



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

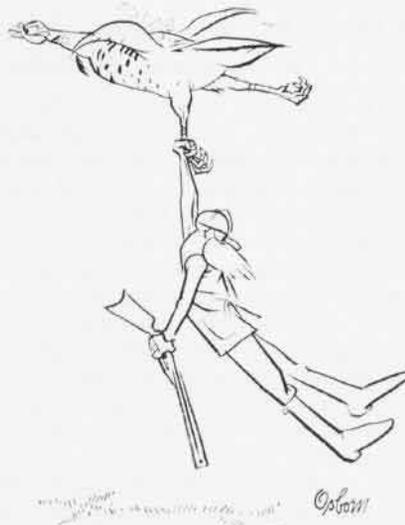
Too Little, Too Late

The *T-bird* was scheduled for a calendar maintenance test flight with an experienced pilot in the seat. Pre-flight inspection, taxi and takeoff were accomplished in a routine manner. The flight proceeded normally and the driver returned to home plate.

After receiving landing clearance, the T-33 entered the traffic pattern, flew a standard approach and broke for the duty runway. The gear was checked down and locked at the 180. This was verified by a silent warning horn, absence of a gear light and all "down" in the position indicator. (The fuel counter read approximately 435 gallons remaining at this time.)

Airspeed at the runway threshold was 105-108 knots and once the barn-bound boy was satisfied he had the runway made, he cut the throttle.

The bottom dropped out. The *T-bird* hit hard on all three wheels, smack in the vicinity of the runway numbers. It bounced and came down hard on the *port* main mount. Immediately after *this* touchdown, the pilot noted the landing gear warning horn, a red light (unsafe gear) as well as a barber pole in the indicator's left main gear window.



As the machine decelerated during roll-out, a left swerve developed and carried it toward the arresting gear chain and some sign posts at the left edge of the runway, just beyond the intersection of the runway and taxiway. The pilot was unable to keep the aircraft straightened out with brakes and he intentionally released the right brake and tapped the *left* to miss the obstructions. As it traversed the in-field, the *T-bird* settled down on the

port tip tank and spun 270 degrees to the left, coming to rest on the taxiway. The pilot shut down, secured all switches and disembarked with his passenger.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy mackerel, how complacent can a guy get? Anyone who relies on luck and superstition, hopin' that experience will make him immune to unpleasantness, instead of stickin' with NATOPS and good common sense, is headin' for the wrong end of the awards table. Even the Nuggets know you have to add knots for that extra fuel weight on landing. What do you suppose made this fella think *he* could get away with it?

Play It by Ear

The missile intercept flight was to be conducted at 30,000 feet and under GCI (ground-controlled intercept) at all times. The two *Crusader* pilots agreed on a 3,500-pound fuel bingo and an alternate military airfield. Since the section leader had experienced a previous generator failure, he briefed this as the "emergency for the day."

In the event of a generator failure, the plane experiencing the failure would fly wing on the other for an instrument approach to the home field. After the pilots obtained approach clearance and had begun descent, the RAT (ram air turbine) signal would be given. They would dirty up above the cloud layer and continue down in section.

Completing the 20-minute brief, they signed out for their respective aircraft, accomplished the preflights, starts and performed a section takeoff. The twosome entered the overcast at 800 feet and broke out on top at 2,800 feet. After reaching 31,000 feet, the section split and completed several intercepts, alternating as bogie and interceptor. As they approached bingo fuel, the section leader informed GCI they had to depart for home plate and advised his wingman to join up.



As they commenced the rendezvous, the wingman in the six o'clock position noted the gear indicators barber-poled and resigned himself to an impending generator failure. The wingman, now without a radio, visually signalled the generator failure to the leader and the flight commenced their homeward en route descent.

At 23,000 feet and 20 miles from home plate TACAN, the leader requested a shift to approach control frequency. He checked visually for his wingman and discovered he wasn't there. The wingman, tired of pushing the stick over without trim, had popped the RAT and so had dropped back from the lead. The RAT gave him back the UHF receiver, but no transmitter or RMI. He switched to approach frequency in time to receive the manual frequency assigned, closed up on his leader and assumed a wing position for the descent.

The flight leader informed approach control of the nature of their predicament but, when interrogated, declined to declare an emergency.

Well along in the descent, approach control again asked the leader if he wanted to declare an emergency. After considering the fuel state and nature of the situation, the leader replied in the affirmative.

