



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Ramp Rammer

A pilot was catapulted in his F8U-1 for initial carrier qualification in the *Crusader*. He felt pretty confident, for he had just completed a good 100 hours of flight training in the F8U, which had included 227 field mirror landings.

He made one pass around the big CVA in a clean condition and entered the pattern to commence carquals. Six approaches were made, which included two touch-and-go's, three wave-offs and then a successful trap, catching No. 1 wire. All wave-offs had been given for a tendency to be long in the groove.

Catapulted off once more, he came around on the seventh pass long in the groove again, but looking good on speed, altitude, and apparently on glide slope. A short distance out from the ramp, the F8U settled on the glide slope, the meatball dropped out of the bottom of the mirror, and the main landing gear struck the ramp on the round-down, three to five feet below flight deck level!

The *Crusader* then continued up the flight deck partially airborne until the hook caught No. 4 wire. The plane veered sharply left during the arrestment and finally came to a stop with the nose gear and cockpit overhanging the port catwalk aft of the No. 2 elevator and well out over the side. The pilot shut down the engine. After



some delay he was hoisted, uninjured, from the cockpit to the flight deck by means of an improvised rope sling.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Shucks! The moral of this story should be pretty obvious. Your old Dad learned some time ago that one sure way you can hit the blunt end of the ship is to fly a low meatball. This lad was flyin' a low one or he wouldn't have caught No. 1 wire on his one trap. A good landing starts on the downwind leg and a goofed-up pattern usually pyramids into a dangerous approach. The only cure for a low meatball close in is power and a voluntary wave-off. For my money he was doggone lucky.

Midnight Ride

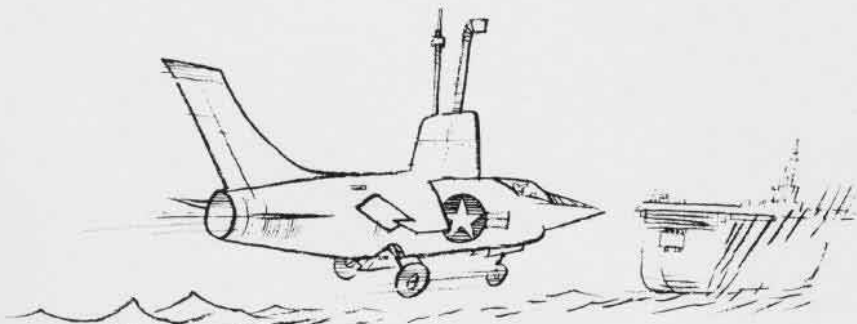
It was an extremely black night, overcast, with no horizon visible, and an experienced F4D pilot was making a night CCA approach to his carrier just off the island of Oahu. The let-down through the overcast was normal and the approach very steady, with the meatball clear, visible and right on the money. With 192 day and 46 night CV landings under his belt, he knew his business. As he came in close to the ship a quick final airspeed check showed 140 knots, FAST, and a glance back at the meatball showed it going up. He hesitated in making a correction, the meatball went off the top, and he came over the ramp high and fast!

He saw the deck, nosed over, and hit hard. Both wing tanks were smashed and instantly burst into flames. He hit full power, went into afterburner and became airborne again, climbing steeply into the overcast. A quick check revealed the right wing ablaze, no cockpit lights, smoke in the cockpit, gear indicating "barber pole" and the left wing damaged, apparently a slat bent up. Expecting to blow up momentarily, he shined his flashlight on the altimeter and when he saw 2500 feet, pulled the curtain, heard an explosion and felt wind flapping around his head.

He thought he was out so he peeked under the curtain. Imagine his consternation to find he was still a passenger! He gave the curtain a half dozen hard jerks to no avail.

Suddenly he realized that the F4D was almost on its back and shuddering in a steep climbing stall. He grabbed the stick, rolled back level and got back in a more normal climb attitude, still in burner. He raised his sun visor, which had snapped down in his struggles with the curtain and could see a little better.

The CCA final controller meanwhile could be heard over the background wind noise saying over and over, "What are your intentions, 207? What are your intentions?" Then he recognized the CCA officer's voice tell-



Low boy!

