



grampaw pettibone

Get Out

The pilot of a T-2C was undergoing carrier requalification. He had already completed four arrested landings and cat shots without incident. After completing his checklists, he taxied across the shuttle for his fifth launch. The bridle was attached, tension taken, and he ran up his engines. Satisfied that all was normal, the pilot saluted the catapult officer. The catapult fired.

At the beginning of the cat stroke, the pilot heard a "bang" and "thud." He saw metal debris fly past the aircraft as a right swerve developed. Acceleration felt wrong and the pilot's first reaction was that the hold-back had failed. Realizing that the aircraft could not be stopped on deck, and it was too slow to fly, he ejected. He entered the water in front of the ship after one swing in the chute. The ship

mind the overeating!



Osborn

turned aside, missing him, and within minutes a swimmer from the plane guard helo was beside him in the water

lending assistance. Both were hoisted into the helo with little difficulty.

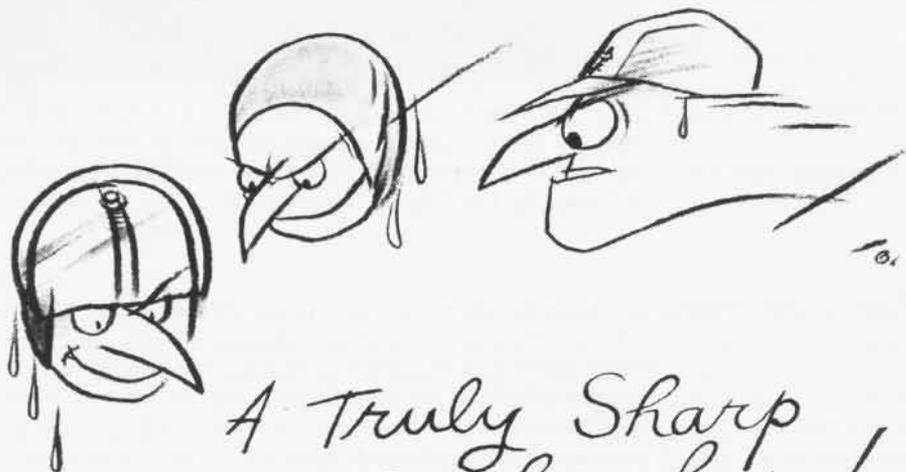


Grampaw Pettibone says:

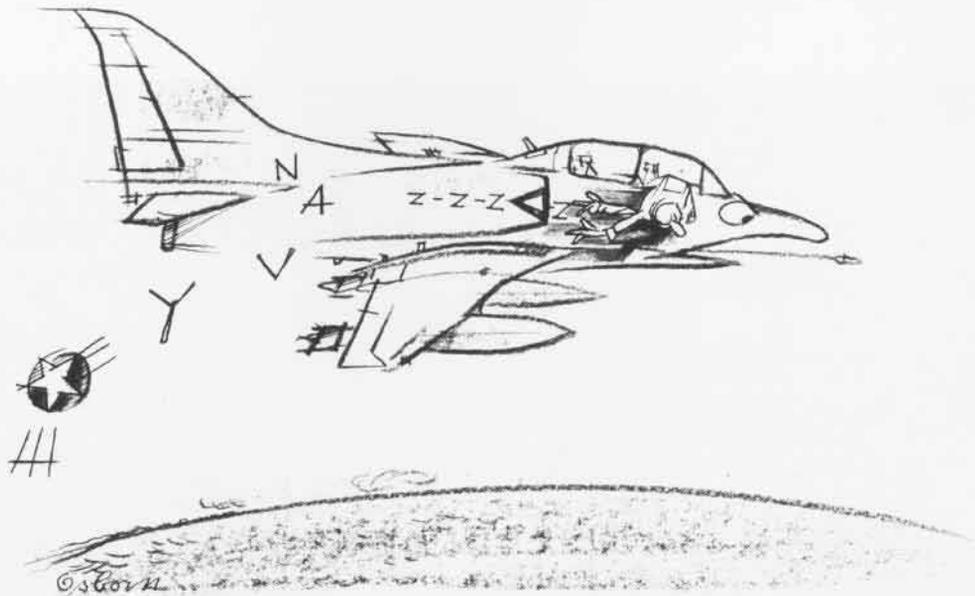
Holy cats! What a predicament! Slidin' sideways with a busted bridle. This pilot coulda been killed. No daydreamer here. Things turned to worms and this young man acted positively and correctly. The pilot's promptness – the coolness on the carrier bridge – the professional coordination of the helo crew – all combined to save a life. Good work!

