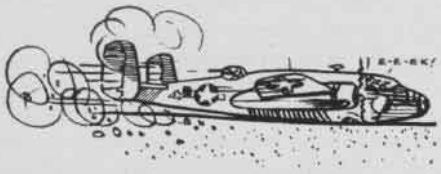
# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Pass the Word

Flying at 29,000 feet on an oxygen hop, an F6F pilot noticed that his engine surged between 3000 and 3500 rpm. Upon descending to lower altitude, his engine returned to normal, only to surge again momentarily at 10,000 feet. He joined the traffic circle at 1000 feet and attempted to circle the field. Approximately three-quarters of the way round, the prop surged again and the pilot had to make a landing in the nearby harbor when the engine failed completely at 500 feet.

Despite two warnings prior to this final engine failure, the pilot failed to notify the tower of his emergency. The investigating board felt that had the pilot done this and made a straight-on approach instead of attempting to circle the field (approximately 15 miles around) the accident would have been averted.

The investigating board was of the opinion that additional instruction and greater emphasis on emergency communication procedure would help prevent many accidents of this type.



## Tail Wheel Trouble

A considerable number of reports are being received of tail-wheel caster lock damage caused by towing or taxiing planes with the tail-wheel locked.

As pointed out in several BuAer publications, lockable caster tail-wheels should be locked only for take-offs and landings on airfields and for take-offs from carriers. They should be *unlocked* for landing aboard carriers and for *all towing operations;* also, for most taxiing, the major exceptions being to save brakes in strong cross-winds or long taxi-ways where clearance is assured by the tower or signalman.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

**It should be easy to clean up such a simple problem. First, be sure everybody understands what happens when the tail-wheel is locked. Then suggest kindly (followed up with the big stick) that everyone put forth the effort necessary to insure it *is* unlocked each time before towing or taxiing. Maintenance and overhaul officers can help by raising a stink in the squadron concerned every time this is not done.**

**In some cases, entire squadrons need indoctrination on this point, as indicated by the fact that tail-wheel caster lock damage, reported as having occurred in this manner, is listed as material failure, when very evidently it is 100 percent personnel failure.**

## Don't Get Boxed

When a PBJ pilot returned to an advance base from a night training hop, he found a rather heavy rain squall surrounding the station. He located the field, however, and made two passes but was unable to get into position to land. His third pass also was unsuccessful. This time, however, he hit the trees at the far side of the field causing a fatal crash.

The investigating board pointed out that it was unnecessary for this pilot to make an immediate landing since he still had 6 hours' gas remaining. They recommended that it be emphasized to all pilots that in cases such as this it is often advisable to orbit and wait for better weather, particularly in tropical areas where storms usually are of short duration.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

**I once had an instructor who helped me over this hump. He used to say, "It's better to spend a little extra time in the traffic circle than a long time in a box".**


## A Poet Is Born

One squadron has turned to poetry to help its pilots remember to lower their hooks before making a carrier landing. When one aviator landed aboard during night carrier qualification with his hook still retracted, he was given the additional duty of composing a few lines of verse which the commanding officer ordered should present "more forcefully to the squadron the full advantage of the check-off list."

The resulting sonnet, unfortunately, was not included with the report of this accident.

## Maintenance Crash

Coming in to land, an F6F-3 pilot could not get his left wheel down. When it became apparent the wheel could not be lowered in the air, the pilot was directed to make a one-wheel landing on the station field. A relatively successful landing was made. The left wing and the propeller had to be replaced however.

Subsequent examination of the left landing gear assembly revealed that jamming of the gear was due to metallic burrs in the yoke bearing. The gear had been removed the week before to facilitate metal work on the stub wing. The bearing was observed to be in good condition at that time.

The investigating board was of the opinion this accident was due entirely to errors of maintenance personnel during reassembly of the gear. Sand or grit was believed to have been carelessly left in the bearing at that time or introduced into the bearing by failure to wipe off the zerk fitting before using the pressure grease gun.

**LOADING UP:** Carrier ordnancemen must study latest training publications so they can load various types of rockets and launchers used by Navy on its aircraft. These men are putting a 5" AR into early-type zero length launcher.

## 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. **Who is responsible for insuring that each occupant in a naval aircraft wears a parachute during flight and is familiar with its operation?**
2. **With the exception of authorized formation flying, what is the minimum distance aircraft must keep from each other in flight?**
3. **Should your cowl flaps be open or closed after stopping your engine?**
4. **Why does the back seat man in dive bombing and stunting, etc., often black out when the pilot doesn't?**
5. **Generator switches should be kept *on* at all times when engines are in operation, except when?**

**Answers on Page 48**

## Bad Mixture

Following engine failure, a JM airplane was forced down in the vicinity of an advanced base. All but one of the crew were killed.

The investigating board was of the opinion that the cause of the engine failure was "water in the gasoline." This opinion was based on the following information: *a.* The main and auxiliary gas tanks had been filled on the intervening day. *b.* Prior to take-off, 100 additional gallons were taken aboard the bomb bay tanks as reserve fuel. *c.* The plane crew operated the gas truck on this latter occasion, but it could not be determined whether they had properly drained the water from the strainer and segregator. *d.* The gas truck was found to contain water. *e.* Engine failure occurred when gasoline was pumped from the bomb bay tank to the main tank.

