

EO 55-30LB-2

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE



**DESCRIPTION, MAINTENANCE  
AND  
PACKING INSTRUCTIONS  
6, 10 AND 20 MAN LIFE RAFTS**

**REVISION  
NOTICE**

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Insert revised pages into basic publication.  
Destroy superseded pages.

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# LIST OF RCAF REVISIONS

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PAGE NO</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PAGE NO</b>
12 Jul 57	13		
2 Oct 57	12		
18 Feb 58	5		
18 Feb 58	6		
27 Jun 58	12		
27 Jun 58	15		
27 Jun 58	19		
27 Jun 58	20		
17 Dec 58	15		
13 Jul 59	8		
14 Aug 59	12		
12 Oct 59	8		
30 Dec 60	12		
13 Oct 61	12		
13 Oct 61	13		
13 Oct 61	14		
8 Jan 62	6		
26 Mar 62	13		
23 Jul 62	13		
28 Sep 62	13		
15 Jun 64	14		

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART	TITLE	PAGE
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION PERIODS	11
3	PACKING INSTRUCTIONS	15

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE
1-1	For Protection Against Exposure in Extreme Cold Regions	2
1-2	For Protection Against Sun, Rain and Mosquitoes In the Tropics	2
1-3	Life-raft Exterior View	3
1-4	Life-raft Interior View	5
1-5	Typical Valise Stowed Raft for Location in Fuselage	6
1-6	Rescue Line, Quoit and Winding Jig	7
1-7	Canopy Closure Method of Closing	9
3-1	Valise Stowage	16
3-2	Valise Stowage #1 Fold	17
3-3	Valise Stowage #2 Fold	17
3-4	Valise Stowage #3 Fold	18
3-5	Valise Stowage #4 Fold	18
3-6	Valise Stowage #5 Fold	19
3-7	Valise Stowage Insertion into Valise	19



## PART 1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
GENERAL	1
DESCRIPTION AND MAINTENENCE	4
INFLATABLE FLOOR AND CANOPY	4
VALISE	4
LIFE LINE	6
SAFETY TOPPING UP VALVE AND DEFLATION PLUGS	6
PAINTER	6
STABILIZING WATER POCKETS	6
BELLOWS BAG	6
HAULING-IN LINE	8
STOWING OF SHEATH AND KNIFE	8
DROGUE	8
CO <sub>2</sub> CYLINDERS AND OPERATING HEADS	8
LADDER	8
RESCUE LINE AND QUOIT	8
RAIN CATCHMENTS	8
RIGHTING STRIP	8
CANOPY CLOSURE	8

## PART 1

## INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL

1 The function of the equipment described in this EO is to save life by keeping crews of ditched aircraft afloat and as comfortable as possible until rescued. The fact that so many lives have been saved since the advent of this equipment, has given aircrews confidence in it and shows that there is little wrong in either the design or the quality of the construction. In this respect it can be placed in the same category as the parachute on which every member of an aircrew knows he can rely. This sense of confidence must not be shaken or destroyed by either careless or thoughtless action on the part of others.

2 Successful operation of life-raft equipment demands that infinite care and attention

to detail be taken, not only on the part of air-crew but also on the part of the ground personnel responsible for the inspection, packing and servicing, upon whose thoroughness so many lives may depend.

3 Emergency life-raft equipment can be broadly divided into two classes. The first provides each member of the aircrew with an individual life-raft stowed in a pack attached to the parachute harness or waistcoat life saving, thus forming part of the wearers personal equipment. In this case each man with his equipment and the knowledge of how to use it is self-dependant and almost wholly responsible for his own safety.

4 The second class provides one or more

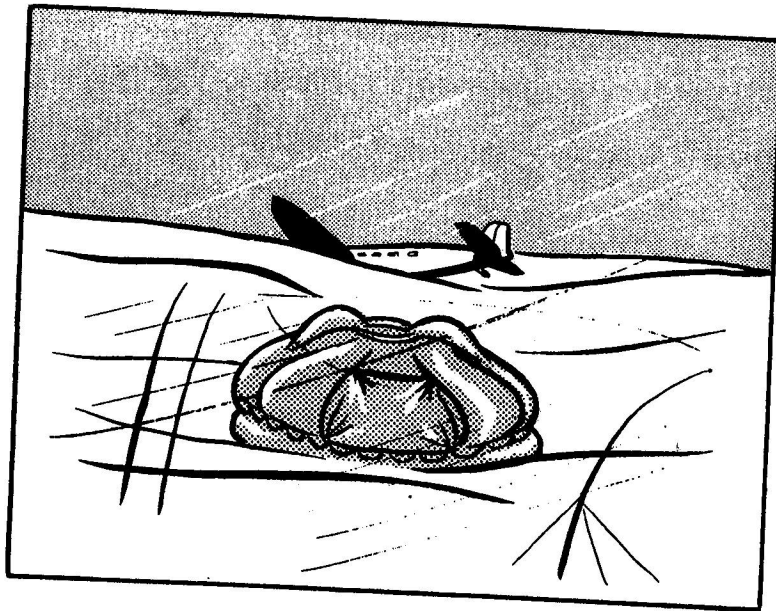


Figure 1-1 For Protection Against Exposure  
In Extreme Cold Regions



Figure 1-2 For Protection Against Sun, Rain  
and Mosquitoes In the Tropics

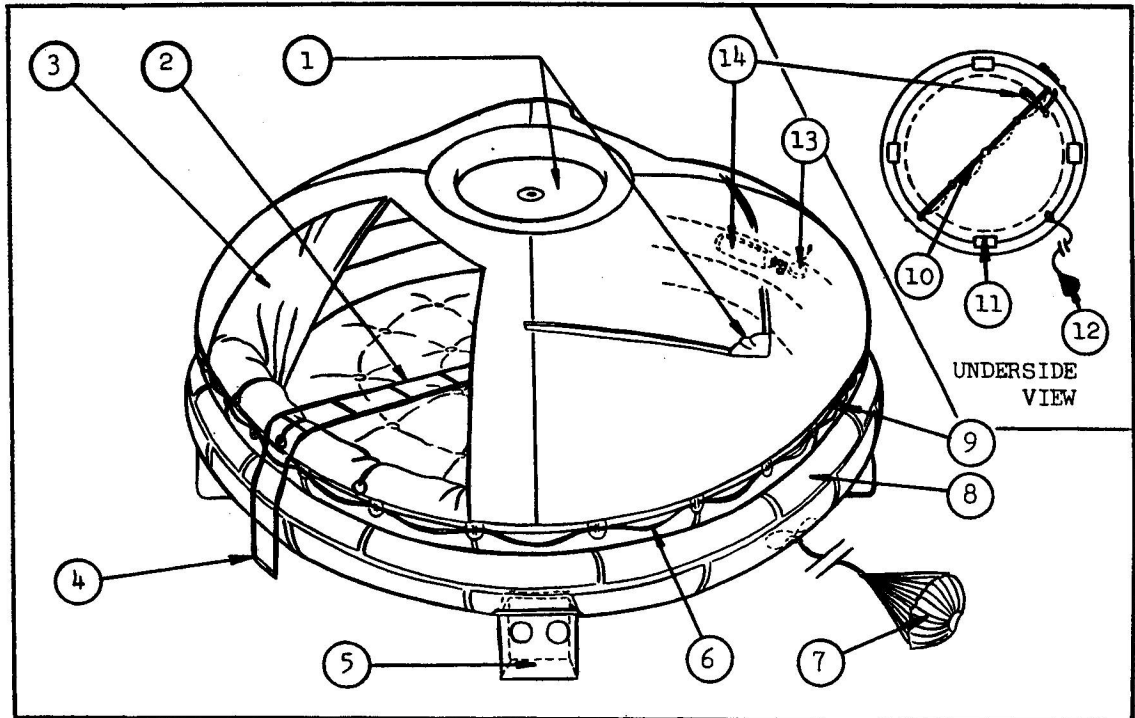


Figure 1-3 Life-raft Exterior View

- 1 Rain catchment
- 2 Hauling-in line
- 3 Canopy closure
- 4 Ladder
- 5 Water stabilizing pocket
- 6 Lifeline
- 7 Drogue

- 8 Lower buoyancy chamber
- 9 Upper buoyancy chamber
- 10 Righting strip
- 11 Water pockets
- 12 Drogue
- 13 Operating head
- 14 CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder

large life-rafts to support the entire crew. The gear is stowed in the aircraft in a valise or a blow-out stowage compartment from which it is either manually or automatically ejected. In multi-seat life-rafts it is important that each man is fully trained in his duties as circumstances may arise where colleagues who through injury or other causes may be unable to carry out their part of the drill.

