


GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Big Secret

Two student pilots were on an assigned gunnery flight in basic training with their instructor flying the tow plane. After a high side run one joined up on the other, but decided that he had a little too much interval. In an effort to close in, he passed under and ahead of the other plane and lost sight of it. As he pulled up the rudder of his plane struck the right wing and pitot tube of the other SNJ. Both pilots felt a slight jar, but saw no apparent damage to their planes, and consequently did not inform their instructor. Each made another gunnery run.

After this run the instructor told the flight to return to base because he considered their formation flying too erratic. It was while returning to base that the instructor first learned of the mid-air collision.

One plane had a dent in the right wing and a damaged pitot tube, while the other had a badly damaged rudder which could not be moved to the left.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**
I've always admired people who could keep secrets—but you fellows are carrying things too far. That last gunnery run might well have been fatal for either of you, since one plane was minus an indication of altitude and airspeed, and the other had a jammed rudder.

Mid-air collisions aren't "CONFIDENTIAL," at least as far as your instructor is concerned. Whenever you damage an airplane—either on the ground or in the air be sure to report it promptly. If you don't you have your neck out a mile.

P.S. Just in case you're careless about your own neck—don't forget that you may not be the next person to fly that particular plane.

New Flight Safety Movies

Since the gasoline shortage is going to keep a lot of pilots on the ground most of this month, why not spend a morning or two looking at flight safety movies. There are four new ones out and they can be obtained from the film libraries at the major air stations. The running time on the films in the flight safety series is only five to seven minutes, so plan to show several at a sitting.

The newest ones are:

"Marginal Weather Accidents"-MN-4353-L

"Avoidable Accident Injuries"-MN-4353-M

"About Sensations"-MN-4353-N

"Unfamiliarity in Type"-MN-4353-O



Belly Landing Box Score

July 1 to December 31, 1948	
Forgot to lower wheels.....	20
Made inadequate attempt to lower wheels	29
Raised wheels instead of flaps after landing	16
Total	65

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Just look at those figures! Sixty-five belly landings in six months. The boners which cause these accidents are costing us well over \$1,000,000 a year.

Let's see if we can't cut this loss down by using the check off list faithfully before every landing. Listen for the warning horn before every landing. Listen for the warning horn before you move the wheel lever. When you hear it, actuate the gear, and listen for the horn to stop blowing. After landing wait until you have slowed down to taxi-speed before raising flaps, and visually identify the control that you are about to use.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:


"Here's a 'near accident' for your collection, as reported by one of the pilots in our squadron:

"I was tow pilot for a gunnery hop while operating out of Nan Yuan Field in Peiping, China. Due to a scarcity of material, we were using quarter inch wire rope instead of the usual manila tow line.

"After taking off and climbing to altitude I proceeded on course and the

hop started runs. Midway in the second run, I felt the banner fly off and the tow escort confirmed this. Immediately the standby tow was called for and I proceeded back to base to drop the tow line.

"After getting normal clearances from the tower I came in and pulled the tow release several times and then called the tower for a check. The tower notified me I was clear. I returned to the area and upon locating the flight, joined up in tail position to make runs. After my third run, one of the other pilots on the hop noticed a "glint" and checked to see if I was losing oil. The oil turned out to be the steel cable still firmly anchored to the plane."

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**
It's lucky for the rest of the formation that this fellow joined up in the tail position. That quarter inch cable can saw a plane in two in nothing flat.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

Of all the accidents you have covered, you have never touched upon mine. Since it was somewhat unusual, and since my squadron has had a few laughs out of it, perhaps your readers would enjoy hearing about it.

After receiving a normal cut in a F6F on a CVL, the nose was allowed to drop through and the plane brought back into a 3-point attitude. Just as the plane hit the deck, the stick went "limp," and the tail flew up. I was rolling down the deck with very good visibility, but no chance of catching a wire. A quick glance into the cockpit told me that the plastic handle on top of the stick had slipped off as I came back on the stick to cushion the landing, and the rest of the stick was somewhat forward, being held only by the trigger, bomb and rocket wiring. I grabbed the "stump," brought the tail down and engaged the #8 wire and barrier.

I was quite "put-out" until someone in the ready room came out with. "It could have happened in the groove!"

More power to your accident prevention column.

Lieut. _____ USN



TOMBSTONE
Here lies old "Hotrock"
So Quiet and Serene
Made his last take-off
With the mixture in lean.

Shot Off the Tow

The F4U pilot was making an overhead run on the towed target during a scheduled gunnery flight. Just as he passed the firing position and started his recovery the target parted from the tow line and the pilot was unable to avoid a collision. The tow shredded as it went through the prop; the greenhouse was observed to explode; and the right elevator broke off. The F4U entered an abrupt spin to the left.

Both the flight instructor and the safety pilot called to the pilot to bail out, but there was no answer and no apparent attempt to recover from the spin. At about 1000 feet the spin flattened out and the aircraft hit the water in a nearly horizontal position. It disintegrated on impact leaving a small oil slick and a few bits of debris. The pilot's body was not recovered.

