



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Bellywhopper

A fighter pilot was scheduled for a gunnery hop in an FJ-4 at an overseas base. Preflight and taxi out were uneventful, but as he released the brakes for takeoff, the whole instrument panel fell in his lap. He aborted the takeoff and returned to the line where the panel fasteners were secured by a line-man. The pilot then continued with his hop, and normal routine prevailed until landing procedure began.

The pilot considered his approach to be a normal one, and flared over the end of the runway, GEAR UP. Two planes awaiting takeoff transmitted warnings. On the second warning, the pilot suddenly realized with a shock that they were warning *him*. He rammied it up to 100% but *too late*. The FJ settled in and skidded to a stop in a real belly-whopper.

While all this was going on, the wheels watch had noted the wheels-up condition while the FJ was in the groove. He turned on the red light and reached for his hand mike, which he dropped. As he stooped over to pick up the mike, his headset fell off. By this time, the FJ was sliding up the deck. Incidentally, the flares 1000 feet up the runway weren't used because the system was being worked on and not operable. The wheels-watch man was evidently too busy to fire his Very pistol.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Son, you had me worried! First of all, this just wasn't your day! If I was a fatalist, I'd say that someone had put a big old X on your forehead and only the proverbial luck of some Gaelic ancestors pulled you out of this one.

My achin' blood pressure just kills me when an airplane driver (as distinguished from a professional type Naval Aviator) sets one in gear up and locked, like a Midway gooney bird in a flat calm. In the first place you sure can tell that it ain't takin' as



Another!!
Bellywhopper!

much power to bring her up the groove as usual. That's a BAD SIGN and you should have got the message.

In the second place, you better "git with it" or your buddies are gonna start wanting you out front leading your division, where they can keep an eye on you.

That instrument panel detaching worries me. Your maintenance officer had better set himself up an inspection division composed of senior rates and insure that *all* work orders are signed off by a qualified inspector prior to putting a plane up for flight. Such incidents *can* be prevented.

Gear Shear

An A4D-1 *Skyhawk* doing night carrier qualification landings was fol-



lowing an F4D *Skyray* in the pattern. Because the *Skyray* was flying a very wide downwind leg and was long in the groove, the *Skyhawk* was forced to extend its downwind leg and to make a long straight-in approach.

Late in the approach the *Skyhawk* was a bit high after overcorrecting for a slightly low meatball on the mirror in the middle of his approach. The aircraft nosed over in an attempt to correct. As soon as the correction was started the Landing Signal Officer transmitted "no lower." The main landing gear and tail hook struck the round down about a foot below the flight deck level, collapsing both main gear. The *Skyhawk* slid forward on its two external fuel tanks and nose gear. The tail hook engaged the number one cross deck pendant for an arrested landing.

On the previous night's landings the same pilot went for the deck on two approaches, engaging the number one wire both times and blowing a tire on final landing. During debriefing he was cautioned against ignoring the meatball and making his own landings. Also it was emphasized that no large corrections should be made when at the ramp.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

A high dive for the deck can break your neck just as sure as a high dive into a dry swimmin' hole.

This pilot allows as how the accident could have been prevented by flying the meatball in the center right down to the deck instead of letting it go low and then attempting to make a correction in close with resultant overcorrection. He'll swear by the LSO's advice, "Always fly the meatball in the center and you'll never go wrong."

Here's as good a place as any to quote the old saying, "Learn from the mistakes of others—you won't live long enough to make them all yourself. It's both safer—and cheaper."

Sure Cure

A two-year-old boy, the son of an officer attached to a base remote from hospital facilities, had accidentally swallowed a nickel.

With the coin stuck in his throat, an immediate emergency air evacuation by helicopter was authorized to transport the small boy, his parents, a doctor and corpsman to the nearest medical facility.

Because of the time factor the HR2S was not preflighted; however it had been checked following the previous flight that morning.

The helicopter's takeoff was normal, but as the pilot raised his landing gear, the rotor RPM became uncontrollable using the twist grip throttle.



Overhead throttles were used and control regained. As the pilot lowered the gear both the collective and cyclic control servos were affected by downward and backward pressures respectively.

