



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Hair Raiser

An accident that doesn't happen is usually the business of my friend Any-mouse, but Ol' Gramps just couldn't pass up this one about a quick thinkin' VR crew.

An R5D on a scheduled airlift took off at 0925 EST from Miami International Airport with 44 passengers and crew aboard, or, as they say in the trans-Atlantic business, 44 SOB. It was a beautiful day, weather perfect all the way, and they were flying a VFR flight plan.

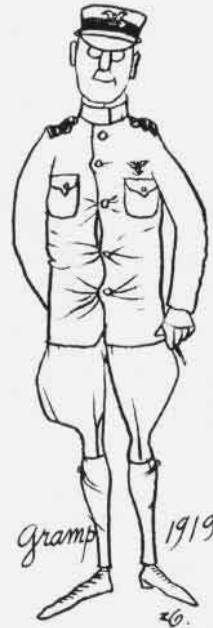
At 1053 EST, they heard the Navy Sanford tower broadcast a blind flight advisory concerning a reported BOMB that had been placed aboard a military transport at Miami and due to detonate at 1100 EST!

The R5D had passed Daytona some time back, cruising at 9500 feet. A quick look around the area disclosed only an old WW II abandoned airfield below. While the copilot radioed NAS JAX for confirmation and got it, the pilot commenced an emergency descent. Passengers were ordered to strap in (most of 'em thought they were goners by now anyway) and were told that this was an emergency landing, and to get out FAST when told to do so.

Meanwhile the clock ticked inexorably on, subtracting minutes and seconds in a deadly count-down to the anticipated blast. The pilots pushed the nose over, diving for the aban-

doned field at the maximum rate of descent. In the race with time, wheels and flaps were lowered in a short final approach to what looked like a 5000-foot landing strip, but, as they crossed the threshold, the clock stood at 1100 EST. Roll-out and hard braking brought them to a stop at 1101 EST. All hands abandoned the big R5D post-haste as the engines were secured. Who knows when a bomb will let go?

Almost two hours later a helo ar-



rived with ordnance experts and a complete inspection was made of the entire aircraft and all baggage. No bomb! Nothing! Whew!

Immensely relieved, all hands boarded their now trusty aircraft and completed the rest of the journey uneventfully.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

What a clutch this musta been! Seems like they were the **ONLY** military transport out of Miami at the time! Kinda narrows it down. Never did find out who planted that rumor, but these lads were real **COOL** in handling the emergency. It pays to maintain a listening watch on that radio, VFR or not.

Sweat Job

After completion of a night intercept hop, two F3H's returned to their home field for some night mirror-landing practice. Each had about 3000 pounds of fuel remaining on entry into the pattern. After three passes apiece, they were instructed to "dog it" to clear the pattern for an AD-7, coming in for an emergency landing with an electrical fire.

The wingman raised his landing gear but left flaps and slats down to remain in slow flight as they orbited. The stricken AD landed safely. The crash equipment, rotating beacons flashing, surrounded him on the runway as the pilot braked it to a stop.

At this point, the F3H leader declared a low fuel warning light and requested an immediate landing. The second F3H also declared a low fuel state with only 1100 pounds remaining, so the tower cleared both for landing on another runway since the duty runway was blocked.

Lights on the runway assigned were not turned on immediately and the F3H leader called for runway lights as he turned downwind. The tower replied by clearing him to land. The pilot said he would if he could find the runway—"Lights if you please." Lights came on as the leader hit the



Dick

ILLUSTRATED BY *Calom*

90° position and the wingman the 180. The F3H leader landed without incident, and the wingman was now cleared to land.

The wingman called gear down and locked and then concentrated on his approach. He was paying particular attention to landing right on the numbers at the proper airspeed since it was a short runway and there was only three knots of wind. Further the angle-of-attack indicator and stick shaker had not been working properly on the previous touch-and-go's.

He touched down GEAR UP! The F3H porpoised violently three times and ground to a stop just off the side of the runway.

As the pilot blew the canopy open, he found the crash trucks deployed around him and a rescue man on the windshield ready to help him out.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jupiter! Ain't this typical? Seems like the only time an emergency occurs to close the runway is when everybody in the area is approaching low fuel state! That "one last pass and then I'll go in" thought can sure be a killer. When the situation is real tight and the red lights are glowin' is the time you'd better use a positive check-off list the mostest. With 1100 pounds left, the sweat shouldn't get too deep in the cockpit.

