GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Dangerous Duct

A squadron power plants crew, consisting of a division supervisor, plane captain, tractor driver and electrician, was assigned the task of trouble shooting a fire warning light discrepancy on the port engine of an F-4B. At approximately 2000 on a pleasant November night, the tractor driver towed a starting unit to the aircraft which was spotted at the high power turn-up spot.

The tractor driver procured sound attenuator head sets for himself and the supervisor, and the plane captain manned the aircraft for turnup. Although intake duct screens were available, the crew exerted little effort to locate them and proceeded to start the engine without a screen.

The port engine started normally but after a few minutes of operation, the plane captain misinterpreted a nonstandard "light" signal from the supervisor to be the "engine cut" signal and secured the engine. After restarting the engine, the supervisor directed the tractor driver to tow the starting pod to another high power turn-up area.

The plane captain had been operating the port engine at full power for about ten minutes when the port engine fire warning light came on. He

retarded the throttle to idle and the supervisor mounted the aircraft via the ladder in front of the idling engine and took up a position on the starboard intake duct. The electrician manned the aft cockpit and closed the canopy.

The engine was again advanced to full military power. Shortly thereafter the electrician observed the tractor return and park next to the port wing with the lights out, but neither man at the front cockpit saw the driver return to the aircraft on the tractor. A couple of minutes later, the plane captain quickly secured the engine when he heard a loud thump and felt the vibration.

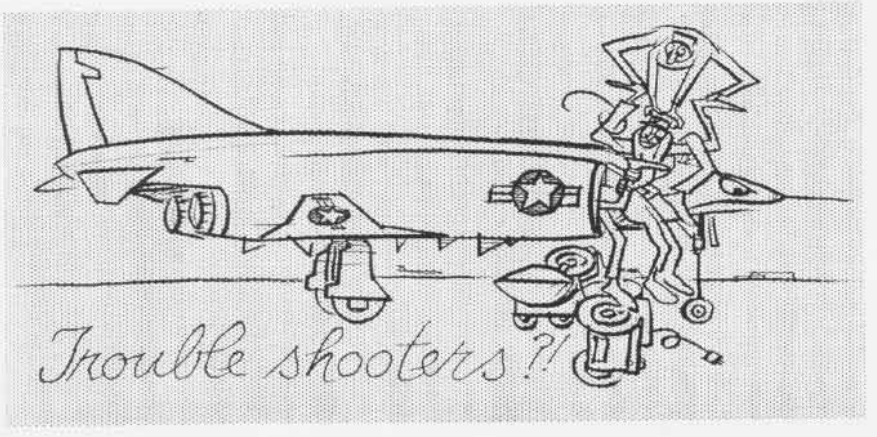
The supervisor, suspecting an afterfire, jumped down from the plane and inspected the tail pipe. He saw the tractor parked by the port wing and promptly went to the intake duct where he found the critically injured tractor driver. He immediately called for the crash crew and ambulance. The medical officer arrived in the ambulance and removed the tractor driver from the intake duct. He was taken to the dispensary for emergency treatment and transfer to the hospital.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great heavenly days! It's just down right sickenin' when you think of the number of instructions, directives, procedures, articles and posters that have been put out in an effort to keep this sort of thing from happening. People are briefed, rebriefed, cautioned, and cautioned again. Still we have that well known per cent who refuse to use their heads.

In attempting to conduct maintenance of this type in an unlighted area and allowing full power turn-ups without intake duct screens, the supervisor was just askin' for trouble.

This lad had been warned several times about the inherent dangers of working around jet intakes, but he just wasn't too impressed. As a result he was critically injured and could have easily bought the farm.



Poor Headwork

It was a beautiful California day as two proficiency pilots proceeded to their T-28B for a local flight. After a normal pre-flight, they taxied out and took off. The pilot in the front cockpit was current in the aircraft, but the dual pilot had not flown the T-28 for two years.

They intended to fly locally for a while, then proceed to another military field in the local area and practice landings for a while.

ILLUSTRATED BY Osborn

Takeoff was uneventful, but while climbing to altitude, they experienced radio trouble: the ICS transmissions were being transmitted over UHF. Shortly after leveling off at 6000 feet, the pilot in the front cockpit instructed his dual pilot to take over while he attempted to correct the radio difficulty. He did not receive a reply over the radio, but thought the pilot in the rear cockpit acknowledged by shaking the stick.

While the dual pilot enjoyed the scenery of the California coast line and the pilot in the front cockpit searched for the radio trouble, the little plane entered a descending right bank. As the aircraft picked up speed, the nose came up, but at this point the little bird fell off into a steep right bank, and the nose fell through. Each of the pilots thought the other was flying the aircraft until the speed and angle of bank reached proportions great enough to shock them. Suddenly they both grabbed the controls in an attempt to bring the aircraft back to straight and level flight. When the dual pilot realized the pilot had control, he released the stick.