Self-medication?

The pilot of a TA-4F was on an RON at AFB West Coast. He was suffering from a cold and awoke at 0330, took a cold capsule and went back to sleep. At 0430 he arose after



A Truly Sharp Triple play!



five hours sleep, took two antihistamine tablets and proceeded to base ops. He filed a flight plan for NAS Home Plate on the East Coast with two en route stops.

Takeoff and the first two-hour leg were uneventful. The second leg lasted 2.5 hours with the pilot developing an ear blockage on final approach. After running some errands, the pilot commenced the final leg of the flight home. Leveling off at 17,000 feet altitude, he removed his oxygen mask and secured the flow of oxygen. Oxygen quantity was eight liters, cabin altitude was 8,000 feet, the AFCS was on altitude and heading hold and the throttle set at cruise power.

About 100 miles from base, the pilot experienced UHF difficulties but was able to contact squadron base radio and informed the duty officer he would be on deck in 20 minutes. That's the last thing the pilot remembers for the next 45 minutes. About 30 minutes after the radio transmission to base, the NAS Home Plate operations duty officer called the squadron duty officer and informed him that the TA-4F had overflowed home plate and was over the Atlantic Ocean heading east.

The *Skyhawk* pilot suddenly regained consciousness, observed his overwater position and turned west. Attempts by the pilot to establish radio contact with a shore facility were unsuccessful. A climb to FL200

was initiated and the pilot continued inbound. He established radio contact with a GCI controller and finally an FAA center 100 miles from home plate. The TA-4F was down to 1,000 pounds of fuel. At 26 miles the pilot commenced an idle descent to base and executed a successful landing. Measured fuel remaining at shutdown was 390 pounds.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehoshaphat! Overconfidence, disregard for Natops and get-homeitis combined to just about kill this pilot. First, ole Gramps admires this lad's honesty in reporting the facts. Now let's learn something from his mistakes. Hypoxia and self-medication can be killers in an airplane. No one is immune. Flying without oxygen is foolhardy and lack of sleep dulls your ability to cope with routine living - much less fly an airplane. This pilot survived to tell his story. You may not be as fortunate. For long life, happiness and retirement benefits, pilots should get adequate rest, see their flight surgeon when a cold hits and abide by Natops. Nuff sed!

Eerie

The night was very dark when the *Skyhawk* driver manned his aircraft on the flight deck for a scheduled night mission. The engine start and all post-

start checks were normal. However, five minutes before launch, squadron maintenance personnel signaled to him that his plane was now "down." He had no indication why, so he double-checked inside the cockpit for a possible cause.

When he looked outside the cockpit, he had the sensation that he was rolling backwards from his position in the middle of the flight deck towards the port side of the angled deck. His first reaction was to step firmly on the brakes. When he continued to believe he was still moving, he dropped the tailhook and secured the engine to signal flight deck personnel to chock the plane's wheels. After there was no indicated change in rate of motion, he felt he was about to go over the side and pulled the override switch and raised the gear handle. The next thing he noticed was that the nose wheel had collapsed.

It was at this time that the *Hawk* pilot realized that he hadn't moved at all, but had mistaken the movement of the aircraft for the movement of his own A-4 *Skyhawk*.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great heavenly days, what a predicament! If your first reaction to this lad's plight is to smile, you'd better think twice. This sort of optical illusion can descend on the best of us. It takes real discipline to overcome it. (July 1968)