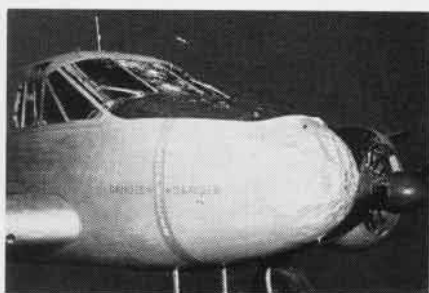


# GRAMP AW PETTIBONE

## Egg-Size Hailstones

This SNB looks like an irate pilot had just gone after it with a baseball bat. Actually the damage occurred during a cross-country flight in the All Weather Flight School syllabus.

The syllabus, however, didn't call for weather quite as unusual as that actually encountered. The instructor and two students were on a routine instrument



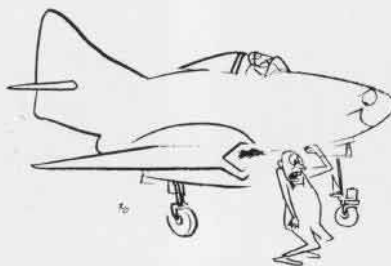
flight from Dallas to Denver, when they found a thunderstorm extending across their flight path near Clayton, New Mexico. They attempted to go around the thunderstorm and changed course 30 degrees to the left. After holding this heading for a few minutes, they spotted a light spot and started through at 10,000 feet. Immediately after entering the clouds an up draft lifted the SNB to 12,000 feet, although a level flight attitude was maintained. At this altitude light hailstones were encountered. Within a few seconds these increased in size, and the windshield began to give way under the impact of hailstones about the size of hen's eggs.

The pilots made a descending left turn and emerged in the clear about one minute later. The SNB appeared flight worthy and after another radio check on the weather the flight continued to Denver.

 *Grampaw Pettibone Says:*

This sort of thing shouldn't happen to a fellow even if he is in the All Weather Flight School.

The accident board checked the hourly weather sequences relative to this flight and their review showed that the pilot was justified in attempting to penetrate the lighter part of the thunderstorm activity. It is interesting to note that their examination of the fabric covered control surfaces showed no outwardly apparent damage from the large hailstones. However, the nose section, both wings, and all of its stabilizers will require replacement.



"THE BARBER!"

## Dear Grampaw Pettibone,

I'm afraid that I have set some sort of record for getting in trouble with jets. In my work at the Grumman factory I have tried to be careful, but the fates seem to be against me.

About two months ago I was working behind the tail pipe of a jet that was turning up and burnt off almost all the hair on my head.

The hair failed to grow again and so I was fitted for a wig before returning to work.

On my first day back I got too close to the intake of an F9F and my wig was sucked into the engine.

*Name withheld by request.*



*Grampaw Pettibone Says:*

Brother, you've had it.

Maybe you ought to get into some other line of work.

P. S. I'll bet your wig didn't do the inside of that engine any good.

## Famous Last Words

The pilot submitted a flight clearance form at the operating desk at NAS GLENVIEW. During the course of his weather briefing, he said:

"You aren't going to make me go all the way around the lake just to avoid a little fog are you?"

The answer was, "Yes," and the aerologist took the additional precaution of writing on the clearance, "Overland Flight—Around Lake Shore."

Apparently the pilot attempted a slight short cut.

Several small pleasure boats proceeding out from Michigan City in a dense fog heard the impact of a crash. They proceeded to the scene, but found only scattered pieces of debris, where the TBM had hit the water. The bodies of the pilot and his two passengers had not been recovered at the latest report.

## Dismal Swamp Bail Out

A flight of five F9F's was proceeding from NAS QUONSET POINT to NAS JACKSONVILLE, when the flight leader had a flame out at 37,500 ft. This occurred shortly after he had increased power from 93 to 96% to take the flight above a high overcast. Portions of the flight leader's statement are quoted below:

I immediately called my flight, as follows: "Allegheny Flight, this is 117 Allegheny. I have a 'flame-out'. I am on a heading of 200 degrees and will continue to hold this course." I made this transmission twice and then turned off my battery switch. I later learned that no one on the flight heard this transmission. As soon as my "flame-out" occurred, the other four planes overran me and immediately lost me in the overcast.

While I was making my May Day report to the flight, I turned off the high pressure fuel cock switch. After my last transmission I turned off the battery switch, shut off my radio, pulled the inverter circuit breaker and also turned off the master fuel switch. As I was letting down, I carefully reviewed the air-start procedure. My indicated air-speed to 21,000 feet was 180 knots.

During the descent most of my instruments were inoperative, except: the airspeed indicator, altimeter, rate of climb indicator, turn and bank indicator, and tachometer. During the descent, the tachometer indicated 30 to 35%. The canopy was completely frozen over. At 20,000 feet I slowed the aircraft to 150 knots in anticipation of making an airstart at 16,000 feet. At 16,000 feet indicating 130 knots, the tachometer read about 15%. Although I knew the proper starting RPM is 5-7% I did attempt an air-start.

At 12,000 feet I attempted another air-start. This time I was indicating between 110 to 115 knots. The RPM hovered between 10 and 12%. Both attempts were unsuccessful. At 10,000 feet I slowed the aircraft to 105 knots hoping to get the RPM within the air-start range. As I did so, I stalled, and apparently went into a graveyard spiral. The last air-speed indication before whipping into a stall was 50 knots.