The pilot climbed the aircraft back to 6000 feet where he checked the slow flight characteristics. During the check, both pilots noted that they had pulled over six positive G's in getting out of the unusual attitude.

Since there was no noticeable airframe damage or, at least, none that they could see from the cockpit, they decided to continue the flight as planned and proceeded to the nearby field for practice landings. After the pilot made five landings, he parked the plane to change cockpits with his dual pilot. When the pilot inspected the aircraft, he noted creases and wrinkles on the undersurface of the horizontal stabilizer. Instead of downing the aircraft for inspection by qualified personnel, the pilots cranked up and flew the little bird to their home base where they reported the damage.

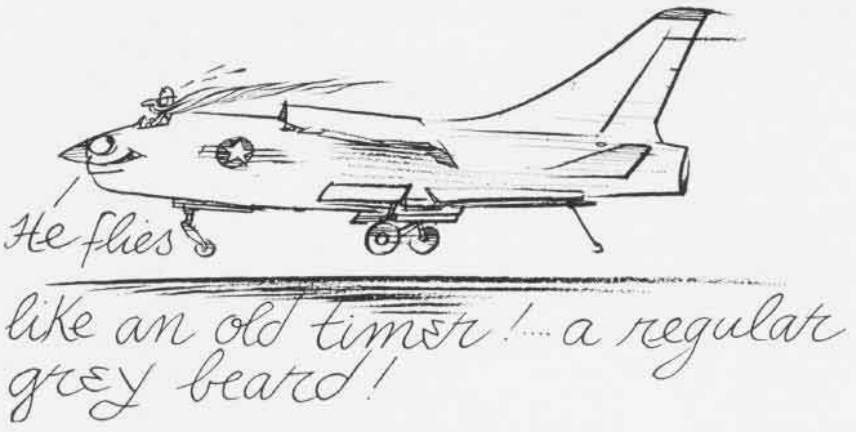
Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehosophat! Fetch me another aspirin tablet, while my ulcer does a few didos and my tired blood sputters. It's pretty plain your ol' Gramps didn't get through to these lads as yours truly wrote a few choice words on two gents last November that pulled just about the same stunt.

These fellows were well aware that they exceeded the G limits during pull-out. But just because the little plane didn't shed any parts, they kept right on flying. Even after they saw the wrinkles in the stabilizer, they cranked up and flew the bird home.

Now, I don't reckon there is a law against usin' poor judgment, but there's certainly no use abusin' the privilege.

This stunt was downright childish. We can't use kid stuff in this business.



Real Sharp

Two F-8A *Crusader* pilots departed a Marine Corps air station on the West Coast for an in-type instrument check flight. Shortly after takeoff, the chase pilot declared an emergency owing to fluctuating oil pressure, and the lead pilot escorted him back to the field. After the chase plane had landed safely, the escort pilot executed a wave-off, cleaned up and headed toward the sea in a climb.

As the aircraft passed through 20,000 feet in burner at .95 indicated Mach, the canopy glass exploded. Fragments of the canopy shattered the pilot's visor, causing a laceration of his right cheek and eye with loss of vision in the right eye.

The pilot immediately observed the effects of windblast in the cockpit. He quickly realized the canopy had failed, but determined that the aircraft was functioning normally with no indication of smoke or fire. He lowered his seat to prevent accidental windblast ejection, reduced speed by coming out of burner and cutting power to idle, dropped the speed brakes and began a normal descent.

A Mayday transmission was made on guard, but the pilot was unable to receive clearly the answering station because of windblast noise. He then contacted El Toro tower, gave them his situation and requested a straight-in approach with the crash crew standing by. Approach control requested the pilot to change frequencies for radar control and approved the straight-in approach. The MOREST gear was not available on this 6300-foot runway, but the pilot was able to stop the aircraft by cutting power and applying brakes. The overrun chain gear was available but not needed.

The crash crew was waiting for the aircraft when it came to a stop and immediately warned the pilot that the face curtain was partially pulled. After the safety pin was inserted, the crash crew assisted the dazed pilot from the cockpit. The only damage to the aircraft was the broken canopy glass.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Yipes, how hairy can it get! This lad has got what it takes! Cast-iron guts, brains, and skill are a mighty hard combination to beat. Now here is a lad with less than 600 hours total flight time and only 27 hours in model, yet he handled this emergency like a real old timer.

The board concluded that "he did an incredible job of flying and landing the aircraft on a short runway without arresting gear while beset by extreme physical stresses plus loss of vision in his right eye." Amen. Couldn't have said it better myself.

Makes ol' Gramps mighty proud to place this youngster's name near the top of the "Real Pro Roster."