



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Head for the Hills

Navy's crusty old safety officer departed an East Coast station for a period of rest and relaxation. He was intent on a test run of a new mode of transportation, namely, one toboggan.

At the test site, the intrepid aviator and his passenger checked terrain, gear and weather conditions. The terrain was rough and hilly with numerous obstacles, mostly trees. Snow covered the ground, contributing to an already icy condition, and temperatures were below normal. After the preflight, the ancient sage of *NANews* and his passenger began a test hop — and almost immediately sideswiped a tree. The passenger was unhurt but the Peerless Pilot suffered a knee injury which put him in the hospital for several weeks and in a cast for several more weeks.

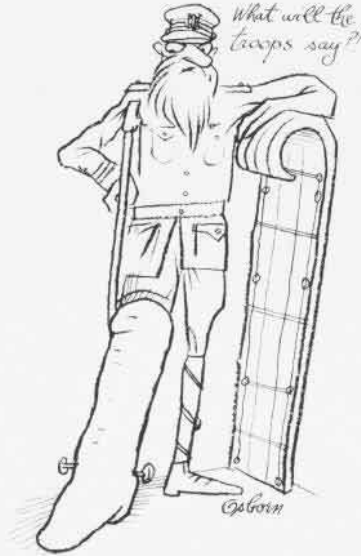


Grampaw Pettibone says:

@#%&*@#! Thunderation! This'n really frosted me! Goes to show yah that you gotta be mighty keeful no matter whatcha do, whether you're drivin' flying machines or toboggans! (Grumble, grumble, grumble!)

Riderless Horse

Reveille came at 0400 for the A-7B pilots of a light attack squadron deployed aboard an attack carrier. Briefing was scheduled at 0445 with the first launch at 0600. Two of the four scheduled *Corsair II*'s completed the launch and, after the mission was completed, returned for an IFR recovery. The two pilots separated for individual Case III approaches. The wingman, a lieutenant (junior grade), marshaled on the 220 degree radial of the carrier's TACAN, 31 nautical miles at 17,000 feet. Ship's weather was given to him as 1,200 feet overcast with 3/4 to one mile visibility in fog, tops at 10,000 feet.

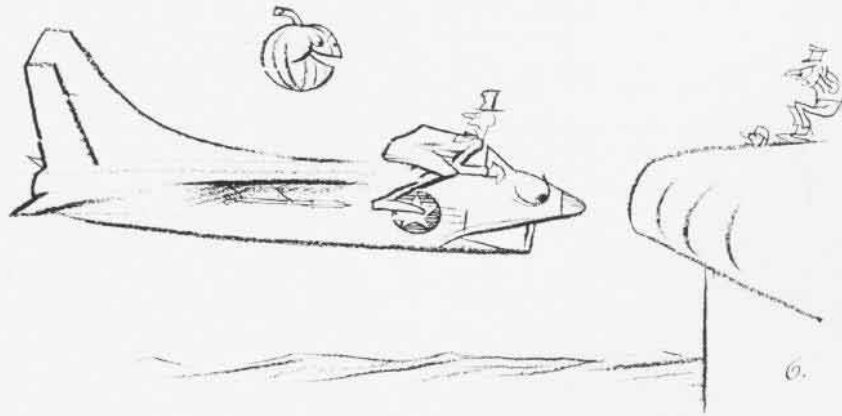


Departing marshal on schedule, he called "platform" at 20 miles, 5,000 feet, and took a cut to the final bearing of 035 degrees. Change to landing configuration came at ten miles with the J.G. electing to make a Mode II approach, using the cross needles because of a previous problem with the pitch mode of the automatic flight control system.

At one mile, he was on centerline and slightly low. Looking for the ball without success he called "Clara" (no ball) and disengaged the automatic throttle. In response to the LSO's call that he was a little low and to drop his hook (which he had forgotten), the pilot raised his nose and added some power. The engine chugged slightly and about that time the ball came into view on the lens. Because the ball was rising, power was reduced. The *Corsair* promptly started to settle. The LSO called for power and the J.G. went to military thrust.

For several seconds there was no response from the engine. The pilot felt he was either going to hit the ramp or the water. Thinking the engine had quit, he immediately pulled the face curtain and ejected, wings level, 125 knots at 150 to 200 feet. He was deposited in the water aft of the ship while his A-7 continued the approach.

