



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

All Wet Decision

Two reserve lieutenants were scheduled for a FAM flight from NAS Coast in an E-1B. The aircraft commander, with approximately 250 hours in type, was to supervise the other pilot, who had over 1,200 hours in the *Tracer*, but only ten hours in the last two years.

Since this was a FAM flight, the preflight, prestart and start procedures were performed with unusual thoroughness. The aircraft commander occupied the right seat; the FAM pilot, the left. No discrepancies were noted and the aircraft left NAS Coast using an instrument departure. The aircraft broke out in the clear during its climb, and the pilot cancelled the instrument flight plan and commenced the high work, which included stalls in various configurations and single-engine procedures.

Following the high work, the aircraft entered the traffic pattern for practice landings at an island airfield approximately 65 miles from NAS Coast. Since the field was below VFR minimums, the pilots were to conduct IFR approaches with touch-and-go landings. The E-1B completed a TACAN to a landing. During the next approach, a GCA, the port engine "popped" several times and there was a port swerve from the power loss.

The plane commander elected to return to NAS Coast; the copilot concurred. Following proper voice communications, the E-1B turned toward NAS Coast. The port engine commenced backfiring and popping again. While the plane commander reached for the secure checklist, the copilot secured the port engine. (At this time they were eight to ten miles from the island airfield.)

The plane commander completed the engine checklist. With power set, the *Tracer* maintained 1,200 feet, 105 KIAS with one-third flaps. At this



point, the plane commander told the copilot that they should return to the island airfield. The copilot, however, persuaded the plane commander to continue to home field—because the maintenance was better there.

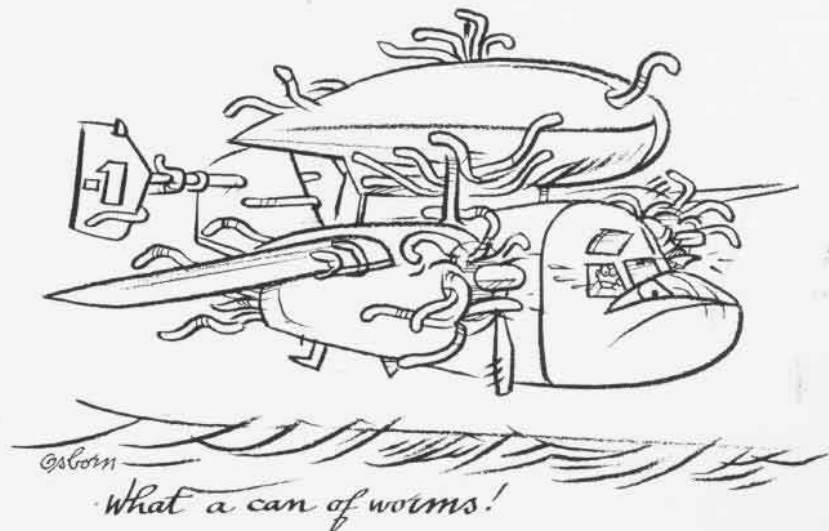
The aircraft established contact

with approach control and the pilots decided to dump some fuel since they were approaching an overcast. During dump, no movement of the fuel gauge needles was noted, although dumping was visually evident. The dump switch was then secured. Immediately thereafter, the starboard low fuel warning light came on and stayed on. They were now 43 miles from NAS Coast.