5 When fully inflated, a life-raft will remain afloat indefinitely but provision is made for maintaining its maximum buoyancy by the use of bellows, leak stoppers and emergency repair kit. In addition, the crew is provided with means of sustenance, recognition and navigation equipment, enclosed in water-proof containers. The life saving waistcoat, or Mae West as it is more generally known, is worn in the same manner as a life belt to support the wearer in the water until the raft can be boarded.

#### NOTE

Never remove the lifejacket when at sea in a dinghy.

6 From the operational aspect, the successful launching of the life-raft (except in the case of the single seat raft) depends on team work. This is important as each member of the aircrew has some duty assigned to him in accordance with the RESPECTIVE DRILL and this should be carefully and FREQUENTLY REHEARSED under supervision of a Safety Equipment Technician.

7 From the foregoing it will be evident to all ground personnel connected with the equipment that because it is provided to save life, no one can afford to disregard the regulations laid down in EOs for its handling, use and servicing. No effort should be spared to attain and maintain the highest degree of efficiency in all aspects of the work, however tame or tedious it may sometimes appear.

#### DESCRIPTION AND MAINTENANCE

8 The latest life-rafts have been designed to meet a wide range of both sea and land re-

quirements, see Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2. This has been done so that an aircraft, which in one flight, may pass through tropics, arctic or over the sea and have primary aids, wherever it may inadvertently descend. In developing a life-raft for this requirement, a life-raft with adequate double chamber floatation and special automatically erected exposure protection in form of a canopy, has been provided, see Figure 1-3 and Figure 1-4. This will provide immediate protection from cold, spray, rain or sun.

9 Life-rafts are formed and constructed by the cementing and sewing together of rubberized cotton fabric and are inflated automatically by CO<sub>2</sub>.

#### NOTE

Yellow dope is not to be applied to life-rafts in an effort to brighten them for easier locating. This practice is unsatisfactory and highly dangerous to the lives of crews which are forced down at sea. When treated with yellow dope, the surface of the raft, after stowage in the aircraft, becomes tacky and sticks together, thus preventing the correct inflation of the life-raft.

#### INFLATABLE FLOOR AND CANOPY

10 The inflatable floor and canopy, when inflated are excellent insulation from cold. In addition the raft may be covered with snow and thus serve as the frame work of a quickly constructed igloo, see Figure 1-1.

#### NOTE

Remember if you descend on to ice or above the timberline your multi-seat life-raft becomes an igloo. Use it as such.

#### VALISE

11 Valises for the six, ten, and twenty man life-rafts as shown in Figure 1-5, consist of 12 to 14 oz. orange cotton duck, rot proofed.



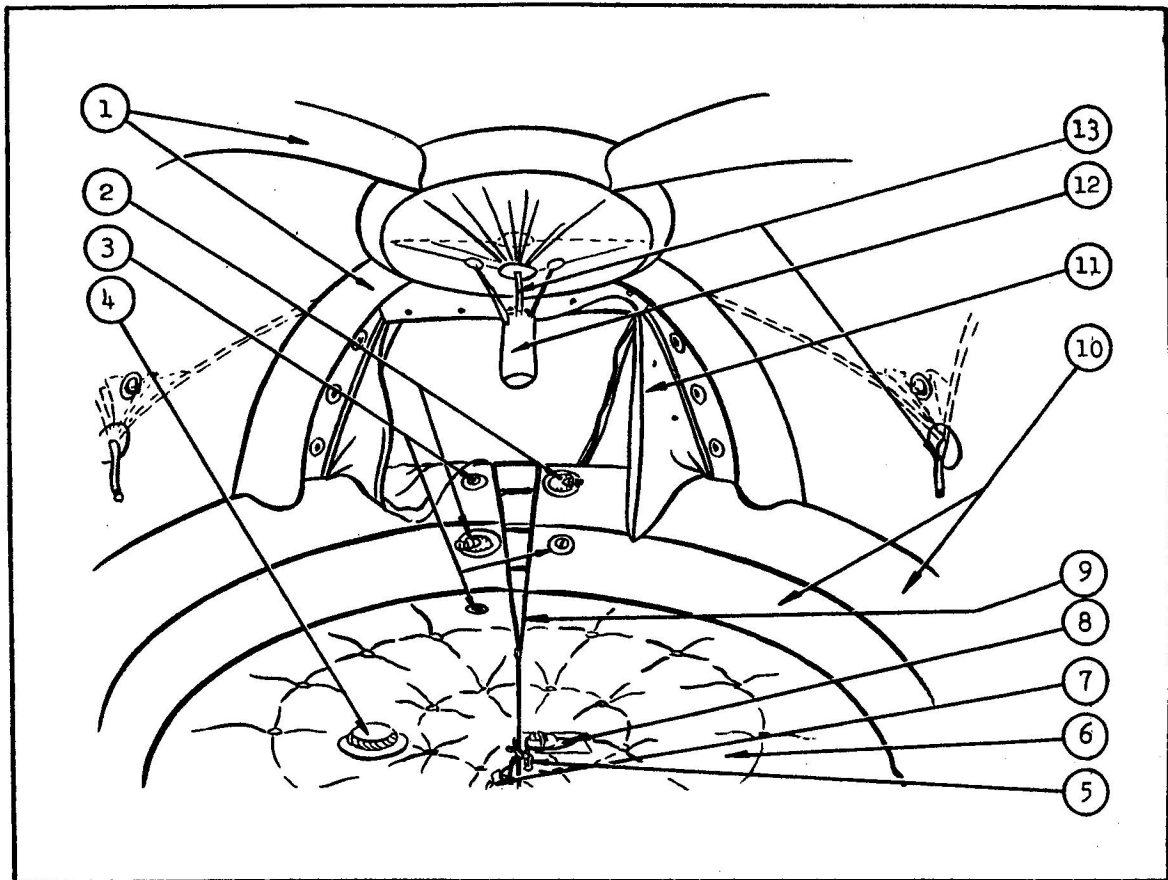


Figure 1-4 Life-raft Interior View

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Inflated canopy     | 8 Sheath knife                       |
| 2 Topping-up valves   | 9 Hauling-in line                    |
| 3 Deflation plugs     | 10 Upper and lower buoyancy chambers |
| 4 Rescue heaving line | 11 Canopy closure bag                |
| 5 Spear valve         | 12 Water storage bag                 |
| 6 Inflatable floor    | 13 Water catchment delivery tube     |
| 7 Bellows bag         |                                      |

#### LIFE LINE

12 The life line as shown in Figure 1-3, varies in length due to the size of the life-rafts. The attachment of the life line to the raft is by equally spacing the base patches around the life-raft on

the outside of the upper chamber. The life line is made of 1" wide webbing and attached to a number of base and cover patches cut from three ply yellow fabric. The number of spacings of the patches varies depending on the size of the raft.

