glucose tablets and a Morphia lozenge I started collecting my marching kit.

I cut some shroud lines and bundled my ration pack and first aid kit into my "poncho" cape, making this into a back pack. I fixed the Wilkinson knife onto my leg restrainers which I used as a belt. I took the clasp knife from the pack and the whistle from the Mae West. I already had a clasp knife and a whistle of my own but I felt these items to be sufficiently useful to duplicate. Two items I set aside to pack, and subsequently forgot, were the candle and jungle hat, both of which would have been useful later. I kept my remaining day/night flare handy in my overall pocket. The "SARAH" I fastened to a tree trunk and switched on. With its aerial erected it was too awkward to carry through the undergrowth so reluctantly I had to leave it. I knew my progress wouldn't be rapid and so even if a rescue team arrived at the site after I left, provided they had some clue as to my heading, I reckoned they would quickly overtake me, as a fit party should travel much faster than an injured man. On the emergency flip from "Pilots Notes" I left several messages around the site giving my intended heading and time of departure. Having collected my water bottle I left the area at around 0830 hours.

The undergrowth was harder to move through than anything I met on the survival course and the going was very slow indeed. Thorns and "hat snatcher" vines abounded, large dead trees to climb over and occasional huge clumps of fern that had to be crawled under made every yard a real effort and, most discouraging of all, there was not a single clearing. With only a short break at mid-day I kept going for eight hours in all. The one cheering feature was the sound and occasional sight of search aircraft above me and the knowledge that many hundreds of people would be working to effect my rescue. During the afternoon I heard a "voice" aircraft broadcasting. It was asking me to switch off my "SARAH"

when I heard the search aircraft overhead. This message was somewhat disconcerting because I reasoned that my failure to comply with the instruction would give the searchers the impression that I was in no fit state to obey, as they would almost certainly assume I was still with the "SARAH". I felt rather guilty for not having made the extra effort to carry this vital equipment with me. At around 1730 hours I came to a small clearing on fairly dry ground and decided to rest for the night.

I made myself a fairly thick mattress of ferns and leaves and while doing so an aircraft came fairly close to overhead. As it was turning in my direction again I fired my smoke flare, but it obviously wasn't seen, the smoke took a long time to rise out of the tree tops. I had a meal of biscuits and cheese, after another abortive fire lighting attempt, and settled down for the night. I was reasonably dry, it hadn't rained all day and the night sky was clear, and the bed of ferns was if anything more comfortable than the dinghy. Having no candle I tried to get to sleep shortly after darkness fell and was successful. However, by midnight I was wide awake and slept very little after that.

I was up at dawn and re-assembled my pack, breaking camp at 0730 hours after a Glucose tablet breakfast. At about 0830 hours I was resting on a fallen tree when I thought I heard voices. This was a rather worrying moment for I remembered talking to another jungle survivor, Fg. Off. Bevin of No. 75 (NZ) Squadron, some months previously and he had said that after a couple of days walking he had suffered hallucinations. He imagined for instance he saw his wife waiting for him with his car and similar fantasies. I had a sudden dread that something of the sort was happening to me. I took a long drink of water, waited and listened, and sure enough the voices were still audible, so I gave a long blast on my whistle. There was an immediate shout and a little laughing Gurkha came crashing through the undergrowth in front of me, I have never been so

glad to see anyone.

The Gurkhas, the 1st/2nd, who were under the command of Major Bob Watterton and Lt. David Stephens, had been moving along a logging track about 400 yards ahead of me when they had heard the whistle, and within a few moments I was being treated right royally. My clothes were stripped off and I was kitted out in clean khaki, socks and boots, wrapped in a blanket, bedded down and being fed hot tea, cigarettes and curry, while the troops worked literally like beavers chopping a clearing for the helicopter. Within three hours they had cut out an area about the size of a small football stadium and after a wait for weather I was lifted out - very dicely at a ropes end, into a hovering Belvedere which had been most skilfully piloted into the clearing. At 1415 hours I was back at Changi at the end of the most momentous couple of days I have lived through.

Looking back on this episode I realise how extremely lucky I was on so many counts and I only hope that other aircrew reading this story will recognise the mistakes I made and benefit from them. In conclusion I would like to highlight some of the points I consider important:-

(i) Any rations of extra survival kit carried in a flying suit should be carefully packed.

(ii) To a smoker a pack of cigarettes and a lighter are most important items and well worth carrying.

(iii) More flares would, if they could be packed, be most useful. On reflection I feel I would have benefitted by using mine more sparingly and later in the search.

(iv) The Wilkinson knife is of doubtful value. Unless a modified version of the folding machette can be substituted for it I would suggest that it could be left out of the pack altogether and the available space given to more flares.

(v) As "SARAH" is the only link the survivor has with the searching aircraft it should be carried by him if he travels, no matter how much extra effort this requires.

(vi) Any plan to move from the area of landing should be most carefully considered. Before making any move it is essential to weigh the pros and cons over and over again, checking every point in the plan. It is worth remembering that in the circumstances, although probably quite unaware of it, the survivor is suffering some form of shock and certainly is not as rational as normal, therefore it is too easy to make a wrong decision that at best will delay rescue, and at worst prove fatal.

(vii) The instruction and experience from the Jungle Survival Course was invaluable. Knowing what jungle was like took a lot of terror out of the situation and I was delighted to find that being alone at night did not worry me as much as being separated from my group on the last night of the jungle phase of the course. I can offer no reason for this, that's just the way it was.

(viii) Finally I would like to steal a little more space to thank all those people who had any part in the rescue that I have not been able to thank personally. It is impossible to express how much the knowledge that so many people are working so hard to get one out means; certainly just saying thank you indeed seems most inadequate.