



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Head Down and Locked

TWO F-4B *Phantoms* had completed the intercept portion of a training hop in the local operating area and were returning to their Southeastern air field.

The lead plane had been having intermittent UHF radio troubles. Fourteen miles from the field, the pilot attempted to contact the tower for landing instructions but his radio was dead. Even side tone was lost. He told his Radar Observer on ICS to keep trying with the radio and through hand signals passed the lead to his wingman and let him know the radio was *kaput*.

They flew into the break over the runway at 700 feet and 270 knots and broke with a six-second interval. The silent wingman laid his *Phantom* over in a 45-degree bank, eased the power off slightly and extended speed brakes. At 230 knots and still decelerating he dropped the wheels.

As the wheels locked down, the pilot suddenly heard a high pitched noise, so loud it was painful, screeching in his supposedly dead hard hat earphones.

He turned down the volume controls on UHF, AUX receiver, TACAN, and switched from hot mike to cold mike but couldn't change the pitch or lower the intensity of the screech in his ears one iota. He yelled to the Radar Observer to try to shut it off but received no response.

This had taken only a short time, and he had continued to fly the landing pattern. He swung into the downwind leg, retracted speed brakes, lowered the flaps, and resumed his attempt to stop the infernal racket in his ears. He leaned far down to the left, trying to unplug his earphones but had no success since only his left hand could be used. His right hand was needed on the stick.

The RO was watching the pilot's movements as best he could. He was highly concerned because control pressures on the aircraft felt a little rough



and the pilot was obviously in some sort of distress. In fact, he appeared to be clawing at his helmet and oxygen mask. He tried calling him on emergency ICS but could get no response—the circuit was dead. He noted with alarm that they were losing altitude, saw the altimeter unwind through 200 feet altitude, saw the pilot bent over the left console (and obviously preoccupied) and decided they were about to “buy the farm.” He positioned himself rapidly and ejected!

Almost simultaneously and perhaps because he was startled by the RO's ejection blast, the pilot added 100% power and pulled the nose up!

The *Phantom* climbed back to pat-

tern altitude, orbited the field once and landed without further incident. During the extra turn around the field, the pilot trimmed up the aircraft and, using both hands, managed to unplug the earphone cord, finally stopping the infernal din in his ears.

The Radar Observer landed safely via the nylon method in shallow water and was swiftly recovered by a helo.

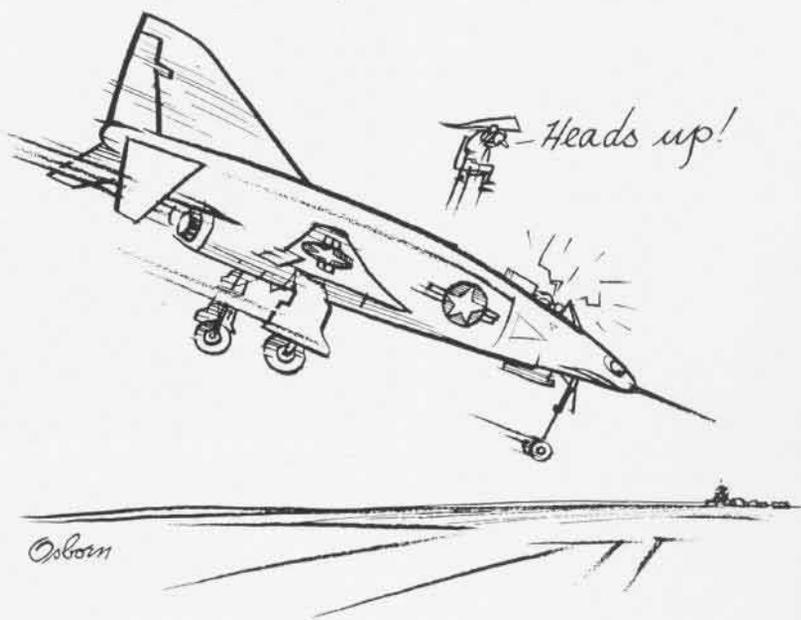
Total damage—one lost rear canopy. The potential—enormous!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great land o' Goshen! This is just about the easiest one to second-guess I ever ran across! Stickin' the head in the cockpit at a time when it oughta be 'up and unlocked' has caused midairs, overrun type collisions on the runways, noseups off runways and taxiways, collisions with line vehicles, people, buildings, just about everything imaginable.

The only time it's safe to have a one-track mind in an aircraft is when it's parked, chocked, tied down and shut down. Even then it's best to look around a bit. Some other one-tracker with his head down might have you bore-sighted.



A Friend Indeed

An F-8 Crusader departed a West Coast naval air station on a local hop. It was an overcast day, pretty solid from about 1000 feet on up to altitude and the climbout was completely on the gauges.

During the climb his radio went dead and as he popped out on top of the overcast, he found himself cut off from ground contact. Owing to the heavy traffic volume in that area, he couldn't safely return to base without prior clearance, so he proceeded to the established TACAN holding fix, intending to pick up a wing position on any returning aircraft.