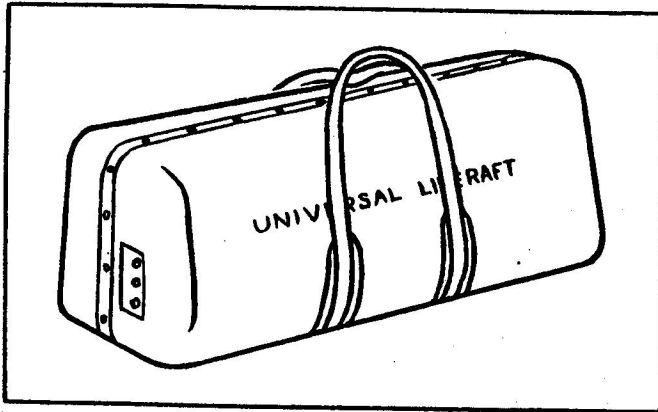


Figure 1-5 (Issue 1) Typical Valise Stowed Raft for Location in Fuselage

#### SAFETY TOPPING UP VALVE AND DEFLATION PLUGS

13 Detailed information on the safety topping up valve and deflation plug as shown in Figure 1-4, items 2 and 3 is covered in EO 55-30-10.

#### PAINTER

14 All life-rafts are fitted with a painter which has a breaking strength of 245 lbs. This painter is secured to the life-raft and when the raft is stowed in the aircraft, whether valise or blowout stowage is used, the other end of the painter is secured to the aircraft structure. North Star and Comet aircraft may carry the life-raft with painter not attached to the aircraft. When carrying the life-raft in this manner a suitable snaphook with a tensile strength of 300 lbs is to be made fast to the aircraft end of the painter. This snap hook is to be attached to the painter by a bowline knot and the loose end seized to the standing part using 32B/359 cord linen #16. When the aircraft comes to rest the painter is to be passed around a strong point and snapped to its own part.

#### NOTE

This prevents the life-raft from being blown away from the aircraft before the crew have boarded. After the crew have boarded the life-raft, the painter is cut by one of the crew members using the knife provided. If the aircraft should sink

before the painter is cut, it will break and not pull the raft under. In some installations, such as valise stowage, the painter also operates the CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder when the valise is thrown out of the aircraft when the aircraft has ditched. In these installations, crew members should be warned that the painter will NOT support the weight of the valise and life-raft complete, therefore the raft must be launched from the aircraft, ONLY AFTER IT HAS COME TO REST. If it is launched from any height greater than the length of the painter, the life-raft will be lost.

#### STABILIZING WATER POCKETS

15 Stabilizing water pockets under the life-raft, as shown in Figure 1-3, aid in boarding and act as sea drogues.

#### BELLOWS BAG

16 The bellows bag is an accessories container of yellow 12-14 oz. duck with a draw string in the top. The stowing position of the container is on the inside of the life-raft and secured to the hauling-in line at point approximately 37" from the loop which secures the hauling-in line to the anchorage patch. Draw the bellows bag tie cords tight and make two half hitches as close to the neck of the bag as possible. The following equipment is stowed in the container:-

- |     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| (a) | Breast bellows   | ea 1    |
| (b) | Viscous sponges  | ea 2    |
| (c) | Leaks stoppers   | nests 2 |
| (d) | Temporary repair kit<br>(items (d) and (e) are contained<br>in one water-proof bag.) | ea 1    |
| (e) | Repair clamps  | ea 4    |
| (f) | Water storage bag polyethelene   | ea 1    |
| (g) | Collapsible bailer   | ea 1    |
| (h) | Whistle  | ea 1    |
| (j) | Instruction booklet  |         |

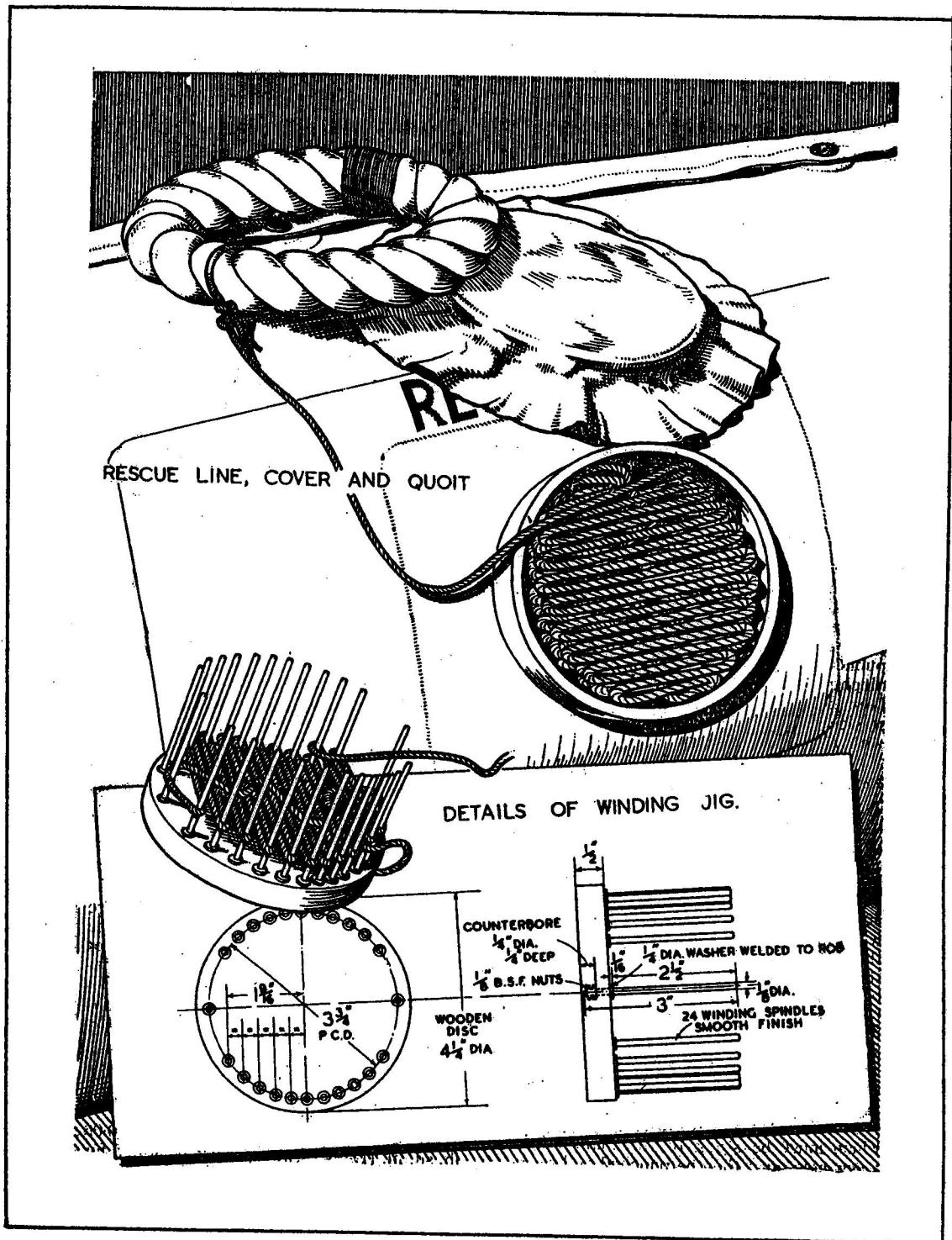


Figure 1-6 Rescue Line, Quoit and Winding Jig

NOTE

Emergency repair of life-rafts when in water is accomplished by the use of metal clamp type plugs provided in the accessory equipment of each life-raft.

HAULING-IN LINE

17 The hauling-in line shown in Figures 1-3 and 1-4 is secured to the ladder by means of reefing the served ends of the hauling-in line, through the loops of the ladder anchorage patches, passing through the loops of the foot-step ladders in the form of a reef knot, and passing back through the loops of the ladder anchorage patches, and served with sailmakers twine. To enable the closure of the canopy, release the hauling-in line loop from the anchorage patch, remove the bellows bag, and pass through the opening.

STOWING OF SHEATH AND KNIFE

18 The sheath for the life raft knife is stitched to a three ply rubberized patch with #40 linen thread, and the location of the complete assembly being the center of the life raft floor as shown in Figure 1-4. The knife is secured to the sheath by a 4 oz. cotton cord 66" long to prevent loss of the knife.

