

GRAMP AW PETTIBONE

The Wingless Wonder

At the bottom of the page you will find a picture of an AD-2, with its wings folded. Take a close look, decide whether or not you think that it will fly in this condition?

You don't think so?

Then you'll be interested in the following accident report:

The pilot was cleared by the tower at NAAS CHARLESTOWN to taxi to runway 22 via taxi finger 1 and to hold. After engine turn-up, the AD-2 was cleared for take-off. The pilot taxied out to the take-off position with his wings folded. At this moment a landing signal officer who was working with another group of planes noticed the plane about to take-off, and shouted to his radio-man to tell the pilot to spread his wings. The tower operator also called the pilot of the AD-2 just as he commenced his take-off run.

When the pilot did not discontinue his take-off run the tower operator repeated the message about four times and then rang the crash phone. Meanwhile the AD-2 left the ground after a take-off run of 2800 feet and began to gain altitude. The pilot states that he became airborne after a roll which seemed normal and produced no cause for alarm.

The plane appeared to make a right turn to clear the runway, gained between 100 and 200 feet and went into a sharp left bank. The pilot applied corrective measures and it returned to normal flight. The pilot at first thought that he had hit some slipstream as he was then near the area which was being used by the pilots in the FCLP pattern.

Suddenly the plane banked again and this time it would not return to level flight. At this moment the pilot discovered that his wings were not spread! The steep angle of bank apparently stalled the AD-2 and it began to settle as the pilot fought to regain control. The impact with the ground was at a speed of about 135 knots with full power on, wheels and flaps up. The plane hit on the left wing stub and slid about 260 feet before stopping. It burst into flames, but the pilot managed to extricate himself from the wreckage, and suffered only slight burns.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well, this is really one for the books. We have a couple of other case histories of pilots who attempted take-offs with their wings folded, but this is the first time I've heard of anyone actually getting into the air. The LSO who had a box seat for this performance says that the AD-2 reached an altitude of about 250 feet. He thinks that the pilot would have been able to come around and make a landing except for the fact that he lacked positive lateral control, and adds that he most certainly owes his life to correct use of the shoulder harness.

If he gets by the Disposition Board that



they're convening, I think this pilot ought to start a one man campaign for the use of CHECK-OFF LISTS.

P.S. While we're on the subject of check-off lists it might be a good idea to review the reference which requires their installation and use. The following is quoted from ACL 97-47, paragraph 117:

"TAKE-OFF AND LANDING CHECK-OFF LISTS—

(A) Check-off lists shall be provided in each aircraft for the guidance of the pilot in properly preparing the aircraft for take-off and landing. It is important that the items of these lists be followed carefully and in their given order so as to insure that all steps are performed.

(B) The recommended procedure for take-off and landing is contained in the pilot's handbook for each type of aircraft and in the Bureau of Aeronautics technical publications."

Aircraft accident statistics show that relatively few accidents occur in multi-engined planes as a result of failure to use check-off lists. However, in single-engined planes we have several accidents every week due to this cause.

DON'T RELY ON MEMORY. USE THE PRINTED LIST.

Do we have an AD pilot smart enough to figure out the wing loading for this take-off—assuming a full gas load and no ammo or bombs? If so, I'd like to hear from you.



Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

Recently I had the experience of being senior member of an accident board that investigated the night crash of an F8F-2. This *Bearcat* had swerved off the runway when the starboard gear collapsed and flipped onto its backside in the soft dirt. The accident was the result of an accumulation of errors and slipshod workmanship which began at the factory, and continued right down the line until the starboard landing gear buckled one night in late August. In this case, it was the result of improper care and feeding of a landing gear trunion pin.

This accident began in a machine shop where the trunion pin was manufactured. Whoever drilled the hole from the outside surface to the zerk fitting only drilled it part way. This made the greasing of the pin impossible since the zerk fitting merely led up a blind hole. The shop inspector did his share in assisting this accident by passing the faulty pin, and it was eventually installed in a new airplane.

Now anyone who has greased a zerk fittings knows that old grease must come out the other end or the fitting is not receiving lubrication, yet this trunion pin remained in the airplane from the time it was installed at the factory until it was removed after the accident without being detected. That means that innumerable mechanics, beginning with the one at the factory and continuing on through at least four Navy units which at one time or another owned the plane during its 16 months of service and 400.4 hours of flight time had never performed a correct grease job on that fitting!

A junior pilot who flew the airplane on its two flights immediately prior to the crash contributed his fair share to the situation by not reporting malfunction in writing on the yellow sheet. AFTER the accident had happened, this pilot remembered that on the two previous flights, the starboard gear would lock down only after the airplane was skidded. He had mentioned this to the squadron maintenance chief, but did not consider it important enough to write on the yellow sheet.

The pilot who flew the plane to its doom came in for his share of blame by the fact that he landed without determining that his gears were both fully extended and locked. He stoutly main-

tains that he checked the cockpit indicator with his red pen-light on the downwind leg. The accident board believes him, but also believes that he did not actually see the indication of down and locked. It is highly probably that over-familiarity with the airplane caused him to "go through the motions" of his check off list and therefore imagined rather than saw the "down and locked" indication. The board's belief was supported by a successful test of the micro-switch and its wiring circuit following the accident.

