

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

The Wrong Time

A PB5-5A recently had a fatal crash during night take-off. An aviation machinist's mate who was being checked out on take-offs was in the flight engineer's seat in the tower at the time of the accident.

While this accident was not caused by the flight engineer, it was pointed out that a night take-off was exactly the wrong time to have an inexperienced man in the tower.

Just a Playful Gesture!

The pilot of an SNJ joined up in close formation on a patrol plane.

As the pilot well knew, this was in direct violation of flight regulations, but he couldn't see any danger in it and it was good fun!

It wasn't so funny, however, when turbulent air or poor pilot technique caused him to collide with the underside of the patrol plane's port wing.

What this SNJ pilot thought was only a playful gesture resulted in:

1. His own death
2. Death of the entire crew of the patrol plane
3. Destruction of two aircraft.

Combination of Errors

An F4U pilot had a fatal crash shortly after take-off when his engine failed because of lack of oil. Here is the story back of the crash:

The plane captain had drained the oil system to find a leak and had not refilled it because the squadron had secured before the oil truck could be made available. So far there was nothing wrong, but the plane captain neglected to change the "in commission" status on the engineering board. This was particularly important in this case because flying was secured in that squadron for the next 43 hours. The reason he gave for not reporting the plane out of commission was that flying was secured the next day and he felt certain that no one would attempt to fly it without consulting him or the second mech. The fact that it was flown proves how wrong he was.

The next morning a squadron pilot decided to hop over to an adjoining field. He happened to choose this plane because it was handiest. Without consulting the line chief or the plane cap-



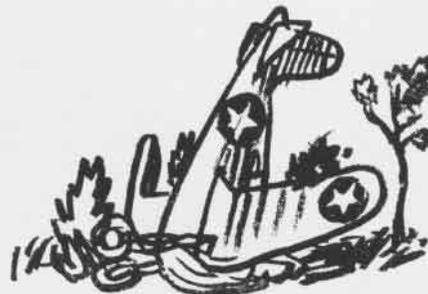
tain as to its status, he instructed a mechanic to start the engine. Then, without conducting a proper pre-flight check, he signed a blank "yellow sheet" and took off. The rest you know!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Let this be a warning to non-reg outfits! Carelessness in aviation eventually ends up this way.

There was absolutely no justification for not reporting this plane out of commission. The squadron was in an area in which



there might well have been an alert or other emergency operation while flying was secured, in which case the same thing might have happened. Some squadrons hang a red "Out-of-Commission" card on the instrument panel of such planes to prevent just this type of accident.

In addition to the negligence on the part of the plane captain, the pilot was seriously at fault on at least two counts:

1. He neglected to perform, or have performed, the required pre-flight inspection.

(This would have disclosed the empty oil tank.)

2. He neglected to turn up his engine just prior to take-off. (Done properly, this would have shown him he had no oil pressure.)

It's too late for this pilot to benefit from these mistakes, but not too late for the rest of us!

There's Nothing Too Small

One pushrod hose coupling on an SBD ruptured and another started leaking during a combat tactics flight. The cockpit filled with smoke and oil spouted in the pilot's face. The situation got so bad that the flier said later: "My vision at this point was zero. I was barely able to see the dashboard." During the forced landing, plane received damage requiring major overhaul.

The Trouble Board assigned 50 percent of the cause of this accident to pilot error. The immediate superior disagreed, stating that under the circumstances the pilot was to be commended for being willing to assume the risk of attempting a landing.

In the opinion of the reviewing authority, the underlying cause of the accident was carelessness and negligence of the personnel responsible for the maintenance of the airplane. It was pointed out that maintenance instructions require the inspection of hose couplings before each flight and at each airplane check. Had this been done, the incipient failures would have been discovered and this accident prevented.

This is a good illustration of the fact that nothing on an airplane is of such minor importance that it can be neglected.

Roll Out

While pulling around in a sharp turn to meet a head-on attack, an F6F entered a high speed stall and flipped over into a nearly inverted position at about 1,000 feet altitude. The pilot apparently attempted recovery by pulling through in a "split-S," but lacked sufficient altitude to complete the maneuver and crashed in about a 45-degree nose-down attitude.

► **COMMENT**—Remember, it takes *much less* altitude to recover from an inverted position by dropping your nose and then rolling or scooping out than it takes to pull through in a regular "split-S" maneuver.

ACI OFFICERS

SPECIFY MANUFACTURER'S DESIGNATIONS WHEN WRITING AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORTS

Aircraft employes want to know how *their* planes are doing in combat. To tell them, the Navy must know not only the model but also the manufacturer.

