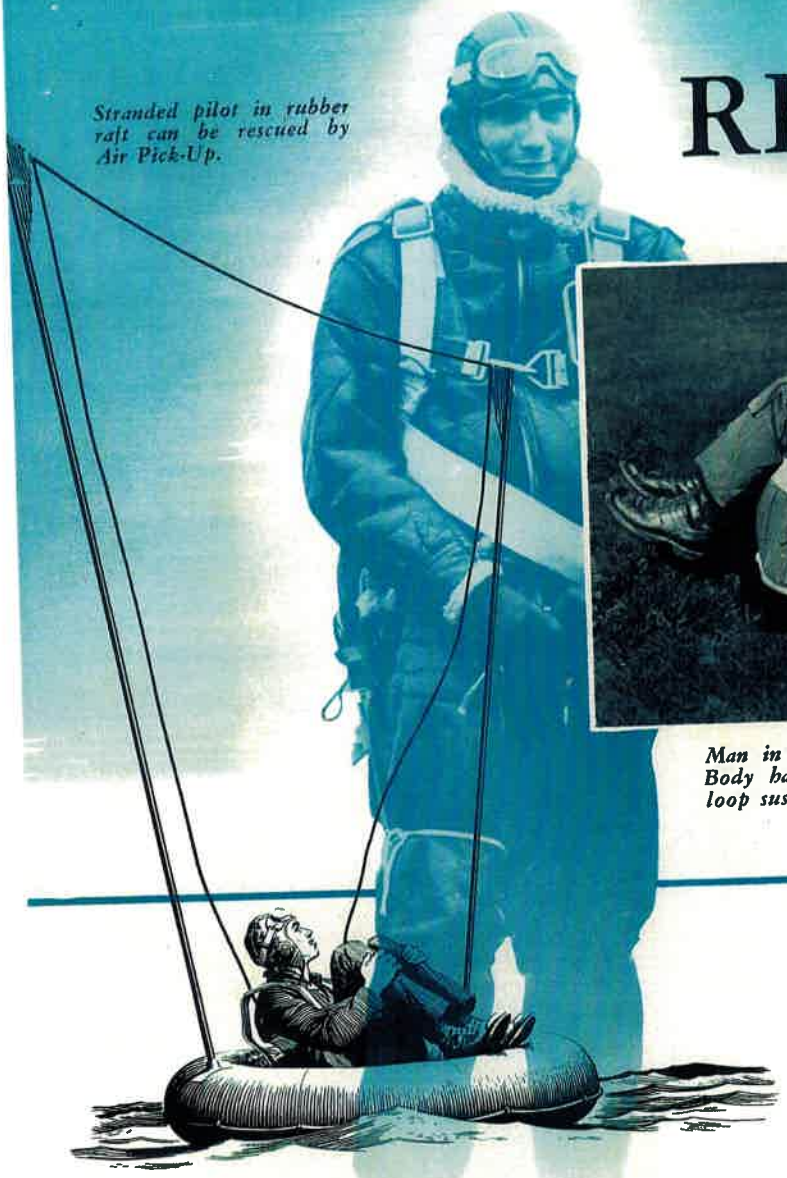
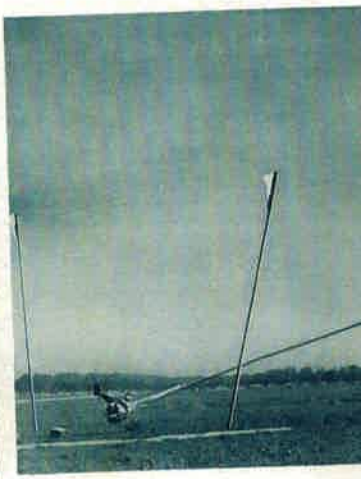
RESCUES *by A*



Stranded pilot in rubber raft can be rescued by Air Pick-Up.

Man in position for Aerial Pick-Up. Body harness is attached to transfer loop suspended between ground poles.



Plane lifts man off ground, just l a glider or a container of mail. feels no sudden shock or discomf as towline is paid out.

ON a crisp September day in 1943, a group of high-ranking Army Air Forces Officers gathered at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. They watched, somewhat nervously, as a young paratrooper strapped on a special parachute harness and propped himself on the ground. A plane raced toward them. Extending below it was a standard pick-up arm. Its hook struck a plastic rope stretched between two pick-up poles and attached to the man's harness. In one long, smooth swing, he left the ground. An instant later, he was 500 feet in the air, dangling below the plane. Like an ordinary container of mail, he was reeled into the cabin. It was the first direct pick-up of a human by an airplane in flight.

Years of experience with mail and express, and later gliders, had shown that the equipment developed by All American Aviation could change the shock of a pick-up into a smooth, even application of stress. The next application was the ultimate: the pick-up of a human by a plane in non-stop flight.

Before calling for volunteers for the first human pick-up, the research groups tried pick-ups with live sheep — the most fragile-boned of all animals. X-rays and other tests showed no ill effects. Then came the paratrooper and a new way of rescue.

Engineers worked on the special equipment for another year before putting it to more extensive use. They increased the safety factor, simplified the rigging and harness, so that it might be used by men who had never even seen a pick-up before. Concise instruction booklets were written, to be dropped along with full equipment to personnel to be rescued.

Human pick-up equipment can rescue stranded men anywhere there are a few hundred feet of clear approach for the pick-up plane. Pilots and crews forced down in mountains, jungles, on ice caps or in the desert can be picked up in flight. Likewise, with specially designed rafts dropped from planes, they can be rescued at sea.