

Hawkeye's starboard quarter. His attention was focused on a ruptured fuel hose behind the aircraft. The *Hawkeye's* copilot, VAW-125 X.O. Commander John Osle, saw the purple shirt heading directly for the prop. AN Christopher Varlaro of the squadron also noticed the purple shirt heading in harm's way.

Cdr. Osle quickly applied maximum reverse thrust on the engine to ward off the purple shirt while AN Varlaro hustled toward the man and intercepted him a few feet in front of the prop. Amazingly intent on the ruptured fuel line, the purple shirt wrestled free from Varlaro and continued in the same direction. Cdr. Osle then feathered the engine. Varlaro was not to be denied and tackled his shipmate, knocking him to the deck inches from the front of the prop.



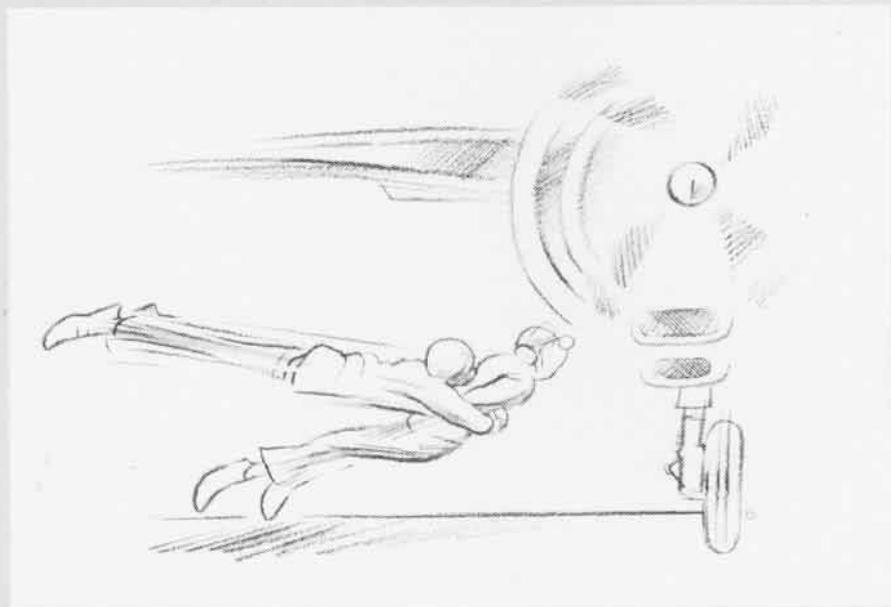
Grampaw Pettibone says:

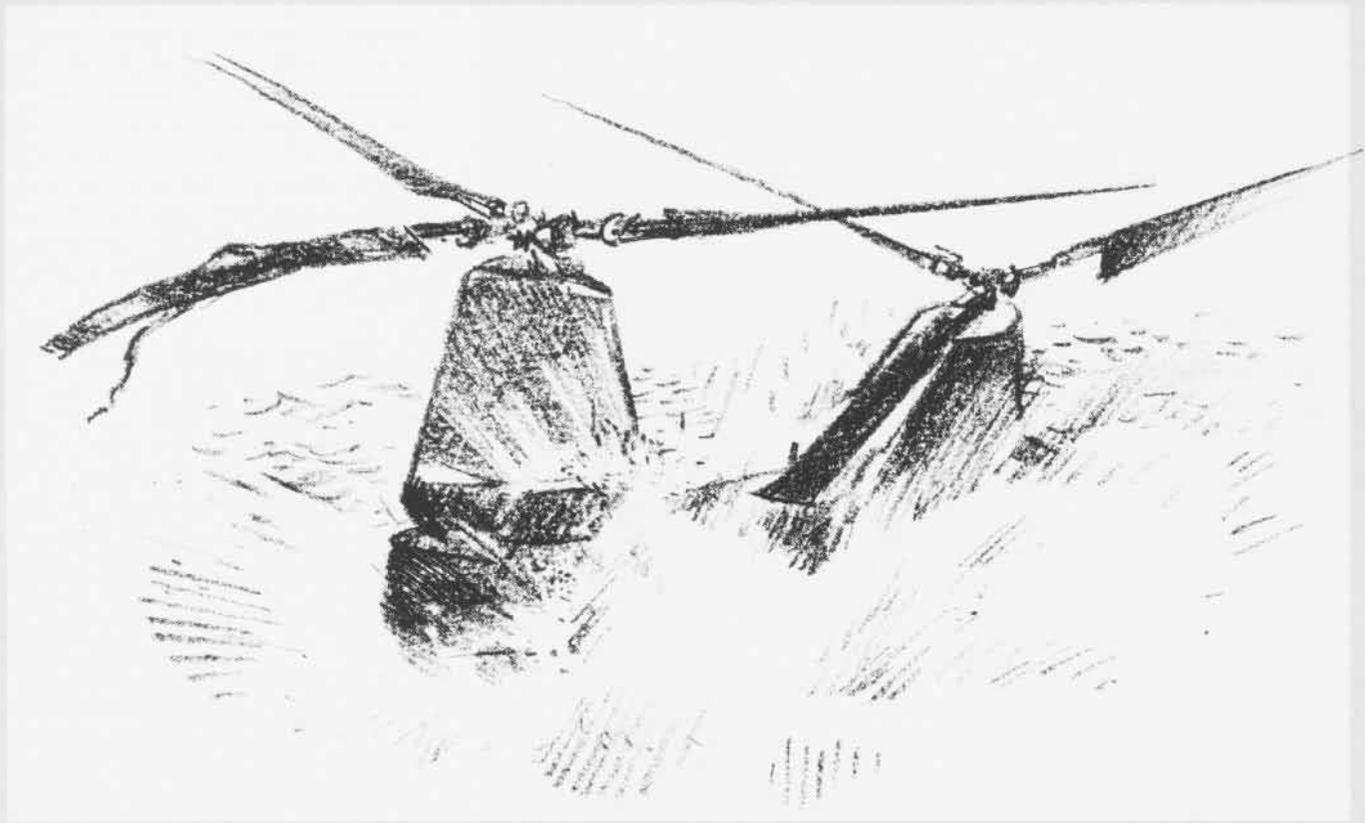
A big-league "well done" to Cdr. Osle and AN Varlaro. I'm peacock proud of their lifesaving actions. In particular, Gramps salutes that young airman.

