GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Poopy Bag

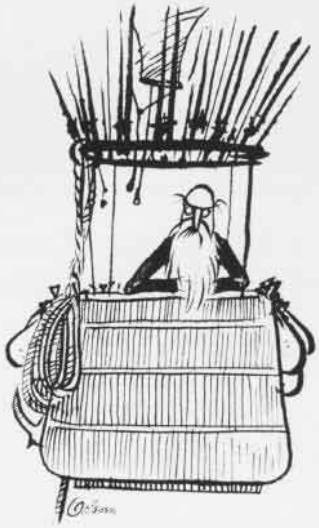
One fine morning recently, a ZS2G airship became airborne on a routine patrol flight from its East Coast base. The wind was calm, with broken clouds at 9000 feet.

The take-off run was uneventful, but during the climb, at about 200 feet altitude, a violent jolt in the controls was felt, and the airship began orbiting to the left, still climbing, with no apparent response to rudder control. The airship commander declared an emergency, ordered both bomb bay fuel tanks jettisoned, and made the decision to attempt an immediate landing. Using offset power on the engines to maintain some directional control, a circling landing approach was made. They hit hard, the landing gear collapsed as the airship hit in soft terrain, some fuel cells were ruptured, and the prop sheared from the port engine. The starboard engine also struck the ground and suffered sudden stoppage.

The airship bounced and ascended rapidly to about 800 feet, a free balloon.

Descent was attempted by valving helium. This was partially successful, but super heating under the hot sun caused ascent again.

A helicopter attempted to aid in



descent of the airship by hovering overhead and forcing it down with rotor wash. With this assist the airship descended to 500 feet, levelled off, and the crew manned *abandon ship* stations. The airship drifted under some low clouds, getting a cooling effect, which caused it to descend at 100-200 feet a minute. Unsuccessful attempts to rip the bag were then made. The *abandon ship* order was given, and the crew escaped via various exits on dragging lines at heights which varied from 20 to 60 feet above the ground.

The crewless airship free ballooned for the next three hours on a busy airway and finally crashed in a remote area approximately 20 miles from home base.

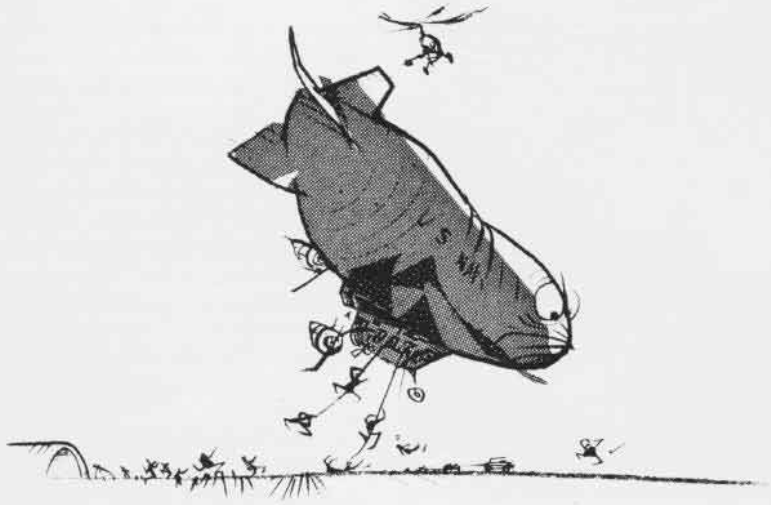
Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Shades of the Shenandoah! These fellers just plain forgot they had a mighty fine balloon to ride in and *panicked*.

If they'd valved helium and settled her in real easy right at the beginning, treated the airship like a free balloon and not tried to stick it in the ground under power like a dart, they'd have made out better. One thing they had was *time*. The ship wasn't damaged, engines were operating normally, plenty of fuel aboard, and the bag was intact. Weather was no problem.

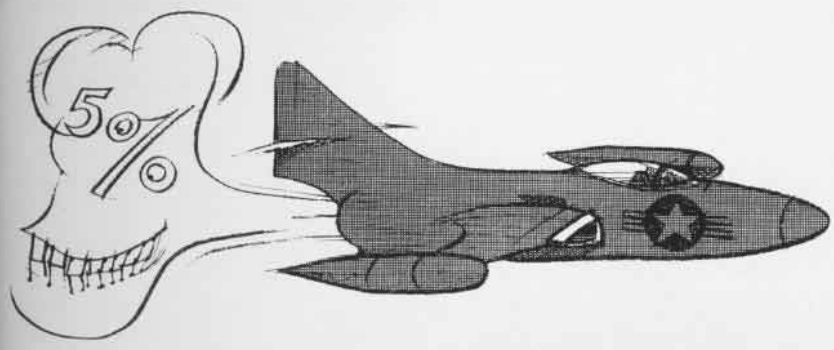
Way back in September 1925, VAdm. Rosendahl, then a Lieutenant, successfully *free ballooned* the floating nose section of the airship *Shenandoah* from 10,000 feet to earth after the giant dirigible had broken in half in a storm.

