



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Real Squeaker

A flight of seven S-2A Trackers (S2F-1) were scheduled for a night radar, low-level bombing flight with searchlights to be utilized for final target illumination on the run-in.

All planes were briefed to enter a racetrack pattern with left-hand turns, 1000 feet of altitude on the downwind leg and a slow letdown to 300 feet on the run-in. Pilots were briefed to remain on instruments during the run and on retirement; the copilots, to illuminate the target and coach the pilot into the run.

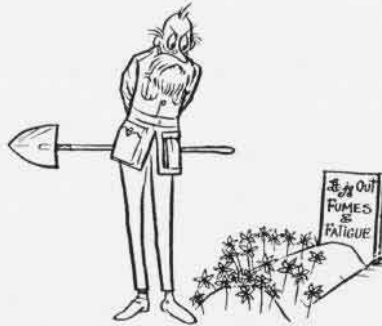
The pilots of one of the aircraft, the heroes of this year, had spent part of the time while en route to the target eating their box lunch suppers. Both were uncomfortable, for the cabin heaters were putting out 'way too much heat. The rheostat had been disconnected by the pilot himself just prior to take-off and only manual control was available. It seemed to have only one position—HOT.

Just as they arrived in the target area and commenced to orbit at 1500 feet, a strong odor of raw gasoline filled the cockpit. It seemed to come from the nose section, so both pilots figured they had better turn off the heater. With all the problems it had given, the leak must surely be there.

As they circled, visibility was poor because of frequent rain squalls and absolute darkness. The flight leader cleared them into the pattern. They descended to 1000 feet MSL and started their first run on the target, slowly descending to the 300-foot minimum altitude.

Gas fumes were still strong, so they opened the air vents. Tilt control on the radar was reported out by the radar operator at this point, but the pilot announced he would continue the run without it and, if it was unsatisfactory, they'd break it off and go home.

Both pilots were peering ahead, trying to visually acquire the target as a check on the malfunctioning radar



when a loud THUMP was heard and felt! Neither pilot reacted immediately to the situation. Then instinctively both pilots applied back pressure on the yoke and the Tracker commenced a very gradual pull-up. They had ricocheted off the water!

The pilots both glanced at the instrument panel—the altimeter read BELOW ZERO! All engine instruments were normal, and they now increased their rate of climb until they read 300 feet on the dial and then levelled off to recheck the situation calmly.

Both pilots were apathetic to their trouble. When in radio contact with their flight leader soon afterward, they responded very slowly to suggestions though they obeyed instructions implicitly.

The flight leader joined up on them as escort, checked the Tracker for damage with his searchlight and found the entire belly radome smashed to pieces! No other damage was apparent to him.

An uneventful return to base was accomplished, both pilots getting



plenty of fresh air with the overhead hatch slid wide open.

With some excellent coaching from the ASW duty officer in Operations, a safe hook down landing was effected on the wet runway at their home base.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Whe—eee! These lads came as close to gettin' a piece of the farm as a man can get! A long working day—they'd been on the go since 0600 with two box lunches for meals and no breaks at all for the entire day. They were all just ripe for a real good carbon monoxide case, gas fumes, or what have you.

Most pilots hesitate to abort a hop for just fuel fumes, but they can be a surer killer than 'most anything else. They eventually numb your brain, give you a fine feeling of self-satisfaction and well-being, submerge any normal alarm signals, and eventually do you in very neatly.

Best thing to do is—GO HOME!
And get plenty of fresh air on the way.

Men's Work

Ol' Gramps had an interesting rescue report pass across his desk the other day that needs re-telling. Sheer guts are hard to beat and this submariner has 'em in large quantities.

An SH-3A (HSS-2) was ordered to transfer two packages of electrical equipment from the USS Wash to the USS Nautilus while both were operating about 200 miles at sea. It was a bitter cold day with the air temp hanging at 18 degrees and a good sea running in a stiff breeze.

The helo came into a hover over the surfaced nuclear submarine and lowered one package to the deck forward of the sail. As the helo crewman was preparing the second package for delivery, a sub crewman dashed forward on the slippery deck to retrieve the first parcel and was immediately washed overboard, parcel and all.

The helo crew went into action, moved into position over the man and hoisted him up posthaste, cold but in good condition.

