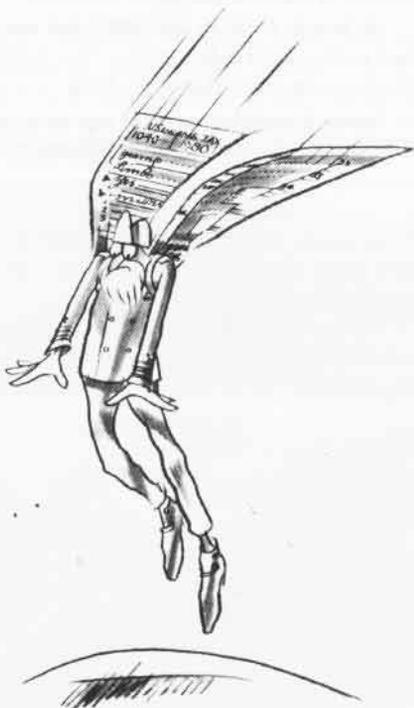




GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

A Knight on the Beach

While providing airborne SAR alert services on October 31, 1979, the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River SAR crew conducted a doppler hover practice rescue in Chesapeake Bay 15 miles south of the air station. With the copilot Marine Captain Dan Price at the controls, the helicopter was trimmed out for a 50-foot hover when the No. 2 engine experienced a sudden and complete loss of power due to failure of the engine-driven fuel pump. The heavy SAR-mission-configured HH-46A *Sea Knight* was above single-engine weight and quickly settled into the water. Seconds before the aircraft impacted the water, the pilot, Lieutenant Commander Bob Sloan, took control of the aircraft and transitioned for a water landing. Capt.



with the rescue hoist cable to prevent the rising tide from floating the helicopter away.

The beached helicopter was retrieved with the help of a Fort Eustis Army CH-47C *Chinook* and returned safely to NAS Patuxent River some 22 hours after the incident.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy hats off to this host of helicopter hot shots! Some of you may recall this incident from an article, "The Smooth One," in the September 1980 issue of *Approach* magazine. The old Sage of Safety was very much impressed with this crew and felt their story deserved to be retold. It is often said that we in the Monday morning quarterbacking business are frequently too quick to criticize and too slow to praise. Gramps heartily seconds the well done from *Approach* and applauds the professional skill and airmanship, seamanship and ingenious gamesmanship displayed by this crew. Thanks to their effort, this bird was back in the air after only 100 man-hours spent in fresh water washdown, flushing the fishes out of the bilge and changing the No. 2 engine.

It's a real pleasure to do business with professionals!

"Know When to Go"

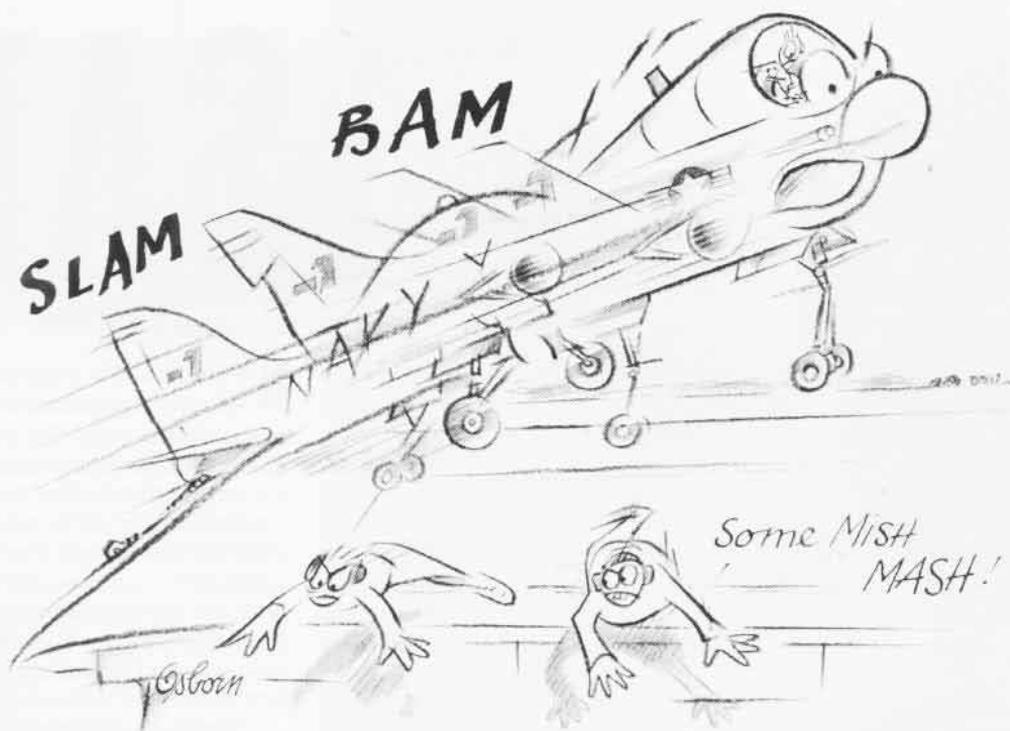
The A-7E *Corsair* pilot's night carrier approach was terminated at two miles from the ship due to lack of aircraft approach lights. The pilot flew along the port side of the ship for a positive landing gear check (SOP), was

