



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

The Tragic Demo

The lieutenant junior grade instructor pilot and his second lieutenant student were scheduled for a syllabus aerobic hop in a T-28 *Trojan*. The instructor, as is customary, was to occupy the rear seat with the student in front.

Preflight, brief, takeoff and field departure were normal with the student at the controls. After a climb to 10,000 feet, the student performed several aerobic maneuvers as directed by the instructor pilot. After these maneuvers were completed, the instructor took control and announced his intention to demonstrate a Square Immelmann which would require increased airspeed and a 5 G pull-up. On a westerly heading, the instructor lowered the nose and gained 280 knots, then initiated a sharp pull-up. The student noted five to five-and-a-half Gs on the accelerometer and the aircraft began to break apart. A right roll of the fuselage commenced, the canopy shattered and, during the course of these events, the instructor was fatally injured.

The student released his lap belt and was thrown clear and below the aircraft, whereupon he deployed his parachute. The fuselage continued its roll on a westerly heading, impacting in shallow water near the shoreline. The student landed three-fourths of a mile away in the water. He was assisted by a civilian boat.

The accident board concluded that an overstress of the aircraft occurred which was not observed by the student due to a lag in the G meter.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well I'll be a monkey's grampaw! Would you believe that, with all the emphasis the "big fellows" have placed on violation of sound judgment and airmanship, etc., we still have a few who don't seem to get the word! It wasn't too long ago that two other instructors "bought the



farm" in their T-28 (All Claws — No Brains, May 1972) while conducting "authorized maneuvers." Don't we ever learn?

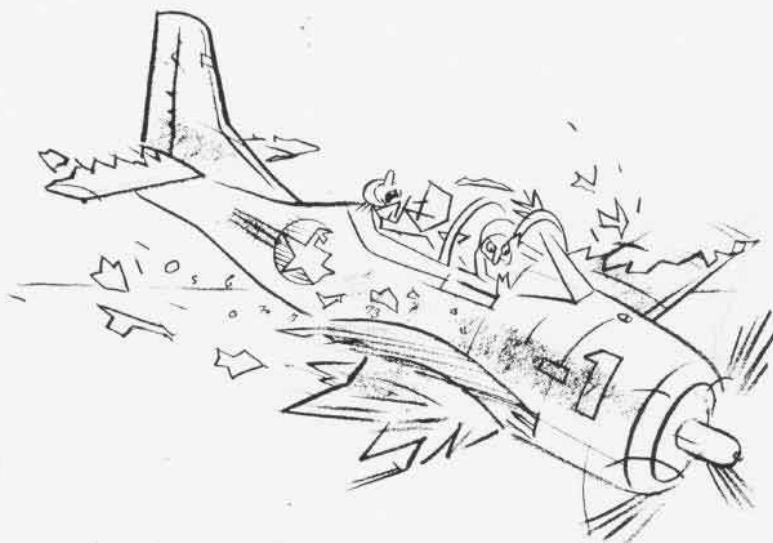
For the majority of the flight instructors, and other aviators, as a matter of fact — you need not read on. But for the three percent who

have tried the unauthorized maneuvers, knowingly violated the rules, performed a little unauthorized low level flying, etc., *You* are living on borrowed time — be smart and aggressive, not foolhardy and stupid! A real pro knows the difference!!!

Shish Kebab

Following a normal brief, the Marine Aviators manned their two A-4E *Skyhawks* for an ordnance training mission. After takeoff, the flight commenced climbing. At approximately 10,000 feet, the wingman experienced intermittent radio problems. When the flight switched frequencies to contact the range controller, the radio failed completely, the white cockpit lights went out and the fuel flow dropped and fluctuated. The pilot related visually to the leader that he had lost his radio.

As was prebriefed, the flight turned toward the ocean to jettison ordnance. After approximately 90 degrees of turn, the fuel flow gauge of the hapless aircraft shattered explosively, throwing splinters of glass throughout



ILLUSTRATED BY *Opdon*

the cockpit and emitting a small amount of smoke into the pressurized cabin.

