



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

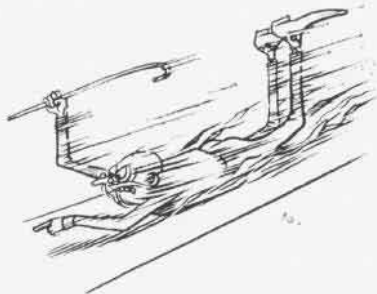
## Big Hunk of Iron

It was one of those pitch black dark nights, with the visibility 15 miles and the sky clear, but the pilots of the big P5M seaplane were flying on the gauges. It was impossible to tell the dark sky from the black ocean below. They had just completed a searchlight run on a practice target located in a large bay in WestPac and were climbing back up to 1500 feet for another run.

The PPC was flying as copilot and instructor on this training flight, running a prospective plane commander through this phase of the syllabus, and of course, performing the normal duties of a copilot, which includes fuel transfer.

He was intent on keeping a good lookout for other aircraft, at the same time transferring fuel from the hull tanks to the service tanks. He remembered looking at the fuel panel and securing the fuel transfer switches when the service tanks indicated FULL.

Shortly thereafter, while climbing through 700 feet, both engines quit! The copilot pushed mixtures to RICH, props to FULL INCREASE, emergency



boost fuel pumps ON. The pilot dropped the nose of the P5M, set up a 125-knot glide and stayed on instruments, concentrating primarily on the airspeed indicator and radio altimeter, cross-checking with the gyro horizon to maintain a wings level attitude.

At 100 feet on the radio altimeter, he began to level off and immediately thereafter the P5M touched down in a level attitude at 110 knots with a BOOM and bounced back into the air! By this time both pilots were on the controls, and, holding the nose attitude constant, they flew it back onto the water for a safe landing.

After trying to restart the engines as they floated in the bay, the copilot discovered that he had turned both

main fuel switches OFF instead of closing the fuel transfer switches as was his intention.

They had been lucky, for the bay is dotted with small islands and rock pinnacles and is normally cluttered with fishing boats and small ships.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Crikey! The silence when those engines quit must have been deafening! Every man in the crew scrambled to his ditching station in time for the first boom as this big iron bird hit, but none of 'em got their seat belts fastened in time or their hard hats on either. We've had enough scrambled heads in patrol planes by now that the VP men ought to have the word. The carrier pilots don't wear 'em ALL THE TIME for glamour!

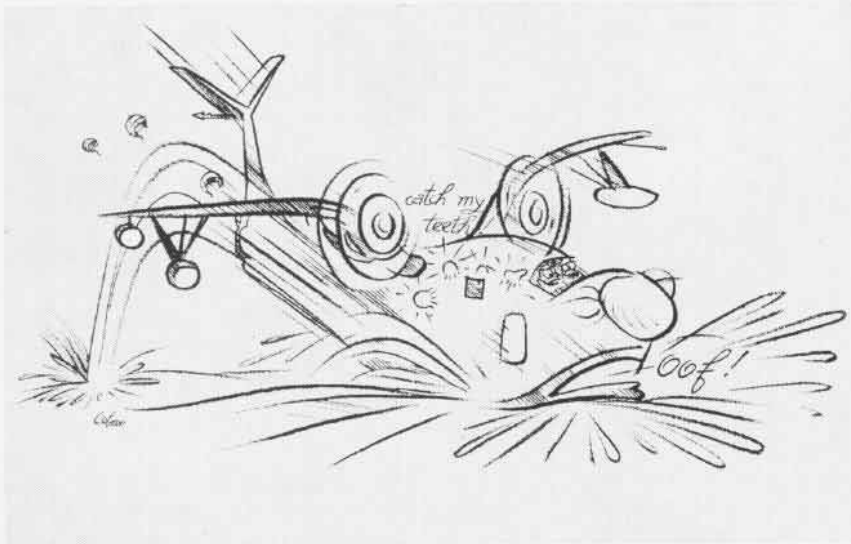
The P5M fuel control panel has a fine diagram of the fuel system with all switches and fuel selectors in the proper places on the diagram. But you gotta LOOK at it before you move anything! After pulling such a prize stunt, they salvaged a sad situation very skillfully. I'll bet they'll have no extra passengers for quite a while.

