



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 transatlantic 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. It was due to detonate at 1100 EST!

The R5D had passed Daytona some time back, cruising at 9,500 feet. A quick look around the area disclosed only a 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.

*Beware the Ides
of March! and
Shape up!!!*



Meanwhile the clock ticked inexorably on, subtracting minutes and seconds in a deadly countdown to the anticipated blast. The pilots pushed

the nose over, diving for the abandoned 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 5,000-foot landing strip but, as they crossed the threshold, the clock stood at 1100 EST. Rollout and hard braking brought them to a stop at 1101 EST. All hands exited the big R5D posthaste as the engines were secured. Who knows when a bomb will let go?

Almost two hours later a helo arrived 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:

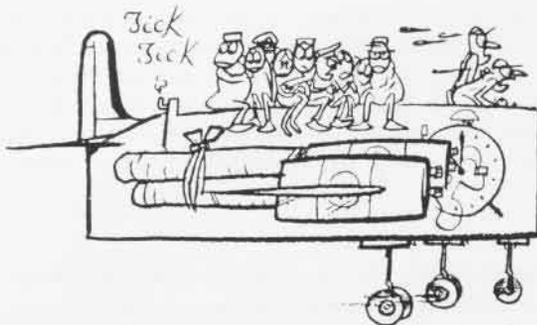
What a clutch this musta been! Seems like they were the only military transport out of Miami at the time! Kinda narrows it down. Never did find out who planted that rumor, but these lads were real cool in handling the emergency. It pays to maintain a listening watch on that radio, VFR or not.

(Reprint from NANews, February 1961.)

Hypoxic Hare

A crusading Marine F-8V pilot filed a flight plan for a cross-country to a Midwest air base. The requested en route altitude was surprisingly lower than normal and, after some discussion concerning adequate fuel reserve, the flight operations duty officer authorized the flight plan.

Preflight and taxi appeared normal. While holding for takeoff, the pilot lazily fingered the fuzzy fur of his lucky rabbit foot. The en route leg of the hop was routine until approximately 175 miles from the destination. There, the flight service air



traffic controller received the following transmission, "Center, this is Marine_____. Request immediate descent and direct routing to destination. I'm losing cabin pressure, my rabbit is hypoxic and he's running all around the cockpit - at least I think he's hypoxic. "Center, how do you read?" The center air controller copied and believed that the pilot was hypoxic and hallucinating. The request for descent was immediately granted and Center notified the destination air base that the inbound *Crusader* was being flown by a pilot who was suffering from severe hypoxia and was hallucinating. Contact was maintained between Center and the rapidly descending *Crusader* throughout the approach and landing.

Upon touchdown, the pilot thanked Center for the expeditious handling and single frequency approach. The pilot also stated that the rabbit had finally calmed down. Center passed all this information to the tower who in turn alerted medical personnel. During

rollout, the pilot noted several crash vehicles moving rapidly toward the runway. In the descent, he had misplaced his approach plate and was unable to locate tower frequency. Thinking that another aircraft was inbound with an emergency, the pilot braked hard and turned off the runway at the first available taxiway. He was much surprised to find himself surrounded by crash and medical vehicles, and came to a stop on the taxiway. Several personnel, including two medical officers, emerged from one of the vehicles and with hand signals attempted to direct the pilot to shut down the engine. Having some difficulty in understanding the signals, the pilot opened the canopy and leaned over the cockpit rail. As the pilot motioned for the personnel to come closer to the aircraft, a small white rabbit jumped from the cockpit of the *Crusader*, landed upright at the feet of the medical personnel, and then disappeared at a dead run across the taxiway as the medical squad

watched with great bewilderment.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

"Holy hypoxic hare-i-see!" - to quote the mystified medical men. I've known some pilots who I thought had bees in their bonnets, but a hypoxic hare hopping around in your hatch could be more than a hare-raising experience.

This lad was en route to deliver a bunny to his honey to replace one that had died. He should have brought a ring instead, or maybe a box of candy. Chocolate-covered almonds at altitude may be "nutso," but they don't go goofy, or eat your approach plates. Old Gramps doesn't know much about animal husbandry or rabbit habits, but before any of you other young bucks decide to take a hare for hop you'd do well to recall that rabbits, on occasion, have been known to attack humans - with total disregard for rank or status. Nuff said.