The pilot joined upon the leader and indicated visually that he wanted to land immediately. The aircraft attitude indicator began malfunctioning (off flags flickered in and out) and the cockpit began filling with heavy smoke.

Assuming the lead, the pilot headed for the runway from which he had departed a few moments earlier. Dumping fuel, he deployed his emergency generator and secured all unnecessary electrical equipment in an attempt to regain radio contact and/or reduce the smoke in the cockpit. At this time, the flight was approximately 10 miles north of the field, setting up a straight-in approach to the runway. The escort declared an emergency, notifying the tower that the lead A-4 was coming in with an emergency of an unknown nature and would possibly be arresting because of his gross weight. He asked specifically that the crash crew be dispatched.

As the pilot reached five nautical miles he lowered the landing gear handle and simultaneously experienced what he interpreted to be a complete electrical failure. All landing gear indicators read "unsafe." As a precaution, he pulled the emergency landing gear handle and lowered the flap handle.

Despite the excessive overweight condition, he stopped the aircraft in 9,000 feet and pulled off the runway. During the aircraft's landing roll-out, the crash crew received a radio call to terminate the emergency. While the crash trucks returned to their original alert stations, the *Skyhawk* taxied partly into the de-arming area and tried to signal for the de-arming crew to check his aircraft for hot brakes and install his landing gear safety pins. During these few moments, he unknowingly continued to dump fuel under the aircraft.

Two other aircraft were in the de-arming area, some distance away, and both pilots noted that the pilot was dumping fuel. They called on the radio to give him this information but his radio remained inoperative. The other pilots then frantically gave him the NATOPS fuel dumping signal (turning over a cupped hand) but the pilot interpreted the signal as "come forward" since he had intentionally



Some Spaghetti!

stopped his hot brake aircraft a safe distance from the de-arming crew.

A moment later, the fuel beneath the aircraft ignited and enveloped the plane in flames. The pilot heard the engine decelerate, unstrapped from the seat pan and shoulder harness, disconnected his oxygen mask and vaulted over the windscreen and down the left side of the nose, quickly leaving the area. He received burns and lacerations on his unprotected hands. (He had removed his gloves after landing.) The crash crew, which had been prematurely secured, noted the burning aircraft, proceeded to the site and eventually extinguished the fire. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! I kinda' wonder what manner of aviator this lad is when he can only concentrate on one thing at a time — forgot to turn off his fuel dump because he was busy taking care of "another emergency." Unfortunately, his "reminder" was his aircraft engulfed in flames?! Beautiful, just beautiful! As far as I'm concerned — we can't afford expensive lessons of this kind.

In all fairness to this gent — he didn't get a heck of a lot of help. Some of his electrical problems were due to a nut which was improperly secured during a recent rework. For lack of a nail. . . !

Memo from Gramps

Heard one the other day that I must pass on — goes like this: "A C-121 was conducting practice approaches to a military field. During five of these approaches, one of the mainmounts broke away from the uplock more slowly than normal. On the sixth approach, this mainmount failed to extend at all (Gulp!). Following two recycle attempts, the gear did extend. Gear was then retracted (Yikes!) and the pilot returned to home base a short distance away. When the landing gear was lowered for the final landing, it failed to extend (no surprise to me!). After many recycles and emergency procedures, the gear did extend and lock into place; an uneventful landing followed."

There it is, gents — if you don't believe it, read it again. I can't believe that an experienced aviator with "roller" problems would bring up the rollers once he got 'em down, particularly when he was just a short distance from his home field and not experiencing other problems! Man — where is your common sense? When you have gear problems and you get it down, pending no other problems — *leave it down!* And just in case we have some sea lawyers around, I know that NATOPS doesn't mention leavin' the gear down; however, as you will note in the NATOPS Manuals, "No manual is a substitute for sound judgment."