

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Jet Safety Record

From VF-11 comes word that this squadron flew 1024 hours in *Banshees* during August 1950 without an accident. This is the best monthly record reported to date for a jet squadron.

Aircraft accident rates over the last 20 years indicate that accidents occur with greater frequency in squadrons equipped with the newest type planes. For example, in fiscal 1950 the accident rates for jets were approximately twice as high as those for conventional fighters.

As pilots become more familiar with jet operations, and as some of the "bugs" that show up in any new model are eliminated, there should be a marked improvement in the jet accident rates during the coming months.

Perhaps by the time this issue of N.A. News is distributed, VF-11's record will be bettered . . . we hope so. In any event, congratulations to VF-11.

No Time To Whisper

Case #1

Pilot was making refresher carrier landings in an F8F-1B. On his down wind leg he went over the check-off list but neglected to lower his hook. The hook spotter at the LSO platform was not using binoculars and called out "no hook" just as the plane reached the cut position. The LSO did not hear this warning and gave a cut. The plane touched down in a three point attitude near the #3 deck pendant, continued up the center of the deck, and crashed into the barriers.

Case #2

Pilot was making his second carrier landing in a TBM-3S. On this approach, he neglected to lower his landing hook. The hook spotter did not call out "No hook" until the plane was in the groove and then spoke so softly that the LSO did not hear the warning.

A cut was given and the TBM crashed into number 2, 3, and 4 barriers, and then nosed up.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Maybe our hook spotters ought to imitate Demosthenes, the Athenian orator, who practiced talking with pebbles in his mouth to develop his voice.

When a hook spotter sees a plane coming in with the hook up, that's certainly no time to whisper. He should shout loud enough to be heard clear up at the island and then turn to see that the LSO is giving



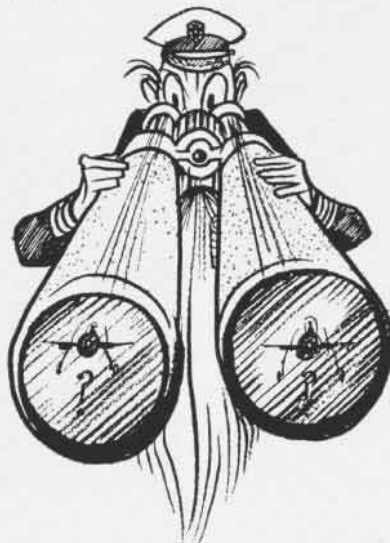
a wave-off. If the LSO doesn't give a prompt wave-off, then grab his trouser leg, and repeat the warning.

By using binoculars a smart hook spotter can often detect the fact that a plane is making a no hook approach while the aircraft is still way out on the down wind leg.

In the last year we have had 10 of these unnecessary accidents. Each one puts a plane out of commission and in some instances the damage has been very severe. Three of these planes flipped over on their backs after engaging the barriers and suffered strike damage; another required a major overhaul. The other six all had major damage.

Let's follow these rules and see if we can't eliminate this type of accident:

1. Explain to the hook spotters the importance of their assignment. Tell them the exact terminology that is to be used. Explain that the LSO is too busy to watch for the hook.
2. Require the use of binoculars by hook-spotters.
3. Require the LSO to acknowledge each signal given by the hook spotter by repeating it back.
4. In the event the warning is not heard by the LSO, instruct the hook spotter to grab the LSO around the ankle to get his attention.



CO₂ Knockout?

Returning from a tactical hop in an F4U-4, an ensign discovered that his plane had a hydraulic failure and he was unable to get his wheels down. Accompanied by his wingman he climbed to 6000 feet where he attempted to pump them down manually. When this failed, he decided to use the emergency CO₂ system. He slowed down to 85 knots and actuated the emergency system, only to have the line leading from the CO₂ bottle burst in the cockpit.

At this time the pilot notified the tower of his predicament and stated that he would try to get his wheels down with dives and pull-outs. He was then advised by a factory representative who had come to the tower to try a snap roll.

At 8,000 feet he performed a snap roll to the right but was unsuccessful in lowering the gear. He called his wingman to say that he would try another snap roll in a minute. A second snap roll was attempted at 8,000 feet and this was followed by a spin to the right. The aircraft continued to spin until striking the ground. In the opinion of the wingman and other witnesses, the pilot made no apparent effort either to recover from the spin or to bail-out.

He was wearing a protective helmet which makes it appear unlikely that he was accidentally knocked out by striking his head during the snap roll. The canopy remained closed during his efforts to lower the gear.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The causes of this accident will probably never be solved to everybody's satisfaction, but here's a theory which seems quite plausible and yet was not mentioned by the Accident Board.

The pilot reported that the CO₂ line burst in the cockpit when he tried to use his emergency system. He had his canopy closed and was not on oxygen. Isn't it possible that he was incapacitated by the high concentration of CO₂ in the cockpit? Years ago, CO₂ in concentrations of 9% was used experimentally as an anesthetic in surgical operations.

In 1948 a major airline crash occurred when the pilot and co-pilot of a transport were rendered unconscious after using the CO₂ fire extinguishing system in a forward baggage compartment.

