GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Painter's Blackout

In a certain VSB squadron, all gasoline selector valve quadrants were painted so that the color black would indicate the main tank, yellow the auxiliary tank and red the "off" position. In one airplane, the painter apparently became confused, and did not hold to the original color scheme. His originality was not appreciated a couple of days later when a pilot flying this airplane shifted tanks in the landing circle and immediately thereafter experienced a total engine failure. The subsequent forced landing in rough terrain resulted in all but complete destruction of the plane.

An investigation into the engine failure showed that, while the selector valve was positioned on a black quadrant (supposedly a main tank), in reality the valve was on "off."

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Of course, you might get someone to check the painter, but he might need another checker to watch him. The *only sure* way to protect pilots from this type of accident is to teach them the touch system of cockpit control through frequent blindfold tests.

Look Before You Land

Failing to note that the landing course had been changed 180 degrees since his take-off, a student pilot made a down-wind landing at night. At the same time, another student was landing correctly—into the wind. This latter student suddenly saw the other plane coming at him. Fortunately for both pilots, he was able, by drastic action, to prevent a head-on collision. The tips of the opposing wings did not clear, however, and extensive damage was done to both aircraft.

Patrol Plane Doctrine

Upon returning to base from a patrol flight, a PB2Y pilot (2127 hours) commenced a landing approach into the bay without contacting the tower or circling the landing area to check the wind. As a result, his *guess* on wind direction was in error and he made a down-wind approach in a healthy 12-knot wind.

A "hot" landing was made. Immediately on contact the nose dug in, causing the aircraft to flip over on its back. The pilot and four of the crew were killed; all others were critically injured.

Investigation disclosed that at the time of landing the C.G. was 0.8% forward of the maximum allowed limit.

▸ *The following recommendations were placed in effect in that squadron, to preclude recurrence of similar accidents:*

1. If contact with the tower cannot be established, pilots should circle the landing area to determine wind direction.
2. So-called "hot" landings should be discontinued. Pilots either should stall the airplane in or make a normal power landing, with speed no higher than necessary to maintain good control.
3. Before commencing a landing approach, check to insure that the plane is within the safe limits of balance.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

"Hot" landing in big boats being a pet hate of mine, I've got to sound off. I know it's a thrill to burn 'em on. It makes you feel you are a smooth pilot—but it should disqualify you as a PPC. There is no excuse for the unnecessary risks involved, not to mention the popped rivets and the wrinkled skin which may result from the extra strain. Then, too, it's a mighty poor habit, as all who have operated in rough water can testify.

One other thing, don't pass up that advice about "balance." That is something we didn't used to have to worry about; it was always safe to fly anything you could get into the air—but not so with the horsepower available today. The remarks of a *Liberator* squadron skipper recently brought this home to me. While raving about how easy it was to take off in the overload condition, he said, ". . . but I didn't dare let anybody go aft the first two hours after take-off." See T.O. 97-44 and get weight-and-balance-control conscious.

Button Up Your Overcoat

Before departing on a routine gunnery flight, the pilot of an F6F noted that two of the Dzus fasteners on his port wing gun cover were loose. He reported this to the plane captain, who attempted to secure them but was unable to do so. The plane captain then told the pilot that he thought the gun cover would hold even though two of the fasteners were loose. Being in a hurry, the pilot considered the problem no further and took off.

A short time later, upon recovering from an overhead run, the gun cover tore loose and seriously damaged the tail section. The airplane immediately was thrown out of control. After falling through the overcast, the pilot managed to recover and subsequently effected a safe landing.

To prevent recurrence of such an accident, the investigating board recommended a closer check and replacement of all defective Dzus fasteners by plane captains and engineering crews. This unit now prohibits any flight unless all such fasteners are secured.

▸ ***Comment*—Since one loose fastener may completely wreck an airplane, frequent check and replacement of all inoperative fasteners should be a 'must'.**

Carriers

LET NANEWS HEAR FROM YOU!

Crewman checks tiedowns of three Avengers lined up across the deck of Independence class carrier operating in a combat area

Damage to Private Property

Settlement of claims for damage to private property growing out of the operation of naval aircraft often are seriously delayed through improper handling by cognizant naval activities.

In numerous cases, property owners have been advised to make claim for such damages direct to the District Commandant, SecNav, JAG, etc. It is the responsibility of the operating unit to insure that damages are investigated immediately and claims properly prepared and submitted. See BuAer Manual, Art. 13-142, and instructions on the back of NavAer Form 422. Copies of this form should be carried in the extended flight packet.

