



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Hacked Hawk

Thoroughly prepared and briefed for a scheduled two-hour, low-level navigation flight, the two A-4B weekend drivers became airborne at 0915. After one hour of uneventful flight, the leader noted the failure of his port wing drop tank to transfer. He decided to terminate the flight immediately and return to homeplate. En route, he performed a slow flight check of the aircraft and discovered that, with a full left drop tank, he was able to fly the machine with an on-speed angle-of-attack indication by utilizing only half of the available aileron trim.

Checking in with the tower, the *Skyhawk* driver requested and received clearance for a straight-in approach to runway 17. He was further advised that the surface wind was 240 degrees at 12 knots. Fuel state at this time was 1,200 pounds internal and between 1,200 and 1,500 pounds in the port drop tank. The approach was normal except for a slightly steep descent to the final glide slope made necessary by the presence of another aircraft on practice GCA. Because of this the pilot was not aware of the

amount of crab required to compensate for the crosswind.

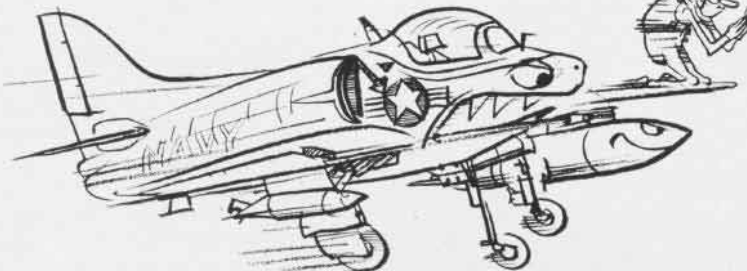
At approximately 200 feet after touchdown, the aircraft entered an uncontrollable port swerve and

proceeded off the runway to a mat area, then on to an open grass area for a distance of some 2,000 feet. With this development, the anxious driver elected to apply full throttle and attempt to get airborne for another try. As the *Skyhawk* accelerated to flying speed, the right main mount struck a mound of dirt. The strut sheared and forced the gear aft into the flap so that it separated from the aircraft. Nevertheless, the plane continued ahead for approximately 100 feet and luckily managed to get airborne.

This time the pilot climbed out over a large lake and jettisoned both drop tanks. He then returned and requested a Morest landing on runway 27. When the gear was ready, he commenced a full-flap approach, unaware that the right flap had long since departed the aircraft. Touchdown was effected at 125 knots, 100 feet short of the arresting gear and on the centerline. The right wing dropped but he caught it and was able to hold wings level with aileron and power. Engagement was 50-60 feet right of centerline, and the machine came to rest on the starboard wing tip, port main and nose gears. After shutting the engine down, the uninjured pilot stepped clear.



maybe a prayer will do it!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehosophat! This young fella could have saved himself a lot of grief by readin' page 24 of the NATOPS Pocket Check List and just using a little common sense. Maximum asymmetrical load for landing and takeoff is 1,200 pounds in this *Hawk* and everybody else knows you find it a lot easier to put the heavy wing into the crosswind.

The price of that tank is around \$1,800 and the cost to repair Charlie damage is approximately \$18,000. Simple arithmetic shows it's a lot better to use standardized procedures than to rely on luck and superstition.

ILLUSTRATED BY *Opbom*

Pro Sans Luck

While cruising at 7,000 feet, the port engine of the SP-2E commenced backfiring. The pilot reduced power and the engine smoothed out. The engine analyzer, however, indicated that number one and two cylinders were not firing on the left magneto. The PPC increased manifold pressure and the engine began backfiring again. A small amount of oil was seen coming from the inboard cowl flap and the PPC immediately secured the engine. The shutdown was normal in all respects, and further inspection gave no evidence of fire. With the situation temporarily squared away, the PPC elected to continue on to his destination which was the nearest military field. The control center was informed and a descent to 6,000 feet was approved.

