

This issue marks the Golden Anniversary of "Grampaw Pettibone" in *Naval Aviation News*. The following pages are filled with stories published throughout the 50 years.

No Farmer's Daughter?

Both engines on an SNB-5 quit at 7,000 feet over Long Island Sound. The two pilots and an ensign, riding as a passenger, buckled on chest chutes. The ensign was ordered to bail out, which he did. The pilots decided to stay with the aircraft and landed gear up in a field. The aircraft was damaged but they were uninjured.

The ensign descended into a wooded area and got hung up on a 70-foot-high hemlock tree. About 100 yards away, he spotted a farmhouse. After climbing out of the tree, he started toward the house but was attacked by the farmer's dog, who bit him on both shins! The farmer and his wife finally called off the dog and offered first aid and transportation to the scene of the crash-landing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Things are getting tough. In the old days, there was always a good-looking farmer's daughter in tales like this. In any event, the bites weren't too deep, because the accident board said the ensign sustained class D for "dog" injuries. (September 1950)

Storm Warning

A formation of six fighters took off on a navigational flight. They encountered a local storm front just short of their destination. The flight leader (1,300 hours) and his two wingmen went into the storm at 1,500 feet; the second section veered off. The leader and one of his wingmen crashed, out of control, shortly after entering the front. The third plane was thrown violently on its back, but the pilot was able to regain control and get through on instruments.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Certainly, every Naval Aviator has been adequately warned in *Naval Aviation News*, as well as through lectures, technical notes,



I've been saying it for 50 years: Safety violations cost lives and aircraft. Don't make 'em!

and aerological pamphlets, to stay out of storm fronts unless absolutely necessary.

Too often aviators are like small boys; it is hard for them to take warnings seriously. They are skeptical and have to try it out for themselves. Aviators really have got to learn from the sad experiences of others. (August 1, 1944)

Necktie Trouble

A primary flight training student was completing his approach to landing and just about ready to break his glide when suddenly his necktie came out of his flight suit and started flapping around his face.

In trying to hold down the tie and control the aircraft during the landing rollout, he caused it to swerve slightly to the left by applying left brake. He tried right rudder and brake but maintained pressure on the left brake. The aircraft swerved and nosed over, damaging the engine and prop, which dug into the ground.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Take it off – take it off – take it off! I'd a lot rather see you violate local uniform regulations than see a nice, new trainer on its nose because of a fluttering necktie. This

isn't the first time this has happened, by the way. (March 1948)

Close Shave

An A3D returning from a night training hop crossed the ramp of a big attack carrier with the meatball right on the money. The hook picked up number two wire after the touchdown and the arrestment seemed normal. Suddenly the wire broke, and the big plane lurched forward with full power on – but slow! As the A3D cleared the flight deck, the pilot cleaned up his landing gear and concentrated on holding his attitude and airspeed. All three men aboard held their breath as they watched the altimeter unwind.

The A3D shuddered as it spanked the water. The pilot gently eased the yoke toward him as the fuselage lightly slid through the dark water. After a few seconds, the A3D broke free of the water and climbed swiftly.

Vectored by the carrier, they flew to a nearby island airfield and made a safe landing. Inspection of the A3D revealed that the underside of the fuselage aft of the bomb bay door and the port engine nacelle had been dragged through the water. The landing signal officer logged the narrow squeak as an arrested landing, a bolter, and a water touch and go.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Fetch me another aspirin tablet! How close can you get to wet feet? This pilot is a cool one, but if he has many more like this, I'll have to check for the competition before I unlimber one of my tall tales at a "Happy Hour" where HATWing One is represented.

Just goes to prove you ain't got an accident till she smashes to a stop, so keep flyin' it. You may luck out. This one did. (February 1961)

No Sweat

During the takeoff roll, at 120 knots, the neophyte pilot, on his initial *Phantom* familiarization flight, smartly pulled the stick aft. The F-4 over-rotated and stalled at an airspeed of 135 knots, with at least 20 degrees nose up, and commenced several wing rock cycles.

There was no response to the instructor pilot's frantic calls for "attitude." Being *in extremis* at about 10 feet above the ground, the instructor elected to abandon the rear cockpit. The seat and chute performed flawlessly and deposited the disgruntled instructor on the runway intersection.

The fledging pilot, not too disturbed over the turn of events, found himself in the enviable position of stable flight again, continued on and landed uneventfully – and nonchalantly – just one hour later.

Editor's note: Grampaw Pettibone simply refused to make a comment. (September 1967)

All but One

An SH-3A *Sea King* crew, consisting of pilot, copilot, and two crewmen, was assigned a plane guard flight for the 2200 fixed-wing launch and recovery. The entire crew arrived on the flight deck at 2130 and proceeded to the assigned aircraft. Upon completion of the preflight inspection, all hands climbed aboard and commenced preparations for the flight.

At about 2140, on signal from Pri-Fly, the number one engine was started, blades were spread and systems checked. After number two en-

gine was started and upon signal from Pri-Fly, the helo's rotor was engaged and all final preparations for flight were meticulously performed in the cockpit. Flat pitch power was checked satisfactorily and the takeoff checklist was double-checked.

The plane director gave the prelaunch signal to hold brakes, remove chocks and tie-downs, and stand clear of the helo at 2156.

As the copilot watched from the *left* seat, the plane captain released the port tie-down, pulled his chock clear of the wheel, and ran in front of the aircraft to a position aft of the island structure. At this time, the pilot watched the chock and tie-down on the starboard landing gear being removed by a Blue Shirt. Each pilot then verified to the other that his tie-down and chock had been removed. But one tie-down on the port mount, tending inboard, was overlooked.

As they received the launch signal from the plane director, the pilot commenced adding power to accomplish a vertical takeoff. The *Sea King* no more than became airborne when the nose pitched down uncontrollably and simultaneously developed a rapid roll to the left. The helo skidded to the left in a left bank, the port wheel struck the deck and continued over the deck edge.

Water entry was surprisingly gentle

and barely discernible to the pilots and crewmen. The two crewmen egressed through the starboard emergency exit window without incident. The pilot elected to leave by way of his already fully open sliding window on the starboard side. The copilot, however, had trouble getting out of the aircraft. He actuated the emergency release handle and, with considerable difficulty, finally succeeded in opening the jetisonable window assembly and escaped.

Fortunately, all required survival equipment was worn by the crew and it functioned flawlessly. The plane guard destroyer's whale boat recovered all hands at 2217.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' succotash! Ole Gramps was mighty happy to see these lads come through this fiasco with no more than minor injuries, but I darn sure wouldn't want to write their insurance if they can't count their tie-downs any better than this.

You can count Gramp's rotary-wing time on one finger, but you can bet I'd have a much better working agreement with the plane captain and directors.

A good surgeon always counts his tools before he sews up his victim. For longevity's sake and better

