



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Memo from Gramps

Congratulations and a hearty well done to CNO Aviation Safety Award winners (see page 2). Know every guy in each winnin' outfit gave 100% toward the squadron's record and it takes just that to be a winner.

Every squadron that gave their all can't win an award as there's just not enough to go around, but you can bet your bottom dollar ol' Gramps is mighty proud of every outfit that gave it the ol' college try. Keep up the good work. Let's make 1965 the safest year in U.S. Naval Aviation.

That ol' accident curve has been goin' down the past few years. That's exactly the direction we want it to go. It'll take a lot of doin' to reduce the number of accidents this year, but I'm bettin' it can be done.

## Planned Trouble

Two S-2B pilots en route to their carrier landed at a Marine Corps air station in southern Japan one evening about 2000. Unable to get a landing time aboard ship, the pilots decided to RON and proceed to the ship the following morning. The flight from the original point of departure was only 1.7 hours (1000# fuel) so the plane commander decided not to top off. He figured there was approximately five hours of fuel remaining in the aircraft and the flight to the ship should be only two hours.

During turn-up the following morning, the aircraft developed a leak in a hydraulic cylinder and was shut down for repairs. Since replacement parts were not available, the plane commander instructed the metalsmith to repack the leaking cylinder and install it on the aircraft. He indicated that he would proceed to the ship with the known discrepancy rather than wait for the shop to fly one to him.

The pilots departed for the ship at 1607 and established radio contact about two hours after takeoff. The pilot informed the ship of his hydraulic leak, stating that he would probably have to pump the gear and



flaps down and might not have brakes after landing. In addition, he reported that he was unable to pick up the ship's LB beacon, his Tacan was not working, he had no radar altimeter and no pilot's attitude gyro. Upon hearing all these discrepancies, the ship directed the pilot to return to the air station and await instructions. Two minutes later the pilot reported to the ship that his Tacan, gyro, and radar altimeter were all working, but he still had the hydraulic leak and requested that he be allowed to land aboard. The ship refused his request and again instructed him to return to the beach.

The squadron's commanding officer aboard ship contacted his pilot at 1847 and was informed that the plane was safe to come aboard and flying it all the way back to the beach might damage the hydraulic system. The squadron commander concurred in the pilot's evaluation of the situation and received permission for the aircraft to land aboard.

At 1859 the pilot was 100 miles away from the ship when he received a landing time of 1945. He immediately added power and headed for the ship in order to make the assigned recovery time. At 1948 the pilot

reported to the ship that he was holding overhead with 1100#. One of the aircraft being recovered ahead of the S-2 was involved in a landing accident and fire at 2017. When the S-2 pilot saw the fouled deck, he immediately requested bingo data. He stated he had only 950 pounds of fuel remaining and had low level lights on both sides. After approximately one minute, he was given bingo information to the nearest field as bearing 070 distance 170 miles. (The discrepancy of the reported 950# of fuel with low level lights should be noted.) The information regarding the low level lights was not passed to the bridge, so everyone thought that the aircraft departed with 950 pounds of fuel.

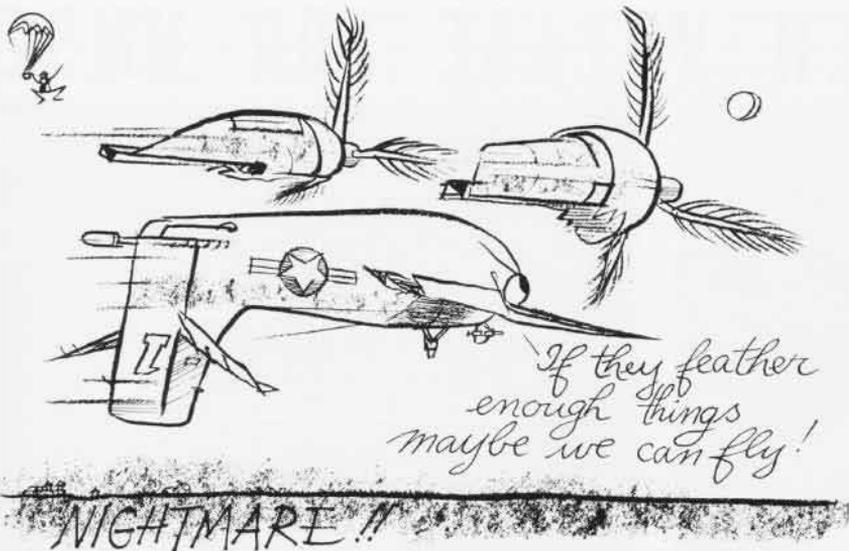
Another S-2 was diverted to escort the low state aircraft to the bingo field whose weather was reported to be 2400 scattered—seven miles. At 2039 the ship contacted the aircraft and directed him to return, but the pilot reported that he could not make it back to the ship which was now 82 miles away. At 2107 the pilot broadcast a Mayday and stated, "One engine is out. We are leaving the aircraft." Shortly thereafter the aircraft crashed approximately 30 miles short of the bingo field. There was no evidence that either pilot attempted to bail out.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

What a waste! A story like this really gets to you. It's downright sickenin' when an experienced carrier pilot decides to fly an aircraft with known discrepancies and, to make bad matters worse, fails to top off with fuel, knowin' full well how landings can be delayed by a foul deck and for other reasons known only to carrier pilots.

