

# FLIGHT STATISTICS

## Who Wakes The Guy That Wakes The Bugler?

During a formation landing of SNJ-4's, the leader lowered his wheels but failed to lock them and then landed with sufficient throttle so that the landing gear warning horn didn't blow until the wheels were on the runway. The gear gave way and the airplane settled on its belly. SNJ-4 Change No. 1, which permits a visual check to insure that the landing gear is locked down, had been incorporated, but the pilot was unaware of this.

The Trouble Board was of the opinion that more care should be taken in distributing similar change information to all hands; that it was obviously inadequate to incorporate the change and not inform pilots.



### Grampaw Pettibone says

The Board's got something there! I'll vote for that; and it shouldn't be too difficult to set up a system in any squadron whereby pilots are informed of changes as they are installed, particularly those which in any way affect flight operations.

## Now They Gas-Up All of 'Em

An instructor at a primary training station flew an N2S-3 for a period of 1.7 hours and then returned to the field to pick up a student for a check flight. The gas truck had left the line to obtain more fuel so the instructor decided not to wait to refuel his plane. The fuel gauge read two-thirds full and he *assumed* he had enough fuel for the flight. After flying through several maneuvers the airplane was landed at an outlying field where the instructor got out and directed the student to make six S-turns to a circle after which he was to make another landing to pick up the instructor. As the student reached an altitude of 50 feet on his last take-off, the engine quit and he was forced to land in rough sagebrush where the plane nosed over.

In reporting this accident the commanding officer stated: "The standard doctrine in effect at this station has provided for the refueling of training planes after each flight, regardless of the length of time training plane was in the air. This has been done primarily to prevent solo students from running out of fuel. The doctrine has not been mandatory insofar as qualified naval aviators are concerned. However, since this accident the doctrine has been applied to all pilots regardless of their qualifications."

## Aircraft Flight Time

An increasing number of operating squadrons are remiss about sending in their "Quarterly Aircraft Flying Report" (Form N. Aer. 422). While this form is short and easily filled out, it is an important report because of its use in many different types of wartime planning. Please cooperate by submitting this report promptly. If accurate flight time of certain aircraft is not available, don't hold up the report; estimate the missing time and make a note to that effect on the face of the form.

## Duck Soup

While simulating a strafing attack at a speed of approximately 250 knots, the pilot of an F4F-4 reported that he flew through a flock of ducks, several of which struck his airplane. This resulted in severe vibration and some difficulty in aileron control, necessitating an immediate forced

## Close That Tunnel Hatch

In a recent period of approximately one month, three patrol planes capsized due to negligence and carelessness on the part of cognizant personnel who failed to close and secure the tunnel hatch prior to taxiing or attempting take-off.

## With Comments by GRAMPAW PETTIBONE



landing. The airplane sank; the pilot received only mild shock and salt water immersion.



### Grampaw Pettibone says

It's my opinion this pilot got off mighty lucky. It used to be fun to chase ducks and occasionally "bag" a pelican, but that was back in the days when you had to have an extra fast plane to catch a pelican. With modern, high-speed aircraft, striking even a small bird may cause loss of control and result in a serious crash.

I'm not accusing this pilot of deliberately running into this flock of ducks; I'm merely warning all and sundry to stay well clear of such things, if possible. My Dad once told me of seeing a straw driven through a five-inch oak tree during a tornado.

## Unauthorized Flight Proves Fatal

One rainy morning a yeoman came into the ready room of a training squadron and asked for a pilot to fly him to a neighboring field to deliver some official papers. A new instructor (250 hours), apparently thinking the yeoman had received authorization for the flight, volunteered and proceeded to request clearance from the squadron duty officer who was also new in the squadron. The weather was "instrument," and all planes were

grounded, but the inexperienced duty officer inferred from his conversation with the pilot that authorization for this special flight had been given by proper authority within the squadron. An SNJ-4 was warmed up and the pilot took off and disappeared into the low-hanging clouds which were then at about 300 feet. A few minutes later, he became confused in the overcast and crashed while trying to get back into the field.

