

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Do It Right

While coming in for a normal landing in an SNV-1, a student allowed his air speed to become dangerously slow and the instructor took over. A hard but safe landing resulted, after which the instructor told the student through the gosport system to take over the controls. The student did not hear the order. With no one at the controls, the airplane suddenly ground-looped, doing damage to the center section.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

The Trouble Board considered the instructor 100 percent to blame (carelessness and poor judgment), and I agree. Of all people, an instructor should certainly know better than to attempt a transfer of controls without receiving proper acknowledgment.

Tower Responsibilities

During night flying operations an F6F on the way out to the take-off position got stalled on the taxi-way with a broken tail wheel. The tower sent out a general warning to all planes stating the F6F's position. At this time, however, a TBF was warming up with the radio not yet turned on. After checking his mags, the TBF pilot began taxiing out to take off. The tower neglected to call him about the F6F and he received no warning of any kind. Due to the darkness of the night and the confusing, flickering light from the smudge pots, he did not see the F6F in time to avoid a collision. One plane received major damage and the other requires replacement of a major part.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

This and other similar reports show that tower operators are not yet doing all they can in the way of flight safety. In this instance, the tower certainly should have seen the danger of a collision when the TBF started taxiing and realized that the TBF had not received the first warning. Tower operators are no exception to the



rule in aviation that no one can afford to take anything for granted. Tower personnel should be continually reminded of their responsibility for avoiding accidents. They are in an excellent spot to see actual and potential hazards to personnel and aircraft and must be on the ball all the time in order to take immediate action to forestall them.

There is no intent here to whitewash the TBF pilot; his neck was out a mile. In fact, had he followed the instructions in *Standard Airport Traffic Control Procedures*, no accident would have occurred. This procedure requires a pilot to receive taxi instructions from the tower *before* leaving the line. Had he done this, he would have got a check on his radio and, at the same time, a warning on the stalled F6F.

Air Discipline

In response to the current drive for stricter enforcement of air discipline in basic and intermediate squadrons, the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Saufley Field, Pensacola, is using a new method for handling course-rule violators and potential Dilberts.

Supplementing the disciplinary action, all offenders are now grounded, placed on several days of tower duty where they must stand watch and record all course rule violations about the field. At the end of each period, they personally report these violations to the Chief Flight Instructor's office.

Whether through pride or ignorance, basic students are all reluctant to go around again after starting an approach. They seem to feel that no matter what they're told, once begun, an approach must be finished in spite of results. On the landing mat where 200 SNV trainers are landing in 20 minutes, one every

six seconds, minor infractions of discipline such as S-turning to a runway, landing long, landing close behind another plane or cutting other planes out, though seemingly insignificant, can form bad habits and cause serious accidents.

Telling a student this before, during, and after flights has never proved sufficient. Now, together, with disciplinary action, the "Tower Watch" seems to completely subdue the violators.

Radio Altimeter

After having been in the air approximately one-half hour on a night low-level bombing practice flight, a TBF pilot flew into the water while making a run on the target. Investigation disclosed that the radio altimeter evidently had not been turned on at any time during the flight.



► *COMMENT*—If the radio altimeter had been used during the flight, the pilot would have known his absolute altitude and would have been able to avoid flying into the water. The radio altimeter should always be used in all low-level flying operations between 0 and 4,000 feet, as the barometric (Kollsman Sensitive Altimeter) may be several hundred feet in error.

Who Wakes the Bugler?

Have you heard the story about the naval air station that developed an *almost* perfect solution for preventing wheels-up landings? A man was stationed at each field not operated under radio control. He was equipped with signal flags and had orders to give a "wave-off" to any plane attempting to land with wheels up.

The only trouble was that the system wouldn't work until the signalman got there and he had to be flown in. You guessed it!—The instructor who flew in the first signalman didn't have anyone to warn him, so he landed wheels up.



A&R SHOPS

LET NANews
HEAR
FROM YOU!

Downdrafts to Leeward!

While flying at 800 feet in the lee of a 3,800-foot peak on Chyginadok Island, Alaska, the pilot of an OS2N-1 suddenly noticed a rapid loss of altitude. He immediately turned away from the cliff and applied full throttle,



but continued to lose altitude and finally mushed into the ground in a climbing attitude. Wind force in the clear was approximately 20 knots.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

While the natural phenomenon of downdrafts to leeward of obstructions isn't limited to Alaska, downdrafts are particularly vicious in that area and so Alaskan pilots soon learn to stay away from the lee side of all hills, cliffs, peaks, etc.

Maybe this pilot was new up there and didn't quite believe downdrafts were as dangerous as he had been told. Of course he knows better now, but you can't afford to expend a plane every time to convince a pilot that a certain flight maneuver is dangerous. Another reason you can't use the personal test method on flight hazards of this sort is that too often the pilot doesn't live to profit by his experience. Some things you have got to learn synthetically—from the unfortunate experiences of others.