The section approached the top of the clouds at 2,800 feet and the leader gave the speed-brake signal after which they slowed to 220 knots. The leader then gave the gear signal. The wingman placed his gear down and brought the wing up. However, he was slow in the transition and eased out ahead by at least two plane lengths. Looking over his left shoulder to keep the leader in sight, the wingman became IFR in the clouds. He looked at his instruments; the gyro horizon had tumbled 60 degrees right wing down and his airspeed was down to 140 knots.

His first reaction was to bring the right wing up; he pushed the stick to the left and booted left rudder. There was no reaction in the gyro. At this point, he noted the gyro OFF light was glowing and his airspeed was down to 120 knots. Once more he tried to bring the right wing up while the altimeter read 2,200 feet and the VGI (vertical glide indicator) showed a 500 fpm descent.

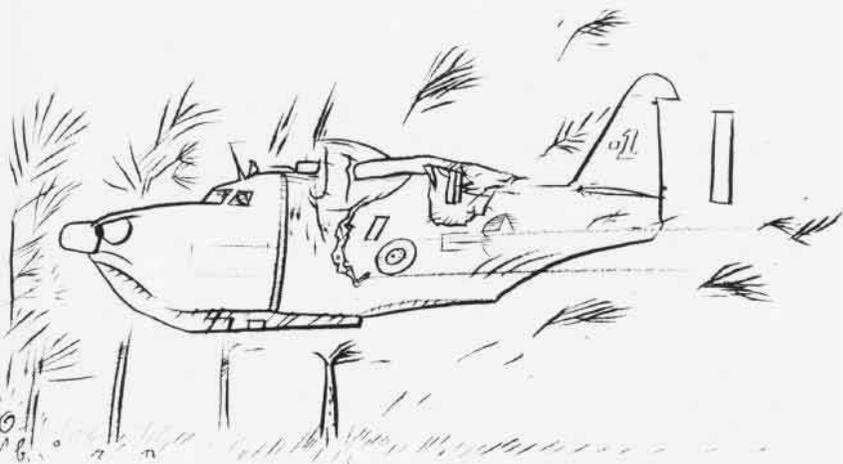
The frustrated jockey moved the stick in all directions without getting

a response. At 1,000 feet, he remembered the mountains below and, without further deliberation, pulled the face curtain. The Martin Baker performed beautifully. The abandoned *Crusader*, as expected, exploded upon impact.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies! This is a perfect example of how *not* to handle an emergency. These fellas had all kinds of VFR weather above that 2,800-foot undercast to get set up properly for a well organized, safe descent. I'm darn sure approach control would'a blessed any request for a level-off to join up and get configured properly for a precision approach to the field. Secondly, no one would have questioned a decision to proceed to their VFR alternate under these terrifyin' circumstances.



Gosh darn it! This makes ole Gramps wonder if all this writin' over the years is really gettin' through.

Tree Trek

The HU-16 *Albatross* departed the naval station at 0700 on a passenger trip to a distant civilian airport. The instrument departure and en route portion of the flight were uneventful. As the HU-16 approached its destination, the weather was reported as 1,200 overcast with four to six miles visibility and wind velocity zero. The pilot decided to make an ILS approach to the field and initiated his request. He was subsequently cleared for the approach and descent.

Descending from 6,000 feet, the *Albatross* passed the outer marker. The

pilot completed the landing check list and entered the clouds at 1,900 feet. The approach was going fine, on glide slope and on course, passing through 800 feet when the course indicator deflected to the *starboard*. The driver corrected properly and shortly thereafter swiped a clump of trees, damaging the flaps, wheels and starboard engine.

The pilot and the copilot (who had seen the trees just prior to striking them) yanked back on the yoke, gained a little altitude, and proceeded in a *right bank* back into IFR conditions. Another group of trees loomed up, were unavoidable, and the HU-16 stalled into them, coming to rest in an upright position. All crewmen and passengers were well prepared and suffered only minor injuries. There was no fire and all hands exited safely.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! I hate to see a grown man like Gramps cry, but this one really did your ole gray-haired friend in.

This fella had over 4,000 hours of accident-free pilot time and let complacency (I've flown this one before) get the upper hand. To make a long story short, he failed to switch his cross-pointer course-selector switch to the VOR/ILS position. Although he was receiving a good DME reading on his TACAN, he, in fact, was not aware that the TACAN and airfield were separated by five miles. *He just wasn't prepared for this flight!*

I know this is old hat for most of you gents but just can't help sayin' it again: "There is nothin' to replace that safety device between your ears."