

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Now I've Seen Everything

The pilot of a TBF taxied out to the designated runway, but before he could start his take-off he was notified by the tower that the runway was being changed due to a wind shift. Before he could reach the other runway, the tower changed the course back to the one first in use.

From the pilot's statement: "By this time my one idea was to get off the field before the tower changed the runway again and as there were still several planes in the air waiting to land, I was in such haste to take off that I forgot to spread my wings. I had no radio-man or gunner with me. While making the run down the runway the only indication I had that the wings were not spread was the fact that the plane would not take off. By the time I was convinced that I could not get off it was too late to stop on the runway."



Grampaw Pettibone says:

You should have seen the airplane after it hit the ditch at the end of the runway!

Instructor's Work Is Never Done

Primary instructors should never take the attitude that they need no longer check their students as to the security of their safety belts. Question them before take-off and once in a while in the air, especially before any kind of violent maneuvers. Make them so safety-belt-conscious that they will frequently check their own belts.

A recent fatal accident again emphasized this point. An instructor gave his student a low altitude simulated emergency during a climb. As a result of the subsequent abrupt forward movement of the control stick, the student was catapulted from the cockpit and killed. The safety belt either became unfastened in flight or had not been secured properly before take-off.



A Lesson for the Instructor

Upon being given a simulated emergency by his instructor at an outlying field, a student in an SNV-1 shifted the fuel selector valve to what he thought was a full tank. The instructor failed to check the new valve setting. While at a low altitude, the engine cut out, necessitating a forced landing. The airplane was completely wrecked, but fortunately, neither the instructor nor the student was injured.

It developed that the student, instead of shifting to a full tank, had turned the selector to the "off" position.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

It is interesting to note that both during and after the landing the instructor swore—he swore he would never again be so trusting as not to check everything his student did.

Jammed Controls

The ailerons of an SBD-5 jammed on take-off, causing a serious crash. Investigation revealed that the rear seat control stick was loose in the rear cockpit and had lodged between the aileron center control horn and the transmitter shelf leg, locking the ailerons.

It developed that two days previous to the crash this airplane had been engaged in a simulated attack on shore establishments and had carried another pilot as observer. Prior to take-off, the observer was instructed in stowage and use of the removable stick. Soon after that flight it was noted that the stick was missing and it was assumed, after some search, that it had been either lost

overboard while in a dive or had been removed and placed in another plane.

The Trouble Board recommended that plane captains use greater care in inspection for loose articles.

Fatalist

This is the sad story of an F4U pilot who found a hole in the overcast and climbed up through (against direct orders). Came time to go home, there was no hole. Even though he was in mountainous country, he started an instrument letdown.

Unfortunately, while the pilot could see some of the peaks which stuck up through the overcast, neither he nor his instruments could see the peak he hit which only stuck up into the overcast.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

It is my theory that most fatalists are lazy. They like to say, "Well, if it's my turn, I'm going to get it anyway." It takes much less work and effort to assume this attitude and let it go at that than it does to pitch in and learn everything about flying and to prepare for all eventualities. And this is probably also the reason so many fatalists show poor judgment. They are too lazy to get fully qualified in the



science of their profession and are, therefore, prone to "trust to luck."

Flying is dangerous, but it is many times more dangerous for these fatalists than for anyone else. Aviation is a science, based on the laws of cause and effect. You can't get by on guesswork. You have got to know the right answer. Those who don't are eventually screened out.

Prolonged Inverted Flight

On his first familiarization flight in an F4F-4, a pilot entered a slow roll and delayed his recovery to such an extent that the oil pressure dropped sufficiently to allow the bearings to become dry. The subsequent power plant failure while on the downwind leg of a landing approach made an emergency landing necessary in rough terrain. As a result, the pilot received severe injuries and the aircraft required considerable overhaul.

COMMENT—Navy aircraft engines are not made to withstand prolonged inverted flight. The Bureau of Aeronautics manual provides that, "Recovery from inverted flight will be made before the oil pressure drops below 25 pounds per square inch." If inverted flight is prolonged to a point where the oil pressure drops below 25 pounds the engine cannot be properly lubricated and a power plant failure may be expected. Perhaps the failure will not occur immediately. The engine may operate normally for as long as several flights and then fail just when it is most needed. Even if inverted flight is permitted in certain aircraft, inverted maneuvers should never be prolonged.

Your engine is your best friend. Treat it considerably.

Torque Accidents

An F4U-1 pilot made a hard landing and bounced approximately 50 feet in the air. At the top of the bounce the pilot applied full throttle. The plane immediately did a half-roll to the left and hit on its back.

