

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Blind Leading the Blind

A pilot with 1,050 hours was scheduled for a check-out in the J2F. Without inquiring as to who should give the check, he selected a pilot with only 1.5 hours in the J2F from whom to get the word. Either the check pilot forgot to give forth sufficient "gems" on take-off technique or the 1,050 hour pilot did not remember what he was told. On his first take-off, he did not apply sufficient right rudder tab and was unable to correct the inevitable left swerve. He then did not cut his throttle in time to avoid crashing into an embankment off the runway. The airplane was completely destroyed.

► **COMMENT**—Squadron commanders must make certain that only experienced pilots—experienced both in total flying hours and in the model airplane involved—are used for check-out pilots.

Know What Your Plane Can Do

While spotting torpedoes, a TBF pilot dived to indicate the position of a torpedo and then pulled up into a steep climb. His plane stalled and fell into a spin from which he had insufficient altitude to recover. He and both crew members were killed in the crash.

The commanding officer said: "Prior to engaging in torpedo spotting, pilots are cautioned to observe proper tech-



nique and warned that numerous accidents have resulted from such a simple procedure. This pilot was new in the squadron and relatively inexperienced, even with his 386 flying hours. His actions indicated too much self-confidence in his ability; this is dangerous at any stage of flying."

► **COMMENT**—This looks like another high speed stall. The pilot probably had ample speed for normal flight, but not enough to compensate for the acceleration ("g") which was added in the zoom. Remember the rule: The stalling speed of an airplane increases as the square root of "g."



Every Organization Has One

An instructor and two students were scheduled for night flying in TBM's at a field where the north-south and east-west runways form a "T," so that to take off in a northerly direction planes must taxi down the E-W runway to the intersection.

During briefing, the pilots were notified that the north course was to be used. In addition, the planes had to taxi past an illuminated numeral which indicated the runway in use and near a lighted tetrahedron which clearly indicated wind direction.

All this, plus an instructor to follow, wasn't even enough. By the time the instructor had taxied to the intersection, he found one of his students bearing down on him, taking off on the east-west runway. He gave his plane the

gun and got clear. However, the other student, who was trailing the instructor, either did not see the approaching plane or didn't realize his danger, for he failed to "scatter." The entire crew of this plane was killed in the ensuing collision.

The erring pilot was recommended for reclassification.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

This is the sort of accident that makes older pilots skeptical, distrustful and suspicious.

I have an old truck-driver friend who is like that. A few years ago he was proclaimed the National Champion because he had driven more miles without ever having had a single accident, than anyone ever did before. When asked by the press for a statement as to what he attributed his success, he replied, "Well—I always drive my truck just as though everybody else on the road is crazy."

It isn't enough to do everything right yourself. You must also keep a weather eye out for the guy who doesn't get the word. Seemingly, there's one of these in every outfit. When the word is passed, either they are doping off, they aren't interested, they "know it all already," or they are just plain dumb. In aviation, it doesn't make much difference which; the results are usually the same.

A Pilot's Best Friend

While tail chasing during fighter tactics, a section leader went into a barrel roll at 3,500 feet and then a split-s, recovering at approximately 2,000 feet. When he climbed and gave the signal to join up, his wingman had disappeared. Later, it was found that the other plane had crashed at a high rate of speed and at an estimated angle of 30 degrees. Apparently, the pilot either had blacked out or lost control of the aircraft.

In an effort to prevent recurrence of such an accident, the squadron commander directed that 6,000 feet be the minimum altitude for all radical maneuvers in the future.

► **COMMENT**—Before engaging in aerobatics, all pilots should be thoroughly familiar with the "effects of high acceleration," as explained in T. N. 22-44.

To engage unnecessarily in violent maneuvers at low altitude is to invite disaster. If blackout, material failure or a spin occurs, the pilot needs time to recover. The time depends on altitude. Hence the adage: "A pilot's best friend is altitude."



Helldivers joining up above two carriers somewhere in the wide Pacific demonstrate the precision flight and timing so necessary for operating with vast task forces now in action



GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ



All aviators should know the answers to these questions. In the air, the penalty for not knowing may prove fatal. If you miss an answer on the ground, penalize yourself by looking up the reference. If you don't, I claim you're a sucker!

1. When two planes in flight approach head-on, what corrective action should each pilot take?
2. Are Civil Air Regulations binding on navy pilots?
3. How much pilot time do you need in any type airplane before you may be cleared to fly it on instruments?
4. You are flying at 16,000 feet and begin to feel either drowsy, nauseated, over-confident or hilarious. What do?
5. After leaving the cockpit in an emergency parachute jump, what should be your first consideration?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 48

He Asked For It

A PBM pilot (1,550 hours), about to take off in a river, called the tower to check whether his take-off path around the bend was clear. He was unable to contact the tower immediately, however, so he decided to take a chance—despite the overloaded condition of his airplane and the general prevalence of small boats in the area.