After some time and with fuel in the fighter running low, he sighted a passing Marine C-130 and joined up on him trying to pass word of his predicament with hand signals. The C-130 pilot was a sharpie, extended his refueling drogue—these Marines are always prepared, carry the gear on every hop—gave our thirsty Crusader a good long drink, signaled that he got the message and entered the TACAN holding pattern with the Crusader nestled under his wing.

The C-130 pilot now radioed for an approach clearance, informed them of the problem and then executed an approach through the overcast with the mute Crusader on his wing. The fighter landed safely and the Marine aircraft climbed back up to altitude to continue with his original mission. He'd been a friend indeed—a PRO.



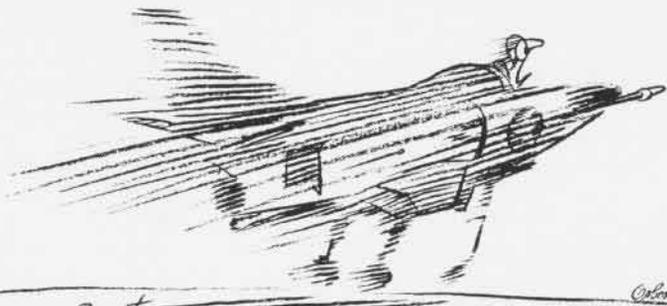
Grampaw Pettibone says:

Bust my buttons! It turns the whole day kinda shiny to read a report of good headwork and teamwork like this. These MEN in the CV's are rapidly establishing a reputation as mighty good to have around. They've just about paid for their new aircraft in SAVES alone. This Crusader outfit says they'd be pleased to fly high cover for the Marine C-130 men ANY TIME!

By An Eyelash

Two Marine A-4B pilots, scheduled for a type instrument hop as a section, filed for a tactical instrument departure and made individual takeoffs from their home base, intending to do a climbing rendezvous.

The flight leader was climbing through 5000 feet, still at 100% rpm, all temperatures and fuel flow normal,



The Super-Scoter

when he felt or heard a "grinding noise." Glancing down at the panel, he saw the oil pressure gauge fluctuating rapidly between 28 and 35 psi!

He reduced power to 91%, leveled off at 7000, radioed the base of his oil pressure problem, and had his wingman join up as he turned back toward the field. The oil pressure steadied up.

Soon after they arrived overhead and after the leader had told his wingman they would orbit to burn down to landing weight, the oil pressure started to fluctuate again. This evidently made him sure of impending engine seizure, for he radioed a change of plans. He would jettison his external tank and would take the MOREST at 16,000 pounds gross landing weight!

Pulling the nose up and climbing to 6500 feet from his 5000-foot orbit, he dropped the wheels at 225 knots and then nosed over again, pickling off his external tank as he swung over a nearby bay.

He continued in a fairly high precautionary approach to the runway, reaching the 180 position about a mile and a half abeam at 2000 feet and 200 knots with gear down, flaps up, brakes out, and still holding 91% power.

Coming around to the runway, he received three wind checks from the tower, all of a port-quartering tailwind of 18 knots.

He passed by the runway duty officer at 300 to 400 feet on his altimeter and still at 200 knots! Realizing he was high and fast, he pulled the throttle first to idle and then to OFF and committed himself to a landing.

The A-4B touched down at 180-200 knots just a few feet short of the MOREST and the tail hook engaged the wire! After a few feet of run-out, the MOREST pendant snapped and the A-4B bounced back into the air in a steep nose up and slightly port wing

down attitude, still doing an estimated 140-160 knots!

With this terrible attitude, only 15-20 feet off the ground, engine completely shut down and a sure-fire mash staring him in the face, the pilot pulled the ejection curtain!

As the curtain reached a point about eye level, the rocket seat fired. He saw the instrument panel go by in a flash, followed by the windscreen. Then he could see the runway and the bay beyond as the seat carried him up and up.

Almost as though it were in slow motion, he felt the seat bladders inflate and start seat separation. He reached for the ripcord, pulling it out about 20 inches. The automatic release had beaten him to it, however, for the chute was already streaming out horizontally behind him and he watched the risers straighten out and that beautiful canopy blossom out.

There was no noticeable opening shock. He slowly swung down, suspended on the risers, like a pendulum and touched down almost immediately, as gently as a feather. His injuries? A scraped elbow as he sat down and rolled over in the gravel.

The pilotless A-4B righted itself, returned to the runway and rolled out for a distance of 3300 feet into the ocean beyond, a strike.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' catfish! This man had almost 1000 hours in the little "Scooter" but drew a complete blank when a simple precautionary approach would have done the job! They'd have needed some kind of giant butterfly net to catch the hairy fly-by he made and considered a proper approach! 'Taint as though the engine was all froze up. She was still purring along good. Chalk up another save for the RAPEC seat, but this kind of test is really stretchin' the guarantee!