A while back, a writer profiled pro-football players. Defensive backs, for instance, are supposed to be extremely self-confident, a bit flamboyant, and suited for independent pursuits. I particularly liked the description of linebackers. They are daring, unselfish, and have great instincts. They're the type who volunteer to drop in behind enemy lines. AN Alvaro can play linebacker on my team any day.

Lifesaving Tackle

After a daytime recovery aboard *Forrestal*, an E-2C was taxied into position behind the number one cat for tie-down. A V-4 division petty officer approached the machine – its two large props spinning – from the





Flapping Phrawg Flounders

Following completion of standard depot level maintenance (SDLM), an aircraft ferry crew arrived at the rework facility. After a lengthy inspection, the crew accepted custody of a CH-46D *Sea Knight* helo. On completion of appropriate flight briefings, the crew flew to an en route air station to remain overnight.

Following an early morning breakfast and the daily and preflight inspections, the crew filed a flight plan and launched for home plate with two en route fuel stops planned. At the second en route refueling stop, the crew and two escort *Sea Knight* crews briefed for the 300-nautical-mile leg over open water, as command policy required a minimum of two aircraft for extended over-water flights.

After a thorough briefing, the CH-46D ferry crew launched as number three in the flight. Two hours after the takeoff, the transmission oil pressure light illuminated. The pilot informed the flight leader of his problem and made an emergency landing at a nearby island. Maintenance QA-qualified passengers determined the problem to be a faulty

transmission oil pressure switch. With the copilot at the controls, the *Sea Knight* again launched, rejoined the flight, climbed to 2,500 feet MSL and established cruise airspeed. Shortly after leveling off, the aircraft developed a sudden and violent thumping beat. The pilot immediately commenced a controlled and rapid descent to an emergency water landing.

Touchdown was uneventful. However, the blades were flapping and shaking so severely that water taxi to the nearest land 10 nautical miles distant was impossible.

The engines were secured and the crew exited into a raft via the cabin door. Both pilots conducted fast but thorough visual inspection of the aircraft to determine the source of the control problem, and discovered that a 46-inch-long de-ice blanket had separated in flight from one of the aircraft's aft rotor blades. Close observation of the integral spar inspection system had "popped black," indicating impending blade failure. The waterlogged *Sea Knight* floated for approximately 20 minutes, slowly rolled left and sank in 2,000 feet of water as the crew watched helplessly and waited in their raft for pickup by their wingman.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy flopping Phrawgs! These two pilots sure did old Gramps proud. The swift and professional action of this crew not only fended off the Grim Reaper but enabled them to locate the cause of the vibration/flapping problem prior to the flopping Phrawg (H-46D crew term of endearment) falling into Davey Jones' locker. Unfortunately there wasn't even a lily pad to leap on, so the aircraft was lost as the H-46D has no flotation gear. The cause of the mishap was material failure of a rotor blade which had recently been repaired at SDLM, resulting in de-ice blanket separation in flight.

These pilots knew their procedures and executed them with timely dispatch, and as a result will be around for more years to come. Old Gramps would like to pin a medal on these two Phrawg jockeys and, in fact, someone did. For their headwork and professional airmanship demonstrated during this incident, HAC Captain Richard Rasmussen, USMC, and copilot Steve Schmidt, USMC, each received the Achievement Medal. Good work gents!