The complications that arose after radio contact was established with the ship were a result of more poor planning, misinformation, lack of information, complacency, over-confidence and so forth. You name it and this flight had it. Any one of the above



usually spells serious trouble, but when you put a couple of them together, there isn't much doubt of the outcome.

There ought to be a real soberin' lesson in this one for every airplane driver in the Navy.

## Nightmare

It was late in the afternoon of a fine spring day when two S-2 pilots filed a four-hour IFR flight plan to a Midwest AF base en route to the West Coast. The plane commander was a lieutenant with over 1200 hours in the S-2 and the copilot was a three-striper with 300 hours in model.

The flight progressed routinely for more than three hours except that the head winds were stronger than forecast. This really was no problem to the pilots as there was sufficient fuel aboard to make their destination plus an hour reserve and weather at the AFB was clear and 12.

Shortly after dark and approximately 80 miles east of destination at 6000 feet and 160 knots, the aircraft suddenly began to vibrate and lose airspeed and altitude. With one of the engines backfiring and the increased pressure on the rudder, the pilot was aware that he was losing power on an engine. He immediately turned on the rudder assist and attempted to advance the prop controls, but was unable to do so until he loosened the friction lock. When he released the lock, the starboard throttle advanced to the full power position but was

thereupon immediately retarded.

At this point the lieutenant asked the commander to notify someone of the emergency while he feathered the bad engine. By the feel of the rudders and the apparent source of the popping and flashing, the pilot quickly decided that he was losing the port engine and promptly feathered it.

After the port engine was feathered, vibration increased, the aircraft became even more difficult to control than before. It was impossible to maintain altitude. The pilot quickly broadcast a May Day and informed the center that they were losing both engines and would abandon the aircraft. He then ordered the copilot to bail out and, after some difficulty, the commander left the aircraft at an altitude of 2700 feet MSL.

Owing to the low altitude, increased aircraft vibration and control difficulties, the pilot decided to remain with the aircraft and, in an effort to ease his control problems, feathered the starboard engine. As the aircraft neared the ground, the pilot pulled the yoke all the way back and put his left arm in front of his face. Luckily, a clear moonlight night enabled him to see the ground and make a fairly successful crash landing in an open cornfield. After initial contact with the ground, the aircraft skidded approximately 300 feet, struck a fence, twisted to the right about 70° and stopped.

Uninjured, the pilot secured the mags, turned off the gas and battery switch and left the aircraft, through

the overhead hatch. He walked to the nearest farm house and after a short wait was joined by the copilot who had bailed out.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Oh, my achin' ulcers! If this fiasco wouldn't wilt the lilly, nothin' would.

When you've got only two engines and one of them goes bad, it's just downright foolish to secure the good one. About the only thing that can happen in a situation like this did: altitude had to be traded for airspeed until the aircraft crashed. No doubt, there were a couple of very red faces and a general sick feeling when the Accident Board proved it was actually the starboard engine that had failed.

These gents were no doubt busy as beavers for a few minutes, but they sure didn't spend much of their time determining which engine had failed. There is no indication that either pilot checked: heavy rudder pressure (working foot—working engine), swerve of aircraft toward bad engine, RPM and MAP indication, etc.

In his rush to feather an engine, the pilot again proved beyond a shadow of a doubt the sage advice in the old saying, "When in doubt, don't."

## Burning Leaves

Those leaves burning outside the Pentagon got Gramps thinkin' the other day. It seems to me the squadron commander and the football coach have much in common.

Each worries about the condition of his men. An All-American on crutches is about as useless as an underslept, overplayed, pooped pilot.

Each worries about getting his team to play as a unit. One goofed-up play costs yardage; a fouled-up flight costs a heap of green yardage—\$\$\$\$\$.

Each worries about the mental condition of his men. Many a fired-up team has overcome physical disadvantages to win. There's no doubt in my mind that winnin' squadrons in Naval Aviation have this same spirit.

There is one big difference, however. In peacetime—when the winning is all on paper and not in man-to-man combat—the winner in Naval Aviation is the squadron that is SAFE-EST. It just follows, natural like, that the Safest will be the Readiest when and if that time comes. That's why the Naval Aviation Safety Center has as its slogan, "Readiness Through Safety," I'd be willin' to bet.