When damage is minor or for other reason property owners do not wish to claim damage, the owner's signature to that effect should be obtained on the form, if possible, and submitted to the Department. Large claims and those from public utilities should be itemized. Even though the amount of the claim exceeds $1,000.00, the maximum amount the Navy now is authorized to pay, the claim should be investigated carefully and submitted.

Such claims often end up as private bills in Congress with the Navy being requested to investigate and report fully whether the claim is just and reasonable. Where extensive damage to orchards, forests, etc., are caused by aircraft accidents, the government agricultural agents in the district or the Forest Service representatives should be requested to aid in estimating the damage. Public works officers are often well qualified to figure the cost of repairing damaged buildings and other installations.

In general, the operating unit concerned is the government's representative in these cases and should insure that its interests are protected. At the same time, claimants are entitled to prompt justice. Careful investigation should accomplish both these objectives. When unreasonable claims are presented, an attempt should be made to have them corrected at the source, if practicable. Units should not, however, refuse to accept claims, even if property owners persist in claiming unreasonable amounts. In such cases, the investigating officers' remarks and commanding officers' forwarding endorsement should specify clearly and fully wherein the property owner's claim is considered unreasonable or unjust.

Enemy Victories

Here are two of many accidents which occur because pilots deliberately attempt unnecessarily dangerous maneuvers:

1. An N2S pilot (390 hours) performed a roll at 100 feet altitude. Something went wrong. He crashed, killing himself and his passenger.

2. An experienced F6F pilot saw a boat-load of girls on a lake. He couldn't resist the impulse to show off. On his second dive he squashed-in during his pull-out. Luckily, he missed the boat by 50 yards.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

A couple of fine contributions to the war effort! Enemy agents would have received medals for accomplishing these same results.

To Jump or Not to Jump

After a mid-air collision at 2,000 feet during dual formation training, an N2T fell into a steep dive, out of control. When it appeared that recovery could not be made, the instructor apparently ordered the student to jump and then started over the side at an altitude under 1,000 feet.

The student didn't hear the order to jump but, upon seeing the instructor leave the plane, pulled himself up in the cockpit. Believing there was insufficient altitude to effect a safe jump, he decided to stake everything on another attempt to recover control of the aircraft.

The plane did respond to the controls and leveled off at about 150 feet. Due to the damaged surfaces, altitude could not be gained, so the student picked out a clearing and made a safe landing.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

The student's quick decision in this case evidently saved his life; the instructor was killed because his chute didn't have time to open. The whole thing was unnecessary, however. The instructor's life would have been saved and the student wouldn't have had to depend on a lucky break, if the decision to jump had been made while there was still altitude.

There are many cases on record where pilots and passengers have failed to jump in time or have crashed with the airplane, without making any apparent effort to jump. Many of these would not have been fatal had the pilots sized up the situation sooner and bailed out immediately. After a midair collision, for instance, there is usually more damage to the planes than is obvious to the pilots. It is up to them to attempt to regain control. Once this fails, however, no time should be wasted in getting over the side.

This is a tricky subject to discuss because it is impossible to lay down exact rules. No one wants to jump and wash out a perfectly good airplane. But in cases like this where there is only time for a hasty decision, it is much better to play safe and jump than to stay with the plane until too late.

GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ

All aviators should know the answers to these questions. In the air, the penalty for not knowing may prove fatal. If you miss an answer on the ground, penalize yourself by looking up the reference.

1. When two aircraft are on crossing courses at approximately the same altitude, which one has the right of way?
2. If necessary to bail out in a spin, in which direction should you leave the cockpit? Why?
3. If you are able to limp back to base with a crippled plane or engine, should you bother the tower with a call informing them of your predicament? Why or why not?
4. In a 70° dive with a speed of 300 knots, about how much altitude would you lose during a normal 5 "G" pull-out?
5. How much more altitude is required to recover from a flaps-up dive than from one with diving flaps split?—all variables constant, *i.e.*, same model plane and loading, same altitude at start of dive and start of pullout, same angle of dive, and same "G" during pull-out.

Answers to Quiz on Page 48

Case of the Careless Mech

Early one morning the plane captain of an F6F climbed into the cockpit to start and test his engine. The engine failed to fire on the first attempt and on the second and third fired only briefly before stopping. He then left the cockpit to help pull through on the propeller.

After the prop had turned about four blades, the engine suddenly caught and turned up to high RPM. The plane captain tried to get back to the cockpit, but was blown off the wing. The plane jumped the chocks and careened down between two rows of parked aircraft, colliding head on with another F6F.

The mechanic at work on the second F6F was fatally injured.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Don't wait for this to happen in your outfit! Take immediate steps to insure that correct starting procedures and precautions are in effect. Then be sure that everybody in the squadron knows about the precautions and that they *are observed*.