Leveling off, the empty *Corsair II* proceeded straight ahead, passed the ship, then turned downwind. As the aircraft left the 180 degree position on its next approach, the angle of bank gradually increased to past 90 degrees, and the *Corsair* hit the water, the engine still running smoothly.



Ichabod Crane will be next!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh my achin' bones. Don't think this didn't happen, 'cause it really did. It's hard to second guess the pilot who's on the spot, but seems as though there's one factor missing in this guy's impetuous decision to get out: What happens to the bird afterwards?

These driverless airplanes ain't quite like the horse who throws his rider and then trots home to the barn. They seldom make it and often wreak considerable havoc on the way. One which recently did make it practically destroyed the barn and all its contents in the process. Another, an F-4, took off after its crew had ejected and flew more than a mile toward home plate before crashing into a house. What next? If this guy had been coupled to the ACLS, the bird might have completed the approach to an arrested landing without him. Careful young 'un, you can be replaced by a black box.

Kick the Tire and Light the Fire

The skipper briefed his division of three lieutenants for a transcontinental cross-country in their new F-4J *Phantoms*. Home-based on one coast, they were scheduled to deploy to the other for training. The #2 man, the C.O.'s wingman, prepared the flight log containing the route of flight, nav aids, and courses and distances. This was then xeroxed for each member of the flight. The flight plan (DD-175) which had been prepared previously called for a distance of 1,053 miles to destination and a no-wind ETE of two hours and five minutes at flight level 310 with two hours and 30 minutes of fuel on board. It was filed at NAS operations by #2 who also received the weather brief for the flight. The only significant weather was a predicted 75-knot average headwind, gradually increasing toward the destination.

The first section took off at about 0915, getting airborne with a calculated 16,400 pounds of fuel on board. A 450-knot and .82-Mach climb was made to 31,000 feet where the power was set to an eyeball 3,000-pounds-per-hour fuel flow on each engine. This was not changed until letdown. These settings gave them an indicated Mach of .88 and a true airspeed of 523 knots, with a ground speed of seven miles per minute.

A mental fuel calculation, 454

miles from destination, showed that their estimated fuel reserve of 1,500 pounds had shrunk to a little over 1,000 pounds. Beyond that point, their ground speed showed a decrease to six and sometimes five miles per minute. As late as 178 miles from destination, when it was estimated that there would be only 400 pounds of fuel reserve and a safe divert could have still been made, the decision was made to continue. An idle descent from 50 miles out was begun at what was stated as 600 pounds fuel remaining; nozzles at 1/2 closed and 250 knots. By the time #2 reached 15,000 feet, he had zero fuel remaining and the port engine flamed out. The ram air turbine was extended and, shortly thereafter, the starboard engine quit.

The lieutenant and his NFO stayed with the stricken aircraft until it reached 1,500 feet and only 3 1/2 miles off the approach end of the duty runway. Two hours and twenty-one minutes after takeoff, they made a precision ejection, landing without mishap, and were picked up and completed the trip via Navy helicopter.

The skipper landed about one minute after the crash with zero fuel



This sort of thing really knots me up!

indications. During roll-out, both his engines flamed out. He asked the tower to have ATC divert the second section, about an hour behind, to an alternate air field.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

If this ain't the consarndest, goldangdist spectacle of airmanship I ever saw in all my born days. It's not only a reflection on the C.O. involved, but a purty fair indictment of those who selected him for the job in the first place.

Flight planning? What's that? Their flight log contained no provision for a fuel plan or fuel log, and there were no entries for time en route. The DD-175 didn't even show who actually was flying in each aircraft and did not include any wind conditions.

The most basic inflight fuel calculations would have shown that the situation was deteriorating below required minimums by the time they had flown halfway. Even after that, the flight leader showed mighty poor headwork in continuing instead of turning back when he eventually did realize that they would be short of fuel.

The almost non-existent jet-cruise-control techniques applied to the flight resulted in over 1,000 pounds excessive use of fuel. Cruise-control techniques are something most pilots are supposed to learn in flight school.

This is precisely the type of accident for which there is no possible justification and, until responsible supervisors and leaders in the Navy are held *responsible*, they will continue to occur unabated.