



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Grampaw Pettibone Says:

It jest burns my hide to hafta read all the reports that cross my desk indicatin' that both pilots and air controllers are plain ignorin' proper use of the emergency and distress frequency, 243.0 mes, and usin' it as a tactical chatter channel.

Now hear this!

1. A pilot had to turn off the guard monitor on UHF during an actual GCA approach because he couldn't hear the final controller over the constant yakyak on Guard channel.

2. A helicopter pilot engaged in a real rescue off Norfolk couldn't get in touch with other rescue craft because of the steady din on Guard channel.

3. An FJ pilot called Mayday and ejected near his carrier. PriFly had its Guard receiver turned down due to chatter. Fortunately, someone else heard his call for help.

With increasing numbers of military aircraft airborne at any one time, that one channel has jest GOTTA be kept entirely free for pilots in emergency conditions.

OpNav Instruction 3730.6 of 23 September 1958 gives the word on the use of the UHF military emergency and distress frequency: "The use of this frequency for routine transmissions either air-to-air or air-to-ground is prohibited. Judgment as to what constitutes an emergency requiring the use of this frequency remains a responsibility of the individual naval aviator and other personnel whose duties include the employment of this frequency. The frequency 243.0 mes, is correctly used when concise transmissions are made only by those aircraft, ground stations, and surface units directly engaged in reducing or averting an emergency or distress situation."

## Pot-holed

An AD-5W pilot landed at a West Coast base after a night hop. As he turned off the runway while taxiing, the port main landing gear dropped in a 36x18-inch unlighted manhole which had been left uncovered. The port gear



immediately sheared off and the plane came to a stop on its port wing tip and radome.



## Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great horned toadies! Night vision after turn-off from a lighted runway jest ain't at its best. An aviator has a right to expect such potholes to be lighted. I know I'd scream like a mashed cat if some 0800 to 1630 joker had left me a booby trap like this one! The cost of repairs could probably have filled that pothole with silver dollars!

## Bolter

A section of F8U-1P photo *Crusaders* returning to their carrier had entered the landing pattern for a mirror approach. The section leader held the meatball on center all the way down final, and his airspeed was right on 137 knots. The landing touchdown appeared normal to the LSO, but the port main landing gear strut suddenly collapsed, the port wing tip struck the deck, the hook point snapped off, and the unarrested *Crusader* skidded up the angled deck in a screech of tortured metal!

The pilot poured full military power

to it, hit the afterburner, and skidded off the deck successfully airborne again! He climbed up through the overcast to 17,000 feet and came off burner to look the situation over. Utility pressure was zero, and his wingman, who had joined up, reported the port main gear was missing, wing tip looked bad, and the hook point was broken off.

Since a field arrested landing was impossible under the circumstances and fuel was pretty tight to make the beach, he flew back over the force and ejected.

Separation from the seat was delayed, because the pilot hung on to the curtain a little too long. Because of this, several shroud lines fouled the blossoming canopy of his chute, and he was greeted by the sight of *two* separate small blossoms! There were also



many small holes torn in the canopy owing to the opening of the chute at 17,000 feet immediately after seat separation.

The trip down, although somewhat accelerated, was uneventful, and the pilot was rescued by the ever watchful plane guard helicopter after only four minutes in the water. The pilots' statement after rescue included an observation that too little official personal survival equipment was now issued and all necessary gear must now be carried in the pockets of the pilot's flight suit.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Sufferin' catfish! You did some mighty quick work there on the flight deck, and if you hadn't lost that hook point you mighta made it in.

Since the pilot had on a Mark 3c Mae West which carries only two smoke flares, his ideas on needed extra survival equipment were interesting. This lad was loaded!



He had a sheath knife sewn in a case on his right leg. In the right front lower leg pocket two screwdrivers eight inches long, signal mirror, pen flashlight, and a packet of F8U flight and emergency procedures. The right rear pocket contained a small tool kit including one Varco saw, one Dzus key, one four-inch crescent wrench, and one 3/8 combination wrench. The left front lower leg pocket contained photo data cards, four navigation charts, and one photo computer. The left rear pocket contained one dye marker, whistle and compass. Two pencils, cigarettes, and matches in left arm pocket, wallet and keys in breast pockets, and knee board on right leg.

Your old Dad, carrying this much gear in the water, woulda been sputterin' and blowin' like a he-walrus in the seal pool at Marineland. Ever check your *oien* pockets for built-in anchors?

## Quote of the Month

(From Flight Surgeon's comments in an MOR recounting the adventures of a young pilot who set his FJ-4B down a bit short of the runway.)

"I have known Ensign P—— for three months and regard him as a conscientious aviator. I'm sure his accident has been a maturing experience."



## Confusion

Two senior officers were scheduled to fly a TF-1 Trader to a monthly Safety Officers conference at a West Coast base. Six other aviators were scheduled as passengers on the trip, and all eight alert birdmen were aboard as the aircraft lined up for take-off after a very thorough runup and briefing of the passengers on bailout and ditching.

Just before lift off speed was reached on the take-off the plane started to yaw to the left. After take-off, the yawing increased, and the pilot was forced to use an increasing amount of rudder and rudder trim. By this time, with only about 400 feet of altitude, the plane had swung left to a heading paralleling high tension lines and a populated area along the shoreline.

One of the aviator passengers suddenly reported that the port engine was on fire and flames could be seen pouring out of the oil cooler doors. Reception on the intercom was so poor that all further conversations were conducted by shouting—and all pilots were shouting and giving conflicting advice.

As the pilot hit the feathering button to the port engine, the copilot lowered the landing gear on the advice of *one of the passengers* and immediately raised the wheels again as the pilot shouted "Gear up."

He had lost 200 feet and airspeed had dropped to 120 knots. Full right rudder and aileron were applied in an attempt to control the plane's heading, which was still falling off to port. Airspeed dropped alarmingly as the port engine feathering button was punched and fire extinguisher actuated.

The starboard throttle had crept

back due to a loose friction knob while the pilot was fighting to maintain control and the copilot was busy *fastening his shoulder harness!* Precious altitude was lost and airspeed dropped to 90-95 knots.

Ditching was inevitable. As the pilot attempted to flare and level the wings, the left wing, port engine still windmilling, hit the water, and the plane cartwheeled, coming to rest in 3 to 5 feet of water, inverted.

All eight aviators aboard were injured but survived. No one had worn a parachute harness, only one had on a Mae West, neither pilot had used a hard hat, and three out of five passengers did not have shoulder harness fastened. One passenger who was strapped in, released his safety belt on the first impact and caught the full force of the second one. The TF was a strike.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Gosh, dang it, this whole deal really hurts my soarin' blood pressure! Dropping the landing gear on the pilot while he had his hands full with a burning engine at low altitude purty near cost us eight birdmen. It's just too doggone bad there weren't more seats up front to take care of everyone trying to get into the act.

After hearing a thorough bailout and ditching briefing, how all hands aboard could ignore Mae Wests, parachutes and shoulder harnesses, beats me. The average military aviator riding with someone else at the controls most generally almost makes a quadruple amputee of himself cinching things up tightly. Until BuMed revises the physical qualifications for NavCads to include feathers and webbed feet, we better use the gear BuAer provides us to make up for the lack of 'em.