



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Nothin' But Problems

The pilot of an FG-1D with six hours in type aircraft was cleared on a ferry flight. He planned his cross-country flight carefully, estimating two hours en route to his point of first intended landing. On arriving at his destination, he requested landing instructions and was informed of a cross-wind from the right of 10 knots with gusts to 18 knots on the landing runway. Following his first approach, the pilot made a three point landing in the first third of the runway using 30 degrees of flap. At this point we pick up the pilot's statement.

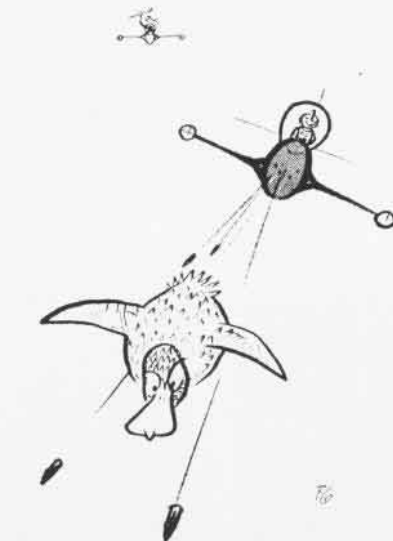
"As I reached for the flap handle to dump the flaps, a strong gust caught my starboard wing and picked it up fast. I kicked right rudder and eased on power to recover and go around for another landing. The combination of the airplane's natural tendency to roll to the left with high power at low speed and the left ground loop started by the gust of wind made the situation delicate indeed, and I drug my left wing damaging the port aileron and flap."

That last sentence is indeed a masterpiece of understatement as evidenced by the knotty problems encountered immediately thereafter.

"I had the additional problem of avoiding two *Corsairs* taxiing back along the downwind (left) side of the runway on the taxi strip. If I took off power and dumped the gear, I felt that I would crash into the first *Corsair*, and with too much power I certainly would have hit the second *Corsair* as he was broadside to me.

"I therefore continued under reduced power to recover from the ground loop. In so doing I made a turn of approximately 90 degrees to the runway, going between the two *Corsairs* which fortunately for all of us had come to a stop.

"Once past them the next problem was to miss a line of parked aircraft and the hangar which was dead ahead.



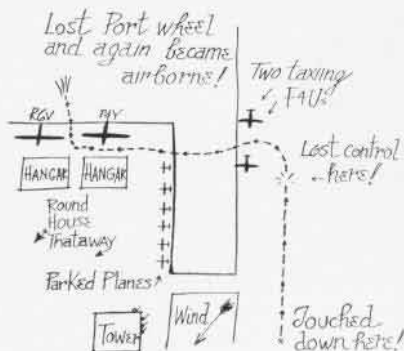
I managed to miss these obstacles, and my next problem was to avert a collision with an R6V *Constitution* and a P4Y parked SW of the hangar. I made about a 90 degree turn to the right and passed between these two planes.

"At this point, the aircraft became completely controllable and I added full power and became airborne. . . . Just prior to becoming airborne, I felt a slight jar."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great balls of fire! For a minute there I didn't think that you were going to make it! That slight jar you heard was my teeth rattling from shaking my head while reading your statement.



I would like to say that this lad's problems ended there, but unfortunately they didn't. He tore off his port wheel on an embankment just prior to becoming airborne. Unaware that he had lost a wheel, and noticing that he had developed a severe hydraulic leak, he used his air bottle to ensure that his landing gear was locked down. When informed of his predicament and unable to unlock his wheels to make a wheels-up landing, the pilot made a one wheel landing on the runway, causing strike damage to the aircraft. He was not injured.

It may be news to some of you, but the *Corsair Pilot's Handbook* states "Cross wind landings can best be made by landing with the tail slightly up—not three point—and somewhat less than normal flap angle."

I can't help but have a feeling that there must have been some place during the 1800 feet of ground travel to abort the takeoff. Any time that you've got a groundloop well under way as this lad did, you're just asking for serious trouble if you try to become airborne again. An aborted take-off in this case would in all probability have caused less damage to the aircraft, and certainly would have saved the pilot a few grey hairs.

