

# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Attention Crane Operators

A tractor crane was parked on an incline at a naval air station to make a lift. Pick-up was made on the up-hill side of the tractor and the load then was swung around to the down-hill side. What do you think happened?

Right; the whole crane tipped over and smeared a PBM-3-S. Estimated damage, \$26,636.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Side lights on this accident are: This was a very experienced crane operator and it was absolutely unnecessary to make this lift with the crane parked on an incline. All of which goes to show that operating a crane is exactly like operating a plane; each requires a lot of common sense.

*Additional side light:* the pilot of this crane was temporarily suspended from duty involving the crane operation.

## The Right Way

Part of a letter from Bombing Squadron 134 to Grampaw Pettibone is quoted as of general interest:

"Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

"... and our pilots are probably the foremost authorities on, and masters of, single engine procedure in these parts. This is for the record:

"a. Five weeks ago a pilot had a scavenger pump failure at 100 feet (!) while making an A/S run. The engine froze tight and he brought it back on one engine. Since then—

"b. The fuel line connection to the droppable wing tank came loose on one plane. The engine started running roughly because of slugs of air getting into the gas line. The pilot brought the plane back on one engine.

"c. The propeller governor on another plane froze and chewed up the gear train; the propeller went up to



full speed. The pilot brought it back, mostly on one engine.

"d. On another plane, the hose going to the droppable wing tank had deteriorated and failed; the fuel pump became air-locked. The pilot brought it back on one engine.

"e. When the valve operating cam on another airplane failed, the pilot brought it back on one engine.

"f. During an engine run-in flight, the pilot feathered the propeller for test. When he could not unfeather it, due to a high pressure oil line failure, he brought the plane home on one engine.

"All single engine approaches were made properly, *i.e.*, they came in high right up to the end of the runway to avoid undershooting, and there were no casualties.

"Thought you might like to hear of something being done the *right* way, for a change."



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Right and bravo! Pats on the back for pilots a. to f. inclusive.

Sure I'm glad to hear of such shining examples of brains and skill! It shows these pilots have had proper emergency drills. They were prepared and knew what to do when trouble occurred.

Unfortunately, I'm not a member of the Board of Awards: I'm in the "Kick-in-the-Pants" Division and work on the

psychological principle that you learn more from seeing someone make a mistake and come to grief thereby, than by watching an expert do it the right way. (For example, to see one man crash and burn up because he forgot to lower his wheels on coming in to land is more apt to make you remember to lower your own wheels than to watch a hundred perfect, wheels-down landings.) Hence, the dumbbells get all the publicity; they are the warning signs for aviators on things to avoid and how not to do it. For the experts, the virtue of accomplishment is its own reward; not to mention the added reward of being on hand to collect longevity fogies.

## Fuel Unconsciousness

The pilot of an SNJ-4 made the following statement after his engine coughed and quit on him, one hour and ten minutes after take-off on a towing flight:

"I was at 3,500 feet when my engine stopped. I immediately turned on full preheat, worked the throttle and gave the wobble pump several strokes, but . . .

"As soon as the plane hit and nosed over, I realized that the gas tank, on which the engine was operating, had run dry and that the engine stopped because I failed to turn my fuel selector valve to the left tank."



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

How's that for snappy mental reaction!?

## The High Price of Ignorance

During his landing approach, an SBD-5 pilot (305 hours) inadvertently opened his diving flaps, instead of his landing flaps. The resulting (and unexpected) increase in drag was just enough to cause the airplane to stall and spin in from low altitude. *Result:* one temporarily crippled aviator and the permanent loss of one good airplane.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

I'll say it again, "You've got to know your cockpit." If you'll just stop and think a minute, you will realize that you can't possibly make a visual check every time you pull, push or twist some gadget in the cockpit. You must know their

CALLING ALL SQUADRON COMMANDERS

SIR! WE'VE ONLY GOT ONE OXYGEN MASK!

Does EACH PILOT  
Check PLANE GEAR  
Before EACH FLIGHT



exact location and "feel," so you can put your hand on any one of them and operate it without a moment's hesitation and without having to poke your head in the cockpit to see what you are doing. That's why I've been hollering my head off for the past year to get you to spend as much time as you can on "cockpit drill."

