



# grampaw pettibone

## Double Trouble

A VFP pilot in an RF-8A was launched from a carrier off the East Coast for what was to be a routine photo recon hop. After approximately one hour of flight time, the pilot noted his utility hydraulic system warning light had come on. The ship was informed of the hydraulic system failure and the pilot was instructed to divert to a naval air station.

The pilot had things all planned for an uneventful arrested landing. In all probability this would have been the case but, after blowing the gear down, he found he could not unlock the wing-incidence lock. After all possible means to get the wing up were exhausted, the pilot discussed the situation with a qualified LSO. The decision was reached to make a wing-down approach into the mid-field arresting gear. While the F-8 orbited the field to burn down, a SAR pilot in a CH-19E was launched to cover the emergency.

The pilot flew a good LSO-monitored approach, touching down approximately 500 feet from the mid-field arresting gear. Touchdown speed was not too excessive for the wing-down configuration of the aircraft but was beyond the design specification of the arresting gear. When engagement with the arresting cable was made, the cable parted and the aircraft-arresting hook failed. The aircraft vibrated as if a tire had blown and the pilot immediately added power in an effort to become airborne. After several doubtful moments, he got the F-8 back into the air.

After realizing the aircraft had been damaged during the attempted arrestment, another F-8 pilot operating in the local area was asked to join on the crippled *Crusader* and inspect the extent of damage. Visual inspection



revealed that the arresting gear cable had whiplashed the aircraft landing gear, causing extensive damage. In addition, the tail hook had been torn away.

With the aircraft in this condition, it was determined that another landing attempt would not be made. The pilot was instructed to proceed to a predetermined area for a controlled ejection. The helicopter pilot positioned his aircraft so he could observe the ejection and pick up the pilot as soon as he landed.

At an altitude of 7,000 feet over an unpopulated area with the aircraft headed toward the sea, the pilot completed his ejection checklist, shut down the engine and pulled the curtain. All ejection equipment operated normally and the SAR helicopter was on the scene almost as soon as the pilot's feet touched the ground. The uninjured *Crusader* pilot boarded the helicopter for what he thought

would be an uneventful nine-mile ride to the air station.

The helicopter took off with the rescued pilot and climbed to an altitude of 250 feet for the flight back. Approximately 20 minutes later, the NAS operations duty officer received a telephone call from the SAR pilot that he had crash-landed in a wooded area approximately three miles from the station due to engine failure. He also stated that he, his crewmen and the F-8 pilot were all in good condition. All four were returned to the air station via land transportation.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies and sufferin' catfish! To be in two accidents in a matter of minutes when you had absolutely nothin' to do with either of them is carryin' things too far.

This helo pilot probably had a pretty red face but he handled his emergency the best way possible when he was confronted with carburetor problems.

It's not too difficult to see that material failure was involved in these accidents, and you can bet your boots that the Safety Center boys are on top of them. But I'd sure like to hear the F-8 driver tell the story at Happy Hour. "There I was ... !" (July 1964)

## Things That Go Bang in the Night

The pilot of the Bell H-1 helicopter was delivering the brand new *Cobra* from the factory to its East Coast home. About 15 miles from the destination, as night began to fall, he and his crewman heard a loud bang. The pilot looked about the cockpit but could detect no indication of malfunction. He figured that he might have lost an access panel in flight.

He continued until the master



caution panel illuminated, indicating a transmission chip detection. He decided to land in an open field located 12-15 miles short of his final destination. The pilot stayed in the aircraft, keeping the rotors turning, while the crewman made a visual inspection of the exterior. No panels were opened. Finding nothing amiss the pilot decided to continue on his way — with the transmission chip light illuminated.

Upon arrival at destination, maintenance personnel checked the aircraft and found that four of the five chip detectors contained large amounts of ferrous metal. The internal oil filter looked as if someone had struck a mother lode. The transmission, containing inordinate amounts of ferrous metal throughout, was removed and replaced.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great sufferin' Shazbot! This was just plain dumb! Fortunately, the only damage that occurred was disintegration of the transmission. Luckily the gent who made this turkey-like move, which could have caused him to be "gobbled" up by his own machine, had only 15 more miles to go. He had a few hundred hours in type and just flat ignored *two unmistakable* warnings for the sake of those last 15 miles. Old Gramps wonders if he (or you) would have made the same decision had you been farther away from your destination. What is so gol darn majic about 15 miles?

Maybe this feller's previous experience led him to ignore loud bangs and chip lights. Have erroneous chip lights been common in the past in this bird? The accepted peacetime procedure is to land, inspect the chip plug, service as necessary, then press on. Things may be done differently in combat, gang, but this ain't combat. And, at the rate we're losin' and abusin' aircraft today, we won't have much left to combat with!

A walk across a green field is a lot more fun than standing in at the end of the green table!

### Never Turn Back?

Shortly after takeoff from an East Coast AFB en route to Home Plate, an AV-8A experienced an AC/DC failure. The pilot promptly secured all electrical equipment except for the No. 1 and No. 2 batteries. He contacted the

AFB on guard frequency and requested clearance direct to Home Plate, 500 miles away. This request was approved.

During the ensuing climb to altitude, the pilot noted a fuel transfer caution light with a simultaneous fuel gauge drop to 300 pounds. These indications reflect loss of fuel-system bleed air pressure. The pilot interpreted these two warnings as faulty indications.

Flight duration at this point was approximately 13 minutes. The pilot elected to continue VFR to Home Plate. Thirty to 45 minutes later the caution warning panel lights began to dim and two of four landing gear indicators went from a safe to an unsafe indication. These developments are indicative of near exhaustion of the No. 1 and No. 2 batteries.

After one hour and 13 minutes total flight time, the aircraft's engine flamed out. The flame-out was caused by fuel feed tank unbalance and subsequent cavitation. Numerous relight attempts were unsuccessful. The pilot ejected successfully and was rescued without further incident.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat. This throttle pusher was really boresighted on getting home. With control shifted to the seat of his pants and experiencing an emergency, this aerial jockey continued his flight toward Home Plate and overflew at least 11 suitable landing fields before flaming out!

When you assume that your experience level in the air makes you immune to accidents, you become a candidate for the Deep Six or the wrong end of the long green table. Nuff sed!

