



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

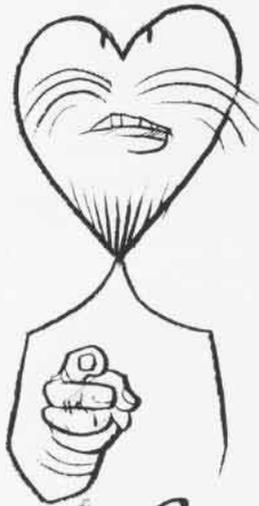
## Pine Trees in the Clouds

The two pilots arrived in the ship's ready room at the crack of dawn to brief for a practice two-plane navigation flight to a pre-assigned target in their A-7 Corsairs. The assigned flight leader decided to allow his wingman to fly as lead aircraft for training purposes. Preflight, start and launch were uneventful. The flight arrived at its first checkpoint at FL 310 and proceeded along its route.

Approximately one hour after take-off, the flight was in touch with center and was cleared for an en route descent from FL 310 to 5,000 feet. In the descent, the flight was switched to local GCA. After reaching VFR conditions at 6,500 feet, the flight was radar vectored to and passed over an airfield at 4,000 feet. After passing over the field, the pilots began the low level portion of the route. The wingman (actual flight leader) was flying a position 3,000 feet aft at five o'clock, slightly stepped up, from the leader (flight leader under training).

At a designated point, the flight turned on the final leg to the target and power was reduced and airspeed slowed to approximately 300 knots. The flight, at this point, was tracking one to two miles south of the course and passed one or two miles southeast of the intended practice target. The lead aircraft did not see the target; the wingman told him to come right, that it was at three o'clock. The leader rolled ten degrees right wing down and, as our wingman was attempting to rendezvous, the leader flew into a fog bank and low clouds. The wingman broadcasted that he was pulling hard right and climbing.

Shortly after, the leader flew into the cloud/fog bank in the ten-degree right wing down attitude; he struck one or more pine trees. He felt a small buffet of the aircraft which he mistakenly attributed to low airspeed and the angle of bank. At this point, he commenced a full power climb to VFR



*Shape up,  
or Ship out!*

*Kind Valentine  
greetings from  
gramp.*

conditions on top (reached at 11,000 feet MSL) and proceeded to rendezvous with his wingman. The Corsairs effected a rendezvous at 12,000 feet. The wingman noticed damage to the left leading edge flap during the rendezvous.

The wingman now took over as leader and the flight proceeded immediately back to the ship. Our leader requested a tanker and the flight was refueled. The pilot of the damaged A-7 now conducted slow flight and found the Corsair completely controllable. The two A-7s trapped back aboard without further incident. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' catfish! Talk about Lady Luck smilin' on someone — you coulda' got kilt! It's one thing to give

a lad the lead for training purposes; it's something else to get there and be of no help at all.

The senior pilot flying as wingman has the responsibility of providing training and most of all supervision. Appears to me the supervising pilot could have at least given the young gent some "instructions" when he flew into the fog bank. Appears we had "fog" in the cockpit along with outside. As for the pilot — looks to me like you missed something, Bub, when you took your instrument training — ever hear of SCAN? Look alive!

