

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Getting The Word

A student in primary training was inattentive as to the location of obstacles along the taxi strip. He also was taxiing too fast. He hit an upright sign just off the paving. When he got out of the aircraft to inspect the damage, he noted the legend on the sign. It was: "TAXI SLOWLY."

Sloppy Signals

The second pilot was bringing a PBV-5A in for a field landing. The second radioman, who was qualified to check the landing gear, found the nose wheel doors were only slightly ajar. Not knowing the plane was close to a landing, he only made a vague sort of gesture. The Patrol Plane Commander interpreted the radioman's signal as meaning that the wheels were down and permitted the co-pilot to land. When the plane touched the ground, it fell forward on the bow and skidded to a stop.

Disciplinary action was taken against the PPC for this accident.

To prevent future accidents of this kind, the squadron commander issued an order requiring that the landing gear be lowered far enough in advance of getting on the ground to enable a check and report to be made that the landing gear actually is down and locked. The order also directs pilots to insure that standard signals only are used when referring to the position of wheels, flaps or wing-tip floats, that they are given in a very positive manner and that they are repeated back to show they are understood.

▶ **Comment:** Aviation Circular Letter 95-44 contains the directive on this subject. All commands should check to insure strict compliance by all personnel involved.

Batten, Batten, Who's got the Batten?

An alarming number of reports are received covering damage to surface controls and actuating mechanisms due to aircraft being parked in high or gusty winds without benefit of battens.

This trouble is not peculiar to any one type of airplane but is more prevalent on the larger airplanes where the control surfaces are more difficult to get at.

Technical Note 43-43 contains direc-



tive for use of battens on parked planes.

It is pointed out that propeller blast from other airplanes may have the same effect as high winds.

Take-off Emergencies

Case 1. Upon reaching an altitude of 200 feet on take-off, the engine of a TBM cut out. The pilot attempted a steep turn back toward the field, during which the plane stalled and spun in, killing the pilot and one crewman.

Case 2. The engine of an FM suddenly lost power on take-off at an altitude of about 300 feet. The pilot attempted a turn to get into the cross-wind runway but his plane stalled and crashed. The pilot suffered serious head and face injuries, and was hospitalized.

Case 3. Following engine failure at 50 feet on take-off, a student in an N2S dropped his nose and made a sharp turn in an attempt to get back into the field. The plane stalled and crashed, seriously injuring the student.

Gram paw Pettibone says:

Sure, everybody knows that in emergencies such as these, unless you have plenty of altitude, you should land straight ahead. But it is a natural instinct to land on an airfield and you will do exactly what these boys did unless you prepare yourself ahead of time.

In this emergency, you are too low to jump and you don't have time to figure things out. The main thing to remember is, *don't lose flying speed!* This isn't as easy as it sounds because you are usually in a climb, just above stalling speed. So snap that nose down like you were taught in a cut-gun emergency. After that, if you have any time left, you can maneuver into the clearest available landing area. Records show that if you can get your wheels on the ground with the airplane still under control, your chances of "walking away" are many times better than if you lose control and spin in.

This is one of the maneuvers you can't learn by correcting your mistakes because you seldom get a second chance. So use your head for something besides keeping your earphones apart; figure this thing out and get it firmly fixed in your mind. Then, to insure that you will react correctly, visualize this emergency on your take-offs until you know force of habit will overcome your natural instinct.

Don't try to turn back into the field when you haven't got a snowball's chance of making it. Don't lose flying speed.



AAR's

Attention is invited to the fact that the "combat or local emergency conditions" referred to in ALNAV NO. 8 of 1943 now are terminated.

Aircraft Accident Reports (Form NAVAER 339) again become a *must* under ALL operating conditions. See Aviation Circular Letter 48-44.

Expensive Fun

A naval aviator was reported for flying formation on a commercial airliner last month.

He was tried by general court martial, found guilty and sentenced to lose \$100 per month of his pay for a period of ten months—total loss of pay amounting to \$1000.

In approving the proceedings, findings and sentence, the convening authority commented that he considered the sentence inadequate in view of the gravity of the offense, which needlessly endangered the lives of others.

