



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Planning Pays

A flight of three F-8E's departed a Western Pacific air station early one afternoon for a strafing flight on a nearby island target. The flight leader had thoroughly briefed his pilots according to squadron SOP and informed them that anyone encountering an emergency would be immediately escorted back to the base for landing.

Weather in the target area began to deteriorate rapidly while the pilots were making strafing runs so the flight rejoined to return to base. As the three F-8E's proceeded along the coast, the number three pilot started feeling a little warm. His eyes seemed to burn slightly, so he switched the cockpit temperature control to manual to lower the cockpit temperature. When he did this, the engine oil/hydraulic pressure warning light came on and utility pressure gauge went to zero pounds. He immediately informed his flight leader of his indications.

The flight at this time was still about five minutes from home base. In the next minute or so, the utility hydraulic pressure gauge started reading alternately zero and normal with the engine oil/hydraulic warning light coming on and going off accordingly.

Upon reaching the field, the flight leader passed the lead to the pilot with the emergency, so he could go through the utility hydraulic failure procedure with him.

The flight remained well clear of traffic, maintaining approximately



5000 feet over the water while the pilot went through the procedure for utility hydraulic system failure. Just as he was completing the procedure successfully, the generator failed and the pilot noted a muffled thump just behind him and to his right. He immediately dropped the ram air turbine (RAT) and regained radio contact with the flight leader and base radio. While the pilot was informing the flight leader of the generator failure, he noticed that the PC-1 system dropped to less than 1000 pounds and the PC-2 gauge fluctuated.

The flight was now at 4000 feet, approximately 10 miles south of the field, so the pilot requested a straight-

in approach and arrested landing. Just after this request, the number two pilot told him to look at the right side of his aircraft. When he looked in the mirror, he saw flames just below the missile stations. The flight leader immediately told him to eject. Without hesitation, he positioned himself and pulled the curtain.

Everything worked exactly as advertised and, as the pilot was descending, he saw the F-8E completely engulfed in flames. On the way down, he reviewed his procedures for separating from the chute and getting into the raft. He unhooked the left lap rocket jet fitting, pulled out the seat pack lanyard and connected it to the torso harness. Then he pulled the "D" ring to the seat pack and partially removed the raft.

Nearing the water, he checked his survival gear and mentally reviewed water survival emergency procedures. While still submerged, he removed his left shoulder rocket jet fitting and, upon coming to the surface, inflated his Mae West and released the right jet fitting. He swam away from the chute, inflated the raft, climbed in and pulled all his gear in with him.

The remainder of the flight was circling overhead. He waved to them that he was in good shape. In a very few minutes, a rescue helo was on the scene so the pilot fired a day flare to indicate his position and let the helo pilot know the wind direction.

The helo approached into the wind, lowered the horse collar harness and the pilot released the seat pack lanyard, left the raft, climbed into the harness properly and was hoisted aboard.

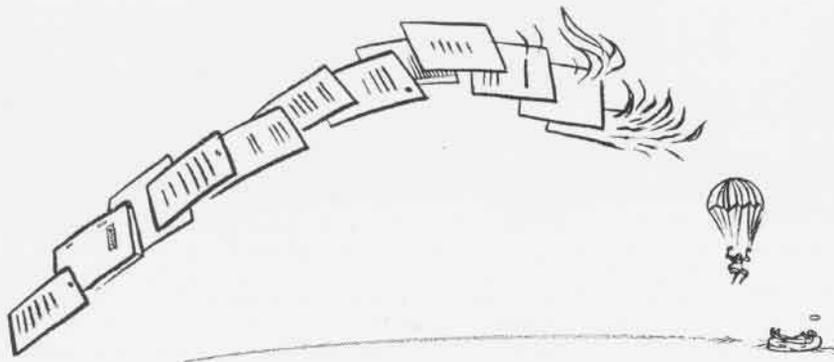
The pilot was taken to the dispensary, given a complete physical and released to full duty.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Well, bust my britches! Sure makes your ole grey haired friend proud to read about such sharp lads as this.