DROGUE

19 The drogue, which consists of a number of gores, is made of cotton fabric. The rigging lines are plaited flax cord. The drogue is attached to the life raft by a 30 ft. length of rot-proofed cord, orange in colour, 1/4" in diameter.

CO<sub>2</sub> CYLINDERS AND OPERATING HEADS

20 Detailed information on CO<sub>2</sub> cylinders and operating heads is found in the following Engineering Orders:-

CO <sub>2</sub> Cylinders	EO 55-25A-2
Operating heads	EO 55-25B-2A

LADDER

21 The ladder as shown in Figure 1-3, is attached to the hauling-in line by passing the two eye spliced ends of the ladder through the "D" ring patches located on the outside of the lower chamber. The free ends of the hauling-

in line are served through the ladder anchorage patch, passing through the eye spliced ends of the ladder in the form of a reef knot, back through the ladder anchorage patch and served with sailmakers twine. The ladder is constructed of buoyant cord 3/4" in circumference and has three rungs, the bottom rung has three lengths of cord, hand sewn, and bound with 30 mm tape.

RESCUE LINE AND QUIT

22 The rescue line consists of a buoyant cord 75 feet long and 3/8" in circumference and is flaked into the collar of the base patch with the aid of a jig as shown in Figure 1-6. The rescue line is then covered by a cord retaining patch cover, which is secured by forcing the quit over the collar. The complete rescue line patch is attached to the floor, but the line itself is attached to the base patch by the cord securing tab.

RAIN CATCHMENTS

23 There are three rain catchments provided on 6, 10, 20 seater life-rafts, all have tubes leading to the inside of the life-raft with rubber stoppers in the end of the tube, see Figures 1-3 and 1-4. The rubber stoppers are 0.7" at the top and taper to 0.55" at the bottom, the length is 0.95". A polyethelene water bag in the bellows bag is attached to the "D" rings near the rubber tubes to obtain fresh water from the rain catchments.

RIGHTING STRIP

24 The righting strip as shown in Figure 1-3 is attached to the underside of the life-raft by two points of attachment on the six and ten seater and three points of attachment on the twenty seater life-raft. The purpose of the righting strip is self-explanatory. If the life-raft should inflate upside down, the righting strip is to enable the correct positioning of the life-raft on the water. The righting is achieved by placing both feet on the floor near the CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder bottle and taking a firm grip of the righting strip at approximately the center of the strip and allowing full weight of the body to lay back, away from the life raft.

CANOPY CLOSURE

25 The canopy closure is manufactured of

light rubberized fabric material and is designed to close the entrance to the life-raft when the following procedure is carried out:-

- (a) Place the elastic loops along the top of the flap assembly, over the hooks along the top of the opening on the canopy assembly, see Figure 1-7 (A).
- (b) Snap the press stud fasteners together on the press stud fastener flap, which are located along the top of the opening canopy assembly, on the inside of the canopy, see Figure 1-7 (B).
- (c) Snap the press fasteners together on the gusset panel, located on both sides of the opening flap assembly.
- (d) Proceed to roll the gusset panel in a neat and tight roll, see Figure 1-7 (C).

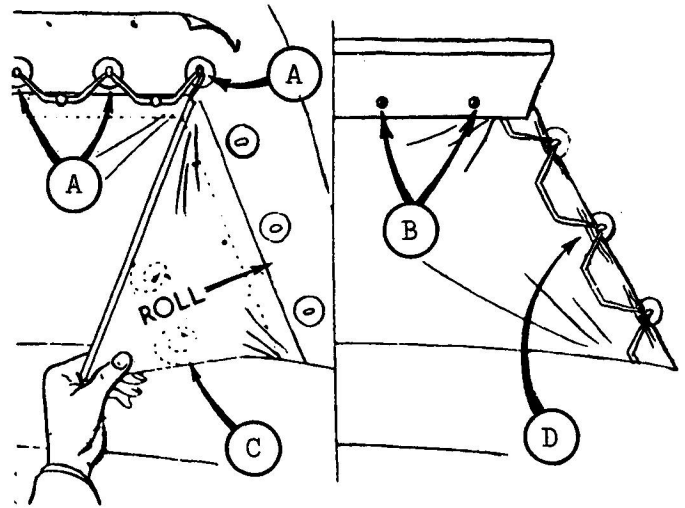


Figure 1-7 Canopy Closure  
Method of Closing

- (e) Complete the closure by placing elastic loops located down both sides of the canopy flap assembly, to hooks, located down the edges of opening canopy assembly, see Figure 1-7 (D).



## PART 2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
MAINTENANCE	11
INSPECTION	11
INFLATION TEST - MULTI-PLACE LIFE-RAFTS	12
BUOYANCY TUBE	12
SAFETY TOPPING-UP VALVE	13
CORRECTION OF PRESSURE CHANGES FOR TEMPERATURE VARIATION	13
LIFE-RAFT IDENTIFICATION LABEL	13
STORAGE	13
SERVICE LIFE	13
DISPOSAL	14

## PART 2

## MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION PERIODS

## MAINTENANCE

1 Life-rafts are items of primary survival equipment, and as such, every precaution will be taken to ensure proper maintenance inspection and handling. All personnel engaged in the inspection, maintenance or handling of life-rafts will exercise caution to avoid stepping or sitting on packed life-rafts, or placing any weights or items on the life-rafts, which are not required to be placed thereon. When accomplishing maintenance, or repair of unpacked life-rafts, personnel will not step on any part of the raft while wearing shoes, and will not step on any part of the floatation tubes. Life-rafts will not be thrown or dropped, since in so doing, damage to life-raft or accessories may result. Particular care will be exercised to prevent hydrocarbons, such as gasoline, oil or grease, from contacting life-raft materials. If the life-raft does come in contact with any form of hydrocarbons, immediately wash off with soapy water, then the raft is to be rinsed, dried and liberally dusted with french chalk or soapstone and tested.

2 The action of sunlight and heat has a very adverse effect both on rubberized fabric and CO<sub>2</sub> bottles. Therefore life-rafts are NOT to be left in the sun, i. e. on wing tips, etc, but are to be kept in the shade and cool as possible.

## INSPECTION

3 When inflating life-rafts for inspection ensure that the air used is free from moisture or oil and that a careful check is made so as not to damage the raft by over inflation. Always use the manometer for testing pressures. Inspection and tests are to be carried out at the following periods on all types of life-rafts:-

- (a) On a unit, test at the following periods:
- (1) When taken on charge.
  - (2) At the periods specified in the maintenance schedule of the aircraft in which they are stowed.

(3) Liferrafts in storage in Safety Equipment Sections and in Unit Supply Sections are to be inspected once every two months.

(b) At Supply Depots, test at the following periods:-

(1) On receipt of liferafts from the contractor or units.

(2) Prior to issuing to a unit.

NOTE

Supply Depots are relieved of periodic inspection except for mildew or other conditions from local storage.

(Paragraphs 4 and 5 DELETED)

Periodic Inspection

6 When liferafts are inspected, the following general points are to be followed:-

(a) The liferaft is to be tested carefully for leaks.

(b) A thorough visual inspection for chafing and signs of deterioration is to be made.

(c) All fittings, attachments, etc., are to be examined for serviceability.

(d) The CO<sub>2</sub> bottle is to be inspected for the correct weight of gas charge and general condition of the bottle.

(e) The operating head is to be examined carefully for correct functioning and serviceability.

(f) A check is to be taken of all accessories which are to be included for serviceability. Ensure that each item is in its correct place and properly stowed and secured. The repair outfit contained in the bellows bag is to be inspected once yearly. Take special note of the ten natural rubber adhesive capsules. If any dryness of contents is suspected or if the plastic capsule container has become excessively hard they shall be replaced. After completing the inspection the container is to be resealed.

