



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Swallowed Up

The F-4B *Phantom II*, number two aircraft in the pattern on the 1700 recovery aboard the large CVA, landed without incident and was de-armed and taxied forward onto the bow parallel to the starboard (#1) catapult track. As the left wing cleared the right wing of an F-4 spotted in the center of the bow between catapults one and two, the plane director, a third class aviation boatswain's mate, gave the *Phantom* pilot a left turn signal. Because of the high winds and the greasy catapult track, the nose wheel of the aircraft wouldn't cross the track and began to slide. The director motioned for a plane handler to push the nose of the plane across the inner lip of the cat track and then gave a come-ahead signal to the pilot when AN Spoiler was in position at the starboard nose of the aircraft. The pilot, watching the director on the port side, momentarily added power to about 80 percent several times.

AN Jonah, another plane handler, seeing there was difficulty in spotting the *Phantom* and observing the di-



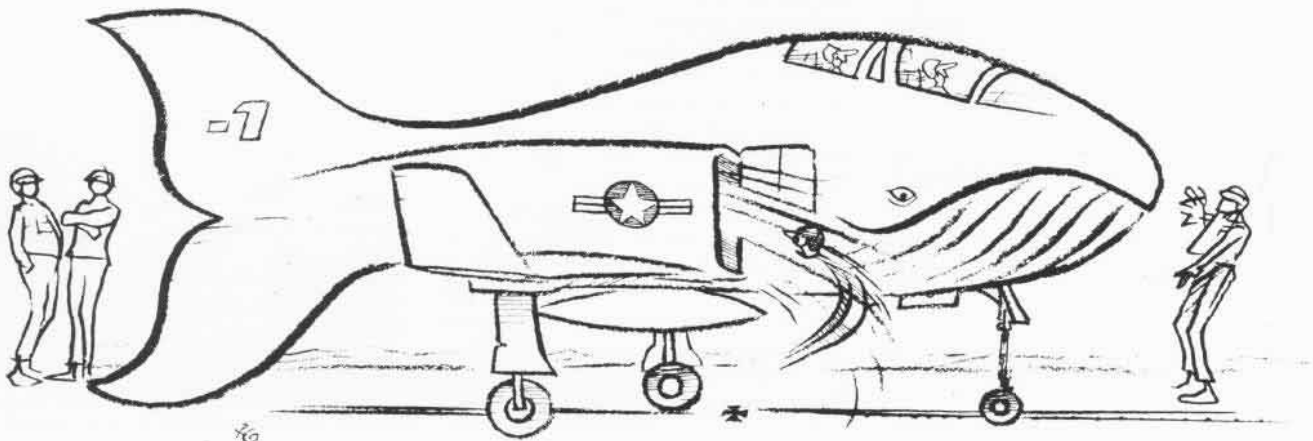
rector's push signal, proceeded from the center of the flight deck, forward of the left wing, and crossed under the F-4. He then stood up directly in front of the starboard intake. As he raised his hands to push the aircraft, the pilot added power to cross the catapult track. Before AN Jonah could even place his hands against the aircraft he was sucked headfirst into the starboard intake.

The addition of power moved the

nose wheel across the catapult track, and the F-4 taxied into its final spot, chocked and tied down. As the pilot routinely conducted his normal shut-down procedures, several people noticed the starboard engine was emitting sparks.

Several minutes later, after the engines were secured, the squadron power-plant troubleshooter dove the duct to see if the engine had received foreign object damage. Halfway down the duct, he saw something but couldn't tell what it was. He took off his goggles, turned on his flashlight and saw AN Jonah lodged against the engine. Shocked, the trouble-shooter turned around and scrambled out of the intake. He immediately grabbed the first person he saw, the RIO, who was just climbing down from the cockpit, and advised him of what he had seen.

Flight deck control was immediately notified and a medical alert sounded. The squadron line division officer entered the duct and observed AN Jonah still up against the engine but decided not to move him for fear of increasing his injuries. A hospital corpsman soon arrived and other personnel



assisted him in removing the injured airman from the intake and taking him to sickbay. Aside from shock and severe bruises, AN Jonah's major injury was a deep laceration on his thigh — from the intake pitot tube.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

