



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

From Rescuer to Rescued

An HH-2D *Seasprite* lifted from NAS Coast to conduct a night area familiarization training flight in the local flying area. The flight proceeded south to a point 12 miles north of the local TACAN and executed a 180-degree turn to return to the vicinity of the station. When they were about four miles south of the base, both the pilot and copilot noticed a flashing white light coming from a bay area. The pilot decided to investigate and found a small civilian boat which seemed to be in distress.

The first approach was at 50 feet, a low fly-by. Using the aircraft loud hailer, the pilot asked the men in the boat if they required assistance. They gave a "thumbs up" signal.

The aircraft then climbed to orbit at 1,000 feet and held an orbit for 20 minutes while the pilots attempted to contact a local Coast Guard station. They noticed the light in the boat was getting very weak; therefore, a second approach was made to drop an electric marker light.

Once again, the aircraft climbed to 1,000 feet and orbited the location for an hour and fifteen minutes. A third approach was begun in order to

inform the boat that the *Seasprite* was departing because of minimum fuel but that assistance was on the way. But this approach was made to the electric light, which had drifted away

from the boat.

Then, after climbing to 1,000 feet in order to communicate with another helicopter in the area, a fourth and final approach was made. This one had a much longer straightaway than the preceding three and ended when the helicopter hit the water approximately one mile short of the boat in distress.



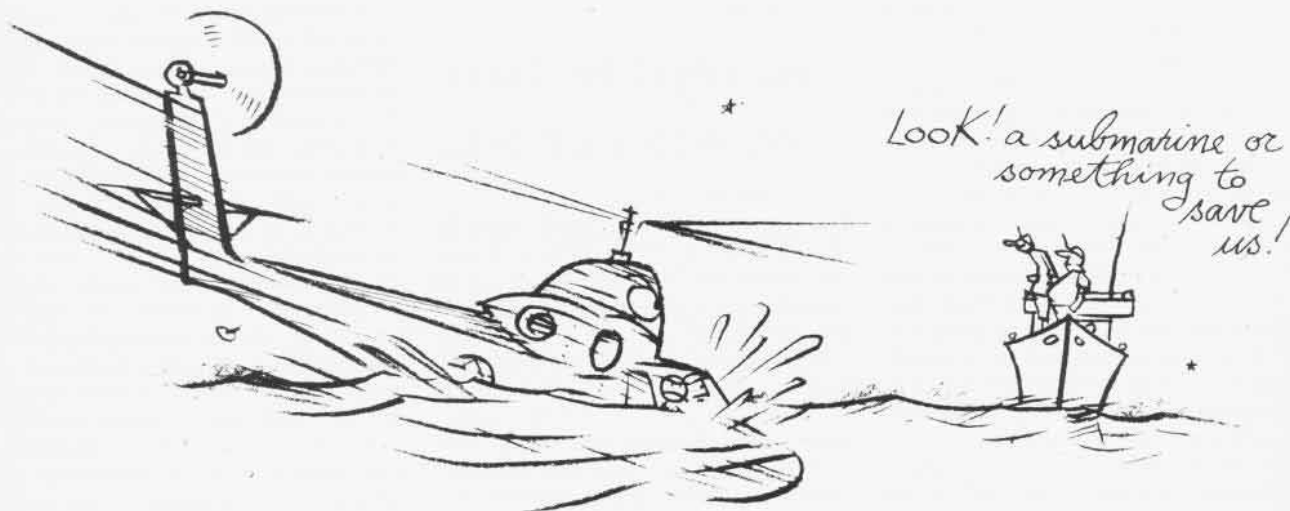
Grampaw Pettibone says:

Blundering blunderins! Once the pilot determined that the personnel in the boat were not in immediate danger, there was no reason for his continued low passes. There was even less reason when you consider the lack of water survival equipment aboard the aircraft — no life vests!

Until our drivers and crew members are required to have webfeet, you'd better carry that overwater survival gear just in case you may have to take your flyin' machine over water.

As it turns out, both drivers were looking out of the cockpit when the helo struck the water, heads up and locked.

I don't believe it! What a miserable example of crew coordination. Seems to me this lad needs more crew training before he continues as a helicopter aircraft commander. Nuff said.





problem areas. What was that I heard mumbled? You don't have any problem areas? Prove it! Make up a test. Try it — you'll like it!

A Complete Waste

When the two Marine Aviators launched their *Crusaders* on an instrument training flight, destination weather was forecast at 3,000 scattered, variable, broken; seven miles' visibility.

Fifteen minutes into the flight, the lead F-8K reported TACAN failure but the flight leader, who was flying wingman, decided to continue the flight in the same formation. The flight leader would pass heading and distance information to the troubled lead aircraft.

On arrival at destination, the flight was cleared for a TACAN approach. The weather was now 800 broken, 3,000 overcast with visibility four miles. The formation remained the same, the flight leader/wingman still providing vectors for the lead aircraft. They broke out at 1,200 feet, reported the field in sight and were cleared to land. The lead aircraft was to land while the wingman made a low pass.

The F-8K landed slightly fast and began to porpoise. At the same time, the harassed pilot noted an unsafe nose gear and added power for a go-around. During climbout, noting the nose-gear gauge now indicated "safe," the pilot requested permission to re-

main VFR in the pattern for another landing. Because of the lack of radar separation from the other F-8, his request was denied. He was advised to climb straight ahead to 2,000 and then make a left turn.

Now on instruments, he commenced a left turn, using a 30-degree angle of bank. During the turn, the pilot noted his gyro horizon indicating a 90-degree left bank. He moved the stick to the right with no effect. He was reading 1,500 feet descending. He ejected.

The pilot landed safely but the *Crusader* was a total loss.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat!! If this fiasco wouldn't wilt the lily, nothin' will! Can you imagine allowin' a fella to go on a cross-country in violation of NATOPS. He didn't have 25 hours in type and he hadn't had an in-type instrument check. It's pretty tough to knock supervision 'cause *there weren't any!* Who's running the show in this outfit? If it were me, I'd have myself a new ops officer and one less flight leader. This accident is pathetic and the most preventable type. There are no excuses!

A Stitch in Time

I received a letter recently and it sounds like this fella had a good idea. Never one to pass up an idea that would add some oil to those movin' parts which make up safety, I'm passing it along.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone,

Tower Chiefs take heed! How many pilots flying out of your airport are completely familiar with the airport and local flying rules? Did I hear an answer? What was that you said? Oh! The squadrons are responsible for area familiarization, are they?? Well, that may be true; however, think how much safer your airport would be if every airplane driver knew what you think he knows.

As a case in point, I offer the following: Twenty-one local pilots were given a written, ten-question test at our NAS. The subject was local procedures, positive control and basic instrument procedure at this particular airport. The results were astounding!

One question (obviously the easiest) was missed by only eight of the twenty-one. All other questions were missed by at least 50 percent. One was missed by 18. It should be pointed out that these were not trick questions on "off-the-wall" topics, but questions on valid, important issues.

Is there a squadron safety officer reading this letter? Well, sir, before you finish this magazine, I strongly recommend that you call base ops and ask to speak to the tower chief. Don't wait for one of your nuggets to become a statistic. Do it now!

Tower chiefs, haven't you heard from that squadron safety officer yet? Don't be proud, call him. Get together and talk. Set up briefings and discuss

'I admit that the accident was due to pilot error. . .but there was nothing wrong with my judgment or technique.'