This young gent takes his flyin'



business seriously by knowin' emergency procedures and how to use his survival gear. Bet his squadron C.O., Flight Surgeon, and Safety Officer see the results of all that good dope and training they've been puttin' out.

The pilot knew exactly what he'd do if something like this ever came up and he went about his business of surviving like a real PRO.

Confucius once said, "In all things success depends upon previous preparation." . . . Ole Gramps says, "Pre-planning is the first step to safe flight."



## Trust and Confidence . . .

Two young helo pilots submitted a cross-country request that was to take them from their home station in southern California to an Air Force base in northern California with two en route fuel stops. The flight was to depart at 1000 on Friday with an RON that night at the AFB and a three-hour local flight on Saturday, then another RON before returning to home station on Sunday.

The cross-country request was approved and the flight departed. In addition to the pilot, copilot, and crew chief, another pilot went along as a passenger. After the first fuel stop, an unscheduled landing was made at a small town and the crew chief was dropped off to visit relatives. At the second fuel stop, a flight plan was filed to the AFB specified in the cross-country request, but the pilots decided to land at a ranch and close out with the AFB by phone.

The flight was then continued without flight plan to a mountain hunting cabin. The helo was landed in a field near the cabin and secured for the night. The field was not too level and the aircraft was tied down on a slope.

The three pilots (pilot, copilot and passenger pilot) secured to the cabin. Later that evening, the passenger's wife and brother-in-law (civilian) ar-



rived at the cabin by horseback.

After a few hours of sleep, all five arose at 0300 to go hunting. The group hunted all morning, four of them returning to the cabin about noon. The passenger pilot failed to show at the cabin and the others thought he had become lost while tracking a wounded deer. At about 1530, they decided to use the aircraft to search for him.

The two helo pilots preflighted the aircraft and found that most of the fuel had drained from the forward cell into the aft cell as fuel spewed from the filler neck when the cap was removed. As most of the fuel had drained from the forward tank owing to the sloping terrain, the pilots used buckets from the cabin to transfer about 10 gallons of fuel into the forward tank.

The lost pilot's wife and her brother persuaded the pilot to take them along as they knew the area and could help in the search. The lady got in the left cockpit seat to act as an observer and her brother got into the passenger compartment with the copilot.

The aircraft was started and the ground check list completed. After a satisfactory mag check, the aircraft made a normal takeoff. At about 100 feet above the ground and 50 feet above the surrounding trees, the engine began backfiring. Airspeed at this time was 30 knots and the aircraft immediately started to settle. The pilot realized he could not clear the trees, so he slowed his forward speed in order to go straight in with as little forward motion as possible.

The aircraft traveled approximately 240 feet forward, then hit a large tree and hit the ground. Fire broke out

around the engine upon impact and quickly spread aft. The pilot pulled the lady from the aircraft and led her clear of the fire. He then returned and found his injured copilot standing by the burning wreckage completely dazed. While he was leading him away from the fire, the aircraft exploded. The civilian passenger did not escape.

The fire was spotted by watch tower personnel of the U. S. Forest Service and help was flown in immediately.

The "lost" pilot returned to the cabin after hearing the crash and seeing the smoke and fire.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Holy smoke! Fetch me another aspirin tablet. My ulcers are doin' nip-ups. I've read some real hairy tales in my day but this one's about as wild as they come.

It's just darn near impossible to believe that grown people could pull such a stupid trick. All three of these guys must've been behind the door when they passed out the smarts.

Now these pilots had evidently earned the trust and confidence of their superiors or this cross-country never would have been approved. Instead of proving worthy of this trust, they threw all caution to the winds and came close to violating every rule in the book.

Everyone knows that pilots who pull stunts like this get hacked—but good, so why are they so eager to toss these wings away so lightly? If Ol' Gramps sat on the big board, believe me, the only discussion would be not whether to hang the guy, but how HIGH!

This one came mighty high—the loss of a life, an aircraft and the careers of three aviators. Could any weekend hunting trip be worth that?