

# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## It's Getting Worse

*Case 1.* Some witnesses, golfers to be exact, saw a Naval aircraft make two passes at an estimated altitude of 200 feet over a golf course. Seconds later, as he pulled out of a 2000-foot dive, the pilot slow-rolled at a low altitude, scooped out and crashed to his death.

*Case 2.* Two pilots were scheduled for a familiarization flight but ended up in a simulated gunnery flight, not authorized. After making a roundhouse high side, Pilot A recovered too abruptly and blacked out. Pilot B, who was attempting to get into a position for his run, lost sight of his cohort. The inevitable happened—a mid-air collision. Pilot A parachuted from his aircraft and Pilot B was lucky to make it back to base. The trouble, unfortunately, did not end with the bailout as the abandoned aircraft crashed into a house, killing a mother and her baby.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Yes, our fatal accident files are full of narratives such as those briefed above. Flat-hatting or unauthorized flying in any shape or form is intolerable and inexcusable. This sort of thing becomes more prevalent month by month, as noted by the increase in the number of flat-hatting accidents and the unusual thickness of the "complaint" file.

You flat-hatters, those of you who still want to live and fly Navy aircraft, had better heed this warning because our citizens are more and more concerned over your antics and about what the Navy is going to do with offenders. If you fellows think you can get away with buzzing your folks' home, and your gal's house, or scaring hell out of your friends and the public in general, then you'd better think again. Sooner or later your mistakes will foul you up good and proper. It's merely a question of time.

If flat-hatters and violators of authorized flying continue to ignore pleas for safe and disciplined flying, they can expect no consideration when caught.

What can be done with violators? Well, the Navy, the Federal Courts and the State Courts have something to say about it. Look at the list.

Some of the punishments which a Naval Aviator Disposition Board can hand out are:

1. Ground you.
2. Dismiss you from service.
3. Revoke your commission.
4. Release you to inactive duty.
5. Reclassify you.

Then a Navy Court Martial can do all the above and more. The court can:



1. Sentence you to substantial loss in pay.
2. Withhold all your promotions during your period of probation.
3. Discharge you from service and confine you in prison at hard labor.
4. Discharge you from service under conditions other than honorable with consequential loss of all your veteran's rights.

Finally, the State and Federal Courts can prosecute a Naval pilot if he violates a State or Federal statute while flying.

*One more thing:* Death gratuities and benefits can be withheld from next of kin, or from people named as beneficiaries, if the pilot is killed in an accident resulting

from his own misconduct. A pilot's misdemeanor thus can have a disastrous effect on the income that might have provided some security for his wife or immediate family.

It seems to me, fellows, that it isn't worth it. I know that all of us are not saints in this respect, but let's keep our wings—this side of heaven.

## Quick Henry—the Hand Pump!

After a normal landing an SB2C was returning to the operations line. The pilot stopped the plane about 60 yards from the parking area, folded the wings, checked the hydraulic pressure, which read 1,000 lbs. P.S.I., and proceeded towards his parking spot. As he completed a 90 degree turn to the left to enter the parking space, the left brake failed and the plane slowly pivoted to the right and hit the next parked aircraft.

Inspection showed that only air pressure remained in the hydraulic system and the brake accumulators. The fluid level in the hydraulic reservoir was very low, with only reserve fluid available. A few strokes of the hand pump, however, built up sufficient pressure to operate the brakes satisfactorily, but caused hydraulic fluid to run freely from the right rear bomb door cylinder which was leaking badly. Inspection of the brakes themselves revealed no discrepancies.

► *Comment:* It is noted that in this case the landing gear and flaps were lowered without difficulty prior to the landing. The flaps retracted normally after landing and the plane was taxied to the parking area with no indication of brake failure. Folding the wings was also accomplished without difficulty. In view of the above facts, it is concluded that the system fluid was partially dissipated during flight and almost completely by the time the flaps were retracted and the wings folded. After these operations, the brakes were probably operating only on brake accumulator pressure.

This accident was caused primarily by a material failure of the hydraulic system which allowed the loss of most of the hydraulic fluid. The pilot showed care in coming to a stop before folding his wings, an excellent precaution in view of the limited capacity of the hydraulic pump on the SB2C when the engine is turning over at low RPM. The pilot's only error was in not actuating the hand pump immediately when his brakes failed; as there was sufficient reserve fluid available, and he might have been able to avoid the collision which damaged the two planes.

## GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ



1. Cold fronts on a weather map are colored: (a) Green, (b) Blue, (c) Purple, (d) Red.
2. If it is impossible to fly below the base of a thunderstorm line, or over the tops of the saddlebacks, and it is necessary to fly through, the point of least danger will be: (a) Lower one-third of cloud; (b) Middle of cloud; (c) Above two-thirds of the distance from the base to the top.
3. How can you detect carburetor icing by reference to your instrument panel?
4. What is the relationship of Aircraft "Mach Numbers" to flight safety?
5. What are the first three things you should do to regain fuel suction if a tank is run dry in flight?