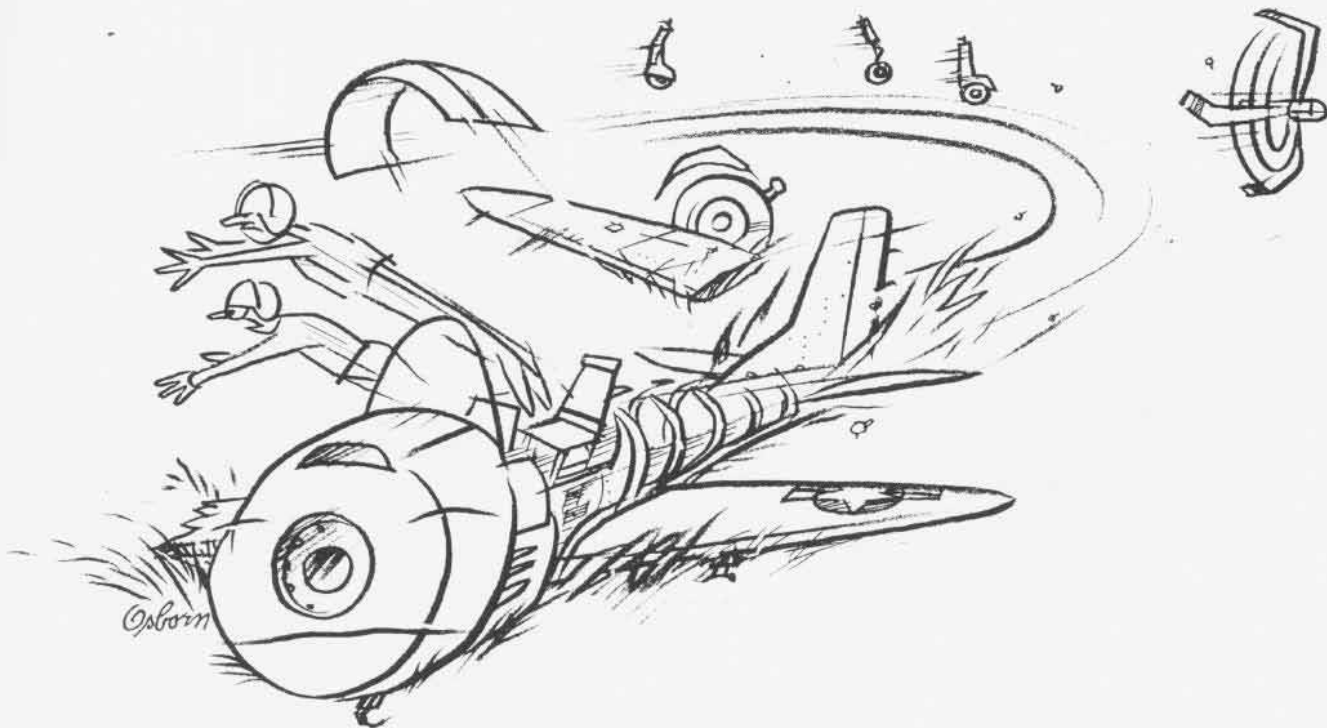
Minutes later, they noted a low reading on their hydraulic pressure and advised approach of a partial hydraulic failure. Very shortly, the starboard engine started missing. The plane commander tried various movements of the mixture control, prop and throttle; but the engine continued to miss. The copilot restarted the port engine which ran "roughly and intermittently."

The E-1B descended through the cloud cover and stabilized at 300 feet with intermittent power on both engines. At approximately 30 miles from home field, the plane commander reported they were "going into the water." Power was gone on both engines and the aircraft ditched.

The uninjured pilots were rescued by helo and the aircraft, which floated, was recovered by a nearby Navy ship.



What a can of worms!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Leapin' lizards! I don't believe it! It's purty darn hard to believe that two "supposedly" experienced Naval Aviators would leave one landing field for another when they had a problem of this kind! Son, after you made a correct decision—to return to that island airfield—you let the copilot talk you out of it. Why?

No matter what happened after the aircraft left the original field, that decision eventually led to your flyin' machine goin' into the water. There's no excuse for this type of accident, which, if handled properly would have been an incident which reads, "Aircraft had rough running engine in GCA pattern; landed uneventfully following GCA." It's that simple!

In the Rough

A lieutenant junior grade instructor and his ensign student were cleared for a day transition flight in their T-28 *Trojan*. Engine run-up, takeoff and departure were normal. After the high work was completed, the instructor gave simulated high and low altitude emergencies to the student, who performed well.

The *Trojan* proceeded into the landing pattern to perform a series of

full flap and no flap touch-and-go landings. On the first approach, in the full flap configuration, the ensign touched down in a slightly nose low, or "flat," attitude, so the instructor demonstrated the next landing. The student then performed two more full flap landings and, on both approaches, he adjusted his power and attitude to touch down in the normal landing area.

On the fourth approach, the ensign was instructed to perform a no flap landing. He completed his approach and rolled out on final with approximately 1,200 feet of straight-away and continued his descent toward the runway. The T-28's main landing gear unexpectedly contacted the ground almost 20 feet prior to the approach end of the runway, with the nose gear touching down at the same time about 12 feet in front of the runway surface.

The aircraft continued onto the runway and the starboard main gear collapsed. The nose gear folded next, and the aircraft began a swerve to the right. The propeller began to strike the runway, then separated from the engine and continued down the runway. The port landing gear collapsed as the aircraft continued to veer right, toward the crash truck. Fire appeared under the starboard side of the *Trojan*

as it slid on down the runway.

The starboard wing struck the left front wheel of the crash truck. The wing separated from the aircraft and came to rest approximately 50 feet beyond the runway, stopping approximately 150 feet beyond the crash truck, perpendicular to the runway. The instructor blew open the canopy and both pilots exited the aircraft without serious injury. The student suffered minor burns. The aircraft was a total loss.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy Hannah! A fella once said, "There is nothing more useless than runway behind you." Well, in most cases the fella was correct. However, there ain't nothing more useless than runway in front of you—if you don't land on it!

The fellas investigatin' the accident couldn't find a darn thing wrong with the machine—not surprising, I'm sure. When a student can't recognize a dangerous situation, it's time for the instructor to immediately take action. I can't help but believe that some people are in the wrong occupation. Being a flight instructor is a mighty tough and demandin' business which requires 100 percent of your attention, 100 percent of the time—believe it!