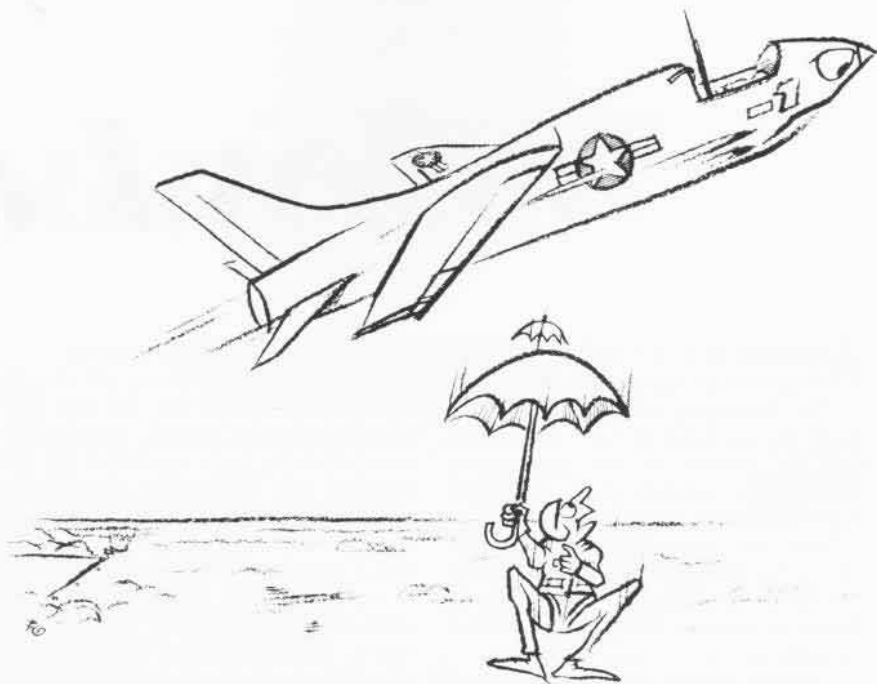
Jumpin' jiminientlies! I just cain't hardly believe it! Y'know there were five different persons who saw that poor man get sucked into the intake, but no action was taken. One man spoke to another about it — but he didn't believe it, didn't seem to understand. Others just went on about their business. Poor Jonah in the belly of the whale.

The engine of that *Phantom* was running for almost five minutes after the incident, and it was several minutes after that before Jonah was discovered and removed. What kind of a flight deck operation was being run out there? Of course it is noisy and confused on the bow during a recovery. People everywhere! That's why we put some of our best people up there. What has happened to our concern for others? This story is too similar to those about the people in the city who watch someone being mugged, robbed, etc. and do nothing about it. Have our Navy and life aboard the big carrier become so impersonal as all this? In today's Navy, with its increasing hazards and dangers, as well as its advantages, we must each and every one become "our brother's keeper."

To Go or Not To Go

At 1032 and 5 seconds, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Lieutenant Colonel cycled the throttle outboard on his F-8K *Crusader*, thus lighting the afterburner to commence takeoff roll for a flight to a mid-continent naval air station.

At liftoff, he noted that the fire warning light came on. (The fire warning system had malfunctioned on the previous flight but had reportedly been repaired by maintenance.) Suspecting a further malfunction and not having enough runway remaining to abort, the colonel continued his takeoff. He raised the landing gear and started to climb, whereupon there was a loud explosion in the aft section of the aircraft. He also noted that the PC-1 hydraulic system pressure was dropping



to zero. He then started the two-position wing down at 220 knots airspeed, and shortly thereafter there was another double explosion in the rear of the aircraft.

This time he saw the engine oil pressure gauge going to zero, a decreasing engine rpm and some smoke in the cockpit. As he cycled the engine out of afterburner, he broadcast to departure control on the radio, reporting that he was flaming out and leaving the aircraft. The colonel then pulled the face curtain with both hands and partners Martin and Baker deposited him unceremoniously on the ground just outside the field boundary at 1032 and 50 seconds. His estimated airspeed and altitude at ejection were 300 knots at 300 feet.

Following the ejection, the now pilotless *Crusader* continued in a shallow right climbing turn. Analysis of statements of ground observers and the departure radar controller confirmed that the craft continued in flight for almost two minutes, completing at least one 360° turn and climbing to almost 5,000 feet over the field where it was seen by the pilot of an airborne C-117D. He observed the F-8 to be in

a slightly nose-high attitude and a 30° bank to the right. The aircraft was seen to roll to about 80°, right wing down, and disappear from sight as it entered the top of the overcast at 3,000 feet. Fortunately, the *Crusader* crashed on vacant land near the air station.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Egads lads, my knees still feel a little weak!! Somebody could'a got hurt. Makes one think, don't it? Who can say whether the colonel did the right thing at the right time or not. There've been several other accidents of this type in recent years, some not so fortunate. When is the right time to go? Out of control? No power? Loss of control response? Altitude? Airspeed? Attitude?

Considerable research is in progress right now to give the pilot a go, no-go light in the cockpit. Run by a computer, it would analyze and integrate many of these parameters and give the pilot an instantaneous decision.

In the case of this *Crusader*, after a long delay in salvage of the wreckage, the disassembly inspection report found nothing wrong with the engine. It was producing power and there was no evidence of an inflight fire????