

Sand Trapped

An S-3A *Viking* crew was taxiing its bird to the approach end of the runway for a session of night FCLPs. Weather was fine enough: 3,000 scattered with seven miles visibility. All nearby taxiway lights were working. The pilot became disoriented, however, and turned off one taxiway onto what he thought was the next proper one. Traveling at a moderate speed of five to seven knots, the S-3A departed the taxiway, entered an area

of soft sand and became bogged down 50 feet from the point where it left the taxiway. The pilot contacted the tower for assistance and shut down the turboprops. With the help of the ground crew and *Tilley*, the *Viking* was returned to the taxiway.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

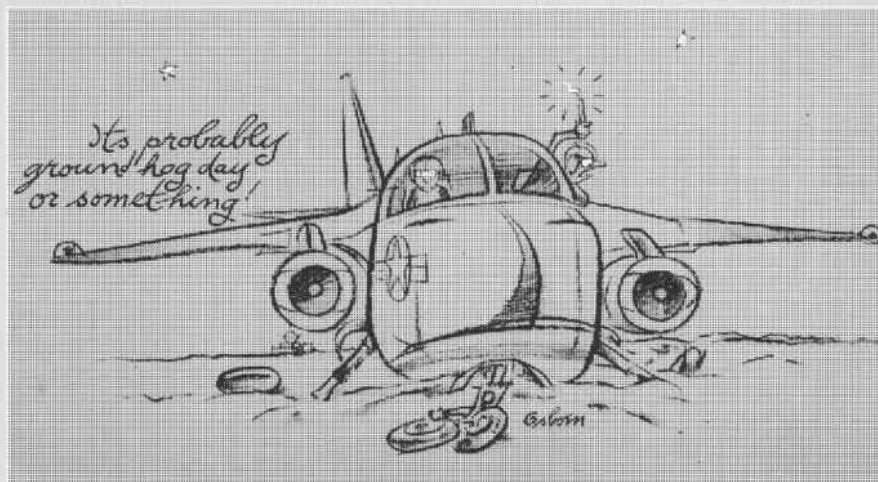
Pass me the Pepto. My stomach's turnin' again. There may not have been any damage to this sub-hunter, but I hope somebody's brain got massaged a bit. The *Viking* has a perfectly good taxi light which was not used, because the pilots believed the light wasn't needed. A mishap report noted that there is a feeling among some pilots that real aviators don't need the taxi light. What worries me is that this macho syndrome may have its roots in the training command and the FRSSs.

If you want to walk a rocky ledge in the dark without a lamp to bolster your ego, that's one thing. Driving a *Viking* is another. The taxi light was designed for a reason. Let it put light in your night when you need it.

Sugar Cane Blues

The UH-1N helicopter crew briefed for a late night mission to shuttle five range control personnel from an outlying island target zone back to their overseas air station home plate.

The crew conducted a normal brief, noting a 2-hour plus 15-minute fuel load. A review of the aircraft yellow sheets showed an outstanding repeat





discrepancy of low-fuel warning light illumination at an abnormally high fuel state, and repeat gripes of number 2 (right) fuel boost pump light illumination.

Upon arrival at the range control site, nine passengers and 500 pounds of bulky cargo were awaiting the helicopter shuttle. Expecting only five passengers, the pilot determined that two trips would be required and requested fuel truck servicing for the second sortie. Once in the aircraft, the passengers advised the pilot of an alternate destination, which was closer than that originally briefed. As a result, the pilot cancelled his request for fuel truck servicing.

After delivering the passengers and cargo, the UH-1N departed the lighted helo landing zone, heading for home base, with 400-450 pounds indicated on the fuel gauge. Two minutes after takeoff, the fuel low-level light illuminated. Six minutes later, the right fuel boost pump light came on. The pilot directed the copilot in the performance of emergency NATOPS procedures for fuel boost failure. The light did not extinguish and the right boost pump circuit breaker was pulled.

The pilot contacted home plate

tower for clearance through the airport traffic area. About 45 seconds later, the number 1 (left) fuel boost light came on and the pilot immediately started a turn to the closest field. Within 15 seconds, the aircraft experienced a dual engine flameout. At 500 feet altitude and 110 kias, the pilot began autorotation, radioed the tower and reported that he was making an emergency landing.

The pilot commenced a flare at an undetermined altitude. The aircraft contacted the ground tail first, bounced hard and came to rest some 50 feet away in a hilly field of 10-foot-high sugar cane. The crew exited the aircraft with only minor injuries to the passenger. The aircraft suffered significant damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy cane-cuttin' catastrophies! What a way to end a flight that should never have launched in the first place. Where was maintenance control and Q.A. supervision in this case, and how much warning did these guys need?

After the cane squeezings were cleared away, it was discovered that only 2.5 gallons of usable fuel re-

mained in the aircraft. Seven gallons of fuel, which could have been used, were trapped due to a partially clogged fuel strainer serving the number 2 boost pump.

The UH-1N NATOPS manual states that 150 plus 20 pounds of fuel (about 13 to 17 minutes of flight) remain when the low-fuel warning light illuminates. The UH-1E/L NATOPS manual addresses a 20-minute fuel, low-level light. But don't be misled by this, gents, 'cause that's with everything else working 4.0. It's less with a boost pump malfunction. They squeezed out 9 to 10 minutes of flight after the low-level light came on.

Keep in mind that these intrepid lads briefed for a 2-hour plus 15-minute fuel load, and had flown 2 hours and 2 minutes when they flamed out with 225 pounds shown on the gauge.

You have to wonder about the previous crews who griped about the low-fuel warning and boost pump lights. How close to flameout did they get?

Listen, gang, it's too late to remind these hapless chaps of one of Gramp's top 10 axioms but let me tell you one more time, "If it ain't right don't take it!"