

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE



Fat, Dumb—And Lucky

The pilot (785 hours) of an SNC-1 made an approach for a landing with wheels retracted. All efforts to warn the pilot, both by radio and visual signals, were unsuccessful, and the wheels-up landing was completed. Examination of the wrecked airplane revealed that both the landing gear and the radio worked normally; also the check-off list was found to be in the "Take-Off" position.

Danger of Electrocution

Civil Aeronautics Board Safety Bulletin No. 149 is quoted herewith for information and guidance:

"Volunteer rescuers narrowly escaped electrocution while removing airmen from a burning aircraft which had crashed a power line at a southern airport recently. The broken wires were reenergized while the rescuers were at work and only the fact that they were out of contact at the moment saved their lives.

"Investigation developed that it is standard practice for power line operators to reenergize lines upon which overloads, shorts or grounds have tripped the automatic circuit breakers. Broken wires are made lethal at stated intervals by robot control or at will by manual control—and this procedure may continue until the location of the trouble is found.

"Immediately any power line wires have been broken, or an aircraft is in contact with such wires, the power line company should be notified of the nature and place of the accident. They will at once cut the current and render the wires harmless. All airmen and all who might assist as crash crews should consider any broken power line wire as 'alive' and dangerous until a repre-

sentative of the power line company gives assurance that it is 'dead'.

"Every airport should keep up a chart of all adjacent power lines and the telephone numbers to be called in case of accident involving broken wires.

"Occupants of an aircraft which is in contact with power wires should get clear as soon as possible. Crash crews should be equipped with dry wood ladders. Such ladders must be well varnished to prevent absorption of moisture in order to prevent any person from coming in contact with such plane and the ground at the same time. Heavy rubber overshoes and gloves should be available for the use of power line crash crews.

"But the best way to avoid electrocuting self or others is to know in advance where such power lines are, and avoid them."

Stunting At Low Altitude

The pilot of an SNJ-4 attempted a snap roll at 800 feet. The maneuver was poorly executed and ended in a split "S". Because of insufficient altitude, the airplane crashed before recovery was accomplished, killing both pilot and passenger.

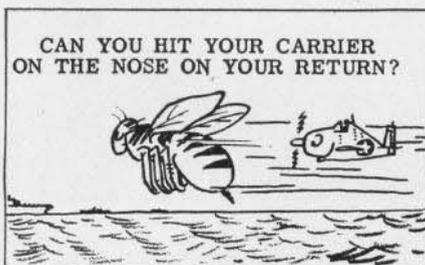


Grampaw Pettibone says

Only the enemy appreciates this kind of an accident.

To Clarify

Under the title "Crash During Altitude Takeoff" in the May 1st issue of NEWS LETTER, the statement was made that the decreased air density at altitude and in hot weather necessitated a faster take-off and landing speed. While this statement is true, it is open to misinterpretation. Although the actual ground speed is



higher under these conditions, the airspeed meter will register *the same* as for a normal landing or take-off, because this instrument is actuated by the same density of air as that which is giving the plane lift. Therefore, airspeed meter readings for take-off and landing will be the same as for normal conditions, but remember, you will require a longer run to build up to take-off speed and also a longer runway on coming in to land.

The Courage of Ignorance

While practicing air work, a student pilot of an N2S-3 drifted out of his assigned area and got lost. He managed to effect a safe landing in a small pasture and proceeded to a telephone. Apparently ashamed to call his station field and report his predicament, he called "Information" and asked her advice concerning the location and destination of certain railroad tracks. After getting this information, he went back to his airplane and attempted to take off. The field was bordered by trees, wires, and buildings at the up-wind end and was too small for an experienced pilot to attempt take-off, but the student was courageous in his ignorance. His take-off was far from successful and the airplane received major damage, as it crashed into the trees and wires.

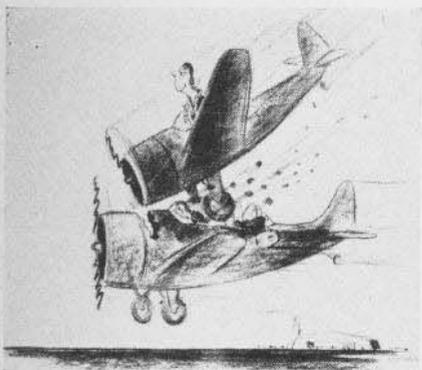
As the Trouble Board pointed out, this accident would not have happened had the student followed instructions contained in the Training Department Regulations which provide: "In case of a forced landing in any field by a student, he is not to fly the ship out. He will call the Officer of the Day at the main base to receive instructions."

Piggy-Back Ride

NAS, CORPUS CHRISTI.—Dilbert has pulled some good ones in his day, but even he at his best couldn't beat this one—a piggy-back landing. It happened when a flight of SNJ-4's was coming in and landing traffic was heavy.

