lessly. "What on earth is the matter with you?" asked Jan.

Anita lifted her head long enough to gulp "I won't get to go to the dance after all! And I won't get to see Bill, either. Oh, I wish I were dead!"

All Jan could say was "Why not?"

"I've got the measles," sobbed Anita.

Winged Suicide

JACK DEMLOW

With every flight you become more convinced that a combat mission in this ship is nothing short of suicide. This suicide ship is the Army Air Forces' CG-4A Cargo Glider, commonly referred to as the "Whisper Ship," "Flying Coffin," "G-Bird," or "One-way Johnnie." Just looking at the glider, crouched in its own grotesque manner on the runway, makes you say to yourself, "How will it ever stay in one piece during the flight—not to speak of the landing shock?" Approaching the ship, you can not help noticing the flimsy fabric, the wooden skids beneath the repulsive, stubby nose, and the celluloid window enclosing the pilot's compartment.

Stepping into the cargo compartment of the "G-Bird," you may pull the fabric door open with a sudden jerk, in which case the door falls off its hinges and is blown feebly down the runway by the prop-wash of the two ship. (The tow ship is the transport plane to which the glider is connected by means of a stout nylon tow-line.) Then, too, you may lose your balance, and placing your hand against the side of the ship to prevent your falling, much to your surprise, you will continue to fall accompanied by a ripping sound caused by your hand plunging with little resistance through the frail fabric of the ship's covering. Should neither of these accidents befall you, you will pass through the cargo compartment and take your place in the pilot's seat, see no armor plate, no bullet proof glass nor any inter-phone communication equipment. At this time, you will realize that you are to fly the most vulnerable ship in the air. You also will realize if anything should go wrong during the mission—having no radio contact whatsoever with the two ship—your only alternative would be to "cut-off" or release your glider from the tow-line, and then pray that you will land in friendly territory.

While you are in the pilot's compartment, your eyes may fall upon a hugh sheathed, machete strapped to the flimsy braces of the compartment. Upon questioning, you will find that this is a piece of emergency equipment needed in the event that the pilot of your tow ship decides to release the glider pre-maturely. In this case, the three hundred and fifty foot tow rope snaps back towards the glider and sometimes entwines itself about the landing gear. To attempt a landing with the remainder of the rope dangling from your ship would be sure suicide as the rope undoubtedly would catch the tree tops and send you crashing earthward with no control over the ship. In this emergency, your co-pilot is to climb out on the landing gear and cut the rope with the machete, while the pilot continues to fly the glider and at the same time selects the field for an emergency landing.

You are on the runway now and ready for the actual take-off. Your glider is "hooked up," which means that the glider is secured by the tow rope to an attachment on the tail assembly of the transport. The glider will become airborne long before the tow ship; consequently, you are warned to be alert for an emergency release. If the tow ship had engine failure or failed to become airborne after using up two-thirds of the runway it would be necessary to execute an emergency release. At this point, the glider pilot's instructions are simple—"get it down the best way you can." The fact that you have no parachute means nothing. Glider missions are always accomplished at approximately four hundred feet and at this altitude a parachute would do as much good as a stepladder.

The tow ship is now beinning to roll forward and is "taking up the slack" in the tow rope. With a sudden jerk, the rope is drawn taunt and the glider begins to roll down the runway. As the speed increases, the glider begins to vibrate, rattle, and shake as though the wings were about to tear themselves from the fuselage. When you think you have sufficient speed to stay airborne, you snap the wooden control column back towards your chest and the ship lurches drunkenly into the air. Your attention is focused upon keeping the wings level and keeping the proper position behind the tow ship; in your mind, you are wondering just where and how you will set this "flying coffin" down should the tow rope snap and come lashing back through the nose into the pilot's compartment. During the entire flight, these thoughts are predominant until your right hand reaches for the release lever. A brief pause for last second decisions and then—"twang"—the cut-off!

Instantly, you bank the ship steeply to the left and then level the wings as the shaking and vibration of the glider ceases. From this point until you feel the landing shock, you are conscious of the name, "the Whisper Ship." WHAM! The wheels strike the ground and you slam the control column forward. The glider stands on its nose and the skids throw dust and sod in all directions. The safty belt cuts sharply into your groins as your full weight is thrown forward and the glider careens skidding and sliding to a halt.

After you unbuckle your safty belt and scramble out of the emergency door, you take a deep breath of dust laden air. Then and only then do you fully know why a glider pilot in an English pub, when asked by a French soldier what the "G" on his wings stood for, promptly, but laconically replied, "Guts!"