



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Pinkie Pincher

The pilot of an F9F-6 had just returned from a flight and was taxiing his *Cougar* to its parking spot when he came upon a gas truck parked in such a manner as to restrict the taxiway. Rather than wait for the truck to be moved, he continued taxiing. A man had been stationed on each side to insure sufficient clearance of the wings.

When it appeared that the left wing would strike an aircraft adjacent to the intended parking spot, the left wing walker repeatedly struck the leading edge of the left wing in an effort to alert the pilot. Here's his story: "I hit the leading edge of the left wing. At the same time, the pilot was raising the flaps and my hand got caught in the opening where the slats fit. My hand remained caught in the opening until the pilot extended the flaps in order to free me."

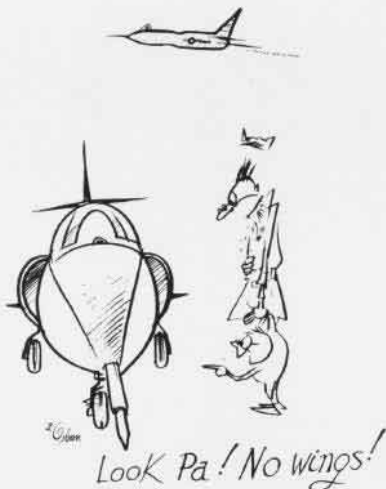
Since the wing walkers were outside of the peripheral vision of the pilot of the swept-wing *Cougar*, the pilot was not alerted until the plane director in front of the taxiing aircraft finally signaled a stop.

The hand was seriously injured, receiving lacerations and compound fracture of three fingers; the aircraft was undamaged.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Looks to me like just about everyone had a hand in this. Mebbe it was necessary for the gas truck to block the taxiway, but the pilot



shouldn't have tried to crowd past in a narrow area where the hazard of hitting an obstacle was so great. Even though wing walkers were used, an airplane can't be squeezed through a space that's too small.

The plane director erred in not stopping the plane immediately when it was apparent that the left wing walker was trying to signal the pilot.

Getting caught in the slat trap made a lasting impression on the line man with the dented digits. He was just trying to do his job when the durned thing bit him. The lump method of learning was a rough way of finding out where not to place his pea-pickin' pinkies, but I'll lay odds that next time he'll get the plane director's attention—if he has to throw rocks at him—rather than blindly hitting at the wing in a vain attempt to alert the pilot.



End Of The Line

The pilot of an HUL-1 gave a "thumbs up" to the plane director to indicate that his helicopter was ready to take off from the icebreaker. Receiving a green flag, the pilot picked up into a hover. However, the aircraft lost RPM, so the pilot landed the helicopter in order to adjust the power. Immediately upon regaining RPM, the helicopter was again picked up into a hover and another takeoff was attempted ahead and to the starboard. However, a tie-down had been applied to the starboard float and left on.

Attempting to gain forward flight with the starboard tie-down secured to the deck, the helicopter was tipped to starboard causing the main rotor blades to make contact with the safety net. The helicopter fell to the deck on its starboard side. The main rotor mast assembly ruptured the starboard fuel tank causing gasoline to pour on the hot engine. The gasoline exploded and burst into flame. The helicopter came to rest in an upright position and was destroyed before the fire could be extinguished. The pilot and his two passengers escaped with injuries ranging from serious to minor.

The pilot had pre-flighted the helicopter while it was still secured on the forward section of the flight deck. Upon respotting for takeoff, the crew chief attached the starboard tie-down. Before giving the pilot a green flag to signal that the helicopter was clear for launching, the plane director, stationed in front of the helicopter, took a step to either side to check that the tie-downs were off. He failed to see the tie-down on the starboard side.