One SNJ-4 landed directly on top of another which was taxiing in; the upper plane's prop cut through the

fuselage and windshield of the lower plane; one of the wheels lodged in its cockpit. Thus engaged, the two planes continued for about 75 yards before the upper plane fell forward in



an inverted position and the lower plane came to a stop nose-down. No injuries were reported, but the cadet in the plane underneath still has his head only because he had "a funny feeling" and ducked just as the prop was cutting through his cockpit.

Details of the unusual crash are related in statements from the instructors and cadets involved. Ensign John Doe, who piloted the lower plane reported:

"The accident happened at the end of the seventh period, about 1730 on April 19, 1943. I had made a normal approach to the runway and had landed. When I was about two-thirds of the way up the runway, I suddenly looked over my left shoulder and saw the other airplane right above me. It happened so fast I didn't have time to do anything but duck.

"After all the noise had stopped I looked up and the other plane was riding along on top of mine. As my plane rolled to a stop, the weight of the other plane threw me on my nose and threw him clear of me."

His student, Aviation Cadet Affirm, wrote:

"We made our approach to the field; we landed and were moving along the runway. (I had a funny feeling—I didn't know why, but things just didn't seem to be going right.) I then looked up to my left. As I turned I heard a noise and crash. I fell to the floor, getting as low as possible. In a second I felt a hard jolt and glass started to fall around me. The next thing I knew, we were standing on our nose."

Ensign Joe Gish, pilot of the upper plane, made the following report:

"I entered the traffic pattern at 500 feet, right hand traffic. I made a let-down to the runway and when ready to land heard the tower ordering an aircraft to take a wave-off. I entered well behind one plane and well ahead of another plane that was making a wide approach. I made a normal let-down and received no signal from the man at the flag truck. I was preparing to land when I felt the plane touch something. I hit the throttle and attempted to pull the nose up but was too late. I remained on the other plane in a nose-down position well forward and rolled until the plane under me began to veer to the left. Then my plane fell over on its back leaving the other plane in a nose-down position well against my plane. My student, Cadet Baker showed excellent presence of mind in an emergency."

Cadet Baker's statement concurs with Ensign Gish's. He adds, "As I crawled out from beneath the plane, the remaining occupants called out that they were not injured. Then the crash truck, ambulance, and officials arrived and took charge."

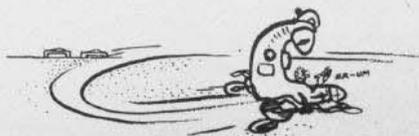
 **Grampaw Pettibone says**

Probably too much trouble for Pilot Joe Gish to look out and see for himself if he had a clear landing area.

Lucky This Time

A serious accident was narrowly avoided when the pilot of an SO3C-2 landplane experienced engine failure while on a familiarization flight. Luckily, he was over an outlying field and managed to make a successful forced landing. The engine failure occurred shortly after take-off when the pilot switched the fuel selector valve to the fuselage tank which he thought was full, but which was nearly empty. The tank had purposely been left nearly empty in preparation for its removal from the airplane, but the pilot had not been informed of this fact.

BUREAU COMMENT This is a good example to bring to the attention of squadron maintenance personnel.



They, too, have a responsibility in helping avoid aircraft accidents. In this case the pilot should have been notified of the condition of the fuselage tank.

Of course, nothing ever relieves the pilot of his responsibility for knowing the amount of gasoline in each tank and for properly shifting his gas selector valve.

Rough Water Landing Technique

In a rough sea, with waves 6 to 8 feet in height, an instructor (1,224.3 hours) attempted a "hot" power-on landing instead of a full-stall landing. Immediately after contacting the water, a wave bashed in the bow and the aircraft began to sink. Twelve of the fifteen persons aboard escaped and were picked up by surface craft. One of the survivors made the following statement: "When we got in the airplane at the base, the pilot made us all wear life jackets. If it hadn't been for that, more of us probably wouldn't be here."

 **Grampaw Pettibone says**

This shows that flight hours do not, necessarily, indicate flight experience. No experienced seaplane pilot would attempt a "hot" landing in rough water. In rough water you've got to stall them in to get the slowest possible landing speed and to keep the nose from plowing into the waves or swells. Anybody can "burn" it on, but it takes technique to make a perfect full-stall landing in a patrol plane. That's why I claim that, in order to keep your hand in, you should full-stall most of your landings, even those made on smooth water.

Note the statement regarding life jackets. There is never any excuse for not wearing these from ramp back to ramp again, on all seaplane flights.

Instructor Trouble

Contrary to the OTU Flight Syllabus, an instructor seated his student in the left seat and permitted him to attempt the initial take-off on the student's first flight in a PV-1. The student was unable to correct a swerve to port and before take-off speed could be gained, the airplane bounced into the air. The aircraft then entered an uncontrollable left turn, dragged a wing and crashed.

The Trouble Board said: "The Syllabus, in part, states that on the first