



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Stall-Spin-Splat

Two F-4B pilots and RIO's completed briefing for a live ordnance hop at approximately 1500 with a scheduled launch time of 1520. Weather at the base was good with 10 miles visibility, but there were broken clouds in the general area with tops to 35,000 feet. The lead pilot briefed his wingman: they would remain VFR at all times and not join in section but proceed to the operations area in a normal tactical formation.

After takeoff, the flight leader established his climb at 350 knots in a westerly direction. In an effort to remain clear of clouds, several heading and speed changes were made during the first few minutes of the flight. While climbing in a wings-level attitude at 350 knots, the lead pilot decided it would be necessary to make a climbing 360° turn in order to clear a build-up in his flight path. He went into burner and entered the turn in a 30° angle of bank and 30° nose high attitude. Even though his airspeed started to decrease, the pilot increased the angle of bank to about



Happy Landings!?!

35° and eased in more back stick pressure.

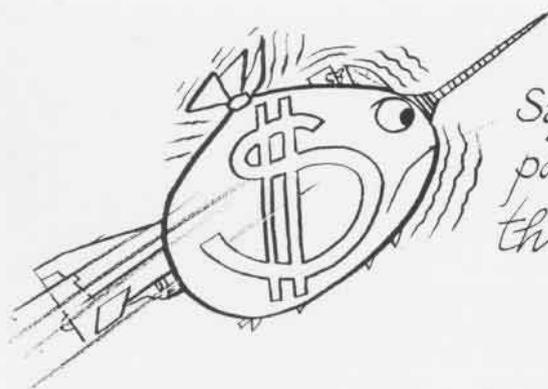
With the decreasing airspeed and increased angle of bank and nose position, the aircraft started to buffet. The pilot eased off on the back pressure but, before he could reduce the angle of bank, the aircraft went into negative "G" and rolled to the right in an inverted attitude. Altitude at this time was 23,500 feet and the pilot immediate-

ly retarded the throttles to idle and momentarily relaxed back pressure. He set six units angle of attack but noted the instrument was difficult to hold steady as he was going from negative to positive "G" and seemed to be hitting both sides of the canopy.

The RIO asked the pilot if he was all right. He replied by asking the RIO to call off the altitude. They were now at 21,000 feet in IFR conditions.

The pilot applied left rudder and the aircraft stopped rotating, but he was hanging in the straps. He then applied back stick pressure and, as the airspeed started to build, he increased the back pressure. The RIO stopped calling off altitudes and when the pilot saw the altimeter go through 14,000 feet, he told the RIO to eject. After he heard the RIO leave the aircraft, he followed immediately.

While descending, pilot observed the F-4B in a flat spin prior to impact with the ground. He seemed to be coming down in the general vicinity of the burning aircraft. Knowing there was ordnance aboard, he pulled the left parachute shroud lines to drift clear of the wreckage. The pilot and RIO were picked up by helo. They suffered only minor injuries.



Say! who is paying for this non-sense?



An F4B aint hay!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehosophat! If a trick like this don't make you fog up your bifocals, nothin' will. This lad put out a lot of effort in tryin' to corner the poor judgment market and darn near did it.

His wingman tried real hard to maintain his position, but when he saw what a mess this could turn into, he got out of the rat race but quick. He informed the lead pilot that he was unable to maintain flight integrity and would maintain 23,000 feet on a heading of 200°. In 10 seconds he was in the clear, wings level, at an airspeed of 320 knots.

Headwork like this wingman demonstrated we can use, but we sure can do without the other type.



Smokin' Pilot

A four-plane division of A-4's received taxi clearance late one afternoon for a scheduled night hop. While the four aircraft were en route to the duty runway, the pilots were instructed to hold their position owing to an emergency—a P-2 with an engine feathered.

One of the A-4 pilots stopped his aircraft in a position from which he could observe the P-2 making the emergency landing. When he saw the P-2 pilot waved off for another approach, he cocked his nose wheel so he would not have to hold the brakes. Feeling he would not resume taxiing for several minutes, he decided at that point to smoke a cigaret.

He removed his oxygen mask and laid it on his left knee. He then removed his right glove. While holding the book of matches in his left hand, he struck a match with his right hand to light the cigarette. The pilot immediately noted an excessive white glow from the match indicating the presence of excessive oxygen.

He quickly tried to extinguish the match with his gloved left index finger and thumb. While attempting to extinguish the match, he noted a small blue flame on the webbing of his oxygen mask which was resting on his left knee. He brushed his mask with his left hand and simultaneously his right hand was burned by the match which had not been extinguished. He dropped the burning match be-

tween his legs. When the match fell past the seat pan, the seat pack burst into flame.

The pilot realized it was too late to make any further attempts to extinguish the fire and concentrated on abandoning the aircraft. He opened the canopy manually and pulled the emergency harness release. He attempted to raise up and push himself back in the cockpit in an effort to keep clear of the fire in the seat. After releasing the rocket jet fitting on the torso harness, the pilot dove over the wind screen but one foot hung on something in the cockpit. He quickly kicked free, swinging by one hand on the pitot tube over the right side to the deck.

As the pilot ran from the burning aircraft, the drop tanks fell from the racks and ruptured. He ran toward the nearest crash truck but it was already on the way to the burning A-4. The crash crew foamed the cockpit and area around the aircraft. The crash crew chief secured the seat and then the throttle which had been left in the idle position.

The pilot received first and second degree burns on the inside of both thighs and the aircraft sustained overhaul damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! Smokin' at any time is bad enough, but to light a cigaret in the cockpit of a high performance aircraft when you know darn well there is a high oxygen

content is just downright foolhardy. There is no way to justify a trick like this. Any pilot who can't do without a smoke for a couple of hours had better start thinkin' about changin' his profession.

Every airman has been told time and time again that tobacco smoke contains at least two poisons, nicotine and carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide rates as one of the deadliest gases known to man. Minute quantities produce visual disturbances and decrease night vision. The effects are even worse at altitude. This lad was plain lucky to get out of this mess with just a hot seat; he could have ended up in the statistics column.

Strike Two A-4's

Two A-4's departed a mid-west NAS on a point-to-point IFR flight plan. Their weather briefing advised of scattered thunderstorms en route with tops to 25,000 feet. During climb out, instrument conditions were encountered. The assigned flight level was progressively raised from FL 280 to FL 350 and finally to FL 390. With the flight in instrument conditions at FL 390, both canopies frosted over and, in a very few minutes, things really turned to worms. The leader noted his DME and radio were out, whereupon he saw the altimeter unwinding. At about the same time the wingman's gyro horizon and TACAN went off. As the leader descended, the wingman decided to separate and go on partial panel, but neither pilot regained control of his aircraft. Both pilots ejected successfully.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh my achin' ulcer! All A-4 Monday morning quarterbacks can take a bow if you figured generator icing. But you say AFC 243A fixed this problem a coupla years ago, so how can this happen? Beats me, gents! The change is coded "URGENT" and is simple to incorporate. Somehow the change was not in these two birds and the need for the change has once again been confirmed.

'Course, extending the Ram Air Turbine probably would have saved the scooters but the problem must be recognized to be corrected.

Ol' Gramps just hopes that all airplane drivers—and especially scooter pilots—learned a lesson from this one.