



# grampaw pettibone

## C'est La Guerre

Lt. E. Coast launched in his trusty A-4E shortly after lunch (at 1248Z) on the return-home leg of a weekend cross-country flight from NAS Southemmost. After takeoff, the pilot experienced an unsafe indication on the left main gear. Lt. Coast notified the tower of his gear indication and requested a fly-by for a visual check. The tower reported that the nose and right main gear were up but the port gear appeared to be partially down. Lt. Coast recycled the gear but the port main gear continued to indicate unsafe. A second fly-by and recycling of the gear resulted in no improvement in the unsafe condition. At this point, Lt. Coast declared an emergency and proceeded west to NAS Marvelous where better emergency facilities, field arresting gear and A-4 support were avail-



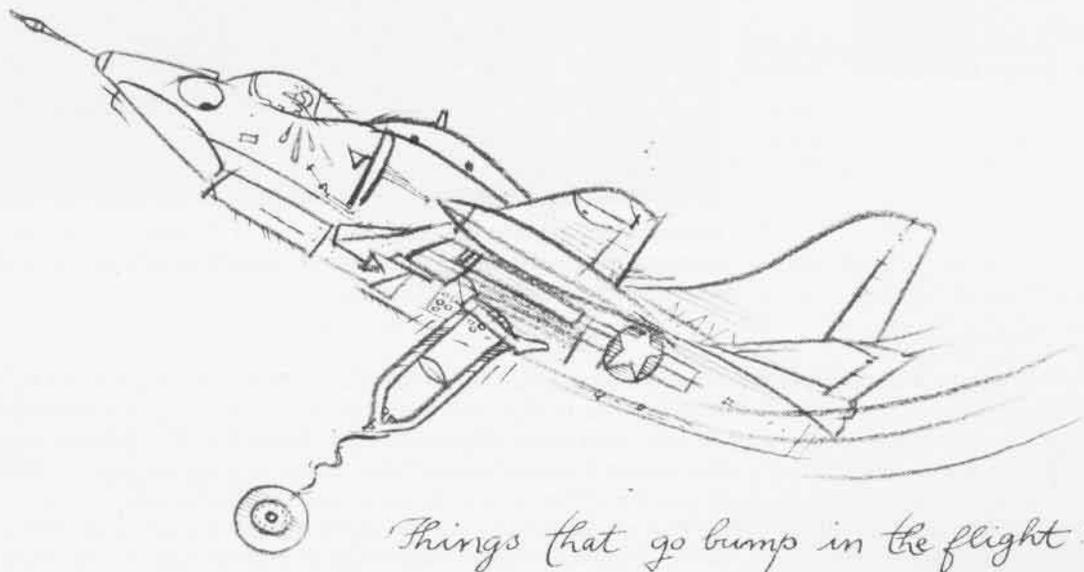
able. Once in the pattern, Lt. Coast again recycled the gear, with no improvement.

He requested clearance to a clear area where he performed negative/positive G maneuvers in 25-knot

increments from 250 to 350 knots, with no success. Selection of landing gear emergency extension also failed to rectify the situation.

At this point, Lt. E. Coast advised the tower that he had only 1,400 pounds of fuel remaining. He attempted another series of G maneuvers, increasing the loads from one to two negative Gs, followed by four to five positive. On the third execution of this maneuver, Lt. Coast heard a loud thump from the wheel-well area.

A subsequent pass by the tower verified that everything was cool and all three gear appeared to be down and locked. A flared touchdown into a short-field arrested landing was executed. Lt. Coast cleared the gear, secured the engine after the crash crew had hooked the crash crane to the aircraft, and happily closed out his flight plan.





Osborn



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy jumpin' jingle bells, gents! That was a mighty close call! The cause of this young feller's woes was attributed to an improperly sequencing gear door mechanism. Whether this lad added to his problems initially during the first down cycling of the gear following takeoff was not made clear. In any event, old Santa Bones will yield the benefit of the doubt to this gent during this pending season of merriment, since he handled the rest of the incident like Cool Hand Luke. Like ol' Santa, he seemed to have it all in one bag. Joyeux Noel!

## Warped Wing

A patrol squadron recently completed a material readiness condition inspection. One of the P-3 aircraft inspected was under type D preservation. The plane's inspector commented: "Aircraft needs all atmospheric openings covered (i.e., exhaust drain masts, lab seal vents)." The squadron representative who accompanied the inspector interpreted the inspector's comments to mean that all atmospheric openings on the aircraft should be covered.

Two days later, the power plant's supervisor directed two shop personnel to tape over all openings on the aircraft. This was accomplished and included taping all fuel tank vents. The

vents went unnoticed by anyone for 12 days. No maintenance action form was filled out because the men who did the taping thought the job was part of the previously assigned type D preservation action.

On the thirteenth day, two airframes personnel were tasked with defueling the ill-fated aircraft. The tape on the fuel tank vents went totally undetected. About the time defueling was completed on tank one, a crew member arrived on the scene and noted that the port wing of the P-3 was deformed. He immediately notified his supervisor. Personnel dispatched to the aircraft discovered the tape covering the fuel vents. When the tape was removed and the negative pressure was relieved, the wing slowly returned to its original shape except for minor buckling. It required 1,000 man-hours of labor to repair the wing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh, my achin' ulcers! This operation needed defooling as well as defueling. Basic qualifications, basic training, basic headwork, basic supervision, basic documentation and basic communication were handled in a basically casual fashion and the outcome was basically predictable. The best maintenance procedures and intentions are worthless when the organization breaks down.

## Back to the Barn

The weather was so bad at the advanced training field that safety pilots were assigned to all students on gunnery flights. After checking the yellow sheet and conducting a normal preflight, the safety pilot and his student proceeded in their TF-9J to the gunnery area.

All gunnery runs were normal but on the last inbound run a slight buffet was noted. The buffet was attributed to clear air turbulence, so the TF-9J joined the rest of the flight for return to the field.

At 12,000 feet, just short of the approach fix, the student pilot noted a small explosion and a decrease of rpm, followed by a flameout. He immediately informed the safety pilot who read the relight procedure. They were unsuccessful in getting an air start and, while passing 8,000 feet, broadcast their intention to eject.

At 190 knots and between 7-8,000 feet, the safety pilot ejected, followed shortly by the student. The *Cougar* was in an upright, wings-level position at ejection. Both occupants enjoyed flawless exits and parachute rides back to earth.

Meanwhile, the *Cougar* continued its descent in such a manner that it made a perfect landing in an open field and sustained no more than superficial damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great heavenly days! I know the *Cougar's* been around for a while, but I didn't know we had any of 'em this well trained.

This particular bird was retrieved intact by an Army CH-54 and by now is back in service. But don't get any ideas that I endorse sticking with it in a case like this. These fellas did absolutely right by executin' the nylon letdown. Investigation showed the engine had an internal failure over which the drivers had no control.

Sure as shootin', if the pilots had ridden it in, things wouldn't have worked out this good. (March 1968)