During a slow landing approach in an SBD-5, the left wing started to drop. When the pilot found he couldn't raise the wing, he used full throttle in an effort to regain control. This airplane also flipped to the left and crashed on its back.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

This is the same old torque problem, gentlemen. In case you have forgotten, propeller torque is the turning moment produced by the rotation of the prop. It always acts opposite to the direction of rotation, therefore always pulls the plane to the left. In high-power airplanes there is a marked tendency for the plane to roll to the left.

Believe me, your ailerons do not get enough air pressure on them at low speed to counteract the tremendous left torque which is generated when full throttle is suddenly applied to a high-power engine. Convince yourself of this by trying it at safe altitude. While still up there, check just how much torque (sudden throttle) you can handle with your ailerons at low speed.

What can be done to prevent this type of accident?

FIRST: Don't let that left wing get down when near stalling speed. I admit this is rather gratuitous advice, but it seems necessary—stalls and spins continue to be among the most costly of all aviation accidents.

SECOND: When near a stall in a high-powered plane, do not apply throttle suddenly; instead, *anticipate* the stall and apply throttle gradually. If you haven't time to ease it on gradually, better not use any. Do the best you can with what you have and accept a hard landing or a minor accident, if necessary, rather than a possible fatal crash, such as the two listed above.

Remember, speed control is the quintessence (yes, *quintessence*) of airmanship. If you can't control your airspeed you'd better go back to flying small balsa models.

Blimp Your Motor

An N2S-3 student (58 hours) throttled back his motor and glided down from 3,000 feet. When he again applied throttle at 500 feet, the motor was so loaded up that it sputtered and then cut out entirely. The only space available for an emergency landing was a short field with rough surrounding terrain. The plane ran through three fences after landing, hit a small tree and then dropped on its nose over a small embankment.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Certainly this pilot must have heard about blimping his motor to keep it from fouling up during a long glide!

Aircraft safety warnings are not issued for fun, nor are they to be taken lightly. They contain the meat of a lot of flight experience and are issued specifically to keep you out of the same trouble that others have already had. Pilots who disregard warnings aren't always as lucky as this student was. He got a second chance.

Physical Fitness

Pensacola reports that for the second time within six weeks an aviation cadet, forced to parachute over the Gulf, has returned to continue training, thanks mainly to excellent physical condition.

In the most recent case, the cadet bailed out late one afternoon and was picked up 24 hours later.

The parachute jump, from 1,700 feet, was normal. The Mae West inflated satisfactorily. A companion in another plane reported his approximate location, but darkness delayed rescue.

Early the next morning the cadet saw planes circling in the distance. He released his dye marker to attract attention, but due to the whitecaps he was not seen. Diligent search was continued, however, and late that afternoon the cadet finally was spotted by one of the OS2U-2 search planes. This plane dropped the student a life raft and circled until he was rescued by a patrol plane.

The cadet said he was tired and thirsty after his 24-hour float. He had



been stung by sea nettles and one foot was slightly lacerated when a fish either bit or finned him. He saw no sharks. This cadet hasn't been heard to grumble recently about required physical drills.

"Drive Your Own"

"The accident campaign posters, 'Don't drive the car of the fellow ahead; drive your own,' might well be headed by our pilots," according to Marine Base Defense Aircraft Group 43.

"On a recent gunnery training flight two F4U's were involved in a mid-air collision. No. 1 pilot, whose turn it was to attack, was flying his plane into a better position for his run. He had eyes for nothing but the target plane. The No. 2 pilot, in line to make the next pass, saw that he was in a good position and thought pilot No. 1 was going to cross under and let him go first. No. 1's propeller chewed the tail section off No. 2's. Bailing out when his plane was in an inverted spin, No. 2 parachuted to safety from 20,000 feet. No. 1 made a dead stick landing."



THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED when the No. 3 man got sucked in on a formation take-off, lost control in the leader's slipstream and collided with the leader's tail. Page Tojo!

Heads Up

Upon leaving Trenton, N. J., an inexperienced ferry pilot, flying a TBM, inadvertently joined up with the wrong formation. It so happened that the group with which he joined had the same destination, but was taking a route different from that for which this pilot had maps. Upon discovering his mistake some time later, he elected to stick with the flight. After flying for 1 hour and 30 minutes, his engine cut out a few times, causing him to concentrate his attention inside the cockpit. During this brief period he lost sight of the other members of the flight, owing to a slight haze in the atmosphere. Having no maps and not knowing his position, he continued to fly around for some time and, as darkness approached, made an emergency, wheels-up landing in an open field.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Don't be a black sheep; make certain you get in the right flock.