



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## TV Towers

The construction of extremely high TV towers in many parts of the country presents an additional hazard to aircraft flying VFR in low visibility or marginal weather.

One such antenna which is being built in Pennsylvania will have an overall height above the ground of 1050 feet. Since it is located on the summit of a hill, it will be 2530 feet above sea level.

Other very high antennas are now completed or under construction at Richmond, Virginia; Newark, New Jersey; and New York City. Many more will be erected in the future and will not necessarily be located near metropolitan areas.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

We haven't hit one of these yet, but I'm knocking on wood. All pilots should familiarize themselves with the locations of these new towers by studying the latest aeronautical charts and publications for the routes to be flown. Also check the *Notices to Airmen*, so that you will get the word on any recently constructed towers, which may not show on the charts which you will be using.

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Seven AM's were on a navigation hop. After about 40 minutes, the leader received a communication that one of the pilots was feeling ill, and granted permission for the pilot to return to the base with a two-plane escort. About 20 minutes earlier, this pilot had realized that something was wrong, especially when his hand dropped off the throttle and he had difficulty putting it back.


He then turned to 100% oxygen. After contacting his flight leader, he turned to emergency oxygen and proceeded with escort to return to the base. "Emergency" position floods the oxygen mask, by passing the demand valve of the system. After depleting his oxygen supply to 250 pounds, he realized that he would not have enough to complete the flight, so went back to 100% oxygen setting, and opened the canopy. About this time he also climbed to about 9000 feet, as he put it, to "get fresh air."

During the flight back to the base, his two-plane escort directed his flying by hand signals and kept up a constant chatter on the radio to keep him awake. On landing the pilot was examined in the cockpit and was found to be in a



semi-conscious state. His face and nail beds were cherry red in color. His pupils were slightly contracted.

He became conscious in about two minutes but was still confused. He became emotional and began to cry. One hundred percent oxygen was administered until he arrived at the dispensary, and for about 30 minutes thereafter, with steady improvement. He was released the following day. Subsequent checks of all other AM aircraft revealed no excessive amount of carbon monoxide present. The presence of it in this particular plane was caused by a hole in the number one firewall, defective asbestos wrapping, and a loose clamp around the cockpit defrost duct which allowed CO gas to enter the cockpit.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

If you have a headache while flying or other symptoms such as drowsiness, don't waste any time trying to decide whether you're suffering from anoxia or carbon monoxide poisoning. The corrective action is the same in either case. Turn on 100% oxygen. If you have no oxygen equipment, open the canopy or open cockpit windows. Remember that you go *down* for fresh air—not *up* (unless you're under water), so reduce altitude, don't climb.

Once you've done all these things, you can take time out to check your fingernails and find out whether you were turning blue or pink. Let your section leader or wingman know of your condition as soon as possible. They may be able to be of considerable help to you as they were here.



## Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The world's best safety device is situated slightly above and between your ears, use it!

## Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

"Naval Aviator Gish arrived within the control zone of his destination, NAS ZEROZERO, to find that fog had unexpectedly moved in to close the field. Gish was advised to proceed to NAS KAVOO, a clear alternate. Upon arrival at Kavoo, Gish was unable to raise the tower but was informed by the municipal tower operator, who telephoned NAS KAVOO, that there would be a 30-minute delay. Having sufficient fuel Gish decided to wait for Kavoo to take him rather than proceed to another alternate; the weather in the area was deteriorating.

"Ten minutes had passed when the municipal tower operator relayed to him the word that NAS KAVOO would not permit aircraft to land at its field because the ceiling was 800 feet broken, visibility two miles. At the time this report was received, Gish was circling Kavoo at 3000 feet and could discern all the lights in and around the air station. Gish was forced to proceed to another alternate."

The above is a true story except that fictitious names have been substituted for the real ones.

How many aircraft, denied landing clearance at fields technically on instruments and operationally safe for landing, have crashed looking for another field?

Naval air stations must be conscientious and reasonable in making facilities available to aircraft under these conditions. Furthermore, when aircraft are being diverted from a naval air station because of weather, that station should immediately alert the field to which the aircraft are being diverted. In the above case, NAS ZEROZERO should have advised NAS KAVOO to stand by for use as an alternate.

REAR ADMIRAL, U.S.N.



**Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

This sort of thing shouldn't happen—not even to ensigns. It sounds to me like the folks in operations at NAS ZEROZERO dropped the ball, while the Kavoo people just closed shop and went home without leaving anyone behind to turn on the runway lights and man the tower.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" certainly applies in these instances. Any pilot forced to proceed to an alternate has a right to expect that the

operations department there will know that he is on the way. Any pilot circling a field at 3000 feet at night and able to see all the lights clearly wonders "What gives?" when the tower tells him that he can't land because the field is on instruments.

Put yourself in the other fellow's boots when you have decisions of this sort to make.

## Whoa, Nelly

An F4U-5N ferry pilot flying along in smooth air needed a pencil from his trouser pocket to record his log. After several fruitless attempts to get at it by loosening his safety belt, he finally engaged the P-1 auto-pilot and unfastened his safety belt and right parachute leg strap.

Just at the moment when his right hand was deep in the pocket, fingering for the pencil stub, the plane nosed over into a violent dive throwing the pilot against the top of the canopy. With his left fingers, he reached the stick and pulled back to level out only to have the automatic pilot reverse action and go into a violently steep climb slamming the pilot back down half prone into the seat.