Don't Be a Cockpit Ostrich

Case 1. An F6F was observed to be making a normal carrier approach until on the crosswind leg it began losing altitude and crashed just before reaching the groove. Observers on board the escorting destroyer stated that the pilot appeared to be leaning over in the cockpit just prior to the crash. It was the opinion of the investigating board that the pilot inadvertently eased forward on the stick while leaning over to make some cockpit adjustment.

Case 2. Immediately after take-off, the student pilot of an SNJ experienced engine failure. He picked out a field and began his emergency approach. At this point accompanying pilots saw him leaning forward in the cockpit, apparently occupied in getting the engine started again. The airplane lost altitude rapidly and crashed without breaking its glide.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

Who in blazes do you think is going to fly the airplane while you fiddle around with your head in the cockpit like an ostrich? During contact flying, common sense should warn you of the danger of keeping your head in the cockpit for more than a second or two, particularly at low altitudes.

Nothing To Win

Case 1. Following take-off from an outlying field, an instructor returned with his student and made several passes at parked planes. On his last

dive, he hit the ground while still at an angle of approximately 15 degrees.

The instructor paid with his life for this folly. He might still have gotten another chance, however, had he been wearing his shoulder harness, for his only injuries were about the head and face. The student, who was wearing his harness properly secured, was injured only slightly. He walked away from the crash.

Case 2. While making a glide bombing run in a float-type plane, the pilot failed to pull out in time. The plane hit in a flat attitude, tore off the main float, bounced into the air and came down nose first, sinking in less than one minute.

The pilot was not wearing his shoulder harness. He was knocked unconscious and sank with the plane.

The passenger, who had his harness secured, received no injuries. He made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the pilot before the plane sank.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**
Just a little horse sense—about the amount God gives the horse's long-eared half-brother—is all you need to realize that the odds are all against you when your shoulder harness is not secured.

Emergency Technique

While at 2000 feet altitude and six miles from the field, an SBW-3 pilot (342 hours) noted that his engine began to surge and lose power. He immediately broke formation and headed for home.

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.

1. In regard to speed, acceleration and angle of bank, what is meant when an airplane is restricted to normal flying?
2. In the later SNJ's, how much rudder can you use before the tail wheel disengages and becomes free swiveling?
3. When filing an instrument flight plan or whenever flying under IFR, what are the prescribed altitudes for various magnetic headings, outside of control zones?
4. Should planes equipped with electric propellers be dived with propeller in manual or automatic?
5. Are BuAer service changes mandatory or advisory?

(Answers on page 40)

The engine failed completely shortly after he entered the traffic pattern. He was directly over a congested area at the time and, being too low to glide into the field, he turned toward the river. He hit the trees 300 feet before reaching there, however.

Both the pilot and passenger were injured. The plane received strike damage.

The investigating board pointed out the following pilot errors during this emergency:

a. He failed to call the tower for emergency landing clearance. The pilot stated he was too busy to do this, but it is not believed he realized the importance of this step. To do this assures you of a clear runway at a time when to go around again may mean a fatal crash.

b. He made his approach over a congested area, thus needlessly endangering the lives of others. The flight leader advised him to make his approach along the river but this message apparently was not received.

c. His approach error was further compounded by coming in at low altitude. When approaching a field for an emergency landing, particularly with engine trouble, sufficient altitude should be maintained to be able to glide into the field from any position in the landing circle.

Taxi Collisions

While an F6F pilot was returning to the hangar via the taxi strip in front of the tower,

- ▶ He was aware that another fighter was taxiing ahead of him, but
- ▶ He failed to note that the other plane had come to a stop, with the result that
- ▶ He taxied into the other plane—causing serious damage.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

This happens so often you can almost sing it; over 800 times with major or strike damage last year. And most of them occurred because pilots either: a. taxied too fast, b. failed to make sufficient "S" turns to insure a clear runway, or c. failed to keep a sharp lookout over both sides of the cockpit.

Such pilot errors are symptoms of a mental disease inherent in each of us—carelessness. Fortunately, it is not incurable. It normally will disappear with experience or age, but you don't have to wait for that. Most cases can be cured by mixing a pinch of will power with a lot of common sense and taking a dose of that before each flight.

Where the disease has reached the malignment stage, however, it will seldom respond to this simple cure. The only thing that will check it then is the moral suasion treatment, administered in increasing doses, until all symptoms disappear.