



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## SCUBA Anyone?

An F3H-2 pilot had just made a normal day mirror approach to an arrestment aboard a CVA. The hook had picked up No. 1 wire, and after positive arrestment, the pilot had retarded the power and raised the hook. As the *Demon* started to roll back, he advanced throttle to the military power position. Just as the engine started to accelerate the FLY Three Director gave him a "come ahead," indicating the wire had dropped free of the hook.

As the F3H started to move forward angling slightly to the left, the pilot applied right brake in order to turn to starboard in the direction of the foul line and the starboard catapult. The right brake pedal bottomed out —NO BRAKE! He pumped the pedal rapidly several times, attempting to build up pressure, retarded the power to idle and then cut the engine as the *Demon* continued to roll slowly toward the port catwalk!

No one was able to get to him with chocks in time, and the F3H went over the side just forward of the mirror at about a 70° angle to the catwalk. The aircraft entered the water nose down and slightly past the vertical position, continuing over on its back.

The pilot opened the canopy just before the *Demon* hit the water and held his position, securely strapped in, during the first five or six seconds of rushing white water and severe turbulence. He was on 100% oxygen and having no difficulty with breathing underwater. He released the two shoulder rocket fittings of his integrated harness and by much twisting and pulling, for he was hanging inverted in the cockpit, managed to release first one and then the other of the lower rocket fittings.

Disconnecting his oxygen hose, he pushed himself downward and was about two-thirds out of the cockpit when he found himself still secured by the leg restraint cord of the Martin-Baker seat! He was unsuccessful in



his efforts to return to the cockpit to actuate the ditching handle or leg restraint lever, so he pulled out his survival knife from its sheath on the chest strap of his integrated harness. He then held the leg restraint cord taut with his left hand and after 8 to 10 sawing motions with the knife managed to cut the strong cord.

He was about ready to explode, for

he'd held his breath for what seemed an eternity and now hastily pulled the CO<sub>2</sub> bottles of his Mk-3C Mae West. Fortunately, the F3H was still floating, and he shot to the surface immediately, completely breathless, to discover that blessed helo already moving into position over the wreck! Two minutes later he was safely back on the flight deck. His injuries? A small cut on the left thumb from checking for the sharp edge of his knife before cutting himself free.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Great horned toadies! Some would say he's lucky but this man made his own luck! With over 2400 jet hours and 297 jet CV landings he's a real pro. Now he holds the record for breath-holdin'.

Ol' Gramps has no bones to pick with the use of power to provide braking action during roll back and then to move forward against 38-40 knots of wind over the deck. However, we've lost three over the side this year and overhauled two A3D's after brake failures, so maybe a slight slow-down for a brake check before the "come ahead" is in order as an SOP.

## Distracted

An experienced F3H *Demon* pilot gave his flight of six a thorough briefing aboard a CVA one evening. He covered both the details of the night CAP hop for which they were scheduled and the flight to an airfield ashore at which their hop would terminate. He emphasized the peculiarities of the airfield traffic pattern, positive avoidance of any flight over naval housing areas within the traffic pattern and cautioned everyone to "look sharp and be safe." He mentioned the reports of violations incurred by other squadrons on flights to the beach in this area.

The CAP hop was completed, and the flight binged to the beach at 2130. They orbited once over the field and came around for the break in sections. The leader was doing 280 knots, a little fast, but broke on the numbers over runway 4. It was either a break



now or carry it all the way to the end and take it around wide to clear the housing area.

As he broke, he concentrated on passing between two lighted areas he had noted on the ground. Checking his airspeed indicator he saw 220 knots, so he selected slats and flaps and continued the approach. At the 180 he was wide but clear of lighted areas. After a quick eyeball check of slats, flaps, and the gear indicators, he reported "down and locked" and concentrated on a smooth approach and touchdown.

He was right on proper power and attitude on final, but as he passed over the end of the runway, he was showing about  $\frac{1}{4}$  unit fast on the angle of attack indicator. He adjusted the aircraft attitude and made what felt like a very smooth landing on a slightly rough runway—wheels UP! Shutting the engine down immediately, he hit the gear handle in anger, and it went to the down position. The wheels popped out slightly and the F3H slid to a stop. Damage incurred was minor, for the partially extended wheels saved the belly from the usual scrape.