The effects of a high concentration of CO₂ are insidious. It takes time before it incapacitates the victim. In this case, since

CO₂ is heavier than air, the highest concentration of CO₂ was probably in the lower area of the cockpit until the pilot tried the snap rolls.

The pilot would normally have had some warning in that he would have noticed that he was breathing much more rapidly than usual, however, in his circumstances he may have felt that this was due to nervousness or excitement over the impending wheels-up landing.

This is an isolated case and it may be a long time before another aviator is confronted with the same set of circumstances. But if you ever have reason to suspect that a CO₂ line has broken in the cockpit, get the canopy open quickly, and use 100% oxygen if you have it.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

The "Navy Pilots' Information File" in the section discussing Visual Flight Rules, states, "When clearing on VFR, you must remain at least 500 feet below the cloud base and 500 feet above the ground at all times except when taking off or landing."

However, the CAA "Flight Information Manual" states in the chapter on Air Traffic Control Procedures, Section 1, VFR Procedures, "Aircraft may be operated in accordance with VFR above a well-defined cloud or other formation provided, climb to and descent from such 'on top' flight can also be made in accordance with VFR weather minimums."

Is "on top" flight permissible on a VFR clearance? At this station we contend that a VFR flight must have enroute minimums of a 1000-foot ceiling and three miles visibility on Airways or 1000-foot ceiling and one mile visibility off airways.

This interpretation leads to considerable dissension between pilots and clearing authorities. Which definition is correct?

LCDR. USN.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

There is a definite conflict between the instructions in these two publications and your station is by no means unique in its interpretation which requires VFR conditions over the entire route.

At the present time the two Aircraft Circular Letters which deal with Navy Flight Operations under VFR and IFR conditions are being revised. I believe that the new letters will clear up this ambiguity and that "on top" flights will be allowed on VFR plans, provided that climb to and descent from such "on top" flight can be made VFR.

Grampaw's Pome

They fetched me here
With a broken neck,
After getting a cut,
I dove for the deck.



Drop In For Lunch

HELICOPTER stops are pretty well controlled by regulation now, but in the earlier days—a couple of years ago—the boys who flew the eggbeaters were not too fussy about where they sat down for the night.

One eggbeater operator set off cross country with a crewman from Lakehurst. As they proceeded south in New Jersey, the weather became soupy and rain was heavy. Soon there was only straight down visibility so he landed near an old barn standing by itself in a field. The two waited out the downpour there.

They were on their way again when the rain once more threatened an interruption in the journey. This time the pilot looked more closely and soon spotted a large home with two convertibles and a limousine sitting outside. As he approached the spacious front lawn in the rain, two girls came dashing out, ignoring the dampness, waving madly for him to land, which he did pronto.

Soon the two Navy adventurers were enjoying a warm glow inside and out as they sat before a roaring fire. Without looking, they knew that the weather was too bad for them to continue before the next morning.

Don't Kill Your Friends

Nothing is more likely to give a pilot gray hair than the sound of somebody else's propeller chewing up the tail and fuselage of his airplane.

The pilot of the F6F pictured here came mighty close to getting a free neck trim from the prop of another F6F which was turning up right behind him. Both planes were parked in take-off position and the pilot in the aft plane was concerned because his engine was somewhat rough during the mag check.

He decided to give his plane a full power turn-up and was watching the instruments closely. He suddenly became aware of the fact that his plane was moving forward and to port, but not in time to avoid hitting the plane ahead.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I'd like to have a dollar for every accident of this type that has occurred during the last ten years. I could retire and let someone else spend his time reading accident reports.

Don't kill your friends! Whenever you give a plane a full power turn-up, aim one eye outside the cockpit. In time this may make you a little cross-eyed, but that's a lot better than carving up a friend.

Too Proud For a Wave-off

An ensign with 217 hours of flight time was returning to Corry Field after completing his first FCLP hop at an outlying field. He started his approach to Corry Field from a position very close abeam and in a nose high attitude.

In the final stages of his approach, he continued to tighten the turn in an effort to align himself with the runway. Witnesses state that he put the Corsair into a nearly vertical bank just before he crashed on his left wing tip and landing gear some fifty feet short of the runway.



The initial impact sheared off his left landing gear and right wheel. The right landing gear strut then dug into the runway and flipped the F4U-4 over on its back. On this impact the canopy was smashed and the engine torn from the plane. The F4U-4 then bounced back in the air and landed in an upright position. The final impact broke the fuselage just aft of the cockpit.

The pilot suffered a compound fracture of the skull, compound fractures of both legs, and multiple lacerations about the face. He died shortly afterwards.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

The tragic thing about this accident is that it could have been prevented so easily. As soon as the pilot discovered that he was going to overshoot the groove, all he had to do was level his wings and go around again.

A Basic Training Command directive specifies that all approaches except FCLP and actual carrier approaches will be planned so as to have a minimum straightaway of 800 feet. In this instance the pilot was still in a turn when within fifty feet of the runway. He had no LSO to wave him off when he got into a dangerous attitude.

Remember stalling speed increases greatly in a steep turn. Don't be too proud to take a wave-off. The life at stake is your own.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

"Let's go down and see where we are!"