(g) All lifelines, ladders, painters, etc., are to be checked for serviceability and security.

(h) When fitting the CO<sub>2</sub> bottle, ensure that the liferaft fabric is not twisted when the union is tightened.

(j) The utmost care must be taken to obtain maximum deflation. The creases must appear as knife edges. It is vitally important that all the air be expelled from the raft before packing. Any air left inside will exert a considerable pressure at high altitudes. This operation must be performed immediately prior to stowage in an aircraft, stored in this condition for use, air may tend to re-enter due to porosity.

NOTE

Inflation of the liferaft by operating the head on the attached CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder will be carried out as detailed in the aircraft maintenance schedule.

INFLATION TEST

MULTI-PLACE LIFERAFTS

7 Before tests are commenced the topping-up valves (STU valves) and the CO<sub>2</sub> inflation valves are to be flushed with air to ensure serviceability. The maximum air pressure to open the CO<sub>2</sub> inflation valve must not exceed 20 psi. This test on the CO<sub>2</sub> inflation valve will not be required when inflation by the CO<sub>2</sub> system is part of the inspection.

BUOYANCY TUBE

8 Before tests are commenced on the buoyancy tubes insert a rubber plug into the opening of each safety topping-up valve, and inflate liferaft to initial pressure using a manometer. With an initial pressure of 2 psi (4.1" of mercury or 55" of water) the inflated liferaft is left to stand for 30 min. to allow pressure and temperature to attain equilibrium. The pressure is rechecked and adjusted to the initial pressure. The pressure drop in 60 min. is noted. The maximum temperature-corrected pressure drop permitted on this test is 0.18 psi (0.37" of mercury or 5" of water) for the lower chamber, and 0.27 psi (0.55" of mercury or 7.5" of water) for the upper chamber.

NOTE

The maximum corrected pressure drop for the 6-seater liferaft is 0.45 psi (0.91" of mercury or 12.5" of water).



If the pressure drops are greater than the above, the rafts are considered unserviceable and must be carefully inspected for leaks. Soapy water applied with a soft brush will greatly assist in finding leaks.

#### SAFETY TOPPING-UP VALVE

9 The safety topping-up valves are to be tested separately for blow off and re-seating pressures by independent inflations of the buoyancy tube. Each valve must unseat at  $1-3/4 \pm 1/4$  psi and re-seat at  $1-1/2 \pm 1/4$  psi. Tests are as follows:

(a) Remove the rubber plug from the valve port and allow the pressure to drop to approximately 1 lb. per sq. in. to ensure that the valve will fully close. Disconnect the rubber tube from the manometer and inflate the life-raft slowly until the valve commences to open, when a hissing sound will be heard from the port. As soon as this occurs, stop inflation and connect the rubber tube to the manometer and note the reading. If this is within limits specified, increase the pressure until the valve is well open and leave connected to the manometer until the valve closes. When this occurs, note the reading and this figure should also come within the limits specified.

#### NOTE

For further information concerning safety topping-up valves refer to EO 55-30-10.

#### CORRECTION OF PRESSURE CHANGES FOR TEMPERATURE VARIATION

10 The accuracy of the change of pressure reading depends largely on temperature variations in the raft during the duration of the test period. Draughts near the raft must be avoided. All pressure drops must be corrected for temperature variation as follows:

(a) If there is a temperature rise, 0.06 psi (0.12" of mercury or 1.5" of water) must be subtracted for each degree centigrade (1.8°F) in temperature rise.

(b) If there is a temperature fall, 0.06 psi (0.12" of mercury or 1.5" of water) must be

added for each degree centigrade (1.8°F) in temperature drop. Readings are to be to the nearest  $1/4^\circ\text{C}$ , ( $1/2^\circ\text{F}$ ). Should the temperature variation during the test period exceed 3 degrees centigrade ( $5.4^\circ\text{F}$ ) the test is invalid and must be repeated.

#### LIFE-RAFT IDENTIFICATION LABEL

11 It is essential that all life-rafts be labelled as to the aircraft in which they are normally carried, since often the only positive proof of loss of an aircraft at sea is the recovery of the life-raft. A waterproof label of doped fabric made locally, with the relevant aircraft registration number printed in 1" letters on one side and serial number of raft and call letters of unit on whose charge life-raft is held on the other, is a proper identification. The label should be attached to the raft lifeline, by an 18" cord and should be left hanging outside the valise when the latter is stowed. When changing the life-raft from one aircraft to another the new number and tab may be readily fitted. Therefore, if available, the manufacturer's serial number of the life-raft is to be entered in the log book as well.

#### NOTE

The life-raft serial number or unit call letters are NOT to be stamped or stencilled on the life-raft container or valise.

#### STORAGE

12 As life-rafts have a large percentage of rubber in their construction, great care must be exercised in storing them.

13 Life-rafts will be stored in a cool dry place, never in sunlight. Dampness in the storage room may cause the life-raft to become moldy or mildewed.

14 Life-rafts will be stored partially inflated on shelves, if this is not possible they will be stored in valises or separate containers.

#### SERVICE LIFE

15 There is no service life for multi-place life-rafts, the life-rafts and accessories may

be used indefinitely provided they comply with the following conditions:-

- (a) Satisfy the tests prescribed in paras. 7, 8 and 9 of this Part.
- (b) Repairs considered economical.

#### DISPOSAL

16 When life-rafts become unserviceable through repairs or normal wear, the serviceable accessories will be removed and returned to stores for re-issue. The life-raft will be converted to Ref. 15F/200 and returned to a supply depot where action will be taken for their re-issue as targets for gunnery practice.

17 Surplus life-rafts that are serviceable are to be returned to the depot. Unserviceable

life-rafts beyond capabilities of unit repair are to be reported to AMC for disposal.

#### NOTE

Due to the fact that these life-rafts are used only for ditching training, all repairs are to be carried out by unit safety equipment sections. When classifying these life-rafts, a high degree of serviceability is not required.

#### **CAUTION**

The use of Ref. 15F/200 life-rafts multiplace as a means of floatation (excluding practise training under qualified supervision) is dangerous and will not be tolerated.

## PART 3

## PACKING INSTRUCTIONS

## SIX, TEN AND TWENTY MAN DINGHIES

## VALISE STOWAGE

1 The procedure prior to packing the six, ten and twenty man life raft into a valise, is a thorough inspection and proper deflation. The folds must appear as knife edges after deflating.

2 Felt should be placed around metal parts of the dinghy so as not to endanger the rubberized fabric through chafing.

3 The packing procedure of the six, ten and twenty man life raft is as follows: Figure 3-1 to Figure 3-7 - Valise Stowage. The painter is to be attached to operating cables of CO<sub>2</sub> operating heads as per Figure 3-7.

NOTE

Safety connecting cord is to be of sufficient length that no tension is applied on cables when dinghy is packed for service or inflated. This cord is to run under the life line adjacent to the upper operating head and is required as the possibility exists that operating heads modified as per EO 55-25B-6A/1 might be in-

stalled in error. Care is to be taken that the operating head connecting cord runs over the safety line so that if operating wires pull free of heads, the dinghy will still be secured to the painter by means of the safety connecting cord.

4 The dinghy as illustrated in Figure 3- comprises the following ancillary equipment for six, ten and twenty man life rafts

- (1) Rescue line.
- (2) Glove paddles, bellows bag and bellows.
- (3) Sheath knife.
- (4) Leak stoppers.
- (5) CO<sub>2</sub> cylinders.
- (6) Operating heads.
- (7) One temporary repair outfit (i bellows bag).
- (8) One inflatable cushion.