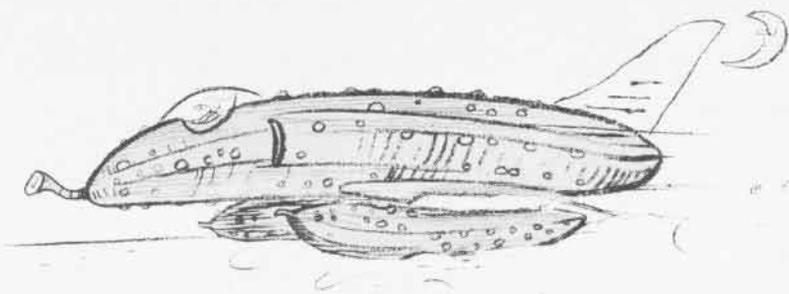
#### Grampaw Pettibone says:

Phooey! There's no d-n excuse on earth for forgettin' the wheels, and this man was the first to admit it, but there's also no reason for handin' a pilot so many distractions and rules to follow at a NAVAL AIR STATION that such an accident is a dead set-up!

I've poured over this airfield's OPS manual and can find no reference at all to avoiding the housing areas in the traffic pattern. The long and short breaks are clearly indicated however, so the restriction is evidently in effect. A 360° overhead break dropping off 1000 feet to a landing is NOT recommended procedure for our PRESENT DAY jets. It can be done, but gets hairy more times than not. Jet noise is disturbing, but there can be NO COMPROMISE with aviation safety to save ruffled nerves on the ground! Not inside the government fenced area, that's for sure!

### Night Incident

An A4D pilot entered the DOG pattern around a big CVA after returning from a bingo to the beach for refueling. This was his second attempt at night carqual. He's had a little trouble the first period with a total of three bolters and no arrestments in



Cool as a Cucumber!

seven passes, but the LSO had advised him his problem was holding high and fast on all passes, not dangerous.

The pilot felt pretty good about the night carquals, so far, a little keyed up, but who isn't? The moon was up, nice and bright, and there was a good horizon. A man couldn't ask for a more favorable night.

He was given a Charlie and entered the landing pattern. The first pass he overshot the groove and waved off wide on the starboard side. No approach light was showing, so the LSO requested a gear check from the pilot and received a "down and locked" report at the 180° position. This pass was normal although a little fast, but as the A4D passed the LSO platform only an instant before touchdown, the LSO saw his gear was UP!

Wave-off lights were flashed, but they were too late as the A4D hit hard on its drop tanks, and slid off the angle deck in a nose low attitude, flame belching from the tailpipe as the pilot pushed the throttle to the firewall!

Skimming the surface of the calm sea, the A4D slowly gained altitude and orbited the ship until another A4D joined up as escort. They were then ordered to an airfield ashore and given their steer.

As the two planes approached the field after an uneventful trip inbound, the lead pilot attempted to lower the landing gear. Nose and left main gear extended and locked, but the right main wheel extended only to about a 45° angle. He tried to retract the gear again, but although the nose and left wheel retracted and locked UP, the right wheel remained partially extended.

Negative "G's" didn't help, so he warned his wingman to stay clear and then rolled inverted and applied negative "G's" again! The wheel fell into the wheel well and the door closed!

Rolling back to level flight, he now notified the tower that he would land wheels up into the Moresst gear and requested the runway be foamed. This sharp air station tower told him that they had been informed of his divert, and the job was already nearly completed.

After orbiting ten minutes to allow completion of the foaming job and to let his wingman land, our intrepid aviator now made a full flaps-down, gear-up, straight-in approach to the foamed strip. He extended the speed brakes when he felt he had the runway made, flared and touched down lightly at approximately 110-115 knots. He shut the engine down immediately, and the A4D slid only 600 feet to a gentle stop, riding it out on the battered but still intact drop tanks. No injuries. The damage to the A4D after TWO wheels up landings? Minor! an INCIDENT report was the only paper work required!



#### Grampaw Pettibone says:

Bust my britches! Only the sturdy A4D's noted ability to survive a wheels-up boomer on the tanks saved this pilot from bustin' his you-know-what! I can't say I endorse his method of retracting a stuck wheel, but he sure can fly that bird (except for landing, that is).

If it's possible to have a time when the check-off list is more important than another time, it's during carqual. A pilot gets pretty wrapped up in line-up, meatball, attitude and altitude and it's all too easy to overlook routine cockpit checks unless the check list is used.

Unless there's a low fuel state involved a "no approach light wave-off" should be mandatory. Until BUWEPs licks the burnt-out light bulb problem, those visual gear checks just gotta be SOP for the LSO's. "Pilot, recheck your gear" just doesn't do it.