



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Easy as Pie

The pilot of an F9F-6 on his third hop of the morning, a routine tactical training hop, cut the flight short because he and his wingman "felt pooped." He closed the power control to idle and proceeded to land. The airplane went farther down the runway than usual before touching down. The touchdown seemed normal, except that when the nose dropped immediately after touchdown, the pilot realized that he had no nose wheel.

The *Congar* slid straight and comfortably on the runway to a stop. On the way, the pilot opened the canopy. On stopping, he shut down the engine, removed his mask, smelled burning rubber, unhitched his straps and disconnects, and left the airplane.

In the pilot's words: "When I looked back at the plane to see what had happened to the nose wheel—no wheels at all! That was when I first realized I'd landed wheels up. Somewhat shook up, I was ushered into a dispensary truck. I was relieved to hear a corpsman radio in that the pilot was uninjured.

"Mental attitude that morning probably contributed to the accident. This was the sixth plane I had been in and out of. Three I had strapped myself into, started up, checked, shut down, unstrapped and disconnected from, clambered out of and downed. One had no UHF reception, another's speed brakes couldn't be raised, and the third had a near-dead battery. I would recommend to anyone in the same fix that he give up and take a shower instead of trying again."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Son, you said a mouthfull! After downing a series of aircraft, a pilot's feeling of frustration and general mental attitude just ain't fittin' for flight. Anybody would wish he'd stood in bed.

Taking to the air in flying machines is a complicated business these days. Squadron ground personnel and gadget designers should try to make the pilot's job as simple and free of un-



necessary distractions as possible.

But great horned toadies! No pilot has any call to dope off completely. This daydreamer automatically reported his gear down and locked without feeling for the position of the landing gear handle or checking the gear indicator. And he didn't look for the runway paddle man who was frantically waving him off. The runway radio which might have gotten through to him wasn't functioning.

The pilot breakfasted at 0500 and, not being particularly hungry, ate nothing more for the eight hours preceding the accident. He'd had a full ration of sleep the night before, but prior to that he'd been short every other night for a week. It all added up



to his being somewhat lacking in food and sleep—and a pooped feeling that prompted him to shorten the hop and probably contributed to his failure to lower his gear.

Taxident

A Ltjg. made a normal landing following a scheduled transport flight in the Philippines. Passengers in his AD-5N were two other pilots.

After turning off the duty runway onto the taxiway, the pilot was advised by the tower operator that there was an obstruction on the taxiway and an open ditch paralleling the taxiway (recently dug for the installation of high intensity lighting).

In taxiing around the barricades surrounding an excavation, the pilot gave extra clearance to port and permitted the starboard wheel (on his blind side) to roll off the taxiway and into the ditch, the prop striking the runway.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great balls of fire! The pilot had been warned of the obstruction and the ditch and *still* he managed to taxi into one or the other. He had high-priced qualified help aboard—two designated aviators who could have served as lookouts.

However, these naval aviators were so busily engaged in violating one of the most basic safety rules—removing safety belt and shoulder straps before the aircraft came to its final stop—that they assumed no responsibility for assisting the pilot.

It's still true that the two eyes in taxiing should be yours and—when available—two sets are a darn sight better than one.

Foot in the Dike

The pilot of an SNB was cleared for a straight-in approach at NAS OAKLAND on his night VFR return flight from Fresno. On final, the pilot allowed the aircraft to get too low and a sharp jolt was felt as the starboard main gear struck a dike seven feet above and 405 feet short of the runway. The wheel contacted the dike

18 inches from the top, damaging the starboard landing gear oleo strut.

A wave-off was taken and the pilot checked the port landing gear down, but the copilot could not see the starboard gear. Retardation of throttles gave a silent response on the horn check, indicating gear down and locked, so the pilot attempted a normal landing. The starboard gear collapsed and the aircraft swerved violently off the right side of the runway, collapsing the left gear and belly-bumping to a halt. Pilots and passengers were uninjured, but the Beech was worse for wear.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Jumpin Jehosophat! I'm constantly amazed at the way some pilots avoid getting the message.



I just wear a lot of good-luck charms and hope for the best.

