



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Gramp Roars

Jehosophat! Aviators don't make them all! After years of trying to keep pilots from sprouting wings (or horns, as the case may be), now it looks like I'm going to have to take on the education of magazine publishers. In the February issue, the guy's blue pencil slipped, and the article entitled "The Case For Ejection" has me saying that forced landings in jets should be made wheels up. Any durned fool who can read knows that just the opposite is true. The very last sentence in OpNav Instruction 3750.12 spells it out in language that even magazine publishers can understand—forced landings on unprepared terrain by jets or other tricycle gear aircraft should be made WHEELS DOWN.

Remember—make 'em WHEELS DOWN if you hafta make 'em. And you, Bub, keep your flying speed or you'll spin in from that swivel chair of yours.

And now if all the desk jockies will get the heck back to their pencils we can get on with our business in the air. A pox on the chairborne forces!

† Detachment ZERO, NAF Lower Slobbovia—Dear Gramp: I did it and I'm sorry. Can I get up now, please?—The Publisher . . .



## Boxing Lesson

Two JG's flying F2H-3's on a low-level navigation training flight spotted two canyons up ahead. The wingman, noting the rugged terrain, called to

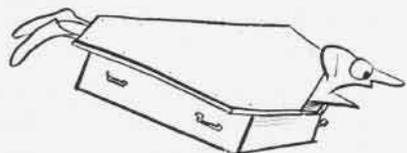
the flight leader, "Don't think we can make it from here."

"Yes, we can, it's easy," came the reply.

They proceeded into the selected canyon at 300 knots, the wingman taking the lead.

In the wingman's words: "I was climbing rapidly due to the terrain slope, and I noted that we were just about committed to keep going. The sides of the canyon were now too narrow to turn around. I saw my rate of climb indicator pegged at 6,000 feet per minute and airspeed dropping fast.

"I hugged the port side of the canyon and I knew at this time that if I kept my altitude, I would never make it. Dropping my nose, I tried to increase my airspeed, and at the last moment, I pulled up and nursed the aircraft over the end of the blind canyon. Airspeed was around 140 knots and clearance over terrain from 10 to 50 feet."



When the wingman could get no radio response from the flight leader, he circled back and saw a large billow of black smoke about 1,000 feet below the canyon rim.



### Grampaw Pettibone Says:

"Yes, we can, it's easy" is high on the list of famous last words. Although the wingman didn't think they could make it, he let himself be influenced by the other pilot's fatal confidence. I suspect he still held some reservations and kept his mind working on a way out. Otherwise, he might not have been set to make that slow motion zoom that permitted him to limp over a low spot in the canyon wall some 12,000 feet above sea level.

I've read several cases of pilots getting themselves boxed in lately,



and I'm convinced that not all of the box canyons are in cowboy movies. The trouble is that too many pilots aren't learning this lesson until they're in serious trouble.

"In case of doubt, don't" is a good rule to follow when tempted to take chances on low-level nav hops. This type of flight is necessary, but the added hazard must be recognized and reckoned with. It looks to me like the older and wiser heads in an outfit could go a long way toward impressing on younger bucks the necessity for extra caution and superior planning.

## On Borrowed Time

After downing his F4D because of faulty radio equipment, a Ltjg. took off in the standby plane to act as bogey, making simulated runs on a four-plane division.

During the climb-out to 42,000 feet, the aircraft had a pronounced right wing-heavy tendency which the pilot made several attempts to "trim out." He homed in on the other planes of the flight, which had taken off 15 minutes ahead of him, and spotted them visually. At 43,000 feet and indicating a speed of Mach .9, the *Sky-ray* was in a starboard turn when it began a slow roll.

The pilot attempted to counteract the slow roll, but the aircraft would not respond and continued into a second slow roll. During the second roll, the pilot counteracted the rotation. Whereupon the aircraft threw both external tanks and reversed direction with a violent snap roll. After one rotation, the airplane again made an abrupt halt, then snapped into another roll.

The pilot released all flight controls, thinking the aircraft might right itself, but he began to "red out" and could not clearly see the flight instruments. At a last known altitude of about 40,000 feet, and almost unconscious, the pilot reached upward with his right hand, grasped the face curtain, and ejected himself from the aircraft.

The pilot lost consciousness, then as his senses began to clear he realized that he was spinning at a terrific rate. He finally forced his right hand to pull the bailout bottle. In the pilot's own words:

"The centrifugal force on my body was so great that I was unable to use either my legs or arms in a 'scissors'

manner to cause my body to roll over. I was also unable to turn my head so that I might look down at the terrain and estimate the altitude. I decided to pull the ripcord as soon as I felt warm air as I was continuing to slightly 'red out' and had no idea how high I was above the terrain.

"All of a sudden I had an extremely warm sensation throughout my body, and I pulled the ripcord. The parachute opened immediately, and I found myself staring at small ripples on a very smooth sea. I estimated my altitude to be no greater than 1500 feet. I had just enough time to release my chest buckle and check on the security of my knife as my feet struck the water."

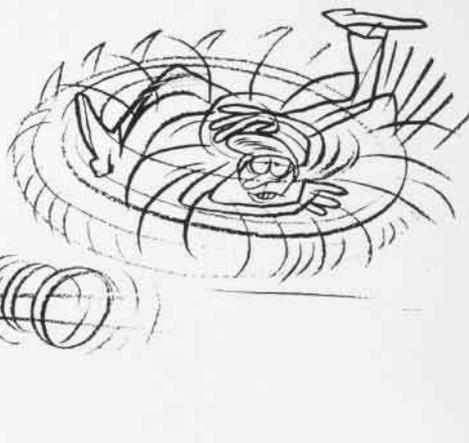
The downed pilot was sighted by an S2F crew and was picked up by helicopter after an hour and 20 minutes in the water.



### Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Son, you had me worried. I thought you'd never get around to pulling that ripcord. If that "warm sensation" had been delayed any further, things wouldn't have turned out so hot.

Mention was made in the accident report that the pilot had difficulty in determining whether or not the lateral trim system was functioning properly. Since there is no lateral trim indicator in the F4D, the amount of trim can be determined only by visual reference to the control stick on the ground or by aircraft reaction in flight. The AAR Board listed the following possible contributing factors in this accident:



*Ltjg Jelly Roll*

1. An unequal fuel transfer resulting in full external and internal fuel tanks on the starboard side.

2. A defective yaw-damper system resulting in an abnormal rudder deflection when the attempt was made to recover from the starboard wing down condition.

3. A defective lateral trim system giving loss of lateral trim control with full right trim in.

Since the airplane crashed into the ocean, there's nothing but the pilot's report on which to base an opinion of what happened. But it seems to me that when repeated attempts at trimming failed to correct the right wing-heavy condition during the climb-out, it should have been the pilot's cue to abort the mission, slow down to approach speed, take stock of the situation, and — if practicable — get back on the deck.

This was the sixth accident in which this lad had been involved. Maybe he was a victim of circumstances and sad coincidences in his previous hair-raising adventures—I don't have accounts of his previous accidents available to me at this writing.

A Reservist, the Ltjg was due for release to inactive duty, and immediately following this sixth accident he went into a non-flying status at his own request. That may be the smartest thing he ever did, since the statistics rarely permit a pilot to survive his *fifth* accident.

## MEMO FROM GRAMP

Haste makes waste; but for survival by ejection, well planned, rehearsed, fast, coordinated action can save your life. Here, he who hesitates is lost.