



Gentlemen, meet an old-timer, P. S. ("Post Script") Pettibone, long since retired, but now back in parachute harness. He started flying back in the days when airplanes were built out of cigar boxes and baling wire; when an airplane was considered a success if the pilot could coax it 50 feet in the air, and a successful landing was anything you could walk away from.

The chances are, your squadron commander won't even remember P. S. Pettibone, but those steeped in the ancient lore of naval aviation will recall the many aeronautical exploits with which his name was intimately associated. His log book is studded with "firsts," dating back to such things as: "first to take off in a seaplane carrying 250 pounds of useful load" and "first to make a 4-hour endurance flight." In the last war he used to dogfight in a flying boat and use a Colt .45 to help out his combination gunner and bomber in the bow.

"Post Script" Pettibone was almost equally famous for his hair-trigger temper, affectionately referred to by his cronies as his low boiling point. These cronies never tired of getting a "rise" out of him by transforming his nickname into "After Thought" and other, less flattering, terms. He is still very able and eager to take care of himself, but because of his high blood pressure and his rheumatic back and out of respect for his venerable age and long, grey beard, we now defer to his desire to be called "Grampaw." Accordingly, Grampaw Pettibone it is--respectfully.

Grampaw is still a rabid aviation enthusiast, particularly where naval aviation is concerned. He has had more close calls and experiences than Eddie Rickenbacker and Dick Tracy combined. The last of Grampaw's aviation experiences came about through his love of fishing and was responsible for his return to duty. Grampaw claims fishing is the best thinking exercise in the world, so he used to spend much of his time at the river which runs through his farm, "fishing" up new ways to outwit his old Hun opponents. About ten days ago, while so engaged and just about the time he was "bagging" another Heinie, a student pilot crash-landed a few hundred yards away. Fortunately, the student wasn't injured, but the airplane caught fire and burned. The reminiscent smell of this burning airplane was too much for Grampaw. He stopped only long enough to locate his lucky helmet and returned with the student.



Now Grampaw couldn't begin to pass a physical exam, but he talked himself into a waiver; long, grey beard and all. He demanded a flight physical, but after listening to his asthmatic wheeze and visualizing his beard all tangled up in the cockpit controls, the medical board wisely turned him down. Grampaw claimed this board was biased and came to the Bureau to complain. He argued that because of his long flying experience he didn't need to be in perfect physical condition. He offered to take the Chief of the Bureau up for a hop and prove this to him, personally. He argued that because he had flown all types of planes and had had every kind of accident, he knew how to avoid them. The longer he talked, the clearer it became that it would be a shame to isolate him at any one station and not give all aviators the benefit of his vast experience. The result was, that despite his personal desire for "action," he is now occupying the chair of Aircraft Safety Counselor in the Bureau.

From this vantage seat he will reminisce and through the medium of the NEWS LETTER, point out "boners" and offer advice. Your personal flight-safety problems, if addressed to him, care of the NEWS LETTER, will receive his personal attention. He insists this is all a waste of time because aviators are too hard-headed to take advice, anyway. We disagree and entreat you to give him earnest heed, for he knows whereof he speaks. His is the real Voice of Experience. He learned the hard way--by trial and error. As he says, he has made all the errors; so there is no need for you to repeat them. May you profit by his mistakes!