At this time he managed to get a hand on the clutch, disengage the pilot, and nose forward before the aircraft stalled. Upon recovery the accelerometer had recorded in excess of  $-2$  and  $+3$  g's. Had the canopy given way or had the plane gone into a spin, the pilot would have been in a rather embarrassing predicament.

## Oh, My Aching Head!

A helicopter squadron was conducting flights to indoctrinate recently designated helicopter pilots in the technique of taking personnel from the water via the hydraulic hoist and rescue sling. The exercise was being conducted in a bay about 100 yards from the seaplane ramp.

Swimmers equipped with exposure suits and life jackets were used to simulate downed aviators. The procedure employed was for the instructor to demonstrate the correct maneuver of the helicopter with the student operating the hydraulic hoist on the first recovery. Then the student and the instructor changed positions and completed three or four more practice recoveries.



During one student's third recovery, the hoisting sling was lowered into the water just ahead of the swimmer. The man in the water seized the sling and pulled it sharply towards himself. As he did so, he was struck in the head by the lead weight attached to the hoisting cable. Fortunately he retained his faculties, entered the sling, and was taken to shore where medical aid was obtained.

The accident board noted that the weighted cable had been used for about four years by helicopter squadrons without previous reports of injuries. In this case, the error directly responsible for the accident was caused by the swimmer. In his eagerness to get into the sling, he started the weight swinging over his head and then projected his head into the arc of the swinging weight.

Persons in the water are cautioned to exercise care in getting into the sling and to avoid violent maneuvers. It is also recommended that the weight be padded with material such as sponge rubber and covered with canvas.

## Successful Ditching

At 2300 a pilot departed NAS BARBER'S POINT for a routine night GCI flight in an F6F. Four minutes after take-off and at an altitude of 1200 feet, he noted engine roughness and a propeller surge. He was at this time approximately four miles at sea. Examination of engine instruments revealed rapidly dropping oil pressure.

Realizing that he might experience sudden engine stoppage owing to loss of oil, the pilot quickly made the decision to ditch the aircraft. Having made this decision, he so advised the GCI controller, turned into the wind, maintained an air speed of 120 knots, and rightened his shoulder straps and safety belt. At an altitude of 600 feet, he turned on his recognition lights, the reflection of which gave adequate light for landing, and set the radio altimeter on the 50-foot scale.

When the warning light of the radio altimeter came on, he dropped his seat, pulled the nose up to a three point attitude, and held 80 knots until water contact was made. He experienced two distinct impacts. The pilot abandoned the plane and estimated that it sank within 20 seconds. The pilot did not know the proper technique for firing his Mark 30 Mod. 0 life vest flares and both failed to function. Rescue of the pilot was made by a submarine operating in the area. His location was detected by the sound of his life vest "referee" type whistle.



**Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

This successful night ditching has some interesting angles. In the first

place, the pilot's decision to ditch was a little unusual. When he felt the prop surge and saw that his oil pressure was dropping rapidly, the field was just about four minutes behind him and he had 1200 feet. In similar circumstances, experience indicates that nine out of 10 pilots turn back to the field and try to limp home. Some make it and some don't—depending on a lot of factors, but mainly on how long the engine continues to deliver power.

In my opinion, this was a borderline case, in which it would have been just about as safe to try to maintain altitude and get back over the field for an emergency landing. After all, a night ditching in a carrier type plane, without landing lights, is no cinch. Perhaps the relatively warm water near Hawaii area was the deciding factor.

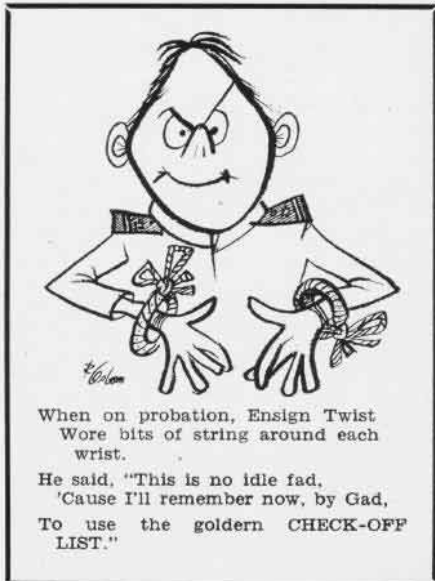
In any event, one can't help admiring the pilot for not wavering once he decided to ditch. He kept his wits about him, turned into the wind, notified the controller, made excellent use of his radio altimeter, and executed a well controlled landing.

His achievements after he got in the water were not quite up to the standards displayed in the early part of the emergency. There are far better times and places to learn the technique of firing a life vest flare than while floating in the ocean.

The whistle came in mighty handy, as it has for a good many other pilots.

P.S. This ditching reminds me of the famous "Powerful Swimmer Case" which occurred in the same general vicinity shortly after the war. In this case, the pilot's engine quit cold and he informed his wingmen that he was bailing out. As I recall, the bailout occurred about midnight and the spot was marked by one of the wingmen. Everybody and his brother spent the rest of the night and the better part of the next day looking for the pilot. Single and multi-engine planes combed the area. Hundreds of flares were dropped, but there was no sign of the pilot. Late the next afternoon the phone rang in the hangar, and a voice said, "You guys must be blind."

It was the pilot phoning from a house along the coastline. His swim to shore had taken him slightly over 12 hours.



When on probation, Ensign Twist  
Wore bits of string around each  
wrist.

He said, "This is no idle fad,  
'Cause I'll remember now, by Gad,  
To use the goldern CHECK-OFF  
LIST."