



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Breathless

After a thorough pre-flight and normal take-off, a pilot climbed his T2V-1 out of the field on a local area navigation training flight. He was alone in the aircraft and had filed for a two-hour hop. Cruise climb to 35,000 ft. was uneventful. He had the oxygen regulator on normal setting, had about 1600 lbs. of oxygen pressure showing, the blinker was working normally, and the only aircraft discrepancy was a poorly functioning cabin pressurization system. So far it would only maintain a 5000-foot cabin pressure altitude differential.

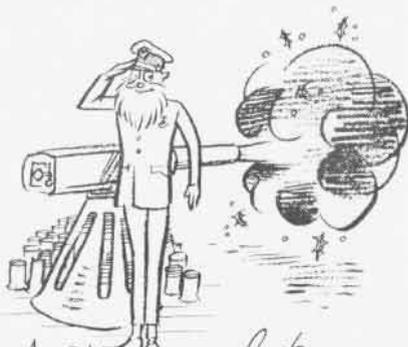
Leveling off at 35,000 feet and switching to 100 per cent oxygen, he started his planned local area navigation problem. The first couple of legs were pretty routine, and he was busy tuning in his ADF when suddenly he found he couldn't breathe! Glancing down he saw he had zero oxygen pressure!

Moving fast, he popped the speed brakes, eased the power off and started down in a hurry. He held his breath until he felt ready to bust, meanwhile insuring the bailout bottle handle was clear in case he needed it.

There was about eight-tenths cloud cover under him at around 22,000 feet. He was descending through 30,000 when he suddenly greyed out, lost his vision almost completely, couldn't see his instruments at all, and pulled the bailout bottle.

A blast of oxygen filled his mask, and his vision started to return although little green and blue spots seemed to dance in front of his eyes and he couldn't focus on the instruments. Leveling off at 23,000 feet, he found he had real channel vision; in fact, no peripheral vision at all. He felt as if he had to point his eyes directly at a particular instrument to read it properly. Cabin pressure altitude now read 18,000 ft. He had to get down through this stuff before the bailout bottle gave out!

He now switched to guard channel and went on the air, gave his identi-



*A 21 gun salute  
for that real  
professional,  
and a merry  
Christmas too!*

fication, stated he had lost oxygen at altitude, was on top of the overcast, needed help and wanted anyone to answer who read him. A nearby Air Force Base came on immediately, told him to squawk his parrot and the mode desired. The area traffic control center also came up on the air clearing him for immediate descent to 10,000 ft. He gave them a negative on this,

for he still couldn't read his instruments clearly and coupled with numerous thunderheads in the area with the considerable associated turbulence to be expected, it looked like more than he could handle.

Air Force radar now gave him a steer to their base, but right at this time, a big hole appeared in the overcast under him. He pushed over, descended below 10,000 feet and broke out in the clear underneath the heavy cloud cover just as his bailout bottle gave out.

Calling the Air Force, he told them of the new situation, that he was now O. K., got a steer and distance to his home field and headed for home.

After a safe arrival and landing, he fully reported his difficulties, downed the plane and asked for a report on the discrepancies found in the oxygen system. Maintenance trouble shooters found that a check valve in the oxygen filler spout was jammed in a partly open position. A little dirt or grit had fouled the check valve and allowed his entire oxygen system to bleed off.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

**Sufferin catfish! Breath-holdin' is a mighty unsatisfying way to make a let-down. This breathless gent could have saved himself a lot of**



spots before his eyes if he'd pulled the bailout bottle instead of tryin' for one last breath, hollered May Day like crazy and started down immediately. He'd have had his clearance from the center before he reached the top of the overcast. May Day is not a dirty word, although you'd think so by the obvious reluctance of many pilots to use it. Lack of breathin' air is as positive an emergency as a flame-out or fire and can kill you quicker. You gotta run a howgozit on your oxygen supply as well as your fuel. If you don't, you too may be breathless.

