



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Over, Under—and Out

A young fighter pilot was positioned on the port catapult, ready to go for an 0730 launch. He had carefully preflighted his F8U *Crusader*, the weather was CAVU and, all things considered, it was a good day for a CAP hop.

He had a good turnup and saluted the catapult officer. After a normal delay he felt the first shock of the shot (A), followed immediately by a second unusual shock and a noticeable lack of acceleration. He quickly retarded the throttle and tromped on the brakes to stop her. It seemed that the tires were skidding, so he released and reapplied the brakes (B). As he approached the bow, it became readily apparent that the F8U wasn't going to stop.

The pilot remembered heading for the water in a 70° dive, striking hard (C), and the cockpit rapidly filling with water as the windshield side panels shattered. The F8U sank immediately up to the tail structure, then bobbed to the surface and flipped over on its back.

Hanging inverted in the cockpit underwater, the pilot was breathing easily, his oxygen mask being snug and watertight.

He reached for the face curtain and pulled hard, but nothing happened, so he groped around, found the windshield bow, oriented himself, and



pulled the ditching handle to release himself from the seat. He cleared the sinking *Crusader* using the standard Dilbert Dunker method of escape.

Kicking up to the surface (D), the pilot saw the side of the ship racing past him and was sucked under again (E), now breathing oxygen from his bailout bottle.

Surfacing again, he found himself facing aft and the white, foaming wave bearing down on him. Sucked under, deeper this time, he inflated his life vest. As he surfaced, exhausted, the helicopter was hovering overhead.

Discarding his chute and paraft, he

found himself too exhausted to enter the sling normally, so he hooked a helo sling strap to his torso harness' shoulder ring and was hoisted (F), carried dangling over to the plane guard destroyer and deposited safely on the fantail, somewhat waterlogged, but otherwise uninjured.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Dunk me in the briny deep!
This lad musta been thinking pure thoughts all week, 'cause if ever a hop turned into a can of worms, this was it!

A cold cat shot and a thorough keel-haulin' are not normally conducive to long life or further appreciation of the finer aspects of life in the blue.

The launching pendant failed during the cat shot, causing his hairy ride. Rigid inspection procedures instituted by BuAer should preclude further failures, so relax fellas, they've been checked.

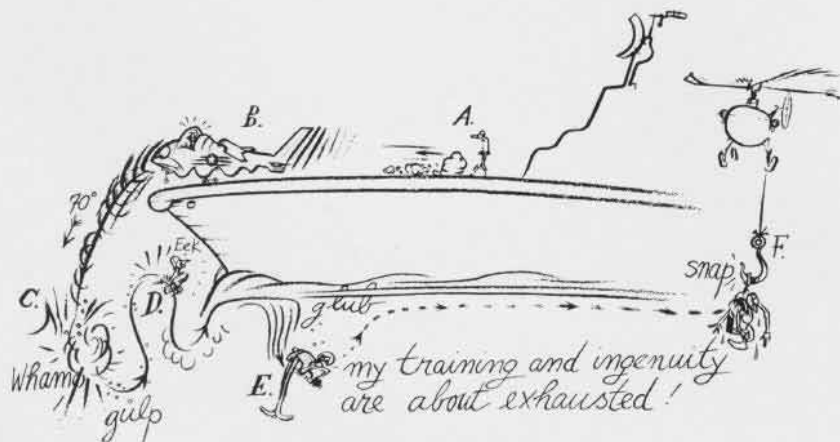
Desert Ordeal

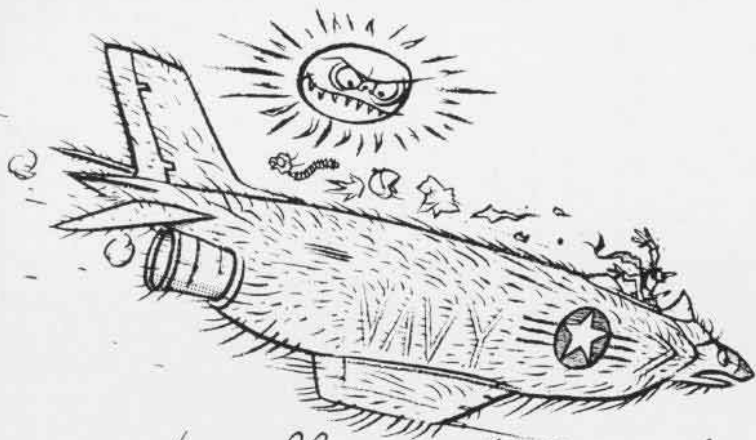
An F3H *Demon* was launched from a desert base on an intercept mission under positive radar control. Take-off and climb-out had been normal, and several changes of heading had been received and acknowledged by the pilot.

