GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

No Farmer's Daughter?

An Ensign riding as a passenger in an SNB-5 heard the engines quit and shortly afterwards was told to put on a chute and kick out the emergency escape hatches.

Meanwhile the pilot and co-pilot discovered that the fuel selector had sheared. They were able to move the handle freely, but system remained on the #1 tank which had just run dry.

At the start of this emergency the SNB was cruising IFR at 7000 feet enroute to NAS QUONSET POINT. The plane broke out of the overcast at about 5000 feet over Long Island Sound. They turned towards the Connecticut shoreline and buckled on chest chutes. On orders from the pilot, the passenger bailed out shortly after the plane crossed the shoreline.

The pilot and co-pilot looked over the terrain and decided to ride the plane down. A wheels-up, full-flap landing was made. The SNB hit in a flat attitude and skidded about 300 feet before encountering a drainage ditch which caused it to groundloop nearly 180 degrees. Neither pilot was injured.

While still descending in his parachute, the Ensign watched the forced landing. A few seconds later he landed in a wooded area and found himself hung up in the top of a 70′ hemlock tree. About 100 yards away he spotted a farm house.

After climbing out of the tree he started towards the house, but was attacked by the farmer's dog, who bit him on both shins! The farmer and his wife finally called off the dog and offered first aid and transportation to the scene of the crash landing.

Grampaw Pettibone says—

Things are getting tough. In the old days there was always a good looking farmer's daughter in tales like this. If the pilot got nipped it was only on the ear. In any event, I guess the bites this fellow got weren't too deep because the accident board says that he had class "dog" injuries.

A Reminder from Gramp

If you've been following the course of events since the fighting broke out in Korea, you know something of the plans for expanding our aviation strength. You've read of the carriers coming out of moth balls and of the orders that are being placed for new

planes. Some of your friends who were placed on inactive duty last year will soon be back in uniform.

We should all take a backward glance at our aircraft accident rates in the early days of World War II and resolve to do a better safety job this time. In any period of accelerated training, the number of accidents is bound to go up. More pilots are flying and the individual pilot is flying a greater number of hours per month. Many pilots are making the transition to newer, faster planes.

Last year our fatal accident rates were the lowest since 1940. Fewer than 6 pilots per 1000 on active duty lost their lives in aviation accidents compared with the wartime peake of 45 deaths in non-combat aviation accidents per 1000 pilots in 1944.

This time Ensigns with less than 300 hours of flight time will be climbing into the cockpits of jet fighters that cost a cool half-million dollars apiece. The squadron Flight Safety Officer's job is going to be more important than ever before. The officer assigned to this billet should be experienced, energetic, and relatively senior in the squadron organization.

Give him your cooperation and support. His job is to help save lives and equipment.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In emergency situations, a pilot's life and the lives of his passengers and crew often depend on a split second decision. Will you think fast enough to make the correct move? What would you do in this emergency?

Immediately after take-off in a JRB, the plane goes into a dangerously steep climb. You push forward on the yoke and roll in down tab, but the plane approaches a stall. Your life depends on your next move. What is it?

(Answer on opposite page)

Thrown for a Loss

Because of a recent epidemic of F4U-FG groundloops, one of my assistants undertook a study of all the *Corsair* groundloops that occurred during the past 12 months. After reading 67 accident reports he came up with this description of the most frequent set of circumstances in a *Corsair* groundloop:

"The pilot may have hundreds of hours in other types of planes, but has less than 50 in the *Corsair*. He circles the landing field in a left hand traffic pattern and has a moderate cross wind from the right. Instead of putting down only 30° of flaps as recommended in the pilots handbook for landing under cross-wind conditions, he goes right ahead with normal procedure and lowers full flaps.

"Shortly after the wheels touch, the plane veers to the right. The pilot is reluctant to use brake, but tries a little left rudder, then full left rudder, and finally gets on the left brake. His actions have been too little and too late. By this time the *Corsair* is wound up in a right turn. The left wing tip is dragging as the plane leaves the runway, and the crash truck heads for the scene."

Of course, not all of last year's groundloops fit exactly into this pattern. One groundlooper had 575 hours in type. There were a good number of groundloops in which cross-wind conditions were not present, and in a dozen or so cases the cross-wind was from the left. However, the conditions above applied in more than half of the cases.

Tower operators can help cut down this type of accident by watching wind conditions closely and warning pilots when to expect a cross-wind landing. With this knowledge, the pilot can use the correct amount of flap and can be prepared to use brake and rudder quickly in the event of a swerve.

Where only one runway is available and a strong cross-wind exists, pilots with very few hours in type should not be scheduled pending more favorable conditions, unless the maintenance department is short of business.

Hot Tip Department

Grampaw Pettibone says—

Want to avoid getting yourself in a heap of trouble? Then read the Hydrographic Office Memorandum for Aviators #8, dated 26 June 1950. This memo modifies earlier directives in regard to Airspace Reservations and clearly defines the boundaries of these reservations:

U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D. C.

White House—Capitol Area, Washington, D. C.

Clinton Engineering Works, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Hanford Engineer Works, Richland, Washington.

Los Alamos Project, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

If you aren't familiar with these Airspace reservations or allow a navigational error to put you over one of these areas, you are in for a very rough time. Here's what happened to one fellow:

He was flying an R5C at 8000 feet on a VFR flight plan from Chincoteague, Virginia to Memphis, Tenn. His flight path should have taken him to the right of the Oak Ridge reservation, but as he neared Knoxville he altered his course to the left to circumnavigate a line squall with buildups to 20,000 feet. This seemed like an intelligent maneuver since the squall extended to the North and there was a clear area to the South.