The aircraft accident board concluded that the primary cause of the accident was the failure of the plane director to insure that the tie-down had been removed from the aircraft prior to giving the signal to launch. A secondary factor was the pilot's failure to check the aircraft for an explanation of the power loss which



occurred during the first hover before attempting the second takeoff.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sufferin' sunfish! Failure to make quadruply double sure you're unlassoed before launch is like playing with firearms without checking the chambers. By the time you find out you had a loaded situation, you may not be around anymore.

The board's conclusions as to the accident cause rates my amen, but I'd like to point out that the pilot also had a responsibility for making sure that he was untied before he reached the end of the line. Being an interested party in the events to come, he might well have taken time for a circuit of his flying machine after it was re-spotted.

Glider Practice

At an altitude of 24,000 feet during a practice bombing mission, the engine of an AD-6 began running rough and trailing smoke. While the pilot was turning toward the nearest airfield, the engine blew a cylinder through the cowling and failed completely.

The pilot then glided his powerless *Skyraider* to NAAS FALLON, Nevada, some 25 miles distant and executed a perfect dead-stick landing. He attributed his successful handling of the emergency to constant practice of emergency procedures which are emphasized through his squadron's aviation safety program.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sounds to me like this lad turned in a 4.0 performance—the kind that comes from pre-planning and practicing possible emergency situations. Well done, lad, well done!

Gentlemen, Be Seated

In a recent R4D-8 landing accident which resulted in overhaul damage to the aircraft, the plane captain—as was his custom—stood between the pilot's and co-pilot's seats during landing.

The Medical Officer stated in his report: "It is emphasized that this man—when standing between the pilots—is in a most vulnerable position should there be a rough landing or accident on landing."

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

This kind of durned foolishness has been going on for years in *Skytrains*, *Neptunes*, *Privateers* and just about every multi-engine flying machine that has a plane captain aboard, and it's high time we knocked it off.

Mebbe there are some cases on record to show that his presence between the pilots served a useful purpose, but they're far outnumbered by the accidents in which the extra pair of hands in the cockpit created confusion and caused the accident.

Reminds me of the time at El Paso international airport when the pilot of an R4D on its takeoff run gave the co-pilot an affirmative sign to indicate that the engines sounded good following a magneto change. You guessed it—the plane captain, standing between the pilots, mistook the signal as an order to retract the gear, and the ground-fast *Skytrain* slid to an embarrassing halt as an unscheduled event viewed by a record audience assembled for an air show.

As stated in OpNavInst 3710.7A, each person in a Navy aircraft is required to wear his safety belt and shoulder harness during take-off, and their use is to be continued until the completion of the flight except when necessary activities require temporary removal.

When a plane captain stands between the pilots during take-off or landing, he's inviting a headlong dash into the instrument panel or through the windshield. Few heads are designed to stand such rough treatment.



Feet's Too Big

During touch-and-go landing practice, the pilot of an SNB inadvertently applied foot pressure to the brakes when actuating the rudder pedals. This action was not compatible with good aircraft control technique and overhaul damage to the aircraft resulted.

The pilot was a six-foot-four specimen who wore size 14 shoes. After the accident it was discovered that when he placed his feet against the rudder pedals approximately three inches of each shoe rested solidly against the brake pedals.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Lad, those size 14's may be mighty handy for stomping out grass fires, but when it comes to flying there may be times when your feet's too big. You've got a problem, but half the battle's recognizing it.

The Navy has a lot of pilots who are tall in the saddle, but they realize it and make the necessary allowances. If you crank the pilot's seat in the *Beechcraft* all the way aft, then be sure to remove the back cushion, you'll ease the leg room situation and cause less foot cramping. As for the brake pedal routine on the deck, you'll need a constant awareness of foot placement (and no cramps in the big toe) to keep out of trouble.

In airplanes with adjustable rudder pedals, always insure that they're set for maximum distance from you. If the allowances you can make in the various aircraft models won't ease your problem sufficiently, you may have to limit your flying accordingly. Meanwhile, just be happy that you were turned under enough to permit you to scoot under the wire and into the Navy flying program you wanted.

