



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Ten Fathoms Under

The pilot of an SNJ received a wave-off on his first carrier qualification approach. We pick up the pilot's statement as he arrives at the 90 degree position on his second approach.

"I apparently encountered some turbulent air because my wings started to wobble, but not violently and not like a stall. My left wing dropped and I must have over corrected because my right wing then snapped down and the aircraft rolled into a nose down steep right bank and hit the water in that attitude. The canopy jammed almost completely shut upon impact (except for about an inch). The aircraft went under water once and then I think it bobbed back to the surface because I could see what appeared to be a horizon. The aircraft started to sink and the cockpit began to fill with water. Just before my head went under I took a real deep breath.

"As the plane sank, I kept trying to open the canopy, first by using the normal release handle and then by trying the emergency release. I wasn't getting anywhere as I couldn't budge the canopy, and I was just about ready to give up. The plane must have hit bottom about this time for I felt a slight jolt and all motion stopped. It was so dark in the cockpit that I couldn't see what I was doing.

"I was about out of breath and decided that if I was going to get out I would have to do so immediately. I put my left hand on the release handle and my right hand in the crack in the canopy. I put both feet on the instrument panel and pulled with all my might. The canopy gave a little and started to slip back. I forced my head and shoulders through the opening, stood on the seat and shoved. As I left the cockpit, I pulled my right hand CO₂ bottle on my Mae West. It was still pretty dark and I was going up pretty slow, so I pulled the left hand bottle and started paddling as fast as I could. I was still paddling after I broke the surface. A motor boat from the destroyer picked me up almost immediately."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Son, you sure had me worried there for a minute. I didn't think you



were going to pull that left hand CO₂ bottle.

This lad escaped from his plane which was 50 to 60 feet under water and in so doing had held his breath for well over two minutes. That speaks pretty well of the physical fitness program, I'd say. Proper use of his shoulder harness paid off as it always does, but he received minor lacerations when he clawed his way out of the cockpit.

This accident just goes to show that it's a mighty cagey move to make sure your canopy is locked open when you're operating around a carrier. In addition, when flying service type aircraft, you can't lose anything if you make a habit of wearing your oxygen mask when making landings and take-offs.

There are a few aviators around who have been in conditions similar to this lad's plight who will tell you that the use of their oxygen has made the difference between getting out and not getting out of a submerged cockpit. Besides, that oxygen mask will protect your face from fire and will absorb a goodly portion of



the impact forces in aircraft accidents. All in all, I'd say that the oxygen mask is a pretty handy thing to have around in an emergency.

Take That and That!

The pilot of a PB-1G (Coast Guard rescue B-17) was cleared for a routine test flight. The plane captain was standing between the pilot and the co-pilot as an additional lookout for taxiing. The taxiway to be used ran between a line of hangars and the aircraft parking line.

While taxiing through this area, the starboard wing struck a stake bodied truck parked adjacent to a line shack next to one of the hangars. No one in the plane saw the parked truck or members of the line crew who attempted to attract the attention of the crew in the plane prior to the collision.

The pilot inspected the damage, proceeded to a cleared area where he turned around and, while taxiing back through the same area, his *left* wing struck the top of the line shack next to the same hangar. At this point the pilot didn't stop, but added throttle, dragging his port wing across the top of the line shack, and continued on back to the parking area.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Of all the bonehead stunts I've ever heard of, this one takes the cake. A single taxi accident is bad enough, but to compound it within a few minutes is downright inexcusable. I'm wondering whether this is the type pilot that oughta be trusted with our high priced airplanes. His actions in the second taxi accident certainly leave much to be desired.

There's no excuse for a pilot not posting a look-out outside of his plane before he taxis into a spot that he knows is going to be a tight fit. If there is *any* doubt about the clearance, *stop* until you get some outside help.

When the area ahead is news to you,

And only one looking out, when there should be two,

Taxi only when you know all's clear—

The price of carelessness may cost you dear.

Grampaw
says: THAW!

Don't pull a
Dit in the
CHILL!



YOU CANT BEAT
the Heat!

Really
Heat

GRAMP WRITES A POEM

'T WAS right around Christmas, and we had been told
To go to the Arctic, right into the cold,
To pick up a *Skymaster*, long stranded there,
And bring it back stateside with speed and with care.

We came in the night to cold Frobisher Bay
And ran a preflight check ere hitting the hay.
In temperature readings of 30 below zero,
'Twas no time to think of becoming a hero.

All through the day, there was plenty of work,
And no one was tempted to soldier or shirk.
Then chilled by the winds and frozen with doubt,
We finally taxied the *Skymaster* out.

It took lots of time for the stiff props to feather,
The fluid was frozen by cold Arctic weather.
But take off we did right into the soup,
The trouble then started, first with the loop.

Then out went the heaters, and quick as a flash,
All the dials went quite haywire up there on the dash.
As smoke filled the cockpit—we knew not the source—
The windshield iced over, a problem, of course.

The pins must have frozen, wheels would not retract;
There was nothing to do but to turn and go back.
The overcast held us, its darkness we feared,
When all of a sudden, a large hole appeared.

Down through this chimney and back to the field
As fast as we could with my blood near congealed!
I soon saw the runway—I wouldn't go round—
So I hit the flaps quickly and dropped to the ground.

With ice on the runway, the brakes wouldn't hold
And death loomed before me, lonely and cold,
For the end of the runway held a great drop,
And so well before it, the plane I must stop.

So groundloop I did—then rose such a clatter
We jumped in our seats to see what was the matter.
We'd hit some oil drums, used for lighting, I guess,
But whatever the purpose, they sure made a mess.

We slewed around slowly and came to a stop.
No one was hurt, but egad, what a hop!
The lessons we learned we learned mighty fast—
Engraved on our memories, long may they last.

The lessons I learned then—and there is no doubt—
I didn't take time to thaw the plane out.
Use plenty of heat and plenty of time—
This is the theme of my Christmastide rime.

When instruments fail, they create a real problem;
In instrument weather, you're sure lost without 'em.
Just "fly 'em by instinct" I've often been told
But that's not conducive for growing too old.

Don't be in a rush to get where you're goin'
Just take your time, so your "slip" won't be showin'
It's lucky we are, and most thankful too
To be able to tell this story to you.

Now your old friend Gramp who relates this tale
Will not enter into his usual wail—
Instead, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas tonight—
Take time to be careful, take time to be right.