



grampaw pettibone

It's in the Book

A Marine Aviator was scheduled as part of a two-plane, low-level training flight in an A-4M *Skyhawk*. He was scheduled to brief and lead the flight but another pilot was the designated flight leader. The brief was in accordance with the Natops briefing guide.

Aircraft preflight, start and taxi were on time and without incident. An abbreviated automatic flight control system (AFCS) check was conducted by the pilot prior to taking the active runway. The mandatory steps were performed in this check and no discrepancies were noted. Section takeoff was routine and a climb was established.

The flight leveled off at flight level 230 and the pilot placed the AFCS in standby. The wingman performed a cross-under from left to right and observed the lead aircraft's elevator flutter momentarily. He inquired if lead had engaged the AFCS. Lead replied, "No, it must be the yaw dampener." The flight proceeded to the next vortac where a descent was planned so that the VFR portion of the flight plan could be conducted.

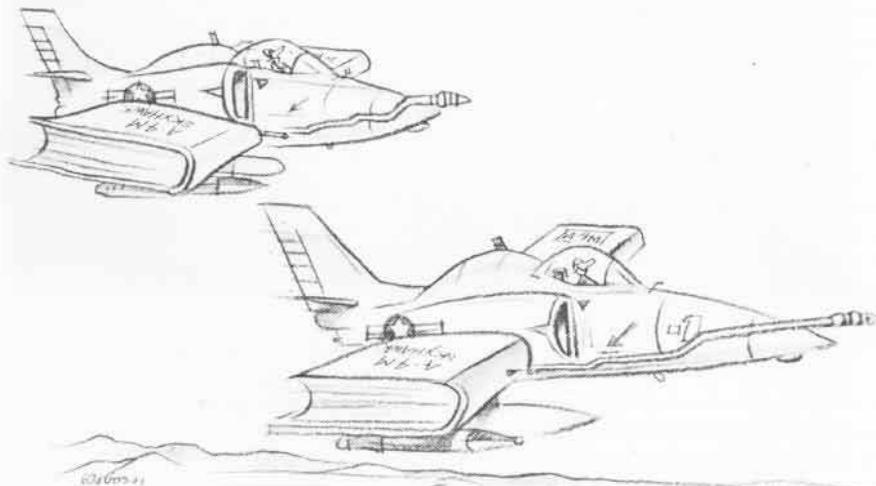
The descent began. The wingman followed in loose cruise formation. As the aircraft were passing flight lev-

el 210, the leader performed a 360-degree roll to the left to increase his rate of descent and to observe his position in relation to the low-level start point.

Up to this time, the leader had experienced no control abnormalities coming out of the roll. Now, at approximately 300 knots, the nose of his *Skyhawk* began to rise. He coun-

tered with forward stick and noted that the nose trim was in the vicinity of zero and not coming up. There was not enough forward stick available, so he used the stick trim button in an attempt to trim nose down. The pilot then began getting erratic input movements in the control stick. He stated that throughout the incident the stick wanted to do its own thing, moving in all quadrants.

The aircraft's nose continued to rise through the horizon and the pilot utilized rudders to do a barrel-roll-type recovery to the left. The aircraft emerged from this maneuver, left wing down, in a left-hand spiral, 60-80 degrees nose low. The pilot reduced power and extended speed brakes. He tried to visually check disengagement of the stab aug, but was unsuccessful due to the movement of his body. He was attempting to pull the nose up to the horizon when he transmitted, "I'm going to disconnect." The wingman replied, "Go ahead." The pilot saw all his emergency T-handles in front of him but, because of the aircraft's movement, could not reach the emergency generator. He said that he disconnected as a last resort, just prior to ejection, utilizing the upper ejection handle. The pilot sustained injuries during the ejection.



crack those books!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy mackerel! When all was said and done and the investigation was completed, there was more to this than meets the eyeball. First of all, due to a lack of knowledge, the pilot incorrectly diagnosed his problem and took incorrect action! Yes, by gummit, there was a failure. But if this lad knew the book, correct action would have saved this machine! He didn't get a lotta help from his wingman, either (who, as you recall, was the designated flight leader)—maybe he doesn't know the book either. All in all, a bad show—which we can do without!

Amateur Time

Two Marine Aviators were scheduled for a familiarization flight in the OV-10 *Bronco*. This was the PUI's (pilot under instruction) fifth sortie. Brief and preflight activities were without incident. The initial phase of the flight was completed as scheduled and the *Bronco* entered the pattern for practice touch and go's.

The PUI completed a simulated single-engine touch and go and departed the pattern. He then reentered, performed two no-flap, two half-flap and one simulated single-engine touch and go. The instructor pilot (IP) then took control and demonstrated a full-flap landing to a stop and go, followed by a half-flap takeoff.

When safely airborne, the IP requested that the PUI raise the gear. At 110 kts, the IP raised the flaps and gave control of the aircraft to the PUI, who was to perform a full-flap touch and go.

The PUI took control, lowered full flaps on downwind and flew an abnormally wide pattern. The IP was leaning around the right side of the cockpit advising the PUI with regard to his flight pattern and could not see the gear indicators or wheels warning light. Additionally, the IP did not check the main gear visually.

The PUI failed to read the landing

checklist to the IP (he had done so on all previous approaches) and reported "three down and locked" to the tower. The approach was flown 5-10 knots fast all the way. A crash crewman noted the gear-up situation and attempted to contact the tower but was unsuccessful.

The aircraft continued its descent until the left prop struck the runway. The PUI was in the process of raising the flaps for a touch and go. At first the IP thought a tire had blown. He took control at which time the right prop and drop tank struck the runway. The IP then feathered both engines and landed the aircraft on the drop tanks. Both pilots left the aircraft in the normal manner.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great gallopin' ghosts! I guess some fellers are just too *smart* to use those checklists.

For the life of me, I can't understand how two — not one — aviators can allow themselves to be lulled into this type of accident. A flyer who develops the proper habit of using the checklist stands less of a chance of omitting it. On the other hand, if he has often been haphazard about it — he may miss it at a critical time. There are enough distractions around to catch even the gent with good habit patterns, let alone those gents with poor ones!!

Who Held the Bag?

While taxiing along the runway after a landing, an FG-1 pilot experienced brake trouble and was not able to maintain directional control. He called the tower and was told to cut the engine and stand by. While waiting for assistance the pilot remained in the cockpit and, in his own words, "stood up so that other planes could see me." A few minutes later an F6F came barreling down the taxi strip and apparently didn't see the FG, nor its pilot, in time to avert a collision. The FG was completely destroyed, with



the pilot barely managing to scramble out of the cockpit in time to save himself.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Let's see who was to blame. *First*, the tower for not warning the F6F pilot about the stalled plane on the runway. *Second*, the F6F pilot, for not observing safe taxi procedure. *Last*, but not least, the FG pilot himself. He should have humped himself out of his plane and gone to the side of the runway, ready to flag down any approaching plane — using his skivvies, if necessary. Expenses for replacement planes and for military funerals would be considerably reduced if this procedure were followed whenever an airplane stalls on an airfield runway, the taxi strip or line. (August 1944)