Just
call
me
Hairy



ing him to eject through the canopy. He could have cried.

The right wing fire seemed to be getting more intense, so he had to get out. Passing 13,500 feet and above the overcast in a max climb, he pulled the D-500 ring, opened the safety belt, threw the harness back out of the way and checked for any cords, plugs, straps, or wires holding him in.

A quick roll to the left and he fell out of the cockpit, tensed up for a smashing blow from the tail section. It was a clear miss, with the afterburner roaring right by his head.

Feeling somewhat relieved and exhilarated by his successful escape, he grabbed the D-ring, pulled, and felt a barely noticeable shock as the chute opened. Things seemed to be breaking a little better.

While floating down the chute oscillated wildly due to an estimated 43 knots of wind, but he managed to get his pararaft out. Slipping out of the chute as he hit the water, he pulled the toggle on the raft CO² bottle, but it only hissed a little and he had to inflate it with the oral inflation tube.

Once in the raft a few tracers from his .38 and one night flare brought the plane guard destroyer racing to his rescue at flank speed. An hour later he was highlined safely back to the CVA.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! This lad had a purty narrow squeek! Diving for the deck was doggone near a fatal mistake. You just don't have to "get aboard" that bad! A wave-off or bolter and a go around is nothin' to be ashamed of. The alternative can be too hairy for comfort. In a survival situation, no matter how hopeless it may seem, if you keep your head as he did, you can salvage your chestnuts from

the fire. Ol' Gramps took the liberty of quotin' a bit from the pilots own narrative, "Happy Hour" style, but you git the "feel" of it better that way.

Fuel Stretchers

Two aviators were scheduled for a weekend cross-country instrument training flight in a TV-2 from their New England base to the West Coast and return. They took off at 1807 EST on Friday evening and flew IFR without incident down the Atlantic coast to a major Marine Corps Air Station. Here they ate hamburgers and malts and had the aircraft refueled. A decision was then made to continue on to a Southern Air Force Base and to RON there, with the West Coast the next day's goal.



The Stretcher Boys!

They made up their IFR flight plan, received a weather forecast which predicted 100 knots of head wind for the 875 miles to their destination and figured two hours and 51 minutes time enroute at a cruise altitude of 35,000 feet, 3+30 fuel aboard. NAS DALLAS, approximately 145 miles further west, was given as an alternate.

Take-off was at 2110 EST. Climb-out on course was GCI monitored. Cruising at 35,000 feet, they passed four checkpoints and were eight minutes behind estimate and 34 gallons over on planned fuel consumption. They pushed on. Arriving in the vicinity of their destination, the weather looked VFR ahead and below, so the pilot at the controls cancelled the IFR flight plan, requested a DF steer, and received a fix of 52 miles from the field. His fuel state was 40 gallons as he started his descent.

The airfield blinked the runway lights to give him a positive fix, and

he set up for a simulated flameout approach, right hand pattern. Initial point was reached a little high at 9500 feet, so he lowered gear and flaps and hit the abeam position still high at 6500 feet and just under 10 gallons of fuel remaining. He decided to fly a deep 90° position to dissipate excess altitude. As he turned final, the engine flamed out.

He had gone too deep to get back to the runway with a dead engine. A wings-level glide, gear and flaps down, at 110 knots was set up and held until ground contact. After striking a ditch and shearing the landing gear and nose section, the TV-2 slid to a stop. The canopy was jammed shut, but the pilot climbed out through a large hole. The copilot was finally freed after 45

minutes. Both men suffered back injuries and were hospitalized. Total time in flight had been 3 hours and 26 minutes on a 2 + 51 estimate.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies! Such poor flight planning and poor headwork once airborne is almost incredible! Figuring you have 3 + 30 fuel aboard in a TV is str-r-etching it just a bit, and an alternate still further along on track when you've already stretched it is really a gasket blower!

This man passed up so many good fields in the last stages of this goof-up, there isn't room here to list 'em.

This entire trip was too long for a two-day period and left no margin for error. Errors in cruise control and flight planning are sometimes forgivable if a pilot recognizes an unfavorable situation and adjusts his plan to compensate for them. But plain bulling along to the fuel exhaustion point—really, that's impossible to swallow.