No sooner was he safely aboard than

the man asked to be again lowered into the water to retrieve the floating package of needed parts. The *Nautilus* was queried for a decision and permission granted.

Slipping back into the sling, the submariner was again lowered into the rough and cold sea alongside the package and with it firmly in his grasp, was rehoisted and carried through the air a short distance to *Nautilus*. The mail transfer was completed without further incident. When the *Nautilus* sends a MAN out to do a job, he gets it done!

Whopped

After a normal launch and an uneventful hop, a pair of A-1H *Skyraiders* (AD-6) landed back aboard a big CVA. The first pilot followed the director's signals and taxied forward to be parked with the other *Skyraider* taxiing close behind. They were parked up on the bow, nose to tail, and the No. 1 plane was shut down briskly after being chocked and secured.

The first pilot quickly secured his cockpit, climbed out on the starboard wing but slipped and fell to the deck off the trailing edge! His kneeboard, chartboard and carbon monoxide tester slipped from his hand and blew aft under the tail section in the strong wind which as usual prevailed over the flight deck. The glass tubes of the CO tester rolled freely and the pilot, immediately concerned over the possibility of broken glass on the flight deck, crawled quickly after them on hands and knees.

As he passed the tail wheel of his *Skyraider* and before the horrified eyes of many plane captains nearby, the still-windmilling propeller of the A-1H (AD-6) parked behind struck him squarely on the side of his APH-5 hardhat, knocking the protective helmet off and dropping him unconscious and bleeding to the deck!

The first men to reach his side applied pressure to the artery at the side of his neck to curtail some extensive bleeding, actually just a few seconds ahead of the doctor and corpsmen who came on the run from the island aid station. A full examination later revealed the pilot had suffered a brain concussion, abrasions and a busted left shoulder. He'll be laid up for several months but that hard hat kept him in the livin', breathin' group.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' catfish! That prop tore a ten-inch gash clean through the APH-5 but didn't take out even one centimeter of his hide. Just shows you, even a pilot with 1000 hours in model can forget that those meat-cutters are flailin' on a heel-and-toe basis.

The flight surgeon recommends that pilots *always* wear their hard hats while on the flight deck for protection against such injury as well as protection from flying objects and loss of hearing. Peripheral vision is cut down but a good rotating head and swivel neck can take care of that. Ol' Gramps heartily agrees.



Poor Head

A U-11A *Aztec* (UO-1) arrived at a municipal airport early one frosty winter morning after a short flight from the pilot's East Coast base. The weather had been VFR, with 4000-foot ceilings, visibility unlimited and only some widely scattered snow showers to mar an otherwise fine day. The pilot was alone in the aircraft.

The runways had been plowed and were clear of snow, but there were banks of snow and ice lining the runway and all taxiways. The pilot had been well briefed on this.

The landing and rollout were normal, but as the plane turned off the runway a taxiway, the port wing tip struck a bank of snow and ice, tearing the metal skin back some eight inches from the leading edge, smashing and distorting the wing tip and exposing the wing structure within.

After parking the *Aztec*, the pilot

had maintenance and flight test personnel of an aircraft company situated at the field inspect the damaged wing tip. They advised the pilot that it should be safe for the short trip to his home base. He accepted their appraisal and subsequently flew the little plane home, arriving without incident.

After arrival, he was somewhat chagrined to find he was in hot water up to his ears and had been d--n lucky. Neither he nor his erstwhile safety-of-flight inspectors had detected a tear in the outboard wing fuel cell. Fuel had leaked throughout the port wing

and was just waiting for a spark to ignite it. In addition, further distortion of the wing tip could have jammed the aileron with disastrous results.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jeosophat! This pilot's decision to fly the damaged plane home without a *thorough* inspection, preferably by Navy inspectors who could have been there within an hour, and without effecting some rudimentary repair to the damaged wing, was ridiculous for a man of his experience and reflects seriously on his judgment.

To top it off, he must figure the orders issued in OPNAV instructions are for *everybody else* and he's in a special category. OPNAVINST 3710.7A in section 3, para. 4 a (2) sets forth the minimum crew requirements for light VT and VU dual control aircraft. No waivers for solo flight in the *Aztec* have been granted by CNO, and only CNO can grant them. It behooves a Naval Aviator to fly by the book or he risks being branded a maverick and getting a *thumbs down* from a board. Then he *will* be in a special category!