

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Letter to Grampaw Pettibone

"Dear Sir:

Of course, no one should rely on memory in lieu of a printed check-off list. However, the following is a bit of easily-memorized verse which includes a number of points not normally appearing on check-off lists. It is a good supplement to a printed list to be run over in one's mind while waiting for head temperature to come up or while waiting for that green light from the tower.

*Take-Off Check-Off in Doggerel
I'm in low pitch and my mixtures rich,
And my blower couldn't be lower.
My quadrant's tight and I've checked by sight
The selector crank, and the fuel in the tank.
The fuel pumps on, and the controls I've tested,
In volts and pressures I'm always interested.
My wings are locked and the pitot's unsocked,
I've set the tabs and set the flaps,
And tightened up on my shoulder straps.
My cowling's sealed and my eyes are peeled,
I'll lock my tail and leave the field."*

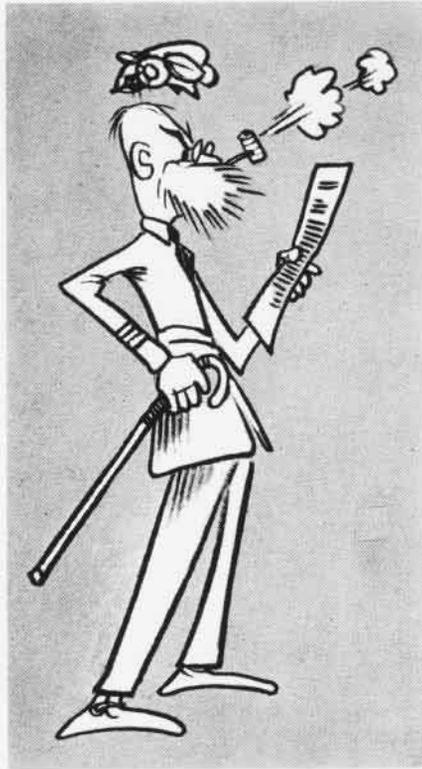


Grampaw Pettibone says:

We greatly appreciate your rhyme and I, for one, am committing it to memory. I will use it only as you have suggested as a SUPPLEMENT to the check-off list. Do we have any other practical poets who will write a readily remembered "landing check-off verse?" I'll be looking for contributions!

Torpedo Squadron Doctrine

A torpedo squadron writes that according to their doctrine, bomb bay doors are not to be opened until planes are clear of the formation and in the bombing run. Two recent breaches of



this doctrine within their squadron show what can happen when this precaution is disregarded.

Case One. While conducting a high speed break-up from a nine-plane formation, one pilot opened his bomb bay doors prematurely, allowing a 100-pound GP bomb to fall through the formation, narrowly missing several planes. It was determined through investigation by the squadron ordnance officer that the bomb had sufficient air travel to become armed before clearing all planes in the flight, and therefore could have caused a very serious accident. The reason for the bomb's releasing when doors were opened was found to have been caused by defective wiring.

Case Two. After breaking formation

to make a glide bombing run, the pilot opened his bomb bay doors before entering his dive. As in Case One, his bombs released due to defective wiring when bomb bay doors were opened, allowing the bombs to fall far short of the target. Fortunately no accident resulted and the bombs exploded harmlessly in the water, but the possibility of more serious consequences was quite evident.

Reversitis

The pilot of an SC lined up with the wind streaks and landed, his only miscalculation being in the wind direction, which was exactly 180° from that of his approach. Upon making contact with the water, the SC's float dug in and the plane flipped over on its back.

Immediately following this plane was another SC whose pilot also had doped off. Seeing the first SC crash, the second pilot landed (also downwind) to give aid. After assuring himself that rescue proceedings were well in hand, the second pilot began a take-off—downwind!!! Unable to get off the water, and while traveling at a high ground speed, his plane bounced heavily on several swells, causing severe damage. Wind socks and smoke were to be seen and could have been used as a check on wind direction by these pilots.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Perseverance certainly is a desired trait in a naval aviator but only when it is tempered with inquisitiveness, caution and just plain good common sense. Wind shifts of 180° within short periods of time are not uncommon. When landing and taking off, pilots should use all means available in checking the wind. In sea-plane operations it is axiomatic that before take-off a pilot should idle his engine thus permitting his plane to weathercock into the wind.

LIFEGUARD SUBS VITAL PART OF AIR/SEA RESCUE

ONE OF the pilot's best friends when he is in trouble in wartime is the lifeguard submarine standing offshore to pick up ditched fliers and their crews or posted along the flight path to watch for shot-up planes which might have had to ditch without being able to radio for help. Lookouts like these on the U.S.S. Sand Lance helped locate and pick up 137 men during the war by official records, and probably many dozen more who never

were entered in the books. Subs on guard duty usually monitored two distress frequencies—4475 KCS and VHF (voice) or 140.58 MCS—in rescue work. During the war the very existence of lifeguard subs was closely guarded so that the enemy would not know how closely they worked with fast carrier task forces or strikes from nearby islands, to insure that every possible Navy pilot or crewman was picked up as soon as possible.





