

From: O.C. 292 Squadron Ceylon Flight.

To: O.C. 292 Squadron Dhubalia.

Date 18th September, 1944.

Report for Period 2nd September to 15th September, 1944.

Your Bulletin No. 9 is to hand, for which may thanks. Thanks also for the congratulations.

2. Re the soluble plug question, it is interesting that the modification which we suggested some months ago has now been officially adopted – in principle. I still think, however, that the static line attached to the aircraft would be the means of release of the dinghy bottle. As it is, the bloke in the water has to find and pull the requisite tit, and it is felt that however good a chap may be at “tit-pulling” under normal conditions, his style as a tit-puller is liable to be considerably cramped after several hours in the water. However, we have been asked by Group to test their mod., so when we have given it the requisite attention, we will then also try out our own idea.

3. Our proposed move to KKS has been squashed, thank Heaven! Having very nearly been let down very badly over the move question last time, when we moved from Sigiriya and at the last minute found that KKS was not ready for us, I refused to take any action whatever this time until I had visited KKS and had a look around. It was extremely lucky that I did so, for when I met the Station Commander there, he said: “What .....so-and-so suggested that you should come here?” It transpired that there were still only four hard standings, and the squadron which lives there has 12 Liberators; the remaining 8 Libs are dispersed on taxi tracks and dispersal roads, and if they want to get out an aircraft it sometimes takes them about 12 hours!! I went there when it hadn't rained for over three weeks, and my Warwick was not loaded, but even so we sank down about 12 inches in the field in which they wanted me to park, and I had to use 'plus 9' to taxi back to the hard road. Also, there is no accommodation whatever for S.N.C.O's or airmen – they would have to be under canvas – and the rains have now begun in earnest. The S.H.Q. officers up there have just gone into a brick building, so their cadgan hut could have been taken over by us, but I would have refused point-blank to have my officers in decent quarters when the N.C.O's and airman were in tents in the rainy season. So I went back to Group and saw S.A.S.O., who agreed that the position was impossible, and then, as I was Station Commander, I did a little juggling here and a little wangling, and now we are to be left here indefinitely, and everybody is happy (particularly us!!)

4. There is no sign yet of the Sea Otters. I'm afraid I rather misconstrued the early signals, for I get the impression that the machines were almost on the way, and could be expected almost any time. Consequently, or course, we are not able to make any observations on the points raised in your letter, but will do so as soon as possible.

5. So far, we still have had no reply to our signal asking you for our Warwick maintenance publications. Presumably something has been done about getting them off to us, for our signal pointed out that the matter was vital and urgent, but we would like to know just what is happening. Incidentally, the diagram you sent was the schematic one, which we already have; the one we require is the maintenance layout, from which it will be possible, for instance, to see just where is the adjustment for the U/S warning indicators. Our aircraft is still A.O.G. awaiting receipt of these publications.

6. Reference Jacochi's{??} query about Airadar {??} Returns, these are of course co-ordinated with our Station's returns, and thence forwarded to 222 Group. We are advised it would be most inconvenient to have them included in your returns, for they would have to be shown without being included in the total (if you get what I mean). The point is that they must be include in this station's returns and if they are also included in a return to 231 Group from you, then A.C.S.E.A. will get them twice, and the war in the Far East would then be protracted by at least three months whilst they sorted out the answers!

7. We are doing numbers of scrambles, mainly looking for Naval aircraft which have failed to take off! We are getting quite a name for supply dropping, though. The army just ring us up, lay on the job, bring along a couple of containers packed with grub, etc., and within no time at all the delighted and grateful groups in the jungle are trying to sort out tins of "Spam" which have become entangled in broken tins of spaghetti mixed with tea and sugar:!. Seriously, though our lads are getting very good at these free drops, and the army tells us that the target is hit every time As the job is always laid on with "Walter", it is always good practice.

8. We are having a bout of unserviceability at the moment, which absolutely nothing seems to overcome. A/C "P" must have an engine changed, and "D" is showing exactly similar symptoms to those of the early stages of "P's" trouble, so we can expect another engine change quite soon. We have four engines somewhere between Indian and here (I took the precaution of ordering these when first we arrived in Ceylon) we were advised about three weeks ago that they had been despatched with escort, but either the "escort" has pawned them, or has somehow become detached from his charges, for there is no sign of them yet. Hence my signal to you, asking for our reserve aircraft to be sent down, even if only as a temporary measure. We have one aircraft on detachment at China Bay for a while, so we are in a pretty mess at present.

9. I have been trying everywhere to obtain a mains transformer (200v.-230v input to 26v. output) for testing purpose, but so far have been completely unsuccessful. I wonder if you could possibly get one for me in India.

10. Reference your queries re the "Walrus", I am sending the answers in the required form tomorrow, but to place them on record I will give them briefly here.

- (i) Neil Robertson stretchers can be used through the rear hatch; this has already been done several times here.
- (ii) Without alteration to the hull.
- (iii) N/A.
- (iv) Ceylon Flight could operate six additional Walrus aircraft without additional personnel.
- (v) It is considered that Walrus aircraft could be satisfactorily operated from rivers or lakes, provided that a beach could be found free from sandbars, and permitting of a landing run not more than 30 degrees out of the wind. In conditions of all wind, take-off run would of course be limiting feature, but an experienced pilot can operate these aircraft under extremely adverse conditions. It should not be forgotten, however, that in the area where this type of operation is likely to take place, rivers are either almost dry, or are raging torrents. Careful survey, or at least reconnaissance would be mandatory before landings could be made. For this type of operation, also, it would be necessary to have the aircraft fitted with large sea-rudders; these would have to be supplied for the aircraft held by this unit.

11. The rains have started here, and flying is perfectly bloody ... even the birds are walking. They tell me that there is so much water on the airfield at KKS that they can do retraction tests on the Walruses without using jacks!

Squadron Leader, Commanding,  
292 Squadron Ceylon Flight.