

ANOTHER SEA STORY OF VP-43 WHO OPERATED OVER LAND AND SEA!

By Bill Maris

It is the only time I flew a PBY and never got out of the tie downs and yet became airborne. With both engines running, yoke pushed forward to keep the nose down, trying to stay on the cradles the CB's had/were making as fast as possible to slide under the hull's to keep us from rocking, unlocking the beaching gear and collapsing on same and punching a hole thru the bottom of the hull. I could feel the PBY hull rock on the cradle as it would lift up then fall back again as the wind would gust to many mph on the ASI [air speed indicator]. A very exciting time for sure. I believe it was Maw Chandler my radioman who was helping me.

Mother nature sure played games with us during that period of time as the storm lasted for hours, all night and then into the next day. The CB's had parked all their trucks with the dump beds elevated along with other heavy vehicles and cats amongst the PBY's to help break the force of the wind gust.

There were two PBY's parked nose against the mountain in a revetment and one Willy-wa picked the outboard one up, turned it 180 around sent it back down and other than break the tie down lines didn't hurt either PBY.

Sheet metal, barrels and ply wood got more flight time than anything else other than the blowing snow. If it wasn't secured, it disappeared. The former neat CB lumber yard by the barracks looked like a tic tac toe game area, lumber of all sizes scattered everywhere.

The aerographers had a bomb shelter covered with 12 x 12 timbers chris-cross over their fox hole and I watched a twister pick those beams up as they all became airborne and disappeared down by the power house and into the dock-bay area. The only thing we lacked were dancing girls to go with the music from the wind as it whistled thru the area. Most amazing I don't remember of any of our crew getting hurt.

GB BILL, VP-43