This is what happened when a flight leader led his group over a congested residential district at an altitude below that prescribed by paragraph 60.105 of C.A.R., which states:

"Except when necessary for taking off and landing, aircraft shall be flown:

"(a) when over the congested areas of cities, town, settlements, or open-air assemblies of persons, at altitudes sufficient to permit emergency landings outside such area and in no case less than 1,000 feet above such areas, and

"(b) when elsewhere than as specified in paragraph (a), at an altitude of not less than 500 feet, except over water or areas where flying at a lower altitude will not involve hazard to persons or property on the surface."

The engine of this plane suddenly failed, leaving the pilot with only two choices: bail out or land. He courageously attempted a forced landing in an unoccupied street, but telephone poles caused plane to swerve out of control and crash into this house. Fortunately no one was seriously injured.

Night Emergencies

At 2,000 feet during a night flight, the engine of an F6F began cutting out. Calling his station tower, 15 miles distant, the pilot said he was returning for an emergency landing. Four miles from the field, the engine failed completely. So much altitude had been lost by this time that the pilot apparently decided a safe bail-out impossible. In the ensuing forced landing attempt, the plane crashed and burned, killing the pilot.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

The pilot's initial decision to attempt a return to the base while he was still at safe altitude is not criticized. His desire to save the plane is both understandable and laudable. However, as a lesson to other aviators, it should be pointed out here that this pilot made a fatal mistake in not jumping before he had lost so much altitude that a successful jump was impossible.

Forced landings at night are extremely hazardous. When there is a choice, they should not be attempted on land unless exceptional circumstances exist, such as non-availability of parachutes in certain transports or a combination of unusual visibility and known favorable terrain conditions. If you have sufficient altitude,

your best bet usually is to jump before you get too low. Forget about saving the plane; it's unimportant when your life is concerned.

Likewise, it is considered much safer to jump than to attempt a forced night landing at sea in a small landplane where all emergency equipment is carried in the paraft. In large airplanes, however, the danger of such a landing usually will be offset by the advantages to be gained from retaining contact with the emergency equipment carried in the plane and from keeping personnel together for mutual assistance.

He Didn't Get the Word

At 4000 feet, the pilot of an R6F experienced complete engine failure. Upon checking his engine instruments, he noticed the fuel pressure had dropped almost to zero. He shifted from reserve to right main but observed no increase in fuel pressure so shifted back to reserve (empty). The engine quite naturally failed to restart and the pilot made a wheels down landing in an orchard. Shortly after the wheels contacted the ground, the plane overturned. The pilot struck his head on the windshield and received serious injuries to his right eye. He had unlocked his shoulder harness during the descent and had failed to relock it for the landing. It was apparent that the lowering of wheels for a landing on such terrain contributed to the seriousness of his crash.

The Accident Board was of the opinion that the pilot failed to shift tanks until after fuel pressure was lost and

thereafter employed faulty procedure in attempting to regain suction.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Damn! Same old story! I get a little fed up with talking about these three asinine errors, but I guess as long as some guys don't get the word, we have to keep trying to drum it into their thick skulls.

Surely no one needs further convincing of the life-saving value of the shoulder harness. Obviously it doesn't do any good unless it is tight and locked.

Never lower wheels for a forced landing on soft terrain. In fact, the only time you want to lower wheels for a forced landing is when the terrain is hard and it is apparent that an entirely successful landing can be made.

In regard to this pilot's failure to regain suction after shifting tanks, quote part of Flight Safety Bulletin 25-44 outlines six steps for regaining suction.

STEPS

"a. Shift to proper tank with positive, visual check of selector valve position.

"b. Switch on auxiliary fuel pump, or use hand wobble pump.

"c. Retard throttle to $\frac{1}{2}$ position.

"d. Place mixture control in IDLE CUT-OFF until adequate fuel pressure is built-up (6 p.s.i. for Injection Carburetors, 2 p.s.i. for Holley and float-type carburetors) then return to Auto Lean or Auto Rich.

"e. Nose over into steep glide.

"f. Use primer if necessary."

Better review this Flight Safety Bulletin unless you know all the "whys and wherefores".

Blown Out of His Area

While practicing acrobatics at about 5,000 feet for almost an hour, a primary student forgot about keeping a check on his position and was blown out of his squadron area. Being unfamiliar with surrounding territory and not having noticed the direction he had been drifting during his stunting practice, he was completely lost.

Shortly thereafter, he decided to make a forced landing. Poor emergency landing technique resulted in a crash—almost 40 miles west of the station field.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

This student apparently concentrated on his stunting practice to the point where he forgot about keeping a check on his position. But even after he realized he had been blown out of his area, he should have been able to locate himself had he previously taken the time to familiarize himself with the terrain and landmarks just outside his own squadron area.

Early in his flight training, a student must learn to divide his attention so that he can keep a constant running check on a great many items. He cannot afford to let his attention be concentrated on any one thing for more than a few seconds, or he is leaving himself open to trouble.

GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ



1. On coming in to land what signals should the pilot give to the co-pilot to lower wheels?
2. Why should pitot static tubes be covered when airplanes are not in flight?
3. Who is responsible for promulgating the instructions to be observed in operating Naval aircraft?
4. Whose responsibility is it to see that pilots keep themselves informed as to the contents of Technical Orders and Technical Notes pertaining to the type of equipment with which they are concerned?
5. What piloting experience is required for operating multi-engine light transport aircraft: (a) Under C.F.R.? (b) Under I.F.R.?

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