

canopy to use as a blanket. The rest I tied in a bundle, secured to the raft with an eight-inch length of shroud line, and, along with the pack and harness, threw them overboard.

By this time, the moon was well above the horizon. It was a friendly, full moon, which I was destined to observe through one complete phase before it should finally disappear and leave me lost and lonely amidst endless black nights. I decided to try to get a little sleep. Unable to lie down in the little raft, I devised a method of sleeping in the sitting position. I tucked my parachute silk under my feet, pulled it back over my knees and over my head, then tucked it in behind me. The silk would then support my head, throwing the weight against my feet. Even with that device, I was unable to get more than two or three hours of sleep each night. The waves and swells were consistently 10 ft. to 20 ft. high. As soon as I would doze off, a wave would break over the boat and wake me up. Then I would bale out the water, doze again, another wave, and so on into the night.

The days were hot, the nights were cold, and the wind and waves were merciless. To combat the heat of the day, I kept my flight suit, helmet, shoes, sun glasses, and even my gloves on. I made a mask out of parachute silk for my face. As a result I suffered very little from sunburn. My light brown hair bleached to a pale yellow despite my helmet's protection.

The wind and waves presented a much more difficult problem than the sun. I kept my sea anchor out so the raft would ride "bow-into-the-waves." At night my parachute silk reduced the shock of being hit by breaking waves, but it did not keep me dry. The constant pounding of the waves was nerve-racking. I soon started cussing at them. The cussing gave way to screaming, and then I got hold of myself. I stopped and prayed for strength to withstand the merciless pounding.

I carried morphine syrettes in my emergency kit for relief from severe pain. When my nerves seemed near the breaking-point, I used the morphine

to give me relaxation. When I was under the influence of the dope, the pounding of the waves ceased to irritate me. I resorted to it on three different occasions, all at night.

The three weeks that I spent adrift in the Coral Sea were not without their exciting moments. I had always wanted to see a whale, and during the first week that wish was fulfilled six times.

On July 20 I saw the first of many Japanese planes that I was to see before being rescued. I drifted on course of about 300 degrees deep into enemy waters. A few enemy planes passed directly over me as low as 500 ft., but failed to see me. I saw an average of one plane a day from then on, some friendly, some enemy, and others too far away to be recognized. I signalled some with tracer ammunition from my .45, with a mirror that I flashed in the sun, and with sea-marker dye. But not a one was to see my signals until August 1.

On July 24 I saw the first shark.

Ordinarily the sea anchor held the bow of the raft into the waves, but around 1330 on this day I noticed that I was riding sideways up the waves. A fish-line which I had secured near the centre of the starboard side of the raft was taut and drawn out at a 90-degree angle to the side of the raft. Suddenly the fish-line snapped, the raft swung back to its usual position, and a shark's fin broke the surface of the water. He swam under the raft and with his dorsal fin cut a fish-line that I had secured to the port side. Thinking a dead shark would float, I tried to shoot him. The bullet struck home. The shark jumped from the water, then floundered and sank. The same thing happened when I tried to shoot a mackerel, so I decided not to waste ammunition on fish.

When I landed on the sea, I had two days' emergency rations with me. These included six small cans of pemmican, three chocolate bars, a small jar of malted-milk tablets, some multiple vitamin tablets, some vitamin B₁ tablets and about three pints of water. I didn't eat a thing the first day.

The second day I decided to ration my food to make it last at least twelve days.