DON'T SAY:

AVENGER WILDCAT
CORSAIR

SAY:

AVENGER TBF or WILDCAT F4F or
AVENGER TBM WILDCAT FM
CORSAIR F4U or
CORSAIR F3A or
CORSAIR FG



“WE WANT
TO KNOW!”

More Ditching Dope

A TBF-1C recently crashed during a carrier take-off. Basic cause of the crash was considered to be pilot technique. One of the preceding fighters had been a dud and was moved over to the starboard side of the flight deck to permit the remaining planes to be launched. This moved the launching spot to port and necessitated the pilot centering the plane on the flight deck after the take-off run had started. In attempting this, the pilot neglected to raise his tail wheel, over-controlled and left the flight deck at the forward starboard corner. Complete control of the aircraft was never gained. The plane stalled near the surface, hit on the port wing and turned over violently.

From the pilot's statement: "My gunner escaped immediately through the turret hatch and my radioman was next out, though he had become confused as to the location of the tunnel hatch when the plane turned over. I was knocked out by a blow on the back of my head, which I cannot explain. (Note: This probably occurred when the plane violently turned over.) We were under water when I came to and I immediately unfastened my safety belt and shoulder strap. On take-off, the only straps I had fastened were my shoulder strap, safety belt and chest strap on my jungle kit back-pack, which in turn was fastened to the seat pack. In order to take my seat raft with me, I left my chest strap fastened and this in no way hindered me in getting clear of the cockpit. I bumped into the wing twice before getting clear of it and swimming upward to the surface. When I reached the surface, both my crewmen were close by and called out that they were unhurt.

"My radioman found that his life jacket leaked and was of no use. I inflated my seat-pack raft.

"At this time—about 5 minutes after the crash—two of the depth bombs in the bomb bay of the plane exploded. They gave us quite a jolt, but no harm was done. (Note: Three things can be done to avoid injury from such possible depth bomb explosions: (1) get clear of the immediate crash area as soon as possible, (2) get into your life raft immediately, and (3) float on your back while in the water in the danger area.)

"We put the radioman into the raft and my gunner and I hung on to the sides, as our jackets were in good condition. The radioman emptied his dye marker into the water.

"The destroyer put a net over the side and we climbed aboard about 25 minutes after hitting the water. Personnel on the destroyer commented that the dye marker made their job of locat-

ing us much easier, as the sea was rough, with rolling swells.

"I recommend that the radioman carry his pack raft in his lap until the take-off is successfully completed, as it is almost imperative that at least one such raft be available in case one of the jackets fails to operate as it should. Also it is much easier to ride a rough sea and stay together by holding onto a raft than by floating and swimming in the jackets alone. It is not always possible for the pilot, in case of a crash such as this, to carry his pack with him on leaving the cockpit, especially if he wants to inflate his jacket to help get himself to the surface more rapidly.

"It is not possible to shout to the rescuing ship and tell them of your condition. Perhaps this information could be more easily transmitted by a green flag, meaning 'All OK—that the men could get aboard, up a net, under their own power,' and a red flag meaning 'Send a boat,' or 'We need help quickly.'" (Note: This idea has merit, but rather than add more equipment to the life rafts, it should be possible to accomplish this with the equipment already at hand. For example, in Forced Landing Signals, one arm vertical or a white Very shell has the meaning "Slight damage" and no arm signal or a red Very shell means "Emergency; send assistance immediately.")

SNJ Landing Gear Troubles

In a recent study of SNJ landing gear troubles (*i.e.*, failure to lock when lowered), it was discovered that the underlying cause in a great many cases was poor maintenance.

Caution: Maintenance officers should insist that their crews maintain the SNJ landing gear mechanism strictly in accordance with the latest instructions in the Erection and Maintenance Manual (AN-01-60F-2), 15 December 1943.

Blinded Signalman

A plane captain was dispatched with two flashlights to signal a PB4Y through a restricted parking area at night. An Aldis lamp, operated from the waist hatch, was used to illuminate the area in front of the airplane.

After moving the ship a short distance, the plane captain gave the "stop" signal and then walked toward the waist hatch. Apparently blinded by the direct beam of the Aldis lamp, he walked directly into the propeller arc of No. 1 engine and was killed.

It was recommended that personnel be warned of this dangerous use of Aldis lamps and that they be indoctrinated to pass around the outboard wing tips of this type aircraft at all times, whether engines are turning up or not.