The following points were covered in the board's comments:

1. Presence of water in gasoline is apt to be more prevalent in forward areas.
2. Only authorized drivers should be allowed to operate gas trucks and segregator units.
3. Water cut-off valves should be checked periodically to insure proper functioning.
4. All crew members and gasoline truck drivers should be drilled continually and relentlessly upon all possible precautions and checks for guaranteeing against presence of water in gasoline.

▶ ***Comment*—Points *2, 3* and *4* are *musts*.**

## Turn-Up Clearance

A Marine Corps air station reports they recently had an illustrated lesson on the absolute necessity for insuring ample clearance astern when turning up engines.

A visiting R5C was being parked approximately 150 feet, tail to tail, with an R4D, which was being secured. Without looking behind him to see that all was clear, the R5C pilot turned up his engines simultaneously to 2000 rpm. As a result, the flippers of the R4D were blown off and the controls were broken.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*
**Strikes me a good sub-title for this item would have been, "The Unwelcome Guest".**

## Misguided Assistance

An ensign pilot and a lieutenant commander co-pilot were forced to land at an Army air base due to rain and generally bad weather. In an uninvited effort to be helpful, the co-pilot pulled the landing gear switch when he thought he was adjusting the flaps. The plane skidded along the runway, causing sufficient damage to send it to thorough overhaul.

The Aircraft Accident Board said:

"It is suggested that persons riding in the co-pilot's seat receive permission of the pilot before operating any of the gear in the aircraft."

## Double Trouble

An F6F pilot made a successful water landing when his engine cut out on a night navigation flight over the Pacific.

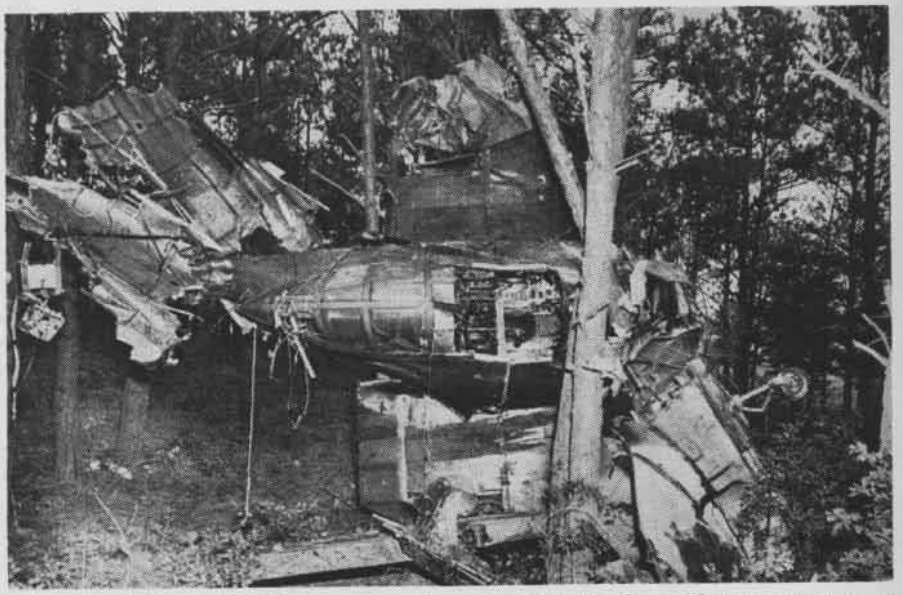
This airplane had been downed after the previous flight because the engine cut out and vibrated. Spark plug leads were changed, plugs were tightened, push rods in number five cylinder were changed and a new cylinder was installed. The engine checked satisfactorily when turned up on the line, but no test flight was made.

The Aircraft Accident Board held that if a test flight had been made within gliding distance of the station field, this engine failure would not have resulted in an aircraft being lost at sea. In addition, the board pointed out that night flights were far from ideal for the first flight after major engine repairs had been made. In such circumstances, this unit now requires that the plane be given a test flight and then complete one day's normal operations successfully before getting more night flying.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*
**Too bad a plane had to be lost to demonstrate the need for such basic safety doctrine. Other units take note. This should be common practice in all cases except combat emergencies.**

**This Is Bad Practice**

Carrying belted ammunition around one's neck makes a pretty picture but is bad gunnery procedure. Ammunition is supposed to be carried in standard cans, not in this manner because bent links and malalignment of cartridges easily can result by such careless handling. This picture of improper procedure appeared in NANEWS April 1.



A PILOT *got himself in this predicament one night when he paid more attention to eating a sandwich than to his navigation, plus being unfamiliar with the local radio range, plus failing to shift gas tanks properly. Let it be said to his credit, however, that he did have his shoulder harness secured—which is the only reason he was able to walk away from this wreck and profit by his mistakes. Any offers for this used plane?*