



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Cross-Country

From: Lt. P. D. Que, 1310/USN
 To: Commanding Officer,
 Observation Squadron One
 Subj: Leave, Request for

1. It is respectfully requested that I be granted 10 days' leave.
2. If granted, my address will be:
 200 Elm Street
 Podunk, Pennsylvania
3. It is further requested that I be detailed aircraft NO-1 #4820 which is assigned to this squadron. It will be used for the purpose of practicing cross-country flying from here to Podunk and return.

Very respectfully,
 /s/ P. D. Que

Because it was a normal request, it was approved and leave was granted. P.D. drew a cross-country pack from operations and proceeded with his mission. In due course, he returned from leave refreshed and with a beautiful tan.

Sometime later, the skipper called Lt. Que into his office for some explanations. The aircraft log book and a pile of fuel chits were on his desk. [The log was up to date and the chits were all properly completed.] The C.O. looked up at him and said, "Seriously, Lieutenant, there are some things here that I would like explained. What is this Charlie's gas pump at Podunk, Pa.?"

"Well, sir, you see," the lieutenant explained, "Podunk doesn't have a landing field, so I landed in a cow pasture on the edge of town. It belongs to a friend, and he said I could use it. He agreed that when I flew over his house, he'd go out and chase all the cows into one corner of the field while I landed. [Good forethought and planning.] Charlie's gas pump is just down the road a piece and, since the sheriff is my uncle, it was easily arranged to taxi down and fill up."



"I see," the skipper said, "but why all these practice flights every day?"

The lieutenant had the answer to that one, too. "You see, sir, Podunk is way inland, and they don't know much about the Navy or that we even have airplanes in the Navy; so I not only kept up my flying skills while on leave, but also flew over town to let them read the U.S. Navy on the side of the airplane. It was all good public relations for the Navy." [Two birds with one stone.]

With this the C.O. reached under his desk and pulled out a crumpled cardboard sign. "What about this sign that was found in the baggage compartment of your plane?" Crudely hand lettered thereon were the words:

SEE PODUNK FROM THE AIR
 \$5.00 A HOP
 ZOOM YOUR HOUSE
 \$2.00 EXTRA

The barn door was closed the next day with the posting of the following order:

From: Commanding Officer,

Observation Squadron One
 To: All Pilots
 Subj: Flying regulations,
 Publication of

1. Hereafter, pilots taking Navy planes on leave will not, repeat, not take up passengers for hire.

W. T. DOOR



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well, singe my ol' gray whiskers! Don't think this didn't really happen, cuz it really did, albeit a few years back.

Things like that don't happen anymore, you say. Oh, but they do. Well, not exactly, but how about the Marine warrant officer who took his aged family relatives for a short air taxi in his H-53? Wiped out the *Sea Stallion* when he backed into another helicopter. Luckily, his family suffered only minor injuries.

Or, how 'bout the Marine captain who just recently buzzed his uncle's farm in the Middle West in his OV-10 *Bronco*? He bought that farm when his wing tip hit a tree.

What about the Navy lieutenant who practiced his own one-man air show to the amusement of the many? He flew wing on airliners, made low passes under power lines, performed aerobatics in the traffic pattern, etc., violating practically every good rule in the book - with no one making any effort whatsoever to bring such escapades to a halt until one day he failed to complete a dirty roll immediately after takeoff in his A-4.

And I only hear about the ones that end tragically. Gol darn immature little kids, that's what they are. There are two approaches to bringing such things under control. The reasonable one of appealing to each pilot's sense of responsibility, his pride of professionalism, his patriotism in not needlessly jeopardizing the taxpayers' dollars, his personal concern for his

family in not recklessly risking his own life to cause them suffering. This approach has been and is being used with only partial success today. The other approach is the "big brother" one, the "two-man rule" – constant, continuous, personal command supervision over all flight activities from takeoff to landing. It is coming, and it may be the answer. Our country cannot afford the carnage of one life, \$1,000,000, and one aircraft destroyed every day of the year in the Navy and Marine Corps. Highly preventable accidents account for one third of this total.