## USES EJECTION SEAT

At approximately 9000 feet, I hit the pre-ejection lever. The canopy opened only three inches. Extreme difficulty was encountered in attempting to reach the emergency canopy lever. The canopy was thrown off immediately upon actuation of the emergency lever. It was 1625 when I left the plane. No difficulty was encountered in actuating the ejection seat curtain.



I estimate that I bailed out at approximately 8000 feet and would guess that my air-speed was in the neighborhood of 400 knots. The seat tumbled 4 or 5 times. When the drogue chute finally stabilized the seat, I found myself hanging in a head-down position. I unbuckled my safety belt, fell clear of the seat, counted five and then pulled the rip cord. Sometime between the moment I left the aircraft and before I pulled the rip cord, my buffet helmet and oxygen mask were torn off.

The 28-foot chute canopy provided a smooth slow descent with very little oscillation. The canopy caught in two pine trees just as my feet hit the ground. I landed about 3 miles to the N.W. of Alligator lake.

After I discovered I had nothing worse than a few scratches and bruises, I decided to head for a cabin that I had spotted. After removing the rain cape, water kit, signalling mirror, and flares from the paraft, I decided to abandon my parachute. I did not believe that I would be found within the Dismal Swamp.

The entire area where I landed is swamp land. Heavy briars and bushes make travelling next to impossible. Within two or three hours after I left the chute I realized that I was lost, and decided to head for Alligator lake to the south. It took about five hours to travel two or three miles to the lake.

I estimate that I came out of the overcast at 5000 feet. The ceiling lowered during the afternoon and it began to rain. Heavy showers fell between 1800 and 0600 the following morning. That night I slept on swamp timber on the edge of Alligator lake. The rain cape helped to keep me dry and kept away some of the many mosquitoes.

The next morning I decided to skirt the lake in hopes that I might find a house or at least better shelter. The going was extremely difficult. To the east, small bushes and briars made the area almost impassable. Therefore I kept going in a west S.W. direction. The sky remained cloudy until about 1000. The few aircraft that did fly over were in the overcast, so I had no means of signalling to them.

Alligator lake is quite wide so that I was unable to distinguish objects on the other side with any degree of clarity. However, I thought I could make out two small houses, and decided to continue on around the lake in hopes of finding shelter and food that night. I spent some time flashing the signalling mirror across the lake, but received no answer.

## RESCUE PLANES SIGHT CHUTE

An F4U approached from the S.W. about 1030. Suddenly he dived down and made passes over an area where I presumed my parachute must have been. I again resorted to the signalling mirror, but the pilot was apparently too intent on looking over the area around the parachute.

Soon another Corsair approached



and flew almost directly overhead. He too failed to see my frantic signalling and the pink lining of the rain cape which I stretched over a bush. I started a small fire just before another F4U joined the other two. He quickly spotted the smoke from the fire and the rain cape which I was wearing. The other Corsairs flew overhead and soon another Marine division of Corsairs joined the group. One of them dropped a message or food, but it landed too far out in the water for me to reach.

A Coast Guard helicopter picked me up, then attempted to retrieve the parachute, but could not do so because of the terrain. At Elizabeth City, I visited the dispensary where the cuts on my ears (injured when my helmet was torn off) were attended to by a corpsman. Later I was transferred to Quonset Point aboard an Air Force B-17.

I would like to offer these suggestions as a result of this experience:

1. In difficult terrain, never leave your parachute. It offers your best chance to be spotted from the air. Do the best you can to keep a fire going. Have all signalling devices ready for immediate use; then rest and conserve your energy.

2. When operating in areas similar to the eastern part of North Carolina, carry some type of insect repellent. You can sleep regardless of the weather but you cannot rest when attacked by swarms of mosquitoes.

3. Always carry a knife. An adequate sleeping bag, bandages, etc., can be cut from your parachute.



4. Always carry a compass. Nothing is more discouraging than to walk for miles through swampland, and not know for certain whether or not you are making definite progress in one direction.

5. Some type of first aid kit should be provided with the life raft equipment.



## Grampaw Pettibone Says:

There are a number of lessons to be learned from this chap's experience. First, it seems probable that he was not getting an accurate airspeed reading during his power-off glide. When he cut his battery switch to conserve power for an air-start he cut off his pitot heat.

Inasmuch as he reports that the windshield was frosted over, it is likely that he was picking up ice in his pitot tube and getting an erroneous airspeed indication. This would account for the high RPM indication on his tachometer, and would explain his inability to accomplish a successful air start. It may also explain why his airspeed indicator showed only 50 knots just before he went into a spin.

A fully-charged battery in an F9F should provide plenty of power for 20 minutes of operation with the engine off.

The pilot's remarks about staying near his parachute are extremely well taken. Many a pilot owes his life to the fact that he stayed close to a chute or to the aircraft wreckage which is much easier to spot from the air than an individual.

In a situation of this sort, your best bet is to spread your chute out so that it covers as large an area as possible and then start collecting wood to keep a signal fire going.

Some changes in the design of the anti-buffet helmet are being made which will allow the oxygen mask to remain in place even though the hard portion of the helmet is blown or knocked off. This will be accomplished by having the mask attached to an inner helmet similar to the aviator's flight helmet issued for summer wear.