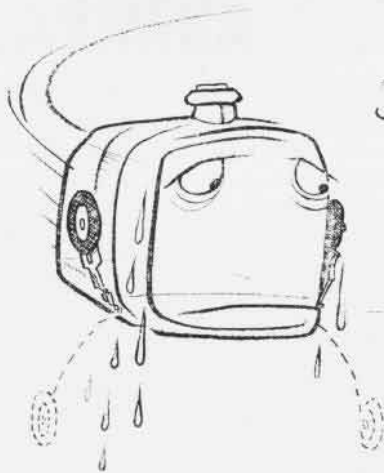
Incidentally, this crash crew now has Gramps vote as the "most improved" outfit on wheels anyplace.

Sharp AD Driver

An AD5W was returning to a big CVS steaming somewhere in the Atlantic. The crew was relaxed after completion of a night radar mission. It was approximately 0400 and had been an inky black night.

They were only a short distance from the CVS when the otherwise routine flight suddenly changed to a nightmare. The engine began to surge uncontrollably between idle and full power!

With two crewmen aboard whose lives depended on his decision, the pilot considered the possibilities; a night ditching in the cold Atlantic, or an arrested night landing on the angled deck of the CVS, cutting the mag switches or fuel off on final approach with a deadstick touchdown. Either one seemed hairy, but he chose to attempt the arrested landing.



Tower! I'm real low on fuel; I've got my gear DOWN.... Give me lights!

The pilot contacted the ship, informed them of his difficulty and rapidly dwindling fuel state and was told he would have a ready deck after one S2F, also having difficulty, was recovered. The S2F got aboard on his third pass, but hit hard, collapsed a main landing gear and laid there like a dead bird, fouling the deck! The AD5W continued to hold in the Dog pattern, surging engine, low fuel state and all.

The CVS crew did a fast job of clearing the deck, and the AD pilot was finally told he had a ready deck.

On the first pass, the AD-5W came around too fast. Although the pilot cut the fuel as he approached the ramp, he was obviously too fast to even touch down, so he turned the fuel back on again and the wind-milling engine caught with a full power roar for a waveoff! A second approach resulted in an early go-around due to excessive speed.

The engine now began to reduce power of its own accord. Our young pilot made a third approach to the angled deck. This one was right on the money, although a trifle fast. He cut the fuel off just short of the ramp, touched down smoothly on the dark deck, caught a wire and came to a smooth, normally arrested stop. The pilot and his two smiling aircrewmembers emerged unscathed from their ordeal.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Pop my buttons! This lad has got what it takes! Cast iron guts, brains, and skill are a combination that's mighty hard to beat. Betcha this pilot has a waiting list of men who want to join his crew. I'm adding his name to Gramps' "Real Pro's Roster."

Close Shave

An A3D returning from a night training hop crossed the ramp of a big CVA with the meatball right on the money. The hook picked up number two wire after the touchdown and the arrestment seemed normal. Suddenly the wire BROKE, and the big plane lurched forward with full power on—but SLOW! As the A3D cleared the flight deck, the pilot cleaned up his landing gear and concentrated on holding his attitude and airspeed. All three men aboard held their breath as they watched the altimeter unwind.

The A3D shuddered as it spanked the water. The pilot gently eased the yoke toward him as the fuselage lightly slid through the dark water. After a few seconds, the A3D broke free of the water and climbed swiftly.

Vectored by the carrier, they flew to a nearby island airfield and made a safe landing. Inspection of the A3D revealed that the underside of the fuselage aft of the bomb bay door and the port engine nacelle had been dragged through the water. The LSO logged the narrow squeak as an arrested landing, a bolter, and a water touch-and-go.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Fetch me another aspirin tablet! How close can you get to wet feet? This pilot is a cool one, but if he has many more like this, I'll have to check for the competition before I unlimber one of my tall tales at any "Happy Hour" where HATWing One is represented.

Just goes to prove you ain't got an accident till she smashes to a stop, so keep flyin' it.

You may luck out. This one did.