And I'd like to remind the "smart" guys, who may not think this is necessary, that pilot error is still responsible for about 70% of all aircraft accidents, and that a great deal of this pilot error is attributable to "lack of familiarity with equipment."

Remember the word from the Fleet: "A pilot is no damn good in combat as long as he has to think about handling his plane."

## Dilbert's Dilemma

*When I left home, my Mother warned,  
"Now Dilbert, do be careful!  
Don't fly too high, don't fly too fast;  
And do land slow and easy."*



*At flying school an Ensign warned,  
"Now Dilbert, do be careful!  
Don't fly too low, nor yet too slow;  
And land with plenty of speed."*

*What should I do, and who believe;  
How high to go and at what speed?  
I know Ma wouldn't tell me wrong,  
But this Ensign's my instructor!*

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

See Navy Regs., Art. 89(2) on "what to do in case of conflicting orders."

## Non-Rubber-Neck Again

Three two-plane sections took departure at five-minute intervals on a night navigation training flight. At the end of the first leg, the second section overtook and passed the first section. Three minutes later, the third section, in making its turn to the second leg, overran the first section. The first section wingman saw the imminence of a collision but had no time to warn the other planes as he dived clear. The two section leaders collided and their planes

crashed out of control. One pilot and two radiomen were killed.

It was the opinion of the trouble board that this collision was caused by both section leaders concentrating on their navigation to the exclusion of all else and relying completely on their difference in time of departure to safeguard them from the possibility of collision.

## Active Month for Dilbert

Marine Base Defense Air Group 42 has submitted a résumé of certain accidents occurring in the group, each with a moral for aviation personnel. Read 'em and learn.

1. A fatal crash occurred when a TBF made a forced landing at sea after an engine failure. The pilot made a good landing, but lowered his flaps *and wheels* during his approach. The plane flipped over on its back, and before a rescue plane or crash boat could arrive at the scene, crew and plane had disappeared.

2. The Dilbert-of-the-month was an assistant plane captain who was warming up an SNJ. He failed to keep brakes on, and when he revved up the engine, the plane jumped its chocks. When silence again settled on the apron, the SNJ and two TBF's into which the "J" taxied were in need of major repairs, and Dilbert required some minor repairs himself.

3. Two pilots made parachute jumps from disabled FM-1's. The most obvious result of these "leaps for life" is renewed faith in the boast that "a Navy parachute has never failed." In fact, it would appear that the pilots are becoming too parachute conscious, for in one of the jumps, the pilot left his plane before determining whether any corrective measures could be taken.

4. Other outstanding Dilberts for the month were two FM-1 pilots who made forced landings because of lack of fuel. One flew his entire hop on the emer-

gency tank. The tank ran dry in the traffic circle, the pilot attempted to make a down-wind landing, but fell 10 yards short of the runway, resulting in major damage to the airplane. Another flew a two-hour combat hop, then attempted a landing using his main fuel tank. He was given a wave-off by the signal officer because of congested traffic conditions on the field. Shortly after he left the field for his second approach, his engine failed, and he made an emergency landing in the water. The aircraft ended up in major overhaul.

As a result of the last two mishaps, the fuel tank indicator consciousness of the pilots is little short of amazing.



**T**HIS major-damage accident resulted from a student's attempt to hit a circle shot by cheating; while making a half "S" turn approach, he saw that he was overshooting and tried to "mush" in. The plane stalled high, and dropped in about 20 feet.

Circle shots are precision maneuvers included in primary training for the specific purpose of developing technique and judgment. If students cheat during this practice, they are only cutting their own throats. Instructors are urged to stress correct approach, proper air-speed and planning of precision landings, rather than exact point of landing.

## Strafing Altitude

Following a "masthead" bombing run, the pilot (307 hours) of a TBF-1 maneuvered his plane to enable the rear gunner to strafe the target. He was observed to be unusually low and, while making a steep left turn, his wing tip made contact with the water, causing a fatal crash.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

This is the logical result of violent maneuvers at such low altitude. One is apt to lose some altitude in a sharp turn, not taking into account the added depth of the plane when a wing is down. Anyway, a pilot on a strafing run should never get so low as to require his full attention to keep from flying into the water; you need some altitude to have room for sharp, evading action. "A word to the wise" should be sufficient.

