



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

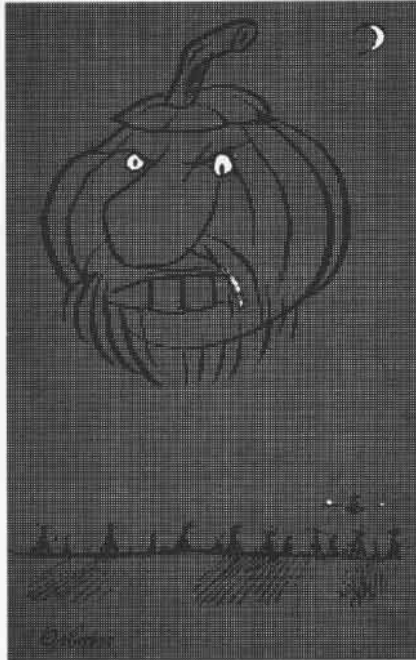
Grossest of the Gross

The unit flight schedule called for a four-plane division to practice road reconnaissance in the A-4 Skyhawk. The flight leader, a lieutenant commander, conducted a thorough brief of the scheduled mission. Preflight, start and taxi were uneventful.

Shortly after takeoff, the second section leader's radio failed and the lead was passed to his wingman. After they reached the briefed road reconnaissance reversal point, it was decided to terminate further recce maneuvers since the visibility and clouds were lower than briefed. The flight headed for home plate.

Approaching the local area, the division leader asked the second section leader if he wanted to make a "few turns." The second section leader accepted the suggestion and the flight proceeded northwest. During the climb, the two sections started a gradual separation and, at approximately FL 220, the two sections turned toward each other in preparation for offensive/defensive tactics.

One section stayed high while the other remained at a slightly lower alti-



tude. Following this turn-in, the leader of the higher section dropped his right wing and then his left several times as if he were trying to keep the lower section in sight under his nose. Immediately following these "wing dips" the

two leaders of the two sections *colli-*
ded! The leader of the high section was killed instantly; the leader of the lower section made a successful ejection. The two wingmen alerted the nearest radio facility and returned to home base.

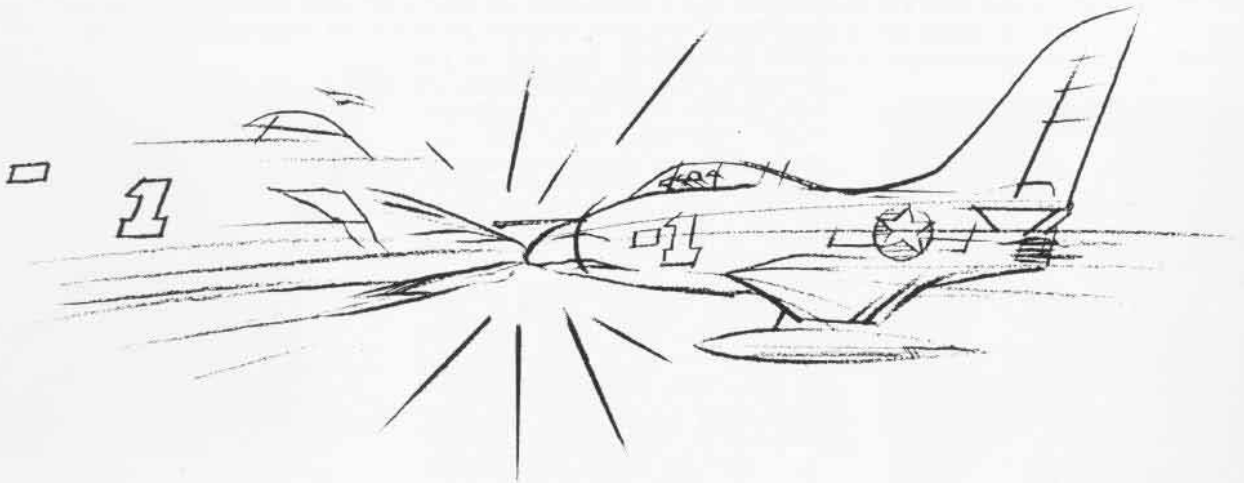


Grampaw Pettibone says:

Thunderin' thunderin's!
There were so many violations of NATOPS and common sense — you need an adding machine to keep track! First of all, ACM was never briefed. Second, you don't conduct ACM unless everyone has an operating radio. Third, you are supposed to break off the fight if you lose sight of opposing aircraft. Finally, ACM was not scheduled — and on, and on and on! The accident is the grossest of the gross — pilot DISPOSITION BOARD is too lenient for the surviving section leader. Drummin' out would be more appropriate!