I don't know how many landings in type this pilot had before this flight, but he only had six hours total flight time in type including the two hour flight just preceding the accident. The requirements of OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3710.6 are such that the greatest probability of a pilot-caused accident on a ferry flight is limited almost exclusively to landings and take-offs, and I agree wholeheartedly with the recommendation made by the accident board that ferry pilots should have a minimum of 10 hours plus a minimum of 10 landings in type to be considered qualified. After all, the primary consideration in ferrying aircraft is the safe and expeditious delivery of aircraft.

There were no eye witnesses to verify the latter portion of the path of this aircraft (except the pilot's word) as it disappeared from view behind the hangars. That's not too hard to understand. The old saying "Head for the roundhouse, you can't be cornered there" was probably taken literally by any potential eye witnesses who happened to be around.

How to Get Electrocuted

The pilot of a TBM was cleared for a local GCA flight. Unable to establish communications with GCA, he proceeded to a small town within the local operating area. Recognizing a friend's ranch, he decided to make his presence known. One low pass was made over the ranch at 200 feet, followed by a second with the gear extended.

During the second pass at an altitude of 35 feet, while the pilot was waving at his friend, the plane struck a large number of telephone wires paralleling a highway adjacent to the ranch. The plane continued across the highway, striking three heavy copper-weld 2400-volt power lines.

The pilot made a pull-up just in time to miss a 33,000-volt power line, but the wires trailing from the wings and landing gear dragged across this line shorting all power circuits. Fortunately, the pilot made it back to the field and landed in spite of the numerous wires hanging from the aircraft.



 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

Son, all you needed was to have wet feet and you probably would have gotten a bigger shock than you got from the aviator's disposition board! It seems that someone has to pull a fool stunt like this about every two months. It's about time you lads realized that you can't possibly win on a deal like this. You're either dead or you have jeopardized your life, your status as an aviator, and certainly the welfare of your family. That old theory that "it can't happen to me" is all wet, because it can and will.

The next time you get into the wild blue yonder and get an urge to impress your friends, just make about two 360° turns first. While you're making those turns, think about your future and remember "The best thing that you can keep for your old age is yourself."



It Could Happen To You

The pilot of the F4U shown here started his approach low and continued to be low throughout his approach. The LSO gave several low signals and the pilot climbed to just under the ROGER altitude prior to entering the groove. As the wings of the aircraft started to level out, the nose dropped and the aircraft started to settle. The pilot was given a low dip followed by a come-on. A waveoff was given immediately after the come-on. The pilot took off power and dropped his nose still further on the waveoff before adding full power. The photographs show the fatal result.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

The pilot in this case had a total of 558 hours in type and 115 carrier landings without an accident.

Unfortunately, aircraft accidents happen to experienced pilots as well as to the inexperienced, although not quite as often. If you find yourself badly out of position during a carrier approach, your best safety device is an early self-imposed wave-off. If you feel certain that the approach can be salvaged—then answer the signals promptly and correctly. Even if you've gotten a cut on your last 50 approaches, don't be sure that you're going to get one on the 51st. Anticipating a cut has gotten plenty of experienced pilots into very serious trouble. You may get a little more ribbing for taking a couple of waveoffs, but it certainly is a lot safer.



An Honest Man

Recently a pilot manned an F4U-5N for night carrier landing practice. His first pass resulted in a wave-off due to being long in the groove. On the second pass he was still a little long and low but answered the LSO's low signal by adding power and was in good position at the cut. Following the cut the aircraft floated up the deck into the barriers.

The LSO states "The pilot made a fair second approach, though a little long in the groove. At about the 45 degree point he was a little low but ended up in good position at the ramp. At the time I cut him, I knew he was slightly fast, and an instant later I realized he was very fast and going into the barriers. This accident was 100 percent LSO error in judgment."

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

Well, if you insist, I won't argue with you. That background noise you hear is a few cheers for your honesty.

However, carrier landing accident statistics show that the majority of all such accidents are attributed to improper pilot technique in landing after the "cut" signal—usually diving for the deck or holding off and floating.

Gee whiz, fellows, why don't you give yourself an even break and learn how to land that bucket of bolts. It'll sure save you a lot of embarrassment, and maybe you can get the LSO to smile a little.