GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Check and Recheck

Two experienced pilots with more than 1000 hours of Beechcraft time between them were out on an instrument refresher hop in their trusty SNB.

After their seventh GCA practice approach, the pilots tried to raise the landing gear, but got an unsafe gear indication with a red warning light in the wheel handle. Continuing around, they made another GCA approach, retarded the throttle, lowered the gear and saw the red warning light go out as the horn stopped glowing. Apparently, the wheels had locked down normally.

Completing the run but with no touchdown, the pilot waved off, placed the gear handle in the UP position, again got a red light in the handle, and the landing gear motor circuit breaker popped. Visually the gear appeared to have remained in the normal DOWN position, but now they got a warning horn when power was retarded.

Leaving the GCA pattern, they attempted to correct their wheel problems. All attempts to correct the electrical trouble failed, for the circuit breakers popped immediately after they were reset, and the gear would not move electrically.

Using his Emergency Flip Chart for the SNB-5, the pilot went through the procedures for manually lowering the gear. With gear handle down and circuit breakers pulled, he uncovered the emergency clutch, pushed the clutch forward, engaged the manual crank and pulled up and aft on it. The handle didn't move! Exerting more force on it, he only stopped when he became afraid of breaking the crank off. Pulling the clutch aft with his toe and heel he covered it again, and both pilots checked the gear visually. It appeared down and locked, but the red light stayed on. The horn just kept on blowing!

Talking it over, the pilots decided they had done everything that could be done, that their trouble was in the

electrical system and that their best line of action was to go on in and land. They were pretty certain the wheels were locked.

The copilot called the tower, informed them of the situation and asked for crash equipment to stand by. The tower rogered and cleared them for a straight-in approach.

A good approach and a smooth touchdown were made although the light remained on and the horn blew all the way in. On the roll-out, the landing gear slowly retracted and the SNB slid to a stop on its belly. The wheels weren't locked!

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehosophat! I wonder how many of our light bomber pilots know the procedures for manually lowerin' the gear by heart or how many carry the Emergency Flip Chart these lads had along? Not that the chart helped any since the pilots missed on a couple of real important points.

First of all, SLOW DOWN! Second, put the gear handle down, pull the gear circuit breakers and leave 'em pulled. Third, depress the emergency clutch ALL THE WAY and after the wheels drop, KEEP IT DEPRESSED while you engage the crank and crank like CRAZY! Visually check the clutch and then if the horn blows with the throttle retarded, they're NOT locked, and you go through it all again.

Both pilots KNOW they should have had a maintenance or safety officer come to the tower for a check of their situation before landing with a horn blowing, so Ol' Gramps won't beat them to death on THAT subject! How are YOUR emergency procedures?

Rush Job

A couple of gents with some 7000 total flight hours and almost 1300 hours in the *Beechcraft* between them made their final approach to a landing after an uneventful 4.5 hour flight. The touchdown and roll-out were normal, a real greased-on job.

At about 45 knots as the tail started to lower, the pilot reached down to open the cowl flaps. The left cowl flap opened easily, but as he was pulling up on the right cowl handle, it slipped out of his hand and turned to the right. He pulled it again, but as he did so he felt something bump the back of his hand.

The warning horn started blaring, and both pilots realized with horror that the gear was retracting! Since their speed was too slow even to attempt a wave-off, both pilots immediately secured ignition, batteries, and fuel. With props turned to clubs, the SNB slid to a stop on the runway. The landing gear handle had been accidentally bumped to the UP position.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sonofagun! What all the blasted rush to open cowl flaps and raise landing flaps is, I really can't figure out!

First, you gotta land the bird, and that isn't completed until you either turn off the runway or have to apply power to taxi.

Cylinder temp is usually pretty low after a normal landing approach and touchdown. Why sweat it?

Raisin' the landing flaps can be lots of help in a crosswind and help you maintain directional control on a roll-out, but remember: as they come up,

ILLUSTRATED BY Osborn

be prepared for an increase in lift on the upwind wing as they pass through 10 to 13 degrees of flap! This can be the start of a whooperdo of a ground-loop.

Head Up and Locked

Scheduled for a night proficiency hop in a T-28 were a couple of instructors. In order to expedite their departure, the front seat pilot performed the preflight while the rear seat man filed the necessary flight plan. Returning from OPS, this man found the pilot all strapped in and waiting to "fire her up." As he strapped himself in, the rear seat man asked if the preflight was completed. His buddy answered "I got the gear, gas and oil."