(Reprint from *NA News*, May 1971.)

Spotless Flyer Flames Out

On his first flight in the T-2C, the student took control after liftoff and proceeded to the operating area. He completed the FAM portion of the flight and then headed toward home base to shoot a hi-tacan approach, missed approach and GCA to a full stop, intending to land with 1,000 pounds of fuel remaining.

Following the missed approach, the aircraft was vectored into the GCA pattern. At four miles from landing, tower directed a 360-degree turn to avoid VFR traffic. Completing the turn, the pilot requested a full stop but the tower cleared him for a low approach only (duty runway fouled) – followed by a wave-off. The duty runway was blocked with a T-2C tow tractor being equipped with a gunnery banner. The other runways were closed for resurfacing.

Turning downwind after this second missed approach, the pilot noted 600 pounds of fuel remaining. He switched VFR to tower, where he was directed to continue upwind to follow another T-2C. Arriving abeam, the pilot called for a touch-and-go, then corrected his call to a full stop and was again waved off for fouled deck. The pilot queried the tower as to the expected delay and was advised of a two to three-minute delay.

Two minutes later, he asked tower

about the delay and was again advised that it would be two to three more minutes. The tower then questioned him as to his fuel state. His response was "low fuel." Tower asked if he wished to declare minimum fuel and received an "affirm." Tower advised him to follow the T-2C ahead and proceed downwind. The pilot asked if he could cut in front of the other T-2C.

The banner tow plane pilot, overhearing the conversation, asked him for his fuel state. Response, 400 pounds. The banner pilot then asked tower if the low fuel aircraft could land on 13R. Tower replied that it was closed. Banner pilot stated, "It's not closed for emergencies." Twenty seconds later, he asked about using the 35 runway and was told that 35R was closed for resurfacing, and 35L was fouled with tow banner. Tower cleared the low state aircraft to turn inside the T-2C. The pilot noted his fuel state to be 150-200 pounds just prior to the abeam position. Tower cleared the tow tractor for takeoff (after 13.5 minutes of fouled deck) and cleared the low state for full stop. Thirty seconds later, while turning to final, the pilot informed tower that the #1 engine had flamed out. At 200 feet altitude, still turning, he went to full power, hit his ignitors, and continued the approach. At 100 feet altitude, #2 engine flamed out. The pilot evaluated his sink rate, airspeed and other possibilities, and decided not to eject. The aircraft landed in tall grass 225 feet short of the runway, sheared off the landing gear, and slid to a stop 85 feet short of the runway. The crew exited unharmed.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy foolhardy flameouts! This is enough to make old pilots cry and young ones jeer!

That this accident was pilot error goes without saying. Of interest here is the reason why. This pilot erred by thinking he could make it rather than declare an emergency – or anything for that matter. To believe that an instructor pilot would orbit home field until fuel was exhausted is ludicrous. To brief other pilots not to do same (as one endorser so recommended) would bring only jeers and guffaws from the ready room.

This pilot was reluctant to have his name associated with any kind of incident, not only those that might reflect upon his judgment but also those involving equipment malfunction. He stated he had reached a point in his career where he had to decide whether to stay in the Navy or resign to seek civilian employment (aviation assumed). He was so anxious to preserve his spotless record that he decided not to declare an emergency. With this kind of thinking, it's only a matter of time before your luck runs out, gents. The sad part of it all is that too often it leaves someone else holding the bag, or in the bag. The lesson to be learned here is that the pilot in command must confess to himself that a problem exists and aggressively demand assistance when the program gets off track.

You can rest assured that commercial aviation is not interested in drivers with this philosophy – nor is anybody else. Particularly not Old Gramps whose flying these days is done mostly in airliners.