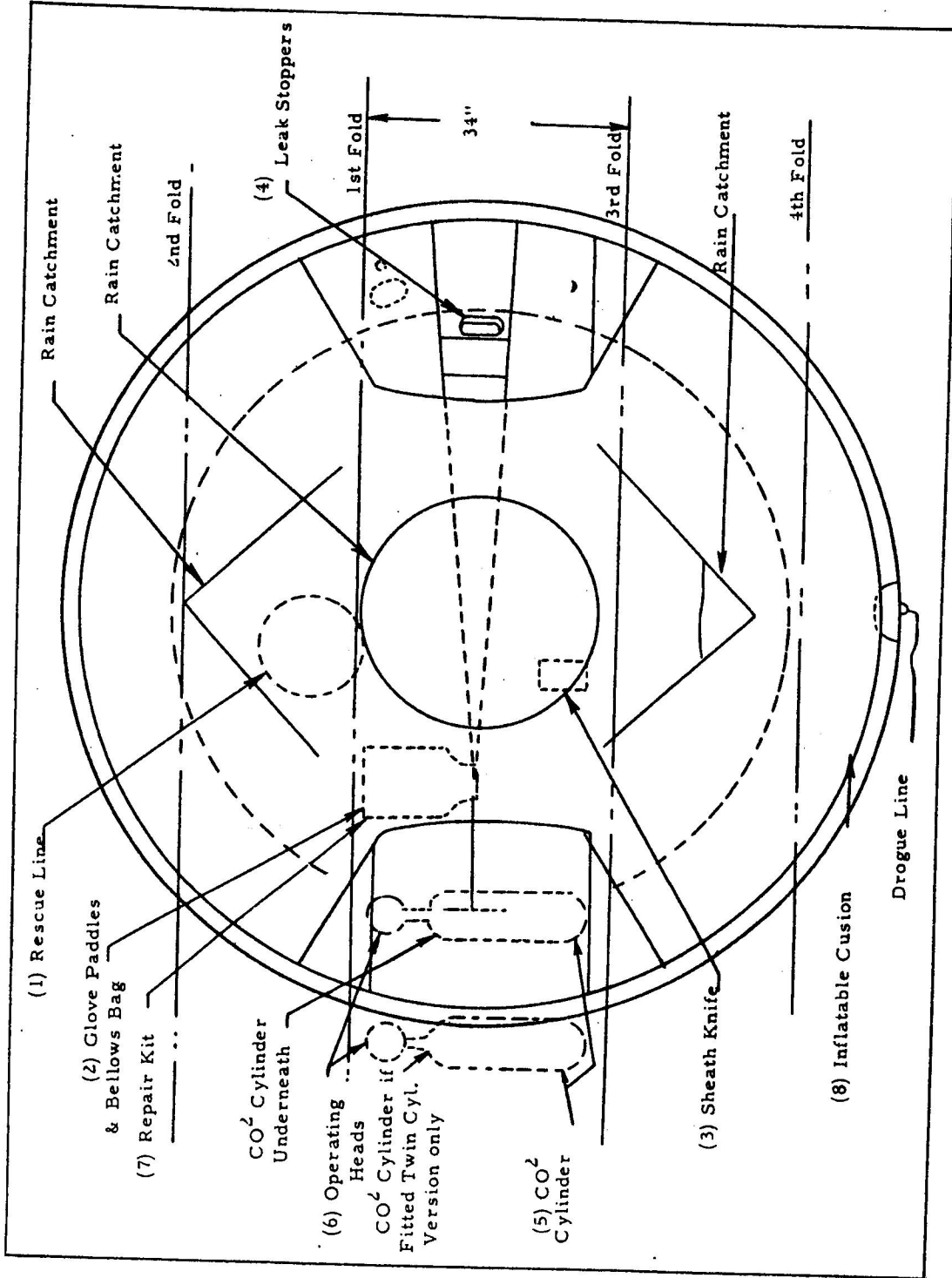


Figure 3-1 Valise Stowage

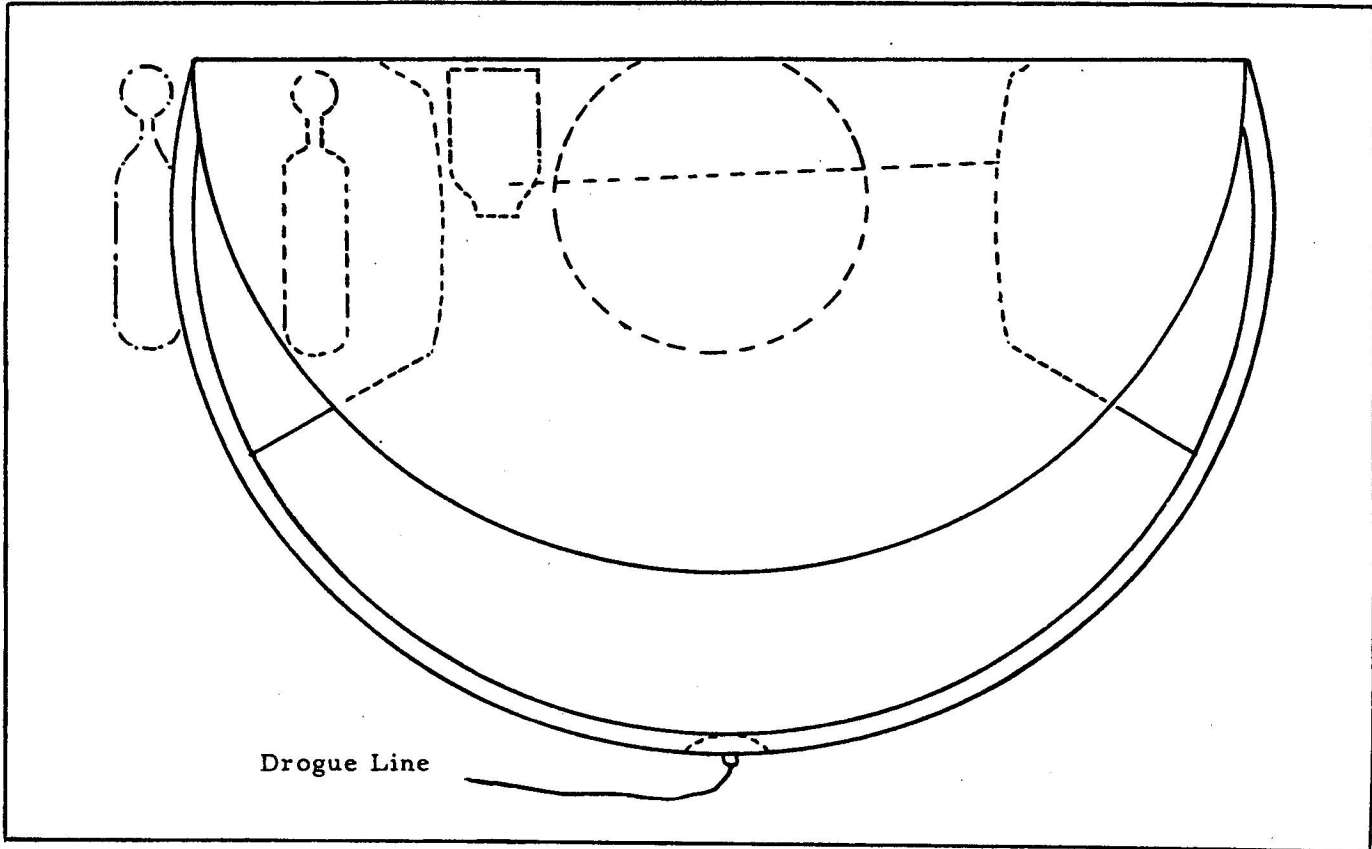


Figure 3-2 Valise Stowage #1 Fold

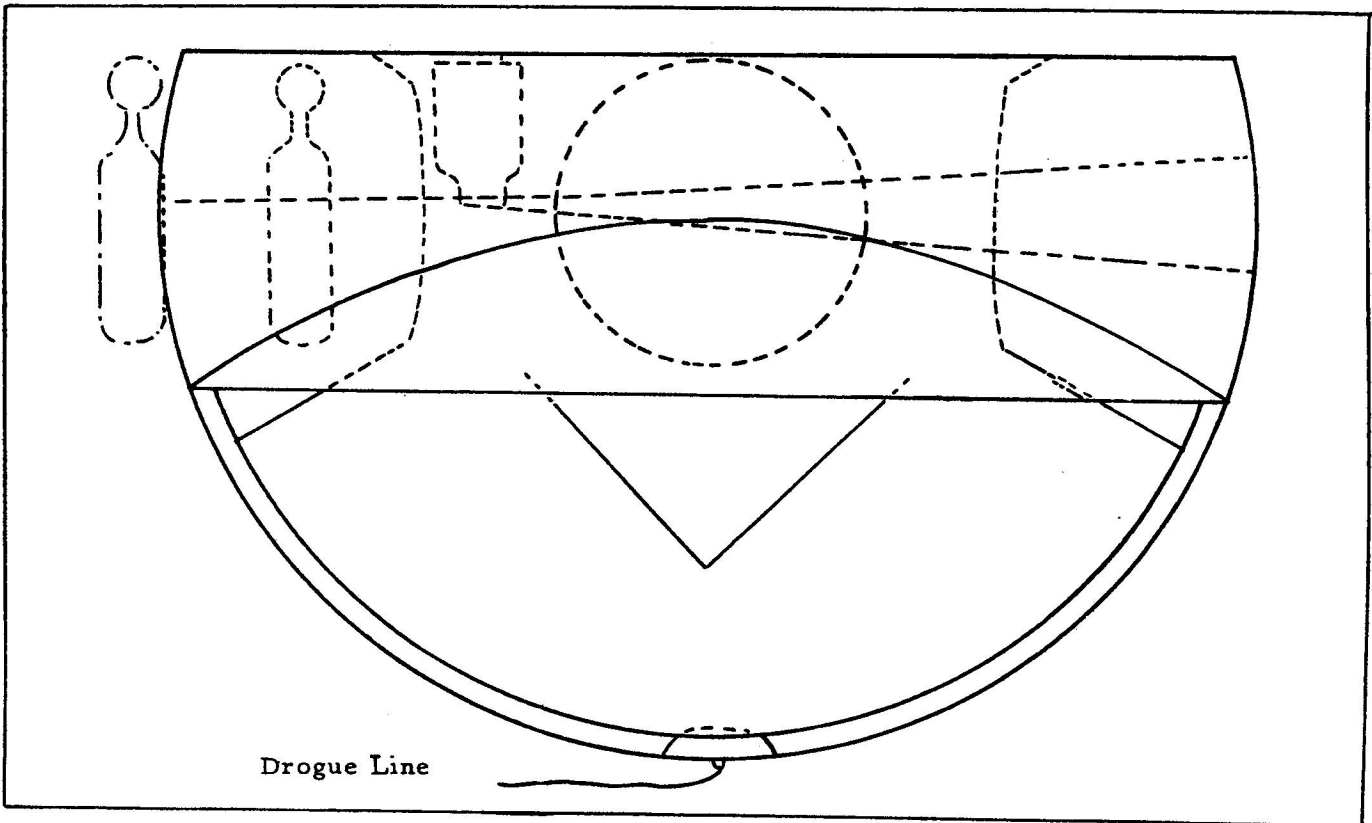