A great many people who never saw nor heard of this pilot, who fortunately escaped without injury, gave him a jigsaw picture that night. He had but to fit in the last small piece to complete the picture of a mangled F8F-2 on its way to overhaul.

Lieut. _____, USN



Grampaw Pettibone says—

Thanks for this interesting analysis. I looked up this particular accident and I agree with your reasoning 100%. I think the following excerpt from the pilot's statement is also worth reading:

"When the prop struck the soft dirt the plane nosed up and teetered about on its nose for what seemed to be about a full minute. This gave me plenty of time to worry about my noggin and what I was going to do about it when that five (5) tons fell on it. I was not wearing an anti-buffet helmet, but I timed the impact just about right when the plane finally went over on its back; I forced my head toward my lap at this time and I experienced only the effects of the terrific concussion of plane meeting ground.

My only thought then was getting out before the fire started, if there were going to be any. At this time I learned a lesson which should be brought to the cognizance of all F8F pilots. If a pilot of an overturned F8F still has his chute on, unbuckle it and slip out of it *before* releasing the safety-belt and shoulder harness. I did not do this and consequently after I had my head and shoulders out of the cockpit I could not extract myself further except by crawling back into the cockpit to get rid of my chute. Without the help of good strong shoulder straps and harness, believe me, it's difficult to get rid of your chute when you are standing on your head."

Ducks Didn't Duck

The pilot lifted his F9F-3 into the blue from runway 18 at NAS SAN DIEGO. He proceeded on course and after two minutes executed a standard rate turn to port at an altitude of 1600 feet. At this time his airspeed was 290 knots. Suddenly two bogies appeared at 12 o'clock level. A couple of ducks were flying in an unauthorized area.

The accident board reports—"The pilot ducked when he saw the ducks, but the ducks didn't duck. Alas, alack, no quack quack."



Get a Whaleboat

The pilot of this TBM was attempting a carrier landing on a particularly dark night. In the previous 14 months he had made two night landings under ideal conditions and six day landings. *This was his first landing on this cruise.*

After three wave offs he was given a cut with the carrier 11 degrees out of the wind. The TBM drifted right after the cut and landed well on the starboard side of the deck engaging the number three wire. The action of the wire threw the nose of the plane to the right, and there was sufficient forward motion to carry the TBM over the side. The plane came to rest in a semi-inverted condition about eight feet below the flight deck. It was held there by the arresting wire and one wheel which was hooked in the armor plate of a starboard gun sponson.

The pilot and passenger were uninjured but they were in a position which must have been uncomfortable to say the least. Hanging by their safety belts and shoulder harnesses, they could see no way in which to get back to the ship. Gasoline was streaming out of a starboard wing tank creating a fire hazard. One can easily imagine that they must have been wondering just what was holding the plane in this position.

The pilot shouted for a whaleboat in case the plane fell into the water. Meanwhile carrier personnel were busy throwing some lines around the plane to make sure that it didn't fall. However, the whaleboat idea seemed to be the best way to get the pilot and crewmen back to safety, so a boat was lowered and brought out to a position about 50 feet astern of the plane. The pilot and crewman dropped out into the water and were quickly picked up.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Ever hear about the fellow who was taking three kittens over to his girl friend's house in a brand new car? Well, it seems that he ran out of gas some distance from a filling station.

He was afraid the kittens would get some spots on the upholstery, so he decided to take a piece of string and tie them to the bumper while he walked down the road to get some gas. Just as he finished securing them to the front bumper another

motorist pulled alongside and asked what the trouble was. The fellow with the kittens said, "Oh, I just ran out of gas."

"Well," the passerby exclaimed, "You don't expect those kittens to tow you do you?"

This was too good an opening to pass up so the fellow replied, "Why not, I've got a whip haven't I?"

In case you're wondering what the connection is, I wonder who had the whip out in this case.

Certainly a lad who has only made eight landings in the previous 14 months and whose only previous night landings were two made under ideal conditions on a previous cruise shouldn't have been sent out on a dark night until he had additional practice under daylight conditions.

"Why not, we've got a whip, haven't we?"

Quick Thinking Saves TBM

The pilot of a TBM-3S was on the port catapult ready for his *first* night carrier launch. When the signal to launch was given, there was a slight acceleration and the plane then appeared to continue under its own power. The pilot sensing the abnormality of the situation, retarded throttle, applied brakes, and turned slightly to starboard. He managed to nose the TBM up and stop just short of the bow.

The catapult registered a "runaway shot." The bridle carried away and was lost over the bow. The cause of the accident therefore cannot be determined, but it is probable that the bridle slipped partially off the shuttle and parted when the catapult was fired.

The pilot received a commendation from Commander Carrier Division Seventeen for his alertness, quick reaction, and prompt and positive action.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

May I add my congratulations? This lad had a split second in which to make the proper decision, and he was right on the ball. I think his quick reaction is especially commendable in view of the fact that this was his first night carrier launch.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

"Grampaw, dear Grampaw, your face seems so red!

Perhaps you'd be safer at home in your bed?

Cause landing downwind is not very bright

Especially when—you do it at night. But hooray for the brakes on your S.N.J. They kept you out of Boston Bay."

A SQUANTUM READER.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

"Dear Squantum Reader, you're so right. From now on I'll stay home at night, And try to forget that Grampaw P. Forgot to observe the Squantum tee. Move over, Dilbert. Yield your place, For Grampaw wears a redder face."