## Blasted

A pair of AD-6 Skyraiders were launched from a CVA for an ordnance training hop. They each had four instantaneous-fuzed 100-lb. GP bombs on their racks and were briefed for masthead bombing attacks on a sled towed by the carrier. Briefed altitude for release was 200 feet at 240 knots, all runs to be 90° to the ships heading, all orbits counter-clockwise.

The hop was flown exactly as briefed. The section leader made his run, pickled off one bomb and pulled up immediately. The wingman took a good interval and made his run-in, 200 feet at 240 knots, nice and level, pickled a bomb and held it level momentarily. There seemed to be a lot of noise and vibration after the bomb exploded, but not until he was in a climbing left turn did he notice a couple of holes in the horizontal stabilizer.

The flight leader, notified of the damage, joined up and looked his wingman's plane over. There were a number of holes in the fuselage and wings, but no apparent fuel, oil, or hydraulic leaks.

All remaining bombs were jettisoned, a satisfactory slow flight check performed and both aircraft were safely recovered aboard the CVA. It had been an exciting morning.



### Grampaw Pettibone says:

Blast me if I can understand people dropping live ordnance without checking NWIP 20-1 to find the MANDATORY minimum release altitudes for that particular bomb and fuze combination! We've had an A3D and A4D destroyed at sea this year by 500-lb. GP iron bombs dropped below published minimum altitudes and now an AD is lucky to get back.

We get so wrapped up in proper delivery of megaton yield weapons



that the blast effect of a little old 100 or 500-pounder GP bomb seems hardly worth mentioning. Like heck! This is Russian roulette of the worst type!

## Night Rider

A Navy TV-2 departed an East Coast Air Force base at approximately 2300 local time and headed for NAS GLENVIEW, an en route stop in his cross-country itinerary. He planned to cruise at 36,000 feet with an estimate of two hours and 17 minutes en route and three plus 10 fuel aboard.

His destination forecast was 1500 feet broken, 5000 overcast, with temporary deterioration to 700 feet overcast and one mile visibility in thunderstorms with hail, heavy rain and winds 20 knots, gusting to 45 knots. Heavy thunderstorm activity was reported over the entire Illinois area.

He reported over Detroit right on his planned estimate and requested Glenview weather. Detroit Radio reported that Glenview had 400 broken, four miles in light rain, wind NE 20, gusts to 25 knots and that the duty officer at Glenview recommended he divert to his alternate which had 4000 broken, 7000 overcast and seven miles in thundershowers and light rain. Detroit Radio also reported that only an ASR approach to runway 35 at Glenview would be available.

The pilot acknowledged the message and shortly thereafter informed Detroit he was switching to Chicago Cen-

ter, gave his position report and declared a fuel emergency, 20 to 25 minutes of fuel remaining and estimated a VORTAC located 7.6 miles northwest of Glenview in 12 minutes.

O'Hare approach control radar picked up a Mayday blip 30 miles east of their field and established marginal radio contact with the pilot. He reported he was at 3000 feet with 30 gallons of fuel remaining.

O'Hare provided radar control to the pilot until the TV-2 flamed out at 400 feet, almost two miles east of Glenview, the pilot was in visual contact with the field. The TV-2 touched down 2000 feet up the 5100-foot, soaking-wet runway at 120 knots. With braking action poor, the T-bird ran off the end and sheared its landing gear in the rain-softened ground. The pilot opened the canopy and left the aircraft, unhurt.



### Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! Ol' Gramps has no idea why the late departure time or why a pilot with almost 3200 flight hours would file into such stinkin' foul weather. This smells like get-home-itis of the worst type.

When he had fuel transfer trouble over Detroit, the place to land was Selfridge AFB, RIGHT THERE, and not go barreling on—burning up what fuel he had available for what could have been a normal approach. 'Head up and locked' would be a better title for this yarn, come to think of it.