



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

*Holy Smoke
&
gallopin' ghosts!*



Right and Wrong

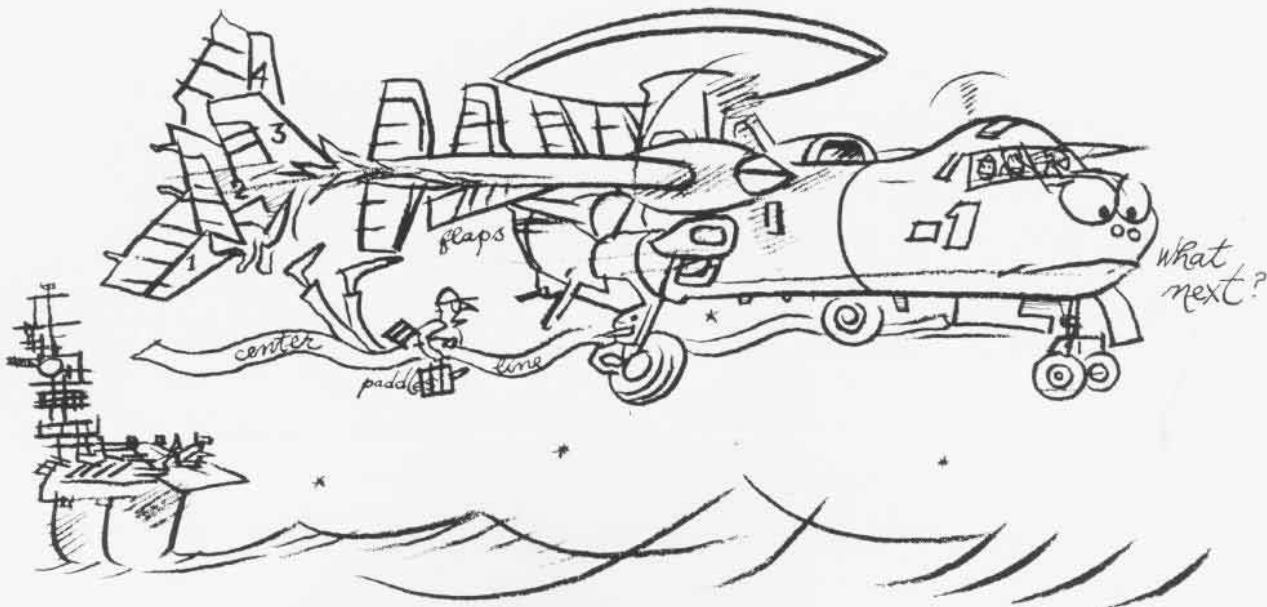
Following a thorough briefing, the pilot, copilot and crew manned their E-2B *Hawkeye* for a night training mission. The entire prelaunch and launch cycle was uneventful and, after approximately three hours, the E-2 returned to the carrier.

A standard carrier controlled approach was flown. At $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, with the aircraft established on centerline and on glide slope, the pilot called the ball. The LSO rogered the ball and called for "little power and attitude." The *Hawkeye* drifted a little left in the middle and the LSO called "right for line-up." The pilot answered all calls correctly and crossed the ramp in good position; however, the plane was in a slight left to right drift.

The aircraft went flat across all four cross-deck pendants in a steady right drift, touching down beyond the wires at a point six to eight feet forward of

the number four cable. The touch-down point was six to eight feet right of centerline with the aircraft still drifting right. Maximum power was added for the bolter and the aircraft stopped drifting and continued down the angled deck, 15 feet right of centerline. Prior to becoming airborne, the E-2B's starboard wingtip made contact with the upper rudder sections of four A-7s parked clear of the foul line.

The pilot or crew was not aware of hitting the A-7s until notified by approach control. The crew then flew the aircraft to altitude where they performed a successful slow flight check. The only discrepancies noted by the crew were a missing wingtip cap and the fact that the flaps would not come up past the $\frac{1}{3}$ position. The pilot reported a slightly mushy feeling in the controls. A FOD walkdown was performed on the flight deck to clear debris. The pilot flew another controlled approach, resulting in a hook



skip. The third approach terminated in an uneventful arrestment. The aircrew exited the aircraft in a normal manner.

The investigation revealed that, on the first approach, the waving LSO stated the pilot overcontrolled a low start, drifted left in the middle but corrected nicely and, from an in-close position, was on centerline and on glide slope. The LSO further stated that the pilot decreased his rate of descent approaching the wires but was on centerline and appeared to have the wires made. The right drift during the final phase of the bolter is confirmed by the PLAT tape.