In those days we had only two large airships and lighter-than-air men were regarded as a breed apart, highly qualified and motivated professionals. I'd sure hate to think the breed was thinning out. Abandoning ship as hastily as was done in this case doesn't follow at all the past fine traditions of lighter-than-air men. It'd seem that there was plenty of time left to figure out the *best*, not the *fastest* way of getting the ship down.



Close Shave

A student Marine aviator experienced difficulty regulating the heat control in his F9F-5 *Panther* soon after take-off on a routine syllabus flight. He informed his instructor, who was flying wing on him, of his troubles, and after a short discussion via radio, he elected to continue the flight. Climbout was continued, although the pilot became very hot and dizzy. On reaching 21,000 feet altitude, the student's aircraft suddenly went into a steep dive. The instructor followed him down and after repeated attempts finally con-



tacted him on the radio and talked him into a pull-out and level attitude somewhere below 10,000 feet.

The young man responded sluggishly to all instructions, but was successfully talked down to a landing by the instructor after 15-20 minutes of flying at low level using 100% oxygen.

Investigation by the flight surgeon revealed that the student aviator wore his oxygen mask loosely because it did not fit well and had caused a sore on his nose. Prior to the flight and after starting his aircraft, the student had waited for taxi clearance with the canopy open and oxygen on *normal*, with exhaust gases of other jet aircraft starting engines swirling over him.

Post flight medical analysis revealed a 17% carbon monoxide blood saturation in the young man. Further investigation revealed that all personnel in the hangar area had incurred carbon monoxide blood saturation ranging from 8 to 22%. Owing to the direction of the prevailing wind, exhaust gases from parked and taxiing jet aircraft were constantly blown into the hangar, shop, and ready room spaces.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Goldurn it! This is a touchy subject 'cause the docs say jet gases contain 95% air and the balance essentially all carbon dioxide. This whole situation, which revealed untold possibilities for in-flight accidents, plus Murphies, due to partial incapacitation in the thinking processes of maintenance personnel, arose from the effects of JET engine exhaust gases! Heavy cigarette smoking, however, can give as much as 10% carbon monoxide blood saturation, and since a mere 3% can cause measurable impairment of vision and altitude tolerance, in many cases the basic groundwork for an incident such as this is already provided and probably accounted for many of the lower blood saturations reported among maintenance personnel in the hangar.

A close look-see at all operations and maintenance areas by your flight surgeon may save both you and your outfit from a close shave such as this. Use *his* technical know-how. He's there to help you.

Wearing a loose oxygen mask is as bad as not wearing one at all. You cannot receive a proper oxygen supply unless your mask is properly fitted. SOP is to use 100% oxygen on ALL take-offs and landings in jet aircraft.

Lost

A pair of intrepid aviators departed their home base on a scheduled local area fam flight in a TV-2. Stalls and simulated landing patterns were practiced at fairly low altitudes. It was a beautiful day with only scattered clouds and 10 miles visibility, so neither man was tracking their position. Fuel was getting low and they decided to return home.

The pilot attempted to tune in the home base on the radio compass without success. They were LOST. Mountains below finally gave them the clue that they were south of their base. Fuel was really tight by now, but an unknown grass air field, obviously a small civil airport, was sighted just as radio contact was established with the home base. A decision to land immediately was made and the home tower informed.

The pilot made his first approach to the north runway. He had to fly over a barn just off the approach end, so the TV touched down fast almost halfway down the runway, and he took a wave-off indicating 35 gallons of fuel remaining. A low tight pattern and approach was made to the 2900 foot northeast grass runway at 100 to 105 knots. The aircraft wheels barely knocked the tops off of some corn shocks on final and touched down in the first 75 feet of the runway indicating 20 gallons of fuel. He used moderate braking on the grass and successfully stopped 300 feet from the fence.

Six days later the TV was partially dismantled, towed under a viaduct, reassembled, and safely flown off a limited access highway.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Shucks, fellers, my old hide's pretty tough and thick, but long, long ago I learned that when you got a job under you that's suckin' air and blowin' smoke you've just gotta keep track of your position *all* the time! A copy of RADFACS should be in the aircraft every time you go out, even shootin' landings in the field pattern! If you'd taken a minute or two to check RADFACS, you'd have surely been able to tune in and identify a station, for there were *five* good LF stations within 40 miles of you, including two UHF/DF facilities! Don't be so proud. Switch to guard channel and sing out your Pan or Mayday call. Help is always available. You lucked out.