



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

All In A Day's Work!

The story that follows is taken from the statement of a Marine Corps first lieutenant following the successful ditching of an F4U-4.

"After climbing to 5000' with my section leader, I noticed that my oil pressure was 70-75 pounds and oil temperature was 85°. After several minutes, the oil pressure dropped to 65 and the oil temperature read 95°. I checked the trailing edge of my wings for any sign of oil leakage, but there was no oil visible.

"I moved the oil cooler doors to the open position and called Capt. _____ and told him that my oil pressure was below normal and I was returning to base. He 'rogere'd and said that he saw some smoke coming from my engine. I immediately turned north toward Elizabeth City Coast Guard station and called Elizabeth City radio on guard channel.

"After two 'May Day' messages, Elizabeth City radio answered and told me a helicopter was enroute. By this time my oil pressure had dropped to 50 pounds and the temperature was up to 120°. I kept the radio station informed of my position at all times. By the time that I passed the first point of land on my left, my oil pressure had dropped to zero and instruments indicated maximum oil temperature.

"As the engine became rough and started missing, I notified Elizabeth City radio that I was going to ditch. My engine began to smoke excessively and approximately 30 seconds later my engine quit completely. I pulled all the levers aft on the throttle quadrant.

"By the time I had the plane trimmed, I was gliding at 140 knots directly into the wind. I pulled the manual lever to drop my belly tank. I checked my shoulder harness lock, and opened and locked my canopy, kicked the 'dump' valve and then concentrated on my landing. At about 200 feet over the waves, I hit my flaps full down and as my airspeed reached 80 knots, I flared out right over the waves, and braced myself for the impact.

"The initial contact surprised me in that it seemed no harder than a carrier landing. After the first splash of water subsided, I released my safety belt and cleared the plane without further trouble. I inflated my Mae West and para-



raft. As I climbed into the raft, I saw the helicopter approaching. I was hoisted into the helicopter, and the trip to shore was uneventful.

"At no time did I feel panicky. Everything I learned in flight training was used to good advantage, from the initial idea of calling somebody on the first evidence of trouble, to the knowledge learned from the Dilbert Dunker, that the first contact with water will subside, leaving time to clear the cockpit before the plane sinks."

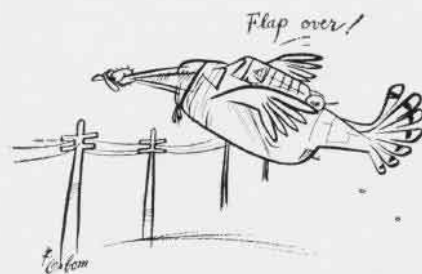


Grandpaw Pettibone Says:

Here's a young lad who had only 700 hours of flight time, but handled his ditching like a veteran. He had learned his emergency procedures, how to use his safety equipment, and was able to put this knowledge to practical use. I wish all pilots could do as well when confronted with an emergency.

Dear Grandpaw Pettibone:

With reference to your article entitled "Flaps Please" in the August issue, I believe that the pilot could have extricated himself from his predicament very simply and safely once he realized that he had started his takeoff roll without lowering his flaps. All he had to do was move the flap control handle to the down position. In less time than it takes to say "emergency brake handle", the F9F would have been airborne.



I speak from experience. On a 4,000 foot runway, after reaching 120 knots with no sign of becoming airborne, I suddenly realized—"NO FLAPS!", put the handle down and popped into the air.

Yours truly,

CDR, USN



Grandpaw Pettibone Says:

I'm inclined to agree with you. Although forgetting to lower the flaps undoubtedly caused the accident, the pilot probably could have avoided the crash had he hit the flap handle.

Some years ago, I landed a TBM in a small civilian field near Phoenix, Arizona. Despite landing in the first 50 feet of runway, I had to use brakes to keep from going off the far end of the short runway.

When I got ready to leave, a few cheerful civilians wanted to give me odds that the plane wouldn't clear the telephone wires at the end of the runway. Having great confidence in the climbing ability of the "Turkey", I took all bets. About three-fourths of the way down the runway, I began to think that maybe the civilians were right. Just then I hit the flaps and the TBM went up just like an elevator, clearing the wires with a few feet to spare.

When my knees quit shaking, I decided that once was enough for that field, and that I wasn't going back to collect.

\$60,000 Blunder

A plane captain was making a routine run-up on a PBM-5 after completion of a 120-hour check, when the port engine suddenly froze.

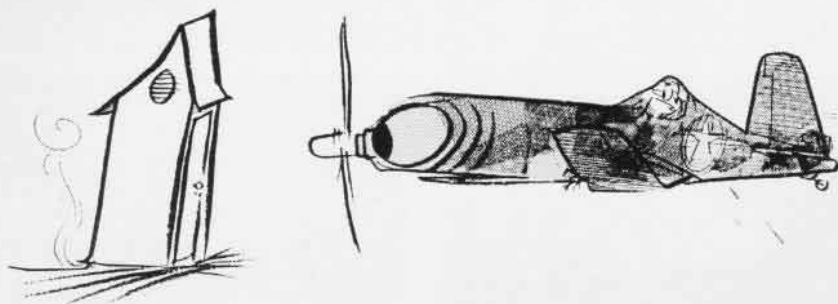
The check sheet, duly signed by the check crew leader, showed that the oil had been drained from the port oil tank and refilled to the proper level. The plane captain did not check the oil quantity before run-up, and it was not until after the engine froze that he discovered that it had no oil.