The accident board was of the opinion that there was no pilot error involved and that the accident was unavoidable.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

I can't go along with the last part of the board's opinion. I believe that this accident could have been prevented if existing safety directives had been followed.

Technical Note 9-47 which was published nearly two years ago describes the use of a safety webbing leader which goes between the target and the end of the tow line. It actually replaces about 100 feet of tow line just in front of the target, and makes it much more difficult for a pilot to shoot off the target. This item is available through the Aviation Supply System (Stock # R94-W-90800) or can be manufactured locally in accordance with the drawings in T.N. 9-47.

It was not used in this instance, and the accident was exactly the type that the safety webbing leader was designed to eliminate.

Chasing Ducks

While on a local familiarization hop in an SNJ a pilot proceeded to a lake some 75 miles distant from the base. He observed a flock of ducks on the lake and made a low level run to observe them. While he was concentrating on the ducks his port wing hit a tree at the edge of the lake.

The impact was slight and the pilot thought at first that he had hit one of the birds which had flown up in front of him. When he inspected the damage after landing it was obvious that he had encountered a tree top.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

This chap really went out looking for trouble. We have enough bird accidents without chasing them around at 50 feet. There are a number of cases on record where planes have been seriously damaged by impact with birds. One F4U, for example, required a major overhaul after tak-

ing a buzzard in the wing center section. Another "bird collision" caused a fatal accident not long ago. In a third recent case the pilot of a PBM made a sharp turn at low altitude to avoid a seagull and tore off a wing tip float. The seagull's evasive tactics weren't so good either, for the pilot brought back the bird.

When you feel the urge to chase ducks sing this little ditty instead:

"Some birds won't obey civil regs;
On days when they feel a bit frisky
They flathat and buzz Navy planes
And don't even know that it's risky.

"But be kind to our web-footed friends,
For a duck may be somebody's mother
And besides if one busts up your plane
You can't make him buy you another!"



One Man Airshow

The picture above shows all that is left of an FG-1D after a Marine Captain in the Organized Reserve decided to put on an unauthorized airshow for his friends. After take-off at a civilian airport he turned back towards the field and made a fast low pass parallel to the take-off runway.

He then pulled up in a climb and between 1000 and 1500 feet rolled the Corsair to the inverted position. Witnesses state that the plane seemed to hesitate momentarily and then the right wing dropped and the aircraft crashed into the ground in an almost vertical dive. The pilot was killed just five minutes after he started his one-man airshow.

9.3 "G" Pull-out

During a glide bombing run an F8F was observed by the spotter to be in a 45 degree dive instead of the 30 degree angle specified for this type run. In an attempt to complete his pull-out above 1000 feet, the pilot applied 9.3 G's to the aircraft.

The safety wing tips in the F8F are designed to fail at loads in excess of 9.0 G's and the right wing tip came off during the pull-out. However, F8F Change No. 27, which incorporates a burn-off mechanism to assure that both wing tips come off, had not been properly installed. Therefore the port wing remained intact.

The pilot regained positive control

of the aircraft and climbed to 6000 feet where he tested stall characteristics. He found that the plane tended to roll to the right at speeds below 110 knots with wheels and flaps down. A safe landing was effected by coming in at 120 knots with 15 degrees of flap. The pilot found it necessary to use considerable left stick and rudder during the roll out to keep the plane on a straight course.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

This accident interests me for several reasons. First of all, the pilot was not wearing a G suit when he pulled 9.3 G's, yet he reports that he did not grey-out or black-out. A flight surgeon tells me that this is quite possible. It takes time for the blood to leave your head, and if the G force is of short duration the pilot may not realize that he is exceeding the safe limits for his plane.


This squadron has directed all pilots and plane captains to check the circuit breakers for the wing-tip burn off mechanism prior to each flight. Also the test procedure outlined in F8F Service Change No. 7 will be accomplished during all future maintenance checks.

Nose Heavy

The pilot of an R4D got a sudden lesson in the importance of proper weight and balance during an engine run-up at NAS MINNEAPOLIS a few weeks ago. The plane was facing approximately 75 degrees out of the prevailing wind in order to be in a position to observe landing traffic. The starboard prop had been run through without incident. As the throttle was advanced for the starboard mag check the tail of the R4D came up slowly and both propellers hit the runway before the pilot could retard the throttles.

The starboard prop was torn loose and traveled straight ahead, but the port propeller hit the fuselage and cut through just forward of the pilot, severing the control column. Fortunately the blades missed the pilot's legs and he got by with minor bruises.

A check of the weight and balance after the crash indicated that the passengers had not taken the seats which they were assigned in the computation of the C.G., which was already near the forward limits.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

There's a first time for everything and in all the years that we've been using R4D's to the best of my knowledge this is the first time this has happened. In fact I've talked to a number of R4D pilots who were sure that it "just couldn't" happen, until they saw the pictures and saw what a close shave this fellow had.

Let's figure weight and balance carefully and see that the actual loading is correct. It will take 5000 man hours to repair this R4D. And it will take \$5,000 to buy a couple of new propellers for the plane.