As he was climbing through 19,500 ft. at .85 Mach, either the canopy blew off or he lost a windshield panel. The wind blast was terrific! The pilot was forced back in the seat, and his arms flailed up overhead. His helmet and oxygen mask were torn off and he momentarily found himself unable to see. The plane began to roll violently both left and right.

Bringing his arms down with great effort, he hit the speed brakes and thought he cut the throttle to idle. The *Demon* went into a steep dive but he was able to recover using nose up trim as it passed through 10,000 feet. He discovered that he had flamed out, probably when he cut the power.

The F3H now went into a sharp climb, stalled, and began a left spin. The pilot grabbed for the face





Just call me Hairy!

curtain but had considerable difficulty grasping it, for the curtain had pulled out and was streamed back over the head rest.

As the *Demon* spun back through 10,000 feet, he succeeded in ejecting. After falling for what seemed a considerable distance, he realized his seat was not automatically separating, so manually opened the lap belt, reached for and pulled the chute "D" ring. His chute opened immediately at an estimated 1200 feet above the desert!

There was no wind and he descended vertically in the chute at what seemed a high rate of descent. He hit hard and stiff-legged, felt a numbing pain in his back and was unable to move.

The 110° heat from the desert sun was almost unbearable, and the pilot finally was able to pull the chute towards him and fling it over a bush as some protection from the blazing sun. He could see the smoke billowing up from the blazing wreckage of the F3H about ¾ of a mile away. It was deathly still and hot, not a moving thing could be seen.

After three parched hours, he sighted a rescue helicopter heading for the burning wreck and fired both day and night flares without a response. A second helicopter appeared and passed directly overhead. The downed pilot forced himself to his feet and although in intense pain staggered approximately 75 yards. He was seen by the helicopter crew, who immediately landed, loaded him aboard, and flew him to the air field, only 25 miles away. Medical examination revealed he had suffered a fractured vertebra from the impact.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! This lad was under radar control, and yet when they lost him from the scope 25 miles east of the station, they simply notified the flight leader. He *assumed* the plane had returned to base! Operations at the base was not notified of a possible crash until two hours later! That big column of black smoke out in the clear desert air shoulda been like a beacon in the sky and merit a *little* investigation! The whirlybird crews oughta keep their eyeballs uncaged and look around a bit as they approach a wreck instead of getting target fixation on a flaming hulk the guy probably got out of anyhow.

The reason the auto lap belt didn't fire was because someone *forgot* to put a cartridge in it! This is criminal. It fouls up the whole escape system, could cost a man his life.

The pilot was by no means lily white. He owned a G suit but didn't wear it, left his sheath knife in the ready room, had a chin strap on his APH-5, but had it unfastened and had not gotten a Hardeman suspension rig for his oxygen mask. Why go out to fly with two strikes on you? Preflight yourself as carefully as you look over your machine. It's just as important. It's your life you're playing fast and loose with.

Rescue

A plane guard destroyer swung into position on the big CVA, preparing to high-line transfer a crewman who had been critically injured when thrown against a gun turret by high seas.

Decision to high-line him was made because of high winds (37 knots) and rotor engagement limitations on the

CVA's helicopter. The big carrier was unable to turn out of the wind since she had a fleet tanker alongside and was refueling.

Sea state was 5, with a 12-foot wave height and frequent rain squalls in the area.

A helo pilot, standing near his tied down bird in the vicinity of No. 1 elevator, suddenly saw another detachment pilot who had been watching the transfer operations running toward him, giving the "turnup" signal. Jumping into the whirlybird, shouting to the crew to stand by and to untie the helo, he made an immediate start. As the last blade boot was being removed, the CVA began sounding her horn and passed the word, "Man overboard."

Rotor engagement was normal with very little blade flapping, and the helo lifted off as soon as he had a "green flag" from the director.

The helicopter spotted the man in the water immediately and dropped him the pronged rescue seat. Although bleeding from a head wound and obviously in a dazed condition, the man grabbed the seat, *stood up on it* and grasped the hoist cable above the hook! After much shouting and motions from the helicopter crewman, he finally sat down. The injured man was then rapidly hoisted aboard and flown to the waiting medical personnel on the carrier. Total time since the high-line broke—seven minutes!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Bust my britches! This was good work! The whole helo detachment worked like a smooth runnin' Swiss watch.

There was one real hitch in the rescue. The man *didn't know* how to get on the rescue seat! Ol' Gramps recommends a copy of the new training film "Helicopter Rescue at Sea," MN8760B, be sent out with every helo detachment and shown aboard their own ship and to escort DD personnel, so that *every man* in the embarked force GETS THE WORD! Every man afloat is a potential rescuee. Let's make every rescue a "routine" job for the helo crews!

Confucius say: Socked-in field is like toothpaste, easy to squeeze out, but hard to get back in. Have a take-off alternate planned!