Ejected Cartridge Cases

Cartridge cases ejected from the plane ahead recently caused a forced landing in an F3A-1. A cartridge case ruptured the oil cooler, resulting in loss of oil and subsequent piston seizure and complete engine failure.

► **COMMENT**—This type of accident may occur to planes which follow too closely behind and below aircraft which are firing. Damage varies from cracked windshields and damaged wings or fairing surfaces to complete engine or propeller failures. Damage increases with higher caliber guns.

Projects are now under way to collect empty cartridge cases in flight from all except fixed gun installations.

Careless Pedestrians

An instructor was recently walking diagonally across a taxi strip in such a manner that his back was toward planes taxiing out to the take-off position. An N2S, with an instructor and student aboard, taxied down the strip at a moderate speed making prescribed S turns. Neither occupant of the plane saw the pedestrian at any time since his direction and path across the strip coincided

with the airplane's right swing during an S turn. The pedestrian remained in the plane's blind spot and apparently was not aware of any danger until struck by the propeller and killed.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

This accident was due mainly to carelessness of the pedestrian. Propeller casualties such as this will continue to occur until everyone learns to respect a taxiing plane. It makes no difference what your rank may be or what you rate around the station, everybody rates the same around a moving propeller.

The following technique may save you from a similar accident, but it isn't guaranteed unless you also keep your eyes open and look around:

ALWAYS CROSS A TAXIWAY AT RIGHT ANGLES SO YOUR BACK IS NEVER TURNED TOWARD A TAXIING AIRCRAFT.

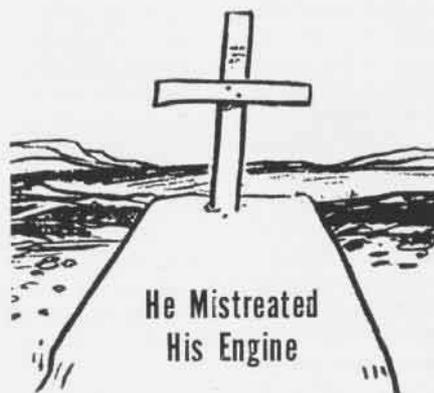
Err on the Safe Side

During primary night flying, a student, upon receipt of the proper light, came in for a normal landing just inside the port line of flare pots. His left wing narrowly missed the floodlight officer and struck a crewman who was picking up used Very's ammunition. The investigating board was of the opinion that the student pilot obeyed all the instructions and signals and that the responsibility for the accident was entirely that of the floodlight officer and his assistants in being too close to the runway in use.

► **COMMENT**—The Trouble Board recommended stricter compliance with existing CNAPT directives regarding location of personnel and equipment during night flying operations. This case is cited in order that other night flight duty officers may avoid similar errors.

Two Ways to Do Everything

An experienced pilot, recently returned from the Fleet, took off in an F6F as leader of a two-plane section. At about 150 feet altitude he suddenly



entered a thin overcast. He immediately tried to get back down, but in so doing, he either lost control or broke out of the overcast with insufficient altitude to recover, and crashed.

The wingman took off 25 seconds after the leader, flew into the same



overcast and immediately went on instruments. He broke out on top at 400 feet and later landed at another airport.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

In aviation, the difference between doing a thing right or doing it wrong often ends up like this.

With regard to your instrument flying ability, remember that little instrument qualification card in your pocket won't fly the plane for you when you find yourself in the soup. You do the flying, so you gotta keep in practice. Another thing—when visibility is low and you are operating from a field with no obstructions ahead, don't try to maneuver immediately after take-off. Go "on instruments" and keep everything steady. Climb straight ahead until you break out on top, or until you reach a safe altitude. See *Flight Safety Bulletin No. 3-44*.

Gremlins Plus Dilbert

Some folks say Gremlins were responsible—others are not so sure—but it is certain that whoever or whatever was to blame, the accidents involving a certain Marine group's R50 were serious enough to put the transport out of commission for nearly half a month.

Here's what happened. First, the R50 was in the middle of a 30-hour check. Standing nearby in the hangar was a 30-foot scaffolding. Outside the hangar was a TBF. Rube Goldberg himself couldn't have designed a more perfect setup for trouble. The TBF was warmed up. The slip stream swept through the hangar doors and toppled the scaffolding onto the transport plane's wing.

Finally back in commission, the R50 landed at an outlying field. A truck went by. One of the wheels of the truck came off, rolled into the plane and tore a gaping hole in the fuselage. Then, while the plane was being pushed into the A&R shop, Dilbert came along. Possibly a Gremlin suggested to Dilbert that he help the boys in their work. He pushed on the radio antenna. It snapped.

Gremlins or no Gremlins—Dilbert or no Dilbert—the R50 was a big problem to this HedRon for several weeks.