After taxiing out to the duty runway and completing a thorough engine run-up, they received take-off clearance. At 40 knots rolling, they had a slight left drift. The pilot applied a little right rudder pressure—no effect. He tapped right brake and the T-28 straightened out.

At 80 knots he tried to pull the nose wheel off—the stick would not move! He tried to shove the stick forward—it seemed frozen! Chopping the throttle he called "Tower, aborting" and went from brisk taps to hard braking, but the brakes seemed completely ineffective. About now the co-pilot called the tower, "Going off the end," cut the mixture and gas, while the pilot got the mags and battery off and blew the canopy.

As they hit the perimeter fence after a bumpy ride through the rough overrun, the nose wheel sheared and they ground to a halt. The controls gust lock was STILL ON!

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin catfish! There's nothin' in this flyin' business that can take the place of a check-off list. The throttle lock didn't work in this case, but No. 1 item both on entering the cockpit and before take-off is to check the flight controls for free and proper movement. If these lads don't straighten out and get with it, some day they're gonna rush out and "buy the farm."

Hairy

The pilots of a couple of A4D-2N's had filed a DD-175 for a night instrument training hop. After an extensive briefing and a thorough preflight of their aircraft, they started engines and ran through the pre-taxi check-off lists. During taxi to the duty runway, check lists were run through again and re-checked after taking position on the runway for a section take-off.

The wingman found everything checked O. K. and placed his lights on bright and flashing to signal he was ready to roll. Both pilots released brakes, and the initial take-off roll was very smooth.

At about 130 knots, the flight leader lifted his nose off, and the wingman attempted to do the same. He received no response from back stick despite heavy control movements. Thinking his nose strut had deflated, he tried one rocking motion with a good amount of forward stick and then full back stick. No response! He had to decrease power to keep from over-running the lead plane as he was accelerating faster, owing to his own lower angle of attack. He had also been applying intermittent nose-up trim, but had not used the console trim over-ride switch.

Right now he decided to abort the take-off. He had used up about two-thirds of the runway and the arresting gear was still ahead of him. Speed brakes were extended, power cut to idle, maximum brakes short of tire blowout applied, and the tail hook handle to the down position. He now saw some colored lights to the side of the runway and got off the brakes since he thought they marked the arresting gear. After what seemed an endless wait, there was no arrestment, and he realized he was going off the end. He looked at the airspeed indicator with ejection in mind. He had slightly less than 100 knots and about 1500 feet of the runway remaining.

He quickly decided on ejection, pushed on FULL THROTTLE and pulled in the speed brakes! He alternated between watching the runway end, the approaching airfield boundary fence and the airspeed indicator. Finally he felt he could wait no longer and as the airspeed was passing through 110 knots, pulled the face curtain!

The whole cockpit lit up with a white glare and he felt a steady acceleration, not a jolt as he expected. As he tumbled, he could see the sparks and flame of the rocket and almost instantly the parachute began streaming out between his legs, gleaming sort of pink from the reflected glow of the burning plane. If it would only blossom, he felt he'd be O.K.!

He felt no opening shock of the chute and hit the ground with what seemed a tremendous impact. He did not lose consciousness, but the wind was knocked out of him for 10 or 15 seconds. About this time, he realized he had driven his legs into soft marshy ground almost to his hips! Heat waves from the burning A4D washed over him as he lay mired in the mud. He had to get away before it blew!

With tremendous effort he managed to unstrap, unzip, and climb out of the torso harness, leaving the whole works in the mud. He crawled about 50 feet further away from the fire where he met the crash crew and final rescue. His injuries? A sprained left ankle, left knee and some chipped teeth!

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! This is the hairiest ejection I've run across yet! The RAPEC seat and all the associated hardware functioned exactly as advertised, but the NB-9 chute only streamed and did NOT blossom! It had not been packed in accordance with the Handbook of Maintenance Instructions! The HMI was in the maintenance office, not in the parachute loft—the riggers claimed they didn't know it existed!

Today's ejection seats are highly complicated mechanisms. Maintained perfectly, they work perfectly. This is a life-or-death one-shot mechanism. There can be no deviations or compromises allowed where seat maintenance is involved. Answer this critical question: How's *YOUR* quality control?