Grandpaw Pettibone Says:

\$60,000 down the drain—that's what a PBM-5 engine costs these days. Yet if the check crew leader or the plane captain had "been on the ball", this accident would never have happened.

A good way to prevent mistakes of this sort is to require that a placard saying "NO OIL" be placed on the ignition switches or control levers whenever the oil is being drained from either engine. The placard should remain there until the tank has been refilled.



Like a Rose??

Remember the story of the fellow who "came out smelling like a rose"? Well, this guy didn't.

The pilot cleared from Patuxent to NAS MEMPHIS, Tennessee in an F4U-4 with 233 gallons of gasoline. His flight plan called for a true airspeed of 180 knots and an estimated time enroute of three hours and 30 minutes. The distance was stated as 680 nautical miles, and the fuel on board was sufficient for four hours and 15 minutes.

A bit of careful computation shows that this flight plan contained several errors. Had the distance actually been 680 nautical miles, slightly over four hours would have been required to make the flight in a no-wind condition at a TAS of 180.

Actually, the distance to Memphis is less than 680 nautical miles, but this factor was just about balanced out by a steady 10 knot head wind which existed all along the route.

The pilot tried to maintain a ground speed of 180 knots and used power settings of 1750 RPM and 31" Hg. This made for a much higher rate of fuel consumption than he had predicted. About 120 miles from Memphis, he first noticed that his fuel consumption was higher than anticipated. He checked fuel remaining versus distance to go and decided that he could still complete the flight.

Just east of Summerville, Tennessee, on the northeast leg of the Memphis radio range, at an altitude of 6,000 feet, his engine began to cut out. He increased mixture to "rich" and turned the auxiliary fuel pump to "emergency". At about 4,500 feet the engine quit completely. Two quick attempts to contact Memphis Tower and one to contact Memphis Radio failed, and the pilot began his preparations for an emergency landing. He started an approach to a long straight stretch of Highway 64, and put his wheels down, only to discover that crowded conditions on the highway made this plan impracticable. He retracted his wheels and made a crash landing on the shoulder of a railroad right-of-way.

At 90 knots, the right wing tip dug

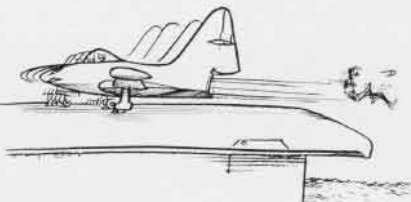
into the side of the railroad embankment. About 10 feet further on, the left wing tip sheared off the upper third of a telephone pole. About 60 feet from the point of initial impact, the fuselage struck the ground and the Corsair slid along in a fairly straight line until the left wing hit another telephone pole, chopping it off at ground level.

The impact with the second telephone pole turned the Corsair into the backyard of a rural dwelling. A privy loomed ahead, and the plane plowed into it. Fortunately it was unoccupied, for the F4U came to rest on top of it. Both the privy and the plane suffered strike damage.



Grandpa Pettibone Says:

A fitting end to an unplanned flight,
I have no tears for this lad's plight.
But after they hoisted the damaged plane,
They should have made this guy remain.
They should have made him stick around
For certain duties on the ground.



Watch Your Step

Not all aviation accidents occur in airplanes. Every year a good many Navy men are killed in connection with flight operations, even though their work doesn't require them to set foot in a plane.

For example, a few months ago a plane handler was walking forward on the flight deck with an arm load of chocks. Flight operations were in progress and the safety stanchions were down. The man walked right off the bow of the ship and was never seen again.

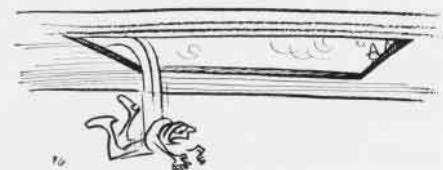
There have been other cases where flight deck personnel have gotten in the prop wash of planes turning up and have been blown back into a moving propeller . . . or stepped into a jet exhaust and been blown overboard.

The rush to get on the elevator before it starts down has resulted in several casualties . . . the more severe variety occurring when the elevator has a real head start.



Grandpa Pettibone Says:

For some reason these accidents don't seem to happen to fellows who have just reported aboard or to old-timers. The first group are probably protected by their own natural caution in an unfamiliar environment, and the old-timers have seen a



few shipmates get hurt and therefore pay more attention to what they're doing. For the most part, boys who get hurt are the ones who have been around just long enough to get the idea that they can do their jobs and think about something else at the same time. That's mighty risky business when you are working around airplanes.



It will be
all right by the
time I get there.