

members successfully egressed with a few incurring minor first-aid injuries.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

**Great balls of fire! I'm referring to those bursting from my brain, not to mention the blaze in the bird's number one engine. Plain and simple, the aircraft commander allowed a bad situation to get worse. The third pilot was placed in a situation beyond his capabilities—making an approach and landing to an unfamiliar field in the dark. Bad show all around.**

## Runway Run-out

An EP-3E *Aries II* returned from an extended reconnaissance mission at night and began its approach to an airfield at a naval support activity in the Mediterranean. The aircraft commander elected to permit a new and inexperienced third pilot to perform the approach and landing at the unfamiliar airfield.

From the beginning of the approach, the third pilot had difficulty. Throughout the approach and landing the aircraft commander permitted aircraft configuration, altitude and airspeed anomalies to develop and continue unabated and uncorrected. The third pilot maintained excessive airspeed during the final segments of the approach and touched down with only half of the available runway length remaining.

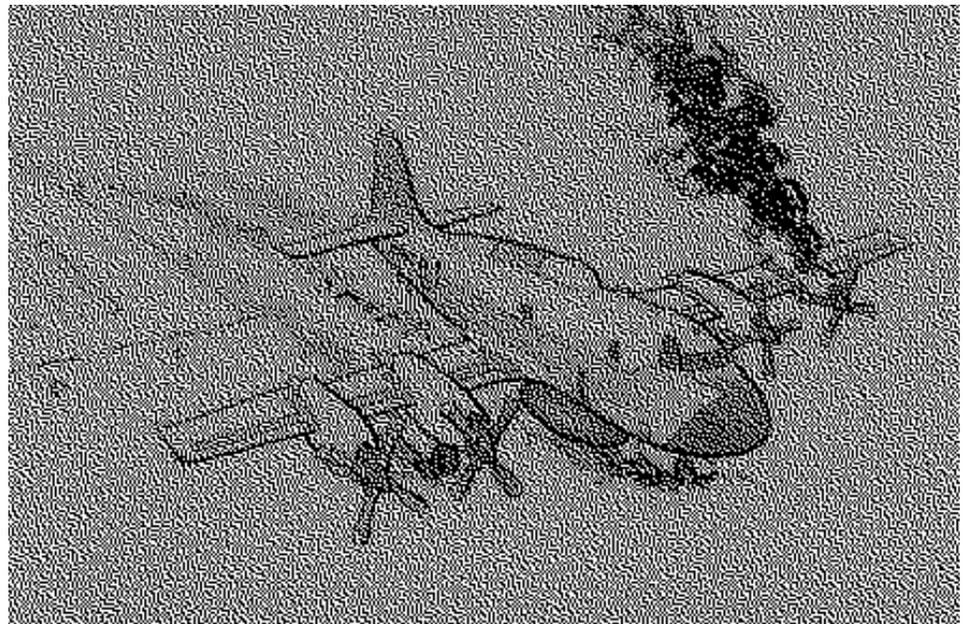
During the initial rollout a slight left drift developed and continued until it was corrected with sufficient rudder application. With the EP-3E well left of centerline and minimal runway remaining, the aircraft commander assumed