About this time he gave a position report to Knoxville radio and was warned concerning the airspace reservation. He felt that he would be able to get around the storm by skirting the northwest boundary of the reservation.

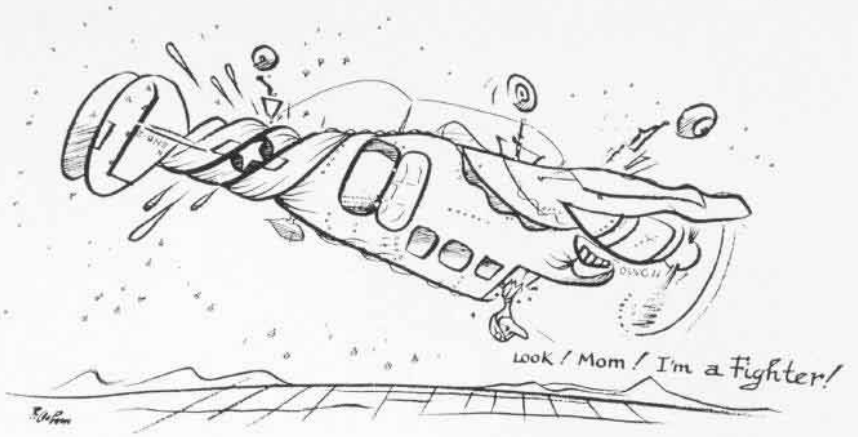
In less time than it takes to tell about it, the Defense Command picked the plane up on radar. A few minutes later the transport was intercepted by an F-82 which made one pass and then flew a wing position long enough to check the R5C's markings. This started a chain of events which involved dispatches from Maxwell Flight Service Center to Chief of Naval Operations, from Chief of Naval Operations to the Commanding General, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic and then down the line to the pilot. By the time the incident had been explained all the way up and down the chain of command, the pilot no doubt concluded that he should have "stood in bed."

Learn the boundaries of these five reservations, allow yourself a little margin for error, and stay out of trouble!

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? ANSWER

Reduce power. You've already done everything else that will help prevent a stall or spin. A smooth reduction of power will cause the nose to fall through. You will probably have to crash land straight ahead. If you have time, drop your flaps. Unless you have plenty of runway left, flip the wheel switch to the UP position.

Chances are that you attempted a take-off with the plane improperly loaded—the center of gravity way too far aft, or with the trim tab set for landing.



Hot Rod Was Here

After getting checked out in an SNB on the previous day, a volunteer reserve pilot was cleared for a local familiarization flight. He made several practice landings and then left the field and flew to an area about 40 miles to the northeast of the station, where he proceeded to attempt a series of wingovers. He states that it was his intention to keep the air speed between 70 and 170 knots during these maneuvers. His altitude was about 12,000 feet.

Halfway through the third wingover, he lost control of the SNB. The passengers felt the nose of the plane whip around violently. Recovery was made in a steep dive with the airspeed needle indicating 230 knots.

The pilot retarded the throttles and tried a shallow pull-out. During this portion of the recovery, the curved portions of the windshield cracked, the co-pilot's side window blew out, and one passenger window was broken. About 4000 feet were lost in the recovery.

Structural damage to the aircraft was severe. Inspection showed bent spars, popped rivets, buckles in the fuselage skin, etc. The SNB was declared a strike.

Grampaw Pettibone says—

When I read about a damn fool stunt like this, I want to get the ax down off the wall and set out after the pilot. I'll bet the passengers who were along on this ride feel the same way. Actually they are darn lucky to be alive.

We think of the SNB as a relatively inexpensive training plane, but it may surprise you to know that it costs the Navy $72,886 in flyaway condition.

I can't take the space to list all the orders that this pilot violated, but here is the most important one:

Technical Order 6-49 restricts the SNB-JRB type to "normal flying." In case there is doubt in anyone's mind, wingovers are *not* considered "normal flying." By definition in Technical Order 2-50 any maneuver in which the angle of bank exceeds 45 degrees is not "normal flying."

Other rules specify that acrobatics are to be performed only when properly scheduled and in a designated acrobatic area. Only persons with orders to duty involving flying may be aboard during acrobatic practice.

As a result of this incident the pilot has been grounded and ordered to appear before an Aviator's Disposition Board.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

Are there any existing regulations pertaining to the dropping of auxiliary fuel tanks to crash victims floating in the water? If not, it seems to me that planes could drop empty wingtip, belly, or bomb-bay tanks to anyone floating in the water and thus afford an additional floatation aid. Since the fuel tanks would be more easily seen from the air than a person floating in a life-jacket, it would aid other aircraft in locating the person during search and rescue operations.

Very truly yours,

Lt., U.S.N.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

I don't recall seeing anything in black and white on this subject, but it sounds like a good idea. Certainly a person floating in the water without life jacket or raft will appreciate anything that will afford him some buoyancy. There are quite a few cases on record where lives were saved when pilots and crew men took off their own life jackets, inflated them, and dropped them to persons in the water.

I'd say drop anything that will float, but if you drop an empty gas tank be careful not to hit the swimmer. Try to drop the tank slightly up wind of the survivor and at as slow a speed as practicable. If you have a smoke light available, drop one at exactly the same time to assist the swimmer in locating the tank or whatever else you have dropped.

There is some danger of skin burns from high octane gas when using a partially full tank as a flotation aid. I recall one instance during the war in which a fighter pilot hung onto a wing tank after a crash, although he was wearing a life vest. The water was rough and enough gas was slopping out of the tank to burn his chest and arms. Shortly before he was picked up he noticed the burning sensation on his chest and arms, and decided to paddle a short distance away from the tank to avoid the gasoline on the water.