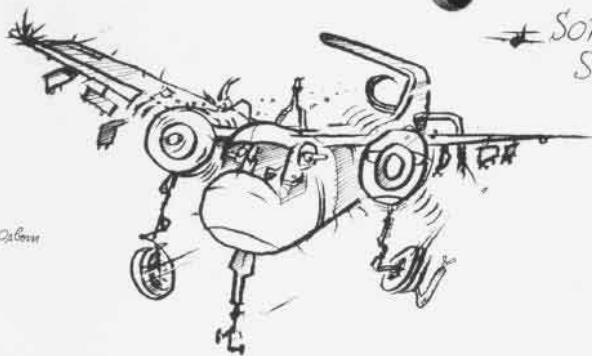
With both pilots working to control the plane, a semi-controlled hard forced landing was made through high tension wires into some bushes.

No injuries were sustained, and damage was minor, but the small patient aboard was *cured* as the nickel in his throat went down into his stomach. The trip was completed by station ambulance.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Both pilots in this whirlybird turned in a professional job of handling a low altitude emergency. What could have been a tragedy was turned into a routine emergency. It pays to know your aircraft thoroughly and, if you are riding as copilot, when to jump in with all available assistance to the pilot. Many accidents have been prevented by a good strong pilot/copilot team perfectly coordinated.



Some show!
Some don't!

Demonstration

It was a beautiful afternoon at an Air Force Base, and a large crowd had gathered for an approved flight demonstration.

An experienced Naval Aviator was scheduled for an FCLP simulation in an S2F-1 Tracker. After a short local flight, he joined the field pattern and reported in upwind over the runway at 500 feet for a left hand break. Contrary to an understanding reached only five minutes earlier by radio, the tower ordered a right hand break!

With no further argument the S2F pilot broke as directed, dropped hook, gear, then full flaps and went to full RPM. He set up his power and descended at 95 knots to the 180° position. At the 90 he had 150 feet and was in a gentle 15° right bank. At the 45 he saw he was overshooting the groove slightly, so he increased the angle of bank to about 25° and added a little power to somewhere around 25 inches. Lineup was good at an altitude of 50 to 75 feet, and the pilot stated that the attitude felt good although perhaps a trifle nose high. Airspeed was 80 to 90 knots, fluctuating due to turbulence near the ground.

He rolled in some aileron to raise the right wing to come out of the turn on final, but it wouldn't come up. A few seconds later the S2F stalled, struck the ground right wing first and then rocked onto the landing gear. It swerved left and headed directly for the static display and the awestruck crowd!

Realizing he might not be able to stop it in time, the pilot decided to take it around, poured the coal to the engines and took off over the crowd in a left wing down attitude. Immediately realizing that he had lost aileron control, by the use of offset power and full right rudder, he regained a

level flight attitude. After a difficult climb out into a clear area, an inspection of the S2F was made by a jet and the S2F crew was informed that the right wing was bent up at a 10° angle. By adjusting power, skidding turns, and some excellent airmanship, a slow right turn back to the airfield was made and a landing touchdown accomplished at about 120 knots.

On landing roll-out, a dragging brake on the right wheel gave him a 30° swerve to the right, but was corrected with hard left brake and rudder. As the plane was turned off onto the taxiway, the port engine died and something could be smelled burning. Pilot and copilot secured the engines and abandoned the aircraft. The pilot's words: "I had had enough for one day!"



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great Balls of Fire! Durned few airshows are approved in this modern day and age and then only when the most exacting requirements are met to insure safety of both the crowd and the participating pilots! A right hand pattern, besides being durned unconventional for an FCLP approach, meant you were pointed right at the crowd all through the turn on to final. Never fly a demonstration unless there's been a definite briefing beforehand. If it doesn't sound right, and in accord with Navy SOP's, DON'T FLY. It's far better to face a disappointed crowd than an outraged public after a disaster.

Second, you got a little slow, Bub, for a demonstration. After watching a bunch of supersonic jet jobs go boring by at slightly under Mach 1, if you'd come around at 95 to 100 knots, you'd have looked like you had stopped in midair to the crowd. The main thing is to display the technique.