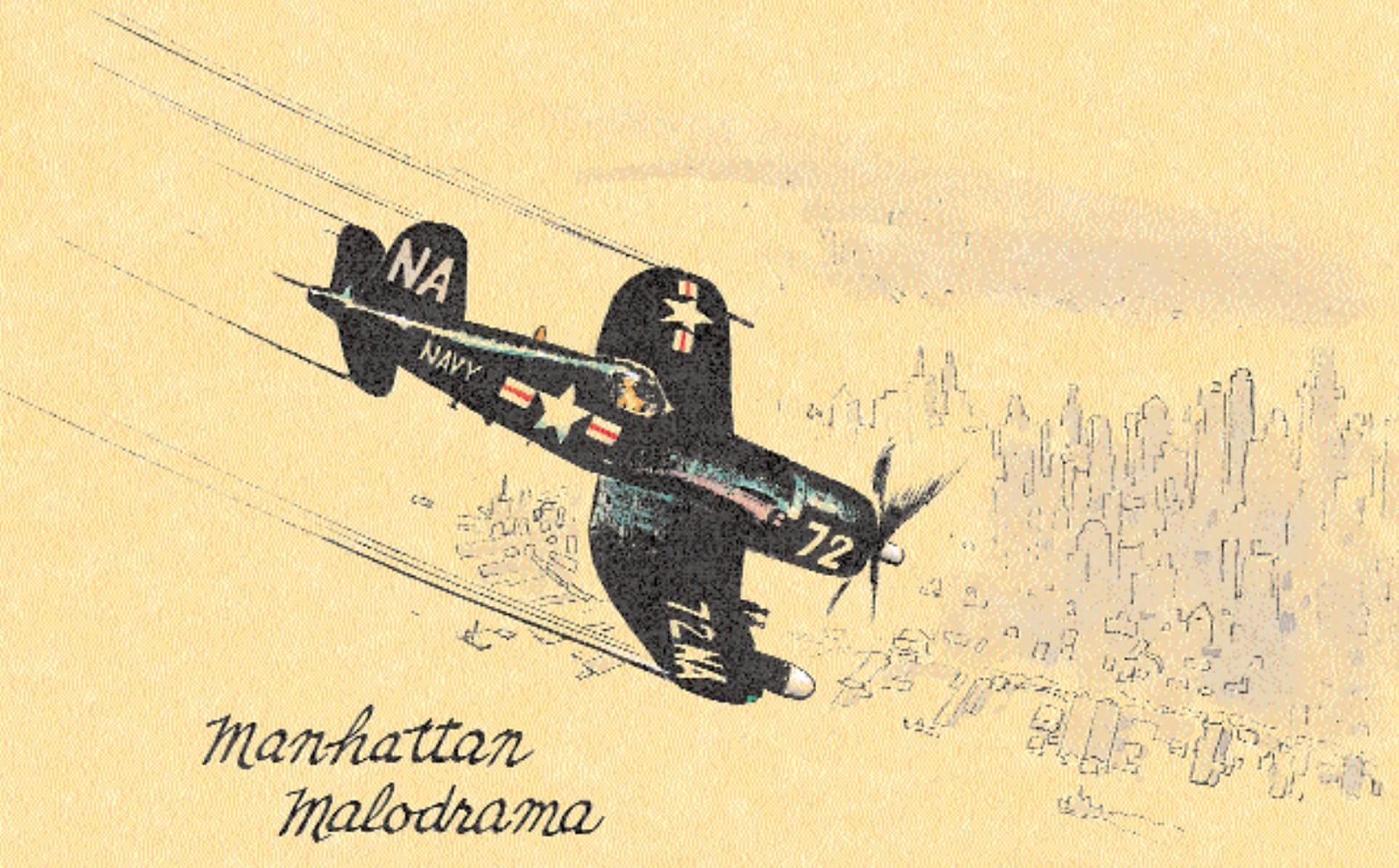
control. His flight control inputs generated severe pilot-induced oscillations in aircraft heading. The plane veered off the runway twice, ran diagonally from the end of the prepared surface and came to rest left of the extended centerline, well beyond the end of the runway. The number one engine erupted in fire and was promptly extinguished by airfield firefighting assets. All crew

## Gramps from Yesteryear

13 April 1951

A section of F4U-5N *Corsairs* launched from NAS Atlantic City, N.J., for an air defense exercise. Immediately after takeoff, the section came under control of an Air Force radar ground-controlled





## Manhattan Malodrama

intercept station and was vectored toward the New York City area at 15,000 feet. Later, the two aircraft were assigned to fly at 25,000 feet.

When over Rockaway Beach at the assigned altitude, the wingman “tally-hoed” a target above and on a course of 250 degrees. The *Corsairs* were ordered to continue climbing and to follow the target, an Air Force B-36.

Passing through 27,000 feet the leader visually checked his wingman who was alert and flying an excellent wing position, as he had been doing during the entire flight. At 28,000 feet the leader noticed his wingman level with his aircraft and flying erratically, pitching and rolling. The leader immediately suspected his wingman was suffering from anoxia. He radioed him to switch to his emergency oxygen system, but to no avail. The wingman turned toward the lead aircraft, passed over it and then fell off into

a steep left spiral. The leader followed the aircraft down but lost sight of it against the background of Manhattan. Nevertheless, he continued to descend, calling his wingman by name but never receiving a reply.

No one witnessed the entire dive. The aircraft was next seen over Brooklyn in a shallow dive at low altitude with wings level. The aircraft passed directly over the New York Naval Shipyard at 200 to 300 feet heading 340 degrees. As it approached the East River the F4U commenced a right turn and then dived toward the river. It crashed 150 yards off Manhattan in Corlears Hook, East River.

**Grampaw Pettibone says:**



**All facts indicated the pilot lost consciousness while at high altitude due to anoxia caused by a malfunctioning oxygen mask.**

**The pilot never sufficiently regained consciousness to avert crashing. The accident board recommended that in all high-altitude aircraft the blinker of the oxygen regulator be so placed in the cockpit as to allow the pilot to see it during all normal scanning of the instruments. In the F4U-5N this was not feasible. It required a rather awkward motion of the head to look down to the left to see the blinker. This was impossible to repeat continuously while flying combat tactics and especially while flying wing.**

**The commanding officer noted that the wingman, an ensign, had according to records attended lectures, demonstrations and movies dealing with the operation and use of the oxygen mask for a total of four hours of ground training on this subject.**