#### BUREAU SAYS:

This crash was undoubtedly caused by the misunderstanding, lack of judgment and inexperience of the pilot and the squadron duty officer. In view of the existing "instrument" conditions, both of these officers should have demanded definite assurance that the flight was authorized by proper authority. The opinion of the reviewing authority of the board of investigation is concurred in: that proper indoctrination was lacking in this instance.

There seems to be some misunderstanding as to who may release flights and under what conditions flights may or may not be released. BuAer Manual, article 13-108, makes the commanding officer responsible for the release of all flights and further states that he shall not permit aircraft to take off when the state of the weather or other conditions jeopardize the flight. Article 13-110 (a) specifies that no aircraft will be taken into the air at any time without authority from the proper source, as designated by the commanding officer.

SecNav letter of November 23, 1942, subject, "Instrument Flying Qualifications, Instrument Flight Clearances, and Civil Airway Flying," published in Navy Department semimonthly Bulletin of December 1, 1942, is also pertinent to this discussion. This letter lists instrument pilot qualifications and also certain additional qualifications which pilots must fulfill before being authorized

to proceed on instrument flights. It also specifies under what weather conditions instrument flights may be cleared. For example, pilots, even though they hold instrument qualification certificates, may not proceed on instrument flights unless they have at least 750 hours service flying experience, plus certain other requirements, and instrument flights may not be released for an airport at which instrument conditions exist or are forecast. Neither of these two requirements were met in the accident under discussion; therefore, not even the commanding officer would have been authorized to clear this flight.

The letter of the Secretary of the Navy prohibits all flights, except for certain specially authorized transport pilots, in which an aircraft is scheduled to land at any airport governed by instrument conditions. This order is equally applicable to local flights. Careful study of these references is recommended to all concerned.

#### Squadron Logs and War Diaries

There seems to be a misunderstanding in some squadrons as to the requirements for maintaining subject records. Navy regulations do not, at present, require aircraft squadrons to maintain or submit squadron logs. Certain wing and force commanders, however, require the maintenance of rough logs by aircraft squadrons. The bureau does not desire to interfere in any manner with such requirements.

The following references contain the wartime requirements for the preparation and submission of War Diaries and Special Action Reports by aircraft squadrons.

- (a) CNO and COMINCH joint Restr. ltr., Serial 291, of Feb. 22, 1942.
- (b) COMINCH and CNO joint Restr. ltr., Serial 3899, of 19 Oct. 1942.
- (c) COMINCH and CNO joint Restr. ltr., Serial 299, of Jan. 23, 1943.

#### All Tangled Up

The following account of an NP-1 take-off accident was taken from the safety pilot's statement: "During a formation take-off, with the student at the controls, we went into a vicious groundloop. After recovering from this we proceeded to take off again but were unable to clear the west end of the mat, because the student's support tube became tangled around his stick, and as a result, the plane struck a snow-bank."

There was no injury to personnel, but the aircraft was damaged beyond repair.



#### Grampaw Pettibone says

I'm working on a three-seater idea so we can carry a safety pilot to watch the safety pilot.

#### Crash on Attempted Landing Following Mid-Air Collision

While attempting to regain altitude for another run on the target sleeve during fixed gunnery practice, the student pilot of an F2A-3 flew wide of his proper position and pulled up into the instructor who was observing the runs. The instructor was unable to maintain control of his aircraft and bailed out. The student's airplane lost its right flipper and horizontal stabilizer.