(Answers on page 40)

## Surprise Salvo!

On a rocket training flight the pilot of an F4U was preparing to fire. The plane was equipped with a Mk1 Mod O rocket selector switch. In the process of turning on his armament switches the pilot placed his left hand on the stick, inadvertently pressing the bomb-rocket button. Then, without noticing the position of the indicator on the rocket selector switch, the pilot snapped on the master armament switch.

His entire load of rockets fired in salvo causing extensive damage to the aircraft.

Pilot in his statement attributed the accident to the ground crew because they failed to set the rocket selector switch in a position other than salvo.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Wait a minute, brother. If you had familiarized yourself with the location and position of all the armament switches before take-off, this accident would never have happened.

Safety regulations provide that both the ordnanceman and the pilot check to see that all switches are in the "off" or "safe" position before the rockets are loaded and the pigtailed plugged in. They should be left in these positions until after take-off to minimize the possibility of accidental firing.

Bureau of Aeronautics Technical Order #70-45 prohibits the firing of aircraft rockets in instantaneous salvo.

Any pilot who goes out on a bombing, rocket, or gunnery training flight without knowing exactly how the armament system works, is really looking for trouble. You were plenty lucky that those rockets didn't shoot up some shore installation or another aircraft.

## Clear the Runway Promptly!

The pilot of the GH-3 pictured above made a normal landing and was cleared to turn off the service runway at the first intersection. He rolled past the first intersection while trying to unlock his tail wheel. Instead of taxiing promptly to the end of the runway, he stopped and two passengers got out to shake the tail in an attempt to unlock the tail wheel. The tower, meanwhile, had instructed the pilot to taxi ahead to the next intersection as four F4U's had been cleared to land.

The first F4U took a voluntary wave-off; the second landed short and turned off at the intersection. The tower warned the pilot of the third F4U too late for him to avoid the crash.

The two passengers saw the F4U coming in time to jump clear. The pilot of the GH-3 suffered very serious injuries.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**  
Responsibility for this accident



rests mainly with the pilot of the GH-3 for not clearing the runway promptly. Maybe faster action on the part of tower personnel could have prevented the accident and very probably the third F4U should have taken a voluntary wave-off. But the best life insurance in this instance would have been to taxi straight ahead to the end of the runway. Remember it's your neck you are sticking out when you dope off.

## Wing and Throttle Pilot

The pilot of the plane pictured below didn't get a thorough cockpit check-out before taking off on his first flight in an F4U.

Because he failed to turn on the instrument switch, his gasoline gauge, oil temperature gauge, and magnetic compass were inoperative. After take-off, the pilot realized that these gauges were not working, but continued to fly for two hours and fifteen minutes.

He was flying with his gasoline selector on Reserve, so that he didn't have the 50-gallon standpipe warning. He ran out of gas near the field, but not quite close enough to make it. He landed wheels up in an adjacent field and received only minor injuries because he had his safety belt and shoulder harness locked.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

"Dilbert," I didn't know you had it in you. I'm right proud of that spark of genius you showed at the very end. Except for that locked shoulder harness you would be explaining the whole thing to Saint Peter instead of to a pilot disposition board.

Anyone who flies a plane without even knowing where the instrument switch is or how the fuel system operates is just an accident ready to happen.



## Check Those Guns!

**Case #1:**

Ninety-two (92) rounds of ammunition accidentally fired from port in-board gun of F4U during preparations to start aircraft. During entire incident all gun switches in the cockpit were in "OFF" position. Firing commenced when external power supply was plugged in.

**Causes:**

1. Short in electrical system.
2. Guns left in charged condition with live rounds of ammunition in gun chambers.

**Case #2:**

Accidental firing of machine guns on F4U fifteen minutes after aircraft landed aboard carrier. Master arming switch and all gun switches on "OFF" position, and all guns set on "SAFE" at time of accident. *One fatality.*

**Causes:**

1. Defective gun charging valve permitted gun bolt to return to the in-battery position despite gun charger handle being set on "SAFE."
2. Live ammunition in chamber after safing of guns in flight.

**Case #3:**

Two civilian employees removing gun from F4U wing in salvage yard. Gun fired as it was placed on the ground following removal, causing severe injuries to one civilian.

**Causes:**

1. Ordnance personnel failed to remove live round of ammunition from chamber when preserving guns for storage.
2. Civilian personnel failed to inspect chamber before handling gun.

► **Comment:** Two of these accidents were caused by material failures and the third as a result of gross carelessness. However, all three could have been prevented if the following safety rules specified in BuAer Technical Note #19-46 had been observed:

1. Clear all guns of all ammunition after flight both aboard ship and ashore.
2. Inspect guns for presence of ammunition in chamber before servicing guns or airplane, particularly before removing guns from airplane wing.
3. Inspect guns and accessories frequently and replace worn parts.
4. Flight personnel inform ground personnel of the exact condition of gun installations before leaving the aircraft.



Here lies the body  
Of Dilbert McBride  
Who said it was easy  
To stretch out a glide.