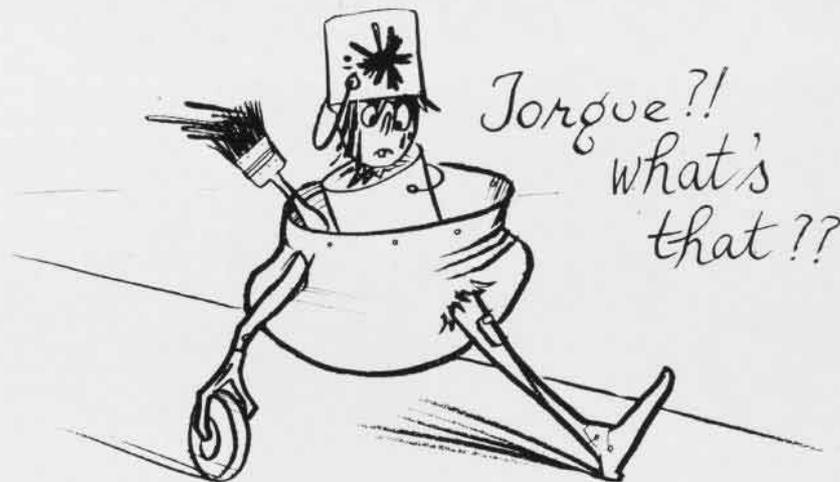
You'd think a severe jolt on a low final would give a definite clue that all was not hunky-dory. The thought occurred to this pilot, but the circumstances warranted more than the half-hearted investigation he made. Seems to me that in this case he'd want a wheels check from somebody *outside* the airplane if one wheel couldn't be seen from inside.

Forewarned is forearmed, and the damage could have been minimized. Further, there was no need for such a low, flat approach to a 6210-foot runway. It was the pilot's home field so he must have known about the slight obstruction on which he stubbed his undercarriage. It's a low-down shame.



MEMO FROM GRAMP:

A high-G pullout is like trying to make second base on a single or wearing an undersized girdle. It all depends on what happens in the stretch.



Paint Spreader

The AD-5W's approach to the landing was normal in all respects until just prior to touchdown. The aircraft stalled as the landing flare-out was commenced. The port wing tip struck the runway; application of power created torque that swerved the aircraft off to the left toward a stack of 10-gallon paint cans 150 feet from the runway. As the aircraft fell back to a level attitude, the right wheel buried itself in soft clay and twisted off.

Continuing on right wing tip, left wheel and tail wheel, the airplane crashed through the pile of paint cans, sheared off the radome and radar antenna and came to rest 290 feet beyond.

The aircraft accident board reported that the pilot's failure to maintain safe flying speed resulted in a stall with loss of directional heading and the resultant crash. Proper use of shoulder harness prevented possible injury.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The pilot who scattered the paint buckets was a commander with 100 hours in model and 3200 total flight hours. But from Cdr. to Ens., they all get in the AD stall/spin act. The picture is constantly improving, but there's still room for improvement.

All AD pilots would do well to review the special report on AD Stall/Spin in the April 1956 issue of Approach magazine as well as take another gander at the AD Accident Research Report (1 July 1951 to 1 January 1955) prepared by the U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center at NAS Norfolk, Va.

Incidentally, the paint cans were positioned for restriping the runways. When this job was completed, the whole mess was removed.

Thrilled to Death

A NavCad with 166 total flight hours, of which six were in model, climbed into his T-28B one afternoon for a scheduled solo hop. He proceeded directly to the general vicinity of the family homestead, well outside the authorized training area. He obviously intended to give his parents a thrill.

He made a pass over his home at an estimated altitude of between 200 and 500 feet. Then he pumped his throttle to attract the attention of the home folks and wagged his wings at his father who was riding a tractor out in the field.

He was making a low-altitude slow roll when he crashed in an inverted attitude at an angle of 70 degrees and a speed of 170 knots. The airplane was demolished by the impact and resultant explosion and fire. The pilot suffered sudden death.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

It was a costly thrill this NavCad gave his parents. Seems like every once in a while some dude has to learn his lesson the hard way. And I'm afraid this type of tragic accident won't be stopped until each pilot—new and old—is convinced that the rules were written for a reason, and for *everybody*.

Next time you're tempted to buzz the old homestead, just remember—you may be plowing your own furrow!