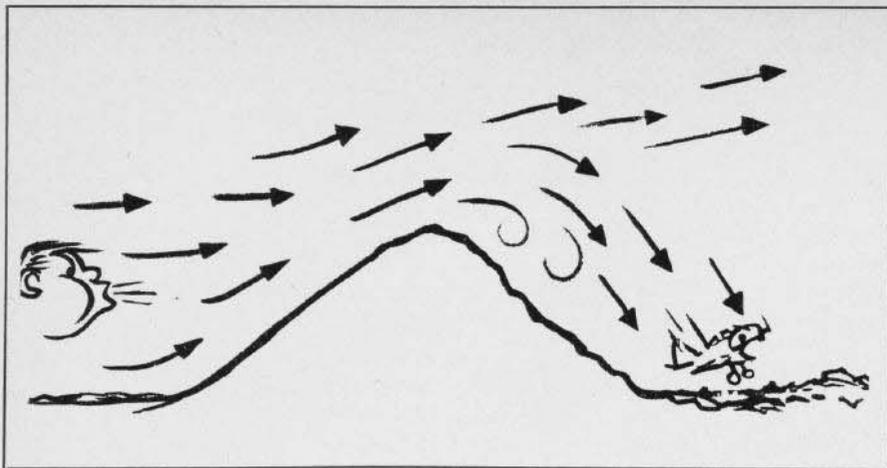
Without reporting the accident or any difficulty with his aircraft, and without notice to anyone of his position (perhaps his radio was out), the student attempted to land at the station field. As he was turning into the wind for his final approach, the airplane was seen to roll sharply to the left and crash to the ground. The investigating board gave as its opinion that this crash was due to loss of control while attempting to make a sharp turn for final approach at slow speed, with only one flipper and horizontal stabilizer on the plane.

#### BUREAU SAYS:

This pilot evidently did not follow instructions as set forth in Technical Order 48-40, which states in part:

"In the event of a collision or if the pilot suspects that his control system is damaged but is still sufficiently effective for cruising flight he will immediately climb to, or maintain, a minimum altitude of 5,000 feet





if sufficient ceiling exists, and will proceed to the vicinity of his ship or station or other suitable point. *The pilot should not be in a hurry to land.*

"Normally every advantage should be taken of communication facilities in order that personnel on the ground may be given full information and that suggestions may be received. Before losing altitude the pilot should test out controls in cruising condition at slow speed, then lower wheels and, if control remains, lower flaps and reduce speed to approximately landing speed, then try out controls with power on and with power off. If a safe altitude cannot be gained for such a check the pilot should exercise extreme caution in taking successive steps to put the airplane in landing condition and in reducing speed.

"When hazardous conditions render a safe landing questionable the passengers should be informed, if possible, and given the option of using parachutes. In the event that a safe landing speed cannot be maintained in any condition, other occupants (if any) and pilot have no recourse save that of abandoning the airplane. In some cases, where serious structural or control damage is apparent, and altitude does not permit of experimentation, abandonment must be executed without hesitation or delay."

After a pilot has tested his damaged plane and made up his mind to land it, he must use extreme care in planning his approach so that he can easily keep within the safety limits of speed and angle of bank that he has previously determined by test at a higher altitude.

### The Little Things

It was just a little thing, that small rip in his life jacket, and he wasn't a sissy. Besides, he wasn't going to be flying over much water, so he took off and promptly forgot about it. Two hours later, while flying over very rough terrain, his engine began to cut out. There was not a field in sight, so he headed for the coast line and landed several hundreds yards off shore. The landing was hard, partially due to the rough sea conditions, and the airplane sank before he was able to get out the life raft. It was then he wished that he had exchanged his life jacket, back there before leaving the field; that would have been the sensible thing to do. And it would probably have saved his life, for he was drowned in attempting to swim ashore in the heavy sea.

### Attention Section Leaders

While leading his section in for a practice primary formation landing a section leader neglected to allow sufficient room for his No. 2 man to clear an obstruction to port. The No. 2 man was concentrating on his leader and failed to see the obstruction in



time to avoid it, resulting in extensive damage to the airplane.

### BUREAU SAYS:

This is further evidence that section leaders must be continually cautioned as to their responsibilities in formation work. In order to build up that necessary unswerving confidence of his wingmen in his ability and judgment, a leader must at all times show consideration to them and prove that he has the welfare of the entire formation in mind during any maneuver.

### Beware of The Leeward Side!

A primary instructor was coaching his student through a practice landing at an outlying field. The approach was low and when the airplane was over the boundary fence it suddenly dropped, hooked the tail wheel in the fence, landed hard and groundlooped to the left through a fence and into a ditch. At the time of the accident a 25-30 knot wind was blowing. The landing was being made on the upslope of a small hill which blanked out the wind and caused the airplane to drop unexpectedly as it crossed the fence into the field.