Need a Light?

A lieutenant Naval Aviator with approximately 600 hours in A-4 Skyhawks was scheduled for a day field mirror landing practice (FMLP). Brief, preflight and takeoff were un-



eventful. After completion of his first FMLP period, the lieutenant returned to the fueling area for a hot refuel in preparation for his second and final period.

The refueling crew encountered difficulty in seating the refueling adapter on the probe of the *Skyhawk* and experienced leakage on the first attempt. They shut off the fuel, reseated the adapter, again applied fuel, and this time a large quantity of fuel sprayed over the aircraft.

Ingested fuel ignited in the starboard intake of the idling A-4 and the resultant explosion and fire blew the nozzleman off the refueling stand and engulfed the forward section of the aircraft. Fuel pumping was immediately secured, squadron personnel manned fire equipment and the fire was quickly extinguished.

The pilot exited the aircraft over the side as the last of the flames were being put out, sustaining no injury. He had momentarily considered ejecting at the time of the initial explosion when he shut down the engine and secured the manual fuel shutoff, but discarded the idea when it became apparent that the fire would soon be out.

The nozzleman and the E-7 safety supervisor suffered first and second degree burns, the only injuries sustained.

Initial inspection of the aircraft indicated superficial paint damage and necessary replacement of canopy plexiglass; however, subsequent P&E inspection called for replacement of the stress panel forward of the starboard intake, thus upgrading an incident to the minor accident category.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' succotash! Someone could'a got kilt! First of all, let me say that the lad in the cockpit was a victim of circumstances beyond his control.

I just can't understand how we work at "booby-trapping" our own machines. In this case maintenance supervisory (that's right — supervision again) personnel allowed the use of fuel check adapters that were in poor condition. They weren't alone, however. Some improper manufacturing could also be involved. Come on, you fellas who work in design, procurement and reliability, let's get together on the same team — if we had, this would never have happened.



Too Shook Up

A crew was transferring passengers from ship to shore in an H-2D *Seasprite*. The crew consisted of a pilot in command in the right seat, a copilot in the left seat, an aircrewman in the cabin. There was one passenger. The flight to the mainland and the landing pad, which was at the top of a 400-foot hill, was uneventful.

After boarding two more passengers, the aircraft was lifted into a hover, stabilized, and gauges were checked; the copilot was at the controls from the left seat while the pilot in command monitored the instruments from the right seat. The gauges appeared to be normal and the copilot transitioned the helicopter to forward flight.

When the aircraft cleared the hill, the gear was raised. Shortly afterward, both pilots noticed number one engine dropping off the line. The copilot remained at the controls and effected a single-engine recovery. A climbing left turn to 500 feet was then initiated while the pilot in command radioed a Mayday and secured the # 1 engine.

The aircraft was then flown in a race-track pattern in order to set up for a max-load landing back at the takeoff point on the top of the hill.

The approach appeared to be normal until the helicopter was approximately 200 to 300 feet short of the

peak; at this point, it began to sink and rotor rpm dropped off. The copilot (still at the controls) then attempted a waveoff to the left but impacted the hill in a left skid, 100 feet short of the landing site.

The aircraft fell onto its left side and slid 60 feet down the hill where it came to rest with the belly pointed up slope. The three crewmen and the three passengers exited the aircraft without injury.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! Can't understand a pilot tossin' all his learnin' out the window as soon as he develops an emergency! Lots of strange things about this fiasco, among them: Why didn't the aircraft commander take over the controls when the emergency developed? Being the aircraft commander means that you have the *confidence* and ability to assume command and/or direct activities when the going gets tough.

These gents got so shook, they didn't do anything right — didn't jettison their external tanks, had their gear up just prior to landing until informed by a crew member and, while checking the gear position, allowed themselves to get slow and lose more lift. There are serious questions about the landing site selected by these lads, also! Just can't believe it. Maybe aviatin' is too complicated for these lads.