Price started the auxiliary power plant and switched to the emergency UHF antenna. Crew chief AT2 Thomas Carpenter and swimmer ADAN Mark Gallagher quickly ensured watertight integrity and readied emergency equipment.

Due to the aircraft's weight and the proximity of the helicopter to the beach line, about three miles away, LCdr. Sloan made the decision to water-taxi to the beach. En route, there were several engine restart attempts, without success, and a mayday report was made. As the helicopter approached the beach, LCdr. Sloan activated the emergency throttle to get maximum power from the No. 1 engine and taxied the helicopter as far as possible up the beach. Normal shutdown followed, and the crew safely exited the aircraft. The crew then secured the helicopter to a tree

Believe me, real
PROS!





sent to the overhead tanking pattern and then radar vectored to his next approach. At two and one-half miles, the LSO, still seeing no approach lights, requested the pilot to switch to the "day" lights position. Approach lights were illuminated and the approach continued. At one mile from the carrier, the aircraft was observed to be "high" (above the glideslope). The LSO instructed the pilot to "start working it down nice and easy." The aircraft continued to parallel the glideslope, still holding high. At 20 seconds (approximately .75 mile) from touchdown, the LSO gave a second "You're high" call. With this, the pilot increased his rate of descent. "Catch it in the middle with power," called the LSO as it appeared the aircraft might now pass through and go below the glideslope. The pilot responded with power and the aircraft went back above the glideslope. At 10 seconds from touchdown (approximately .25 mile), a third "You're high" call was given. At six seconds, the LSO called, "Keep it coming down." Just inside the wave-off point, prior to touchdown, the pilot lowered the aircraft's nose attitude and reduced power. Observing this, the LSO commanded,

"A little power . . . Power, power, power, wave it off, wave it off, waveofffff!" The pilot, responding with power and nose-up attitude, was unable to arrest the excessive sink rate, and the aircraft collided with the ramp! The main landing gear slammed down four feet forward of the ramp line with the tail hook impacting seven and one-half feet short of the landing area. The hook bounced and struck the ramp area once more as the aircraft continued forward in an extremely nose-high attitude. The hook skipped the first three arresting cables but engaged the #4 arresting wire. After 178 feet of rollout, the hook point separated from the shaft, leaving the aircraft to trundle up the deck. The aircraft left the angle in a very cocked-up climbing attitude. Two seconds later, the pilot ejected. He landed back on the flight deck, striking the raised wing of an A-7, was dragged aft by his chute, and was rescued immediately by the flight deck crew.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehoshaphat! A ramp strike will ruin your whole day and, as in this case, could play havoc

with the better part of the evening hours also.

This pilot obviously had a strong desire to get aboard — and he did! However, not in a fashion conducive to longevity.

This incident brings to mind an early 1960 safety poster with a photo of a ramp-strike F-8 Crusader sliding off the angle, nose low, the pilot in the ejection seat above the aircraft. The poster was entitled, "Know when to go, then go!"

Although old Gramps is not really turned on with the start of this landing, I certainly can't fault this young lad's decision to "go" following his impact with the ramp — quickly followed by aircraft deceleration and subsequent hook failure, even though the aircraft remained airborne for almost 14 minutes following ejection. Gramps knows for a fact that more than one unfortunate ramp striker credits that very poster with saving his skin.

Wish someone would draft a poster on staying off the ramp. Old Singed Whiskers is running out of advice concerning the hazards of landing short, particularly on steel decks with square ends.