



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Born Too Late

A young ferry pilot departed from an East Coast base in an HTL-6 helicopter on a 146-mile VFR cross country flight with an enroute fuel stop. Shortly after he left the Naval Air Station local area his chart was blown out of the open cockpit. Undismayed, the intrepid aviator continued on his way, following a highway with the avowed intention of landing at a service station to secure a "road map" which he felt was more suitable for navigation on his trip!

He found a suitable vacant field in a rural community, with a service station nearby, so a landing was attempted. After descending and coming to a hover, he decided to move to a smoother section of the field. A slow turn to the right was started, but the tail rotor skag hit a stump and one of the tail rotor blades was broken off. With rudder control lost, the helicopter struck the ground, wiping out the main rotor blades and buckling the fuselage. The pilot had his lap belt and shoulder harness tight and locked and



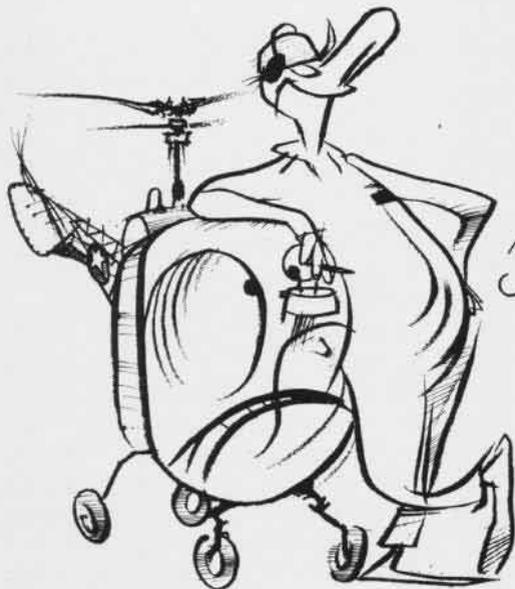
Gibson

was uninjured, although the aircraft suffered overhaul damage.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sufferin' catfish! I guess we been wastin' money all these years printing aeronautical charts and Rad-



The Most!

faes. This young man likes the oil companies' products a lot better. The HTL-6 has a good bird dog mounted right in front of the pilot's face where he can see it all the time. His route was a major airway, absolutely straight, with strong range stations at each end. Total enroute distance was only 146 miles, and he had an approved fuel stop enroute. Needless to say, he should have turned back when he lost his chart.

Throughout military and civil aviation, the "state of the art" has progressed considerably in the past 30 years, to put it mildly. We no longer proceed from point to point utilizing land marks, road signs or town names painted on roofs. This young man was born 30 years too late.

Cool Heads

It was a stormy day at sea in WestPac. The heavy seas following passage of a typhoon were causing the deck of the big carrier to pitch through an estimated 40-foot arc.

An F8U *Crusader* was approaching for a landing aboard, but touched down just as the deck was pitching up. Both the main landing gear and the nose wheel assembly were smashed and sheared from the plane. The F8U slid down the deck and its hydraulic fluid ignited just as the pilot pulled his plane into the air. It was a bolter.

The pilot cut in the afterburner as he went off the deck edge and proceeded to make a nearly vertical climb-out, trailing fire and smoke. At 5500 feet his controls froze and he ejected. The automatic equipment functioned perfectly and he floated down gently to the water.

Meanwhile the ever watchful helicopter had followed his every move and was on station for his water entry. The resourceful copter pilot flattened his 'chute with rotor wash and had the uninjured pilot aboard the whirlybird in less than two minutes.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I'm so proud I could bust my buttons! This quick-thinking tiger



turned what could have been a lily-gatherin' into a successful ejection by using what he had *fast*, and knowing the limitations of his safety equipment.

He traded airspeed and power available for *altitude* and gave his seat, auto lap belt, and auto 'chute opener the 4 to 7 seconds they need to save him. With the nose up *attitude* in his steep climbout, after he passed 1000 feet he had it made! The extra altitude gave him precious seconds to prepare for water entry.

The whirlybird pilot, by being watchful, properly positioning himself to flatten that 'chute as soon as it hit the water, and clearly demonstrating his skill in the copter, was a real professional aviator. Both of these men are the type we all want in our outfits when the going is tough.

And Then There Were None

While flying at 35,000 feet on a simulated strike mission from his carrier in WestPac, the Plane Commander of the A3D *Skywarrior* became increasingly concerned over erratic fuel quantity and center of gravity indicator instrument readings.

He depressurized the cockpit and sent the gunner into the bomb bay to investigate for a possible fuel leak or inoperative CG fuel valve. The plane captain was ordered to take station at the entrance to the companionway to visually observe the gunner within the bomb-bay.

The gunner hooked up to the bomb bay oxygen regulator but could not reach the CG valve, being restricted by the length of the oxygen hose. He disconnected his oxygen, proceeded to the valve, and lost consciousness in the middle of the bomb bay while attempting to reconnect to the oxygen supply.

The plane captain had now lost sight of the gunner, so he went back aft to investigate, with the bombardier-navigator in the visual watch position.

When the navigator reported losing sight of the plane captain too, the pilot established an immediate high rate of descent and descended to 10,000 feet.

As the aircraft was descending, the navigator went aft and found both men unconscious, one on top of the other in the center of the bomb bay. He pulled the gunner's bail-out bottle and was connecting the plane captain to the bomb bay oxygen station when the men regained consciousness. Both men were then helped into the cockpit and placed on 100% oxygen.

The pilot flew the A3D directly back to the ship, made an immediate landing aboard, and the stricken men were transferred to the sick bay for medical observation. Both subsequently recovered and were returned to duty. The aircraft discrepancy was a malfunctioning coaxial cable which was giving false fuel readings and sending false signals to the CG indicating system.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Holy Smokes, this was a close one! Although the plane commander's concern was understandable, the nature of the mission did not justify sending a man into the bomb bay at pressure breathing altitude. His subsequent action, descent to 10,000 feet, was what he should have done *first*. Second guessing is easy, so to profit from his mistake, the Heavy Attack outfits better either carry small walk-around oxygen bottles for use when the mission precludes a descent to safe breathing altitude, or have the hose on the bomb bay oxygen regulator replaced with one sufficiently long to reach all portions of the bomb bay.

In the Rough

Three F8U *Crusaders* returned to their home field after a night air inter-

cept training mission. They had been out almost two hours and the flight leader suggested two touch-and-go's before final landing. Response from the flight was not enthusiastic, but the pattern was set up and landings commenced.

One *Crusader* took a voluntary wave-off on the first pass after he lost sight of the preceding aircraft position, a touch-and-go on the second pass, and set it down for a final landing on the third go 'round.

The landing was good and rollout normal, but the pilot was trying to be too easy on the braking and ran some 20 feet off the end of the runway. The overrun was in bad condition, a fairly hard surface, but defaced and torn up by construction work, for the past several months.

The pilot knew this—it was pitch dark—but the terrain looked smooth; so he commenced a right turn to get out of the rough and back to the taxiway. Using plenty of power, he swung around, dimly saw an embankment ahead, and cut the power. He was too late! The *Crusader* hit the 16-inch obstruction, sheared the port main gear, and settled in on the port wing.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Brother, you've had it! The only reason for trying to drive out of a bad spot was to save some personal embarrassment and some good natured kidding from your buddies.

In today's aircraft, a professional attitude toward every phase of flying, including ground operations, must replace arbitrary snap decisions. Op's could have had some of the duty line crew out to help pronto. Instead of the few minutes job towing you out of the boonies, you probably worked 'em all night hauling in the wreck.

