



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Saved by the Belt

A NavCad returning from a one-hour fam flight reached the point approximately 20 degrees from the landing line when the Runway Duty Officer noticed the F9F-2 beginning to settle. He advised the pilot to add power. Two more such transmissions made in rapid succession went unheeded. The Panther then entered a roll to the left until the wings were vertical as the aircraft struck the ground at about 125 knots. The airplane came to rest 260 feet from the point of initial contact.

Shoulder harness and safety belt locked tight saved the pilot's life. When the crash crew reached the scene, the pilot was still strapped in his seat. His helmet was hanging by the hose of his oxygen mask.

The helmet liner strap was not secured by the pilot, because "it is uncomfortable when strapped, feels like it is choking me since I started using an oxygen mask with it."

In the crash, the helmet withstood a severe frontal blow which crushed it in several places. The helmet was then knocked off or thrown off by a whipping action of the head, following which the pilot received a severe scalp laceration and a concussion. Had the liner strap been secured, the helmet



would probably have remained on and prevented the subsequent head injuries.

Mild lacerations of the left elbow were caused by disintegrating portions of the left side of the cockpit. Abrasions of both shins resulted when the rudder pedals were being torn out by impact. When the airplane came to rest, the pilot was still securely strapped in the seat but only small pieces of scrap metal remained forward of him.

The NavCad remembered hearing several aircraft call for landing in-

structions, but had no recollection of the approach on which he crashed and recalled nothing more prior to awakening in the hospital. For this reason, it was considered that carbon monoxide poisoning or hyperventilation may have existed during the latter stages of the flight. However, this could not be established. The amnesia following the accident may have been caused by the concussion.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

This should convince any doubting Thomases that personal safety equipment is used in airplanes for a reason. Tight shoulder harness and seat belt saved this lad's life. But it's a miracle he didn't get himself killed after his helmet flew off.

A proper fit in mask and helmet shouldn't be too uncomfortable. It's my guess that this lad either had a poor fit or else hadn't become accustomed to the feel of a mask. But it's a cinch now he's joined the chinstrap cinchers.

Split Seconds

After returning from a skip-bombing mission in a jet fighter aircraft, the pilot was shaken when his plane captain pointed out several dents in the leading edge of the wing, scratches on the bottom of the fuselage and pieces of Yucca cactus imbedded in an air scoop.

The pilot's wingman, who had been flying behind him, had been impressed by the low level of the pass, so low that jet wash had raised considerable dust.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The way I figure it, if this gent had delayed his pull-out as much as 1/50th of a second, he'd have made his mark in this world for sure. You can't pull up from six feet under. Had he calculated his dive angle and closing speed toward the ground, he would have realized that, at the time he began his pull-out, he was angling toward the ground at the tremendous speed of about 500 feet per second.

Gee! the NOISE!!



Son! why don't
you drive a
concrete spreader?



Same Song, Second Verse

A little over a year ago, the pilot of a TV-2 departed on an IFR clearance estimating one and one half hours enroute with approximately three hours of fuel aboard. Three hours after take-off, lost and low on fuel, he broke out below an overcast and found his ADF hadn't been pointing to a radio station after all. He had executed a penetration and let-down through instrument conditions in an area of thunderstorm activity. He landed wheels-up uninjured, in a wheat field. The aircraft received "Charlie" damage.

One year later the same pilot, flying an SNJ, was on a night VFR cross-country from Missouri to Texas. About two hours and 35 minutes after take-off, he believed he was close to zero fuel and saw no welcoming runway or beacon lights.

Seeing a highway down below, he decided he'd better not wait till the fan quit. He dragged the highway with landing lights and set up a landing pattern. Because of a 20 to 25-knot wind, he kept flaps up and landed uneventfully gear-down in the middle of the 22-foot width of paving. Incidentally the highway was bordered by telephone poles and lines just 40 feet on either side of the center line.

The pilot discovered he was 30 miles from his destination. Investigation by maintenance personnel showed 20 gallons of fuel in the reserve tank, and the fuel gage was found to be accurate. It's common knowledge that 20 gallons is all the reserve fuel available in

a J-bird—but the pilot made this highway-type night landing *without even switching to reserve.*



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Lad, I think it's time somebody cut you in on the facts of flyin' and let you know you've got a lot to be thankful for. From here on out, you'd better plan every flight like your life depended on it unless you want those roses you've been smellin' like to suddenly turn out to be lilies.

Barrier Bounder

During day quals, the pilot of an AJ-1 was approaching the carrier for his fifth landing when his aircraft was observed to enter the groove slightly fast. The pilot was given a fast signal by the LSO. The attitude and altitude of the aircraft were good, and, after answering the fast signal, the pilot received a Roger for the rest of the approach. Just prior to the cut, the aircraft's attitude changed, with the nose falling through, causing loss of altitude at the ramp.

The hook struck the round-out of the ramp and broke off. The right main gear touched down two feet forward of the ramp, the left gear making contact 18 feet up the flight deck. The aircraft touched down with nose wheel on the center line, bounced, touched down again near the number seven wire, then bounced over the number one and two barriers. The deck was clear, and the pilot rode the brakes until the aircraft plunged over the bow. He then applied full power.

The plane broke up on contact with the water and the ship cleared the debris by about 30 feet. The pilot exited through the pilot's hatch, surfaced, and waved to personnel on the LSO platform as they passed overhead. Pilot and crewman were rescued from the drink by ship's helicopter within a couple of minutes.

The accident board concluded that the primary cause of the accident was the pilot's error in dropping the nose of the aircraft and descending rapidly at the ramp. They concluded that when the pilot is at minimum air speed and altitude during an approach any error is magnified and may be impossible to correct. For this reason such a pass must be waved off early and the pilot brought in slightly higher and



slightly faster until such tendencies are corrected.

The LSO stated that such accidents can be prevented only by continually impressing upon the pilots the dire danger of letting the nose of the AJ drop at the ramp either on anticipating a cut or experiencing the natural high feeling that a new pilot has in approaching the ramp in this type aircraft.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

There's a time and place for everything! It seems to me that when the AJ bounced over the barriers that was the time and the place for two-blocking the throttles instead of trouncing the brakes. He'd have had a fair chance of staying airborne after leaving the ship. If forced to ditch, he could have executed the maneuver with at least some degree of control and less likelihood of personnel injury.

With an aircraft as heavy as an AJ and as critical in all respects during carrier operations, perfection should be pursued on every approach, particularly during carquals. LSO's always remember the important fact that a pilot looks a lot better on a wave-off than he does in the old spud locker.