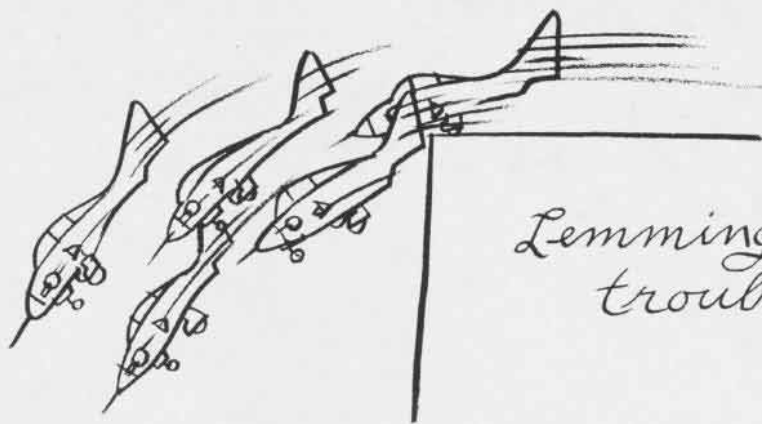
About five minutes later, smoke was observed coming from the port engine. An emergency was declared and the pilot was given a vector to a nearby civilian airport. The crew was directed to make preparations for bailing out as the fire increased in intensity. The center was informed it would be necessary to land immediately or the crew would be forced to bail out.

The center vectored the *Neptune* to a small private airport directly below and a single engine landing was attempted on a 3,300-foot runway. The PPC brought the P-2 to a complete stop 500 feet off the end of the runway with no apparent damage incurred on landing; all hands exited without injury. The airport fire jeep arrived within two minutes, but did not have sufficient equipment to extinguish the fire. Before the city fire trucks could reach the scene, the aircraft was completely engulfed in flames.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Too bad! The operation was a success but the patient died. This is an outstanding testimonial to back up my insistence on using military fields as much as possible. This plane crew was well organized and handled the emergency in a professional manner, but was unfortunate enough not to be close to a military field which could have fought the fire and saved the plane. (The culprit causing this mishap was failure of the exhaust valve



Lemming trouble!

on the number two cylinder.)

It gets Ole Gramps right in the pocketbook to lose one of these machines, but it sure makes me proud to add these boys to the "Ole Pro list."

Short Changed

Concluding an RON or two on the Pacific Coast, the two seasoned instructors headed for their *Cougar* at 0530 with hopes of getting back to the old homestead in Texas at a decent hour. After preflighting, strapping in and copying the clearance, the pilots discovered that the engine would not turn over.

While maintenance replaced the starter, the duo ate breakfast and tried again at 1030 to get airborne. This time the engine turned up, but the RPM fluctuation was excessive and the plane was returned to maintenance. The drivers, a little discouraged, departed for the club to eat lunch.

At 1846, with all systems indicating go, they became airborne and flew uneventfully to a civilian airport for fuel. They filed for destination at 2050 and, following a normal preflight, climbed aboard, turned up and taxied to a designated area to "burn down" excess fuel. This step was considered necessary because of runway temperature and the reputation of the plane for being "sluggish." After completing the "burndown," they went over the check list for a flaps-up takeoff with the radio magnetic indicator in the free position.

The tower issued positive directions to follow a Cessna over to

what appeared to be the apex of runway 35 and 04. In reply to their request for takeoff clearance, the tower directed, "Switch to Departure Control, cleared for immediate takeoff runway 4 landing traffic." (Runway lights on all runways were turned on.)

Takeoff roll commenced with the rear seat man instructed to call off distance markers and air speed. No distance markers were observed. At an estimated 5,000 feet of roll, the tower called on guard channel to advise them they were on a short runway with little distance remaining. (Total runway length was 7,000 feet.) At this same instant, the front seat driver saw what appeared to be the end of the runway and despite all effort to abort, the *Cougar* passed the end of the runway, proceeded through a fence, and came to rest about 200 yards out in an open field. The two aviators, none the worse for wear, jettisoned the canopy and got out.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Egads! Ole Gramps can't win for losing. After trying every trick in the book to get those fuel stretchers to stop and get pumped up, these two just couldn't stand prosperity and booby-trapped themselves.

I ain't saying it wasn't easy to get confused with all the runway lights on, but you just can't expect as much individual attention from a civilian tower operator as you get on a military field. In spite of the extenuating circumstances, the driver in charge is responsible and a little pilot error is like a little smell of garlic—there ain't no such thing.