## Fouled Deck

An S2F had been launched on an ASW mission from a CVS at 0330 one cold morning this past winter. Shortly after the launch, loss of a generator rendered their antisubmarine equipment unusable, so they were ordered to return to the ship and prepare to land.

The pilot was given wave-offs on the first two passes. During the third approach, he was told he would be given a cut, because an AD in the Dog pattern with a stuck throttle and low fuel state made it urgent that all other aircraft be recovered quickly.

The S2F was high at the cut signal and the pilot nosed over, dove for the deck, flared, and landed hard with the left wing down, catching No. 4 wire. At this point, the port main landing gear collapsed, the broken wheel skidding over the side of the angled deck



and the s2F swerved to the left, coming to rest abeam the mirror with the port engine nacelle resting on the deck. There were no injuries to any of the crew members.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Holy Molokus! This accident was completely unnecessary, and no one knows it better than the pilot himself! He had plenty of fuel and could have taken a bolter or even binged if necessary. Because of his poor technique, he really clobbered up the deck for the AD driver. This LSO better get his eyes examined. To give a pilot a mandatory cut when there's doubt as to his ability to put it on safely and when he's in poor position for a safe landing, is not the type of performance expected of a professional on the platform. To tell the pilot beforehand that this has to be a cut is a real good way to insure a clutched pass.

This s2F had only been airborne 45 minutes. He could have hung in the Dog pattern for hours. What was the big hurry, anyway?

## Busted Warrior

An A3D-2 *Skywarrior* was returning to its home base after successful completion of an exercise at sea, cruising on an IFR flight plan, but actually VFR on top.

The No. 2 auxiliary drive unit, which is responsible for power to the rudder and elevator control boost pumps, had failed. Since repeated attempts to recycle the unit were unsuccessful, the No. 2 ADU and No. 2 AC generator were secured, and the rudder and elevator boost were disconnected.

Controls on the A3D are pretty stiff without the boost available, but the pilot had plenty of time in the A3D and felt capable of handling the air-

craft using the elevator trim tab to control the nose position.

Arriving over his destination, he cancelled a TACAN penetration and his IFR flight plan and made a VFR letdown to the field. He called the tower, requested a straight-in to the duty runway, and was cleared to continue, the tower would advise.

An R4D was ahead of the A3D on final, cleared for a touch-and-go; and after it touched down, another A3D was cleared to take the runway for takeoff.

The A3D on final was now only a mile and a half out as the plane on the runway commenced its take-off roll.

The pilot now decided to take a wave-off because of the possible effect of jet blast with his limited elevator control. *At this time* he told the tower of his control difficulties and received a clear airfield for his second approach!

The landing touch-down was solid, and the pilot retracted flaps to keep the A3D's weight hard on the landing

2000 feet to a screeching halt on its belly, its crew abandoning the aircraft after it stopped.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Jumpin' Jehosaphat! This here story is a pretty good example of the message Ol' Gramps keeps tryin' to get over to you guys. It takes a lot of cogs all fitting into their proper slots to make an accident, 'specially this kind.

When you lose boost, you got an emergency, brother, whether you think so or not, and you better tell people about it! The tower would have given you a clear shot at the runway on the first approach if you'd let 'em know your troubles. They've got problems too, you know, with a big fuel hog sittin' there on the end just waitin' to blast off, hollerin' for clearance.

The landing gear down-lock solenoid didn't work, or he wouldn't have been able to raise the gear in the first place. Tests made *after* the accident proved it defective.

There are two dangerous periods



gear. The roll-out was proceeding normally in spite of a 13-knot crosswind 78° to the runway. The pilot glanced at the pedestal, saw what he thought was the flap handle still down, and retracted the gear handle! The A3D's gear retracted, and it slid about

in a pilot's life: ONE, when he's a young cub just learnin' to be a tiger, and TWO, when he's a battle-scarred tiger with PLENTY of time in model under his belt and maybe gettin' a few too many "automatic" reactions and becoming a little TOO RELAXED!