



# grampaw pettibone

## Can Do

The crew of a CH-19E (HRS-3) was alerted for a rescue at their Southwest Pacific island base. They were told that a Navy nurse, while out sight-seeing, had slipped on moss-covered rocks and fallen over a waterfall in a remote and relatively inaccessible area and was unable to move her legs. There were no roads which were passable, even for a jeep. Owing to the extremely heavy jungle growth, a helo was the only logical answer to the rescue problem. The crew manned their aircraft, lifted off and flew directly to the scene.

The nearest clearing suitable for landing was one and one-half miles downstream of the accident site, and the dense jungle and sheer cliffs in the vicinity precluded hoisting the victim.

The resourceful helo pilot set it down in the clearing downstream and hiked back through the jungle to the waterfall, together with the doctor and corpsman who formed the rescue crew. They carried with them a Stokes litter and a one-man life raft.

The helpless accident victim was strapped in the litter, which was in turn strapped to the raft, and floated downstream guided by the helo crew, now doubling as swimmers, until the



clearing utilized for landing the helo was reached.

The patient was then carried to the helo and flown to the naval hospital.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Bust my buttons! It's good for the old blood pressure to read

about a resourceful bunch like this helo Team! Even a helicopter has limitations and it's a sure sign of a pilot's professional proficiency when he backs off after due consideration of the situation and says No. This is sometimes the toughest of all decisions to make. (October 1963)

## Rescue

A young airman, working in the hangar deck area of a big CVA, walked behind an RF-8A *Crusader* which was turning up with the tailpipe directed out the wide open No. 3 elevator ramp.

There was a great deal of racket in the hangar deck area and he was completely unaware of the bellowing engine in his path. As he stepped into the path of the jet blast, he was snatched up and hurled bodily through the opening and far out into the sea below!

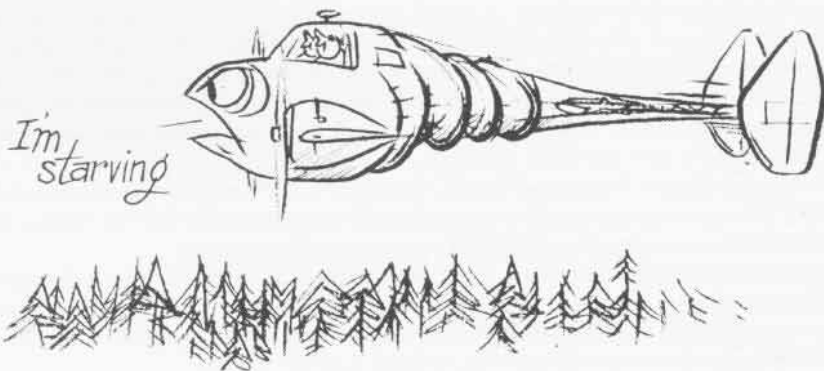
"Man Overboard" was sounded immediately. The plane guard helo, already hovering near the flight deck, came to the rescue and was over the thoroughly dunked victim in less than a minute.

The helo crewman quickly observed the obvious panic and near exhaustion of the man in the water and went down the cable into the water to help him, with the pilot's approval.

The man struggled violently with the rescue crewman, climbing on his back and dragging them both under time after time, finally getting what seemed almost a death grip on the rescue hoist cable itself. The rescue sling meanwhile became detached in the melee and floated away.

The helo crewman also grabbed the hoist cable with his Chicago Grip, a handy gadget, and hung below the panicky victim, helping him as much as possible as the pilot hoisted them both up.

Just as they reached the helo hatch,



the man lost his hold on the cable and tumbled back into the water, almost taking the helo crewman with him. The crewman was made of sterner stuff however and hung on. After he had safely clambered through the hatch back into the helicopter, he coolly lowered another sling to the frantically floundering man below and this time brought him safely aboard.

It had been what the plane guard men call "a complicated rescue."

### Scan Breakdown

The helicopter crew was briefed to conduct a night targeting mission. The mission would be flown from the aft deck of a surface combatant and no communications (Zip-Lip) would be used between the aircraft and ship. The existing weather was marginal VFR with conditions lowering in rain showers.

Takeoff and climb to altitude went smoothly. Moments after descending to mission altitude, the number two generator caution light illuminated and the generator would not reset. The pilot subsequently decided to abort the mission due to the existing weather and the generator failure.

The aircraft returned to the ship, entered the landing pattern and completed the landing checklist, still maintaining strict radio silence as briefed. On the first approach, with the copilot calling altitude and airspeeds, the aircraft was too high and the pilot initiated a wave-off and set up for another approach. Two subsequent approach attempts were waved off and the pilot expressed concern about being able to get the aircraft

aboard. The copilot flew the aircraft for a few moments, allowing the pilot an opportunity to rest. The pilot later reassumed control of the aircraft for the final approach. While the copilot was occupied looking outside, the pilot was busy flying the aircraft on instruments. Suddenly, the copilot noticed salt spray and immediately increased collective to maximum. The aircraft touched the water ½ mile short of the ship, got airborne momentarily, crashed and sank rapidly.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy smokes! I'll bet this airman shies away from jet tailpipes like they were coiled rattlers and will be standin' beers to this helo man at every port call. Sure wonder where the outside observers were during this engine turn-up. A little protection for day-dreamers who walk around in a daze is less effort than "Man Overboard" exercises like this one that take the concentrated efforts of a good part of the people on the ship.

Rescue demonstrations by the helos for all members of the ship's company can pay real dividends when the chips are down. This victim didn't know *beans* about rescue procedures! (July 1963)



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Egads, lads! It appears the "culprit," vertigo, struck again! When things get wormy and vertigo becomes a problem, it's time to admit it, so your partner can back you up on the ole flight instruments. If an emergency situation occurs during practice Zip-Lip operations, it's time to un-zip and transmit.

My bet is that while on *that critical* final approach, both crew members were looking out the window and no one was minding the flight instruments. Good aeroplane crew coordination pays dividends.