Figure 3-3 Valise Stowage #2 Fold

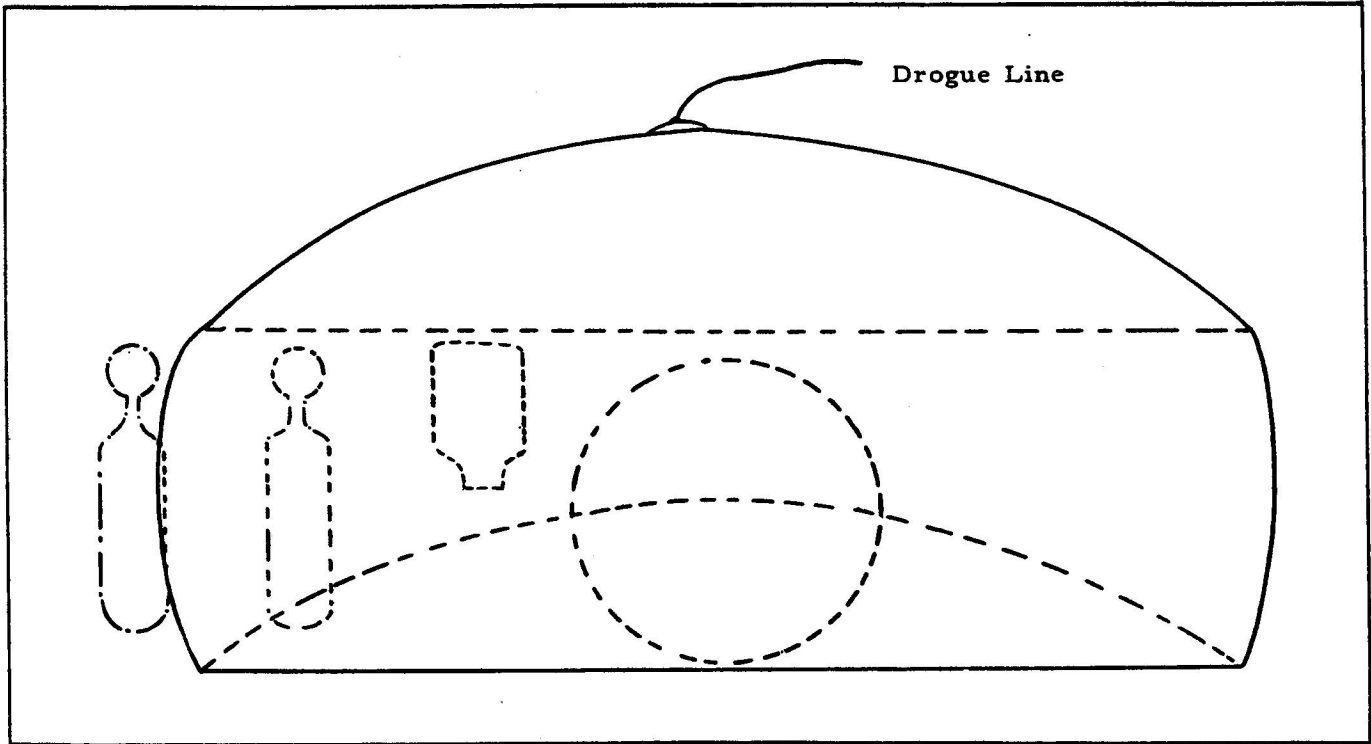


Figure 3-4 Valise Stowage #3 Fold

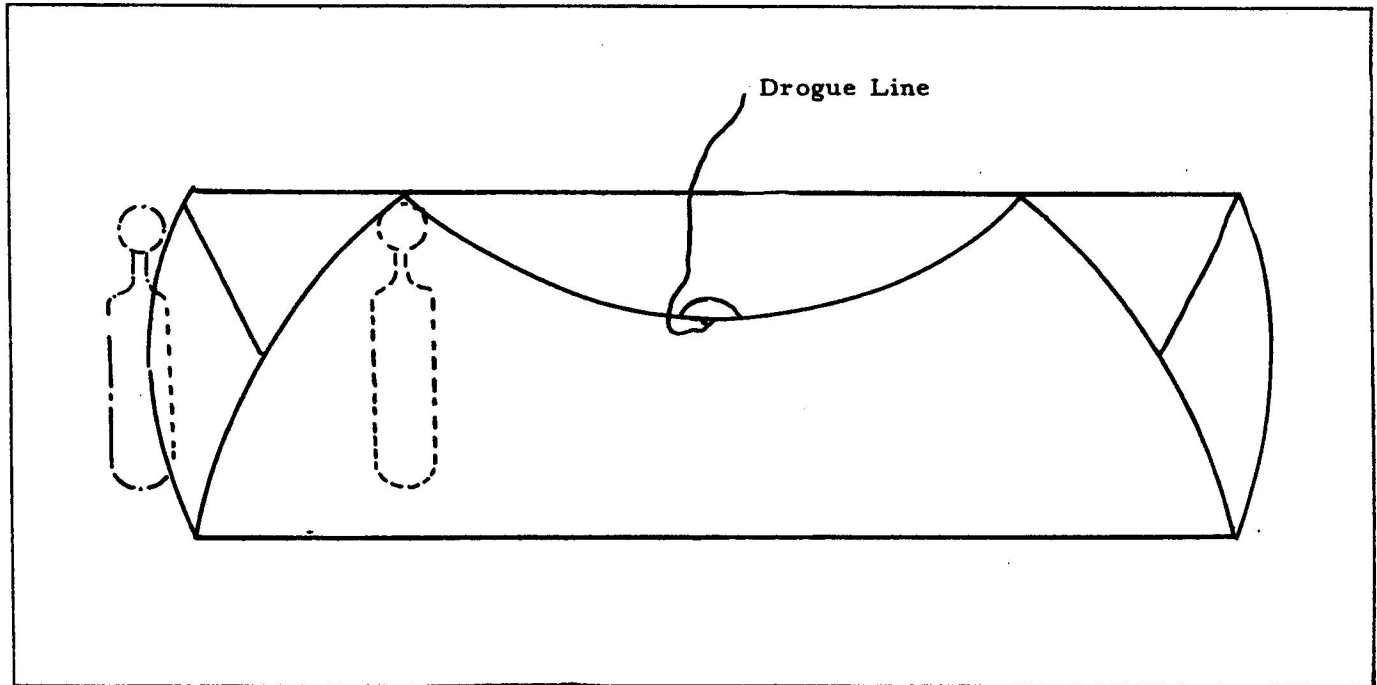


Figure 3-5 Valise Stowage #4 Fold