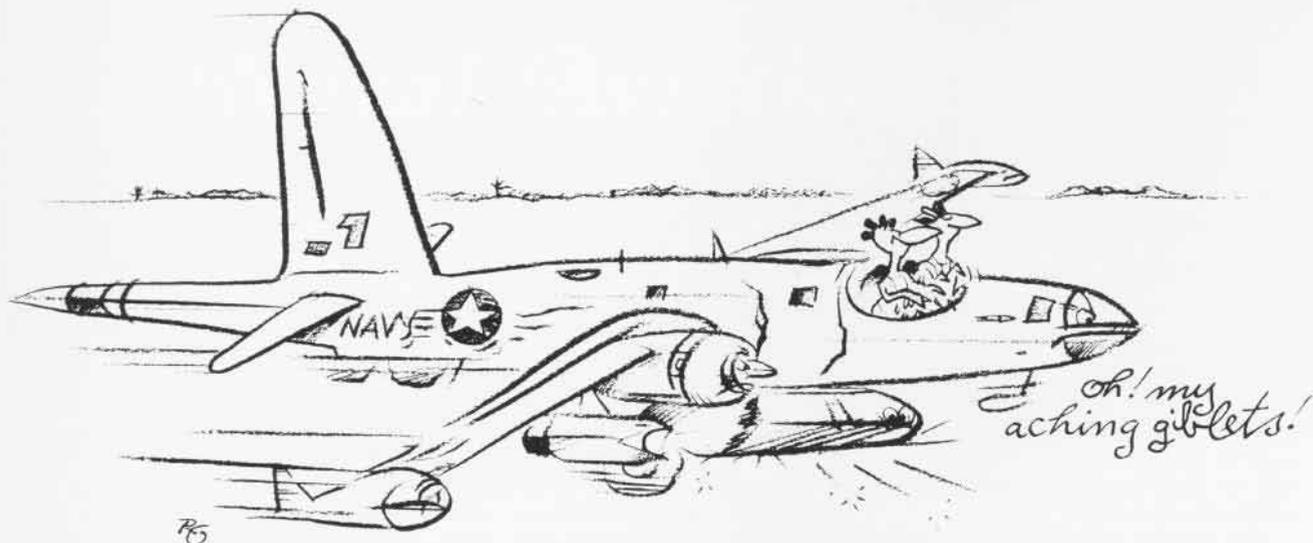
## Nostalgia

While on a dive-bombing flight, the pilot of an SB2C-1C noticed a loss of hydraulic pressure and requested permission to proceed to a nearby field. Prior to landing, he lowered the gear by closing his main system hydraulic valves and opening the No. 3 bypass valves. He failed, however, to close the No. 3 valves, so that in landing, he received brake pressure from the brake accumulator only. This was insufficient to maintain control and the plane groundlooped, but without doing any damage.

Upon discovering that there were insufficient repair facilities at the field, the pilot immediately took off again and proceeded to the base field. On landing the second time, the pilot didn't have enough brake pressure to keep the plane from swerving into a ditch, where it was damaged almost beyond repair.

From the pilot's statement: "It is my opinion that the whole accident can be laid to the fact that I did not familiarize myself enough with the SB2C hydraulic system and consequently did not close the No. 3 valves after using them."

The Trouble Board pointed out that the pilot had two good chances of preventing this accident: first, by knowing how to operate his hydraulic system and second, by having sense enough to stay on the ground when he found, or the first landing, that his brakes were defective.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

**This is a warning for all pilots. Anyone not completely familiar with his hydraulic system should rectify this serious deficiency immediately. Where hydraulic systems are complicated, a squadron lecture and demonstration would appear to be in order.**

**The lack of common sense, mentioned by the Board, is another matter and you can't pick that up from a lecture. Experience is the best substitute, but you even have to mix a little brains with that to produce good judgment. This pilot had plenty of experience (575 hours), but he certainly didn't use his bean when he took off the second time. (June 1944)**

### With These Hands

A P-2 *Neptune* crew assembled for a brief prior to a scheduled five-hour local training flight. The pilot crew consisted of the plane commander, with an extensive amount of experience in the P-2, and a copilot who was a designated third pilot. The brief, preflight, start, taxi and takeoff were uneventful.

The first portion of the flight consisted of communication familiarization training. This lasted approximately three hours and then the crew headed for home plate. With the plane commander in the copilot's seat acting as the instructor (IP) and the third pilot in the pilot's seat acting as the pilot under instruction (PUI), they entered a touch-and-go pattern.

The P-2 completed two normal GCA touch-and-gos and then made a touch-and-go which was not in accordance with NATOPS in that the landing gear and props were adjusted in the wrong place during the landing sequence. Despite these incorrect procedures, the pilot demonstrated satisfactory airmanship.

Upon completion of the touch-and-go, the IP took control of the aircraft from the right seat in order to demonstrate the traffic pattern and landing procedures. The PUI was instructed to just sit there, that the plane commander would do everything during the approach and landing sequence.

The tower cleared the P-2 for landing just as it passed the 90-degree position. A normal touchdown was made. After touchdown, with the nose wheel on the runway, the plane commander moved the flap handle to ten degrees, advanced the jets to 100 percent and started to advance the recip engine throttles.

At this point the plane commander noticed that the pilot in the left seat had his hand on the gear handle which was out of the down detent position. Almost immediately the aircraft passed over an arresting gear cable and the nose started to fall through as the nose gear collapsed.

Although airspeed was approximately 95 knots, the plane commander was unable to hold the nose up with full back yoke. As the propellers and the radome struck the runway, the

plane commander closed the reciprocating engine throttles, secured the jets and ordered the left-seat pilot to bring the mixtures full aft.

The plane commander maintained directional control with the rudder until it became ineffective. He then applied brakes, to keep the aircraft on the runway. The aircraft came to a stop after 3,500 feet and the plane commander ordered the crew to evacuate the aircraft.

The pilots exited through their overhead hatches. There were no injuries; however, the aircraft was damaged beyond repair.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

**Holy Hannah! What a dumb cluck or should I say two dumb clucks! First of all, the aircraft commander was going to make an "unassisted" landing, which is non-NATOPS. Then, all of a sudden, the other pilot decides that he should help the gent out. He sure did — by moving the gear handle while still on the deck! With friends like this, who needs enemies?**

**It seems like, in flying multicrew aircraft, particularly transports and patrol types, we run across a pilot who doesn't know what to do with his hands, so he puts them where they don't belong. Beware of this type!**

**All in all, I would have to say that these two gents deserve each other. However, I don't believe Naval Aviation needs them.**