The pilot, copilot and air boss all stated that they observed the aircraft landing right of centerline four to eight feet. Evidence of the off-center landing was a line of tailhook trail marks clearly visible at 15 feet right of centerline. The impact was discovered by a taxi director who noticed debris. Damage to all the A-7s was limited. The E-2 damage was, fortunately, minor.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

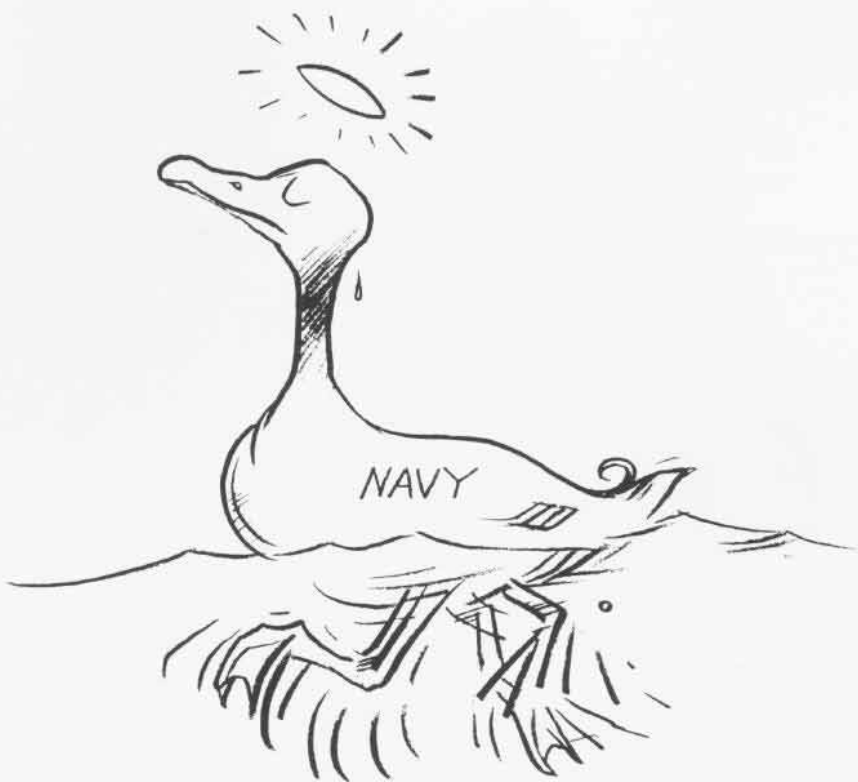
Great balls of fire! What the heck goes on in this squadron's operations office? This pilot was scheduled for this night flight in violation of the LSO NATOPS. The pilot was not current for the night flight. I believe I would have a piece of one operations officer and one so-called "scheduler"!

On the other hand, this was no excuse for the pilot to goof the approach. Besides, the driver is most certainly responsible for bringing his "non-currency" status to the attention of scheduling personnel. Lotsa people had their hands in this mess! Nuff sed!

Elevator Caper

Two aviators arrived at operations at 0830 to prepare their flight plan for the last leg of their weekend cross-country. The aircraft commander had a considerable amount of experience in the S-2 *Tracker*. The pilot filed an IFR flight plan from NAS Southcoast to NAS Homeplate. The flight was to last approximately four hours and be in primarily VFR weather.

Following a thorough preflight, the two pilots manned their *Tracker* and



commenced their start and pre-taxi procedures. The engine run-up was uneventful and the S-2 was cleared for takeoff. The pilot climbed through instrument weather, broke into the clear and leveled off at 7,000 feet. The S-2 was now directed to switch to center frequency; however, contact was not established because of radio difficulties.

During this time, the pilot was moving the yoke back and forth and noted that there was *no change* in the aircraft attitude! He checked his rudder and aileron control which appeared to function normally. The aircraft was now approximately 50 miles from NAS Southcoast. The pilot attempted to control the nose attitude with trim which was successful. He declared an emergency, reversed course and requested a straight-in approach due to the loss of elevator control.

At 35 miles, the S-2 commenced a 500-foot descent, achieved through careful manipulation of the elevator trim tabs. At 6,000 feet the pilot lowered gear and flaps. This was done to

ascertain the controllability at altitude, using the elevator trim changes only. After "some oscillations" of the aircraft, the pilot established his descent toward the runway.

Through careful manipulation of power, judicious use of the trim tabs and some minor S-turns, the aircraft landed back at NAS Southcoast with no injury or damage to the aircraft. Inspection of the aircraft indicated a loose bellcrank assembly which was corrected and the aircraft made an uneventful return to Homeplate.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy Hannah! Singe my old grey whiskers! Well done, lad. Goes to show ya that there ain't no substitute for that safety device between your ears.

This lad behaved like a duck — remainin' calm and cool on the surface, paddlin' and workin' like fury underneath. Seems like good coordinatin' by everyone involved, including the center, the tower and the drivers. You made my day!