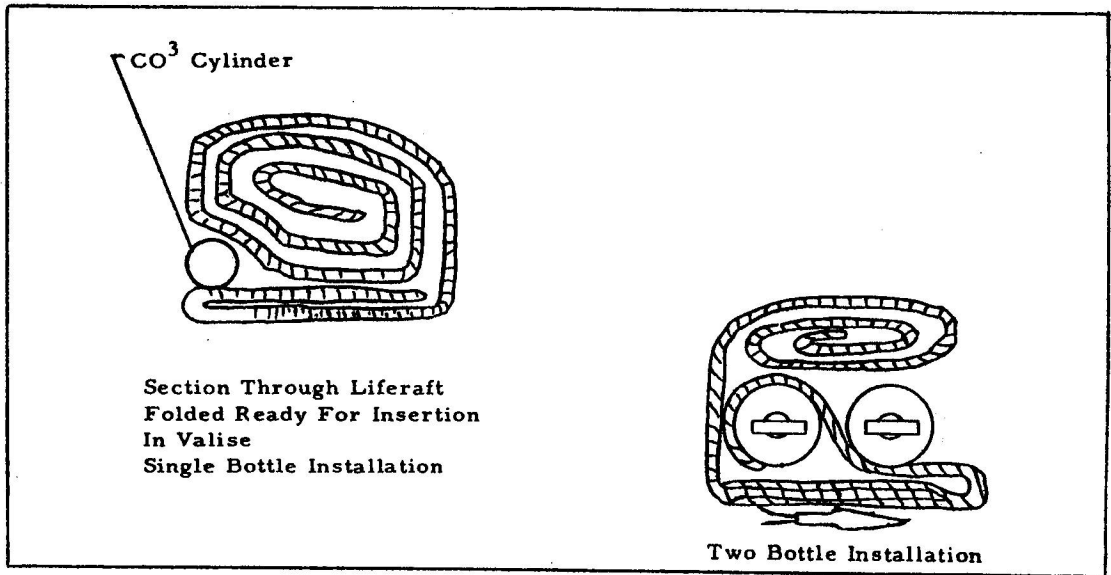


Figure 3-6 Valise Stowage #5 Fold

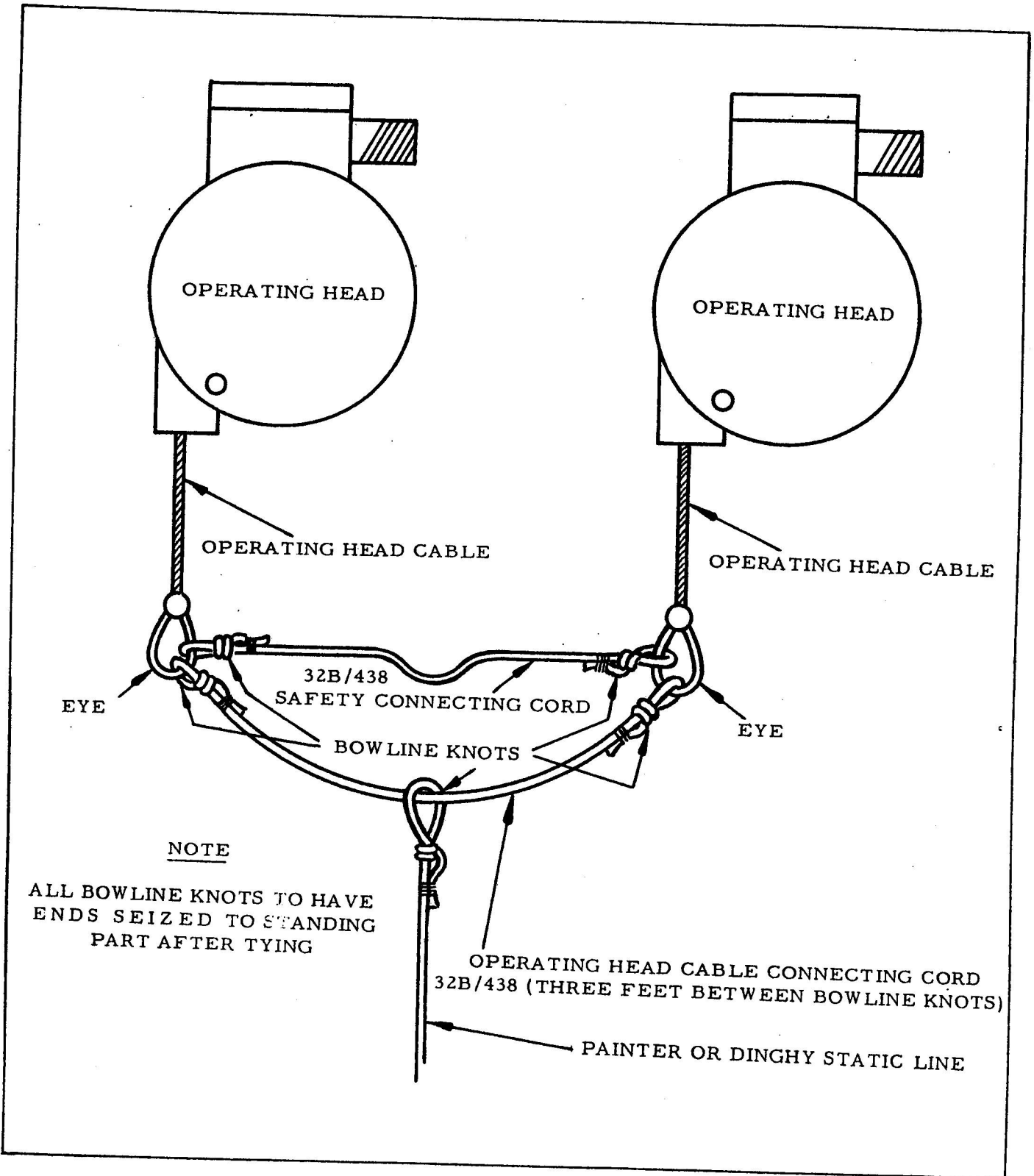


Figure 3-7 - Valise Stowage Insertion into Valise