### Grampaw Pettibone says

There's another natural phenomenon, closely allied to this one, which, I believe, maybe was involved in the above accident; that is the down-draft which is encountered on the lee side of obstructions. When you take up gliding you will finally become such an expert on air currents that you will even learn which side of a cloud to approach to get an up-draft.

Alaska pilots soon learn to avoid the lee side of cliffs and mountains. The down-draft is so vicious in this area under certain wind conditions that you get smacked right down to the ground, despite anything you or your airplane can do.

Lots of things to remember, and lots of flight hazards in aviation, aren't there? But remember, a hazard recognized is half whipped; there then only remains to take the necessary avoiding action. The really sad cases are those which occur because of ignorance.

The best dog for sentry duty, the Marines have wryly observed, is the one that will stay at its post until properly relieved.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Insignia, Medals, Badges, Awards

### Rescuer of Rickenbacker Party Awarded Air Medal

The Air medal has been awarded to Lieutenant William F. Eadie, U. S. N., for his successful rescue of the Rickenbacker party on November 12, 1942, after they had been adrift in the Pacific since October 21.



WORLD WAR I: RICK AND FAMOUS SPAD PLANE

The citation accompanying Lieutenant Eadie's award reads:

"For meritorious achievement while participating in an aerial flight as pilot of a scouting plane in search of the survivors of the Rickenbacker party on November 12, 1942. Discovering their tiny raft after a search



FOR MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT IN AIR FLIGHT

of more than 10 hours, Lieutenant Eadie, knowing that every moment counted after 20 days of hunger and thirst which these men had endured, brought his plane down on the open sea near the raft. Placing the most severely injured man in the cockpit of his small plane, and lashing the others to the wings, he taxied toward his base 40 miles way, until given assistance by a passing ship. His courageous and skillful accomplishment of this dangerous mission was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

### Observers' Insignia

It has been brought to the attention of the Bureau that many officers under duty involving flying as Technical Observers are wearing the Naval Aviation Observers' insignia. That is not in compliance with the Navy Uniform Regulations unless the Officer concerned was designated a Naval Aviation Observer after the completion of a duly prescribed course of instruction. The last officer so designated was designated about 1930. Orders to duty involving flying as a Technical Observer are not a designation as a Naval Aviation Observer.

Officers and men serving in flight crews will be eligible to wear an insignia made up for aircrews. Certain officers on duty involving flying as Technical Observers, such as navigators permanently assigned to air combat crews, will qualify for this insignia by the nature of their duties.

### Air Crew Insignia

As a result of numerous recommendations from the Fleet, an Air Crew Insignia has been approved, giving recognition to the air-fighting ability of flight crews.

The insignia is intended primarily for enlisted ratings, but commissioned and warrant officers, other than those designated as naval aviators or naval

observers, may be eligible to receive and wear it. Excluded also are enlisted ratings with the designation of naval aviation pilots.

The insignia is to be worn on the left breast. When worn with ribbons or medals, the Air Crew Insignia will be uppermost. A miniature, scale one-half of the original, is to be worn when miniature medals are prescribed.

The requirements for award of the Air Crew Insignia are as follows:

(a) Having served, subsequent to December 7, 1941, for a total period of three months as a regularly assigned member of the Air Crew of a combatant aircraft.

(1) "Combatant aircraft" shall be considered as all *operating* aircraft of the Fleet or Frontier forces, and excepts utility aircraft which are neither designed nor fitted out for offensive (or defensive) operations.



(2) The term "regularly assigned member of the Air Crew" shall be interpreted literally and shall be substantiated by the battle-station bill of the unit, under such instructions that may be approved and promulgated by the Bureau of Personnel.

(b) Having suffered injuries or other physical impairment, while engaged in combatant operations since December 7, 1941, as a regularly assigned member of a combatant aircraft, which precludes the possibility of fulfillment of the time requirements, stated in subparagraph (a) above, and is recommended by the Commanding Officer of the unit in which injury or physical impairment was received.

(c) Individual combat stars will be authorized by Unit Commanders in conformance with instructions issued