This faulty decision might have cost

The Wrong Way to Go Home

This is the sad story of a naval aviator who lost his life in an attempt to give his home town a thrill.

As he flew over, he couldn't resist the urge to demonstrate what a hot pilot he was. He went into a screaming dive and pulled out just above the trees. He zoomed up, reversed his course and down he went again. But this time he struck a tree and crashed in flames, almost in his own front yard.

Poor chap! And to think that his biggest thrill he could have given them was seeing him home again, alive and happy.

the lives of 15 people; his own crew and the five people who were in the canoe he hit as he rounded the bend. The pilot was lucky this time, however, for he only side-swiped the canoe, dumping the occupants in the water without seriously injuring anyone.

Mis-matched Wings

After the left wing of an SNJ had been damaged during a taxi accident, it was replaced with a later model wing with a different type of aileron control system. After replacement, the plane was flown successfully on 31 flights with the respective pilots remembering that, with ailerons neutral, the stick was slightly to the right of center. The 32nd pilot, however, forgot and when just about ready to contact the runway during his landing, he centered the control stick. His left wing scraped the runway, resulting in extensive wing damage.

► **COMMENT**—When issued, the modified SNJ wings were marked with a warning to use them only in pairs. Complete details were given to the service in SNJ-3 Bulletin #21 and SNJ-4 #15.

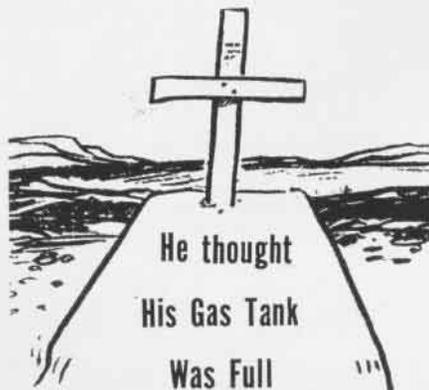
This accident was due to direct violation of these instructions.

Be Prepared

An FM-1 failed to return from a routine practice gunnery flight. Immediate search resulted in the discovery of the airplane on its back in a swamp. The pilot was dead—not from injuries, but from *asphyxiation*.

Further investigation revealed that the pilot had been making a forced landing when the crash occurred. It was determined that the plane had been in flight approximately forty minutes prior to the crash. The selector valve was on reserve. There was no evidence of leakage from the reserve fuel tank after the crash, but there had been leakage from the main tank.

All of these led the investigating board to believe that the pilot had taken off on reserve tank and thereafter had failed to switch to the main tank, resulting in fuel exhaustion and the forced landing. He attempted the land-



ing with wheels down in soft terrain. The wheels caught in the soft mud of the swamp, causing the plane to flip over on its back.

► **COMMENT**—Basic cause of this accident appears to have been the oft-repeated error of failing to shift fuel tanks. This should require no comment.

A second error was committed in this case, however, which probably cost the pilot his life. He landed with his wheels down. As pointed out in Flight Safety Bulletin 14-44, aircraft seldom turn over if landed *wheels-up* in swamp-land. Why this pilot elected to land *wheels-down* will never be known. Maybe he had never read this bulletin. Maybe he forgot what it said. Maybe he got rattled in the excitement of a forced landing. Or maybe he thought it wasn't important and just ignored the advice.

The moral is clear: Be so familiar with safety directives that compliance in emergencies will be automatic.



It can happen to you! This happened when a simulated emergency was carried too low and contact was made with a tree. Both the instructor and student were injured.

Neutral Blower for Diving

While practicing overhead gunnery runs, the pilot of an F4U-1 noticed his engine was cutting out. Power could not be regained, resulting in a forced landing in the ocean.

Upon questioning the pilot, it was discovered that he had been operating in auxiliary blower all during his gunnery practice. This was in direct disregard of instructions and probably caused the engine failure. *Pilot's Handbook* says that all diving should be done in neutral blower.

► **COMMENT**—Prolonged steep dives should be conducted in "low" ratio for two-speed engines and in "neutral" ratio for two-stage engines. For the F6F, as well as the F4U, this means the "neutral" blower should be used. It is also possible that this pilot closed the throttle during his runs, a procedure that should never be employed with auxiliary blower.

See Technical Order #110-44, just issued.