

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Mental Readjustment



Grampaw Pettibone says:

As far as naval aviation is concerned, the return to peacetime flight operations requires a complete mental readjustment. Many things that you had to do to carry out your wartime mission, no longer can be justified. *Safety of flight personnel again becomes paramount.*

Admittedly, military aviation is hazardous and despite every precaution, some fatal accidents will continue to occur. In general, however, they will be directly proportionate to the intelligent and constant effort which is employed to gain against them.

So—

Check the weather.

Check and double check the planes.

Insure that each pilot and crew member is fully qualified to carry out any mission assigned.

Last, but not least, rigidly enforce flight discipline and compliance with safety instructions and flight regulations.

In other words, *teach, preach and demand flight safety.*

Pigheaded and Bullheaded

The scene opens in the ready room of a torpedo plane squadron. A half-dozen pilots are lazing around; some sitting and reading, others just sitting and talking.

Our hero, a handsome bruiser with all the self-assurance of a "hot" 580-hour pilot, busts in waving the 15 June issue of NAVAL AVIATION NEWS. "Listen to this," he exclaims.

He reads the "Hurry-Up Boys" article which tells what happens when flashy pilots raise their wheels too soon after take-off. Knowing he has their undivided attention, he reads with feeling and gestures—a true artist at

work!

A pause as he finishes; then he says, "Boys, I'll never make that mistake!"

He tosses the magazine to the nearest pilot and turns to leave. "Save it, Jim. I've got a gunnery hop."

The scene shifts to the flying field. Time: five minutes later. Our hero gives a jaunty wave to the line chief as he taxis out to the take-off runway in a TBM.

As soon as he hits the runway, he swings her around and pours on the soup. A short distance down the runway, he pulls her in the air and *raises his wheels*. Before you have time to more than gasp in amazement, the plane drops back on its belly. It crunches along for 250 feet, coming to rest *far from the end of the surfaced runway*.

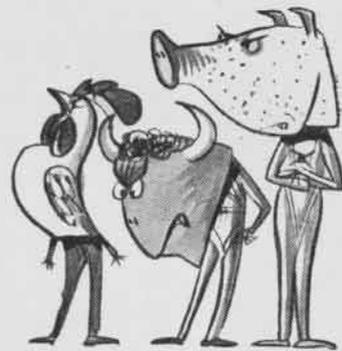
The crash truck clangs up as our hero dazedly climbs out of his crippled plane. Oblivious to the crash crew, he mumbles to himself as he glances toward his squadron area. He wilts when he sees the "gang" bearing down upon him.

Only a technicolor camera will show how red his face is.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

This bullheaded smart-aleck reminds me of my three-year-old grandson, Caleb McMuhl. I gave him a shiny red



wagon last Christmas which he immediately took for a walk. Going down our small hill, the wagon over-ran him and knocked him down. He looked around,

more surprised than hurt, but didn't let out a peep. He got up, trustingly started out once more and was promptly knocked down again, four times before I reached him.

I took hold of the wagon tongue and tried to explain about gravity and demonstrate how everything would be rosy if he just got behind the fool thing and pushed. But not little Caleb! The minute I touched his precious Christmas present, he started bellowing so loud that I had to let go of the wagon to keep the neighbors from thinking I was trying to take it away from him.

What did the pig-headed little rascal do then but shoot out his under lip, lower his head and deliberately start down the hill again—in front of the wagon. He was knocked stern-over-appetite twice more before he reached the bottom (he gets that stubborn streak from the McMuhl side of the family).

The thing that worries me is what will happen to the little tyke when he grows up and becomes a Naval Aviator? With his disposition, he's bound to develop into a dead ringer for our TBM hero. Being too cocksure and bullheaded to heed any advice, he will probably bump himself off on his first solo hop.

Even "Angels" Need Altitude

During night combat tactics, the pilot of a night fighter made a low altitude radar interception on the target plane flying at an altitude of 500 ft. Reporting the interception to his fighter director who was in the rear seat of the target plane, he requested a visual signal. Apparently at that very moment he sighted a blinking buoy and mistook it for the blinking port running light on the target plane. Thinking it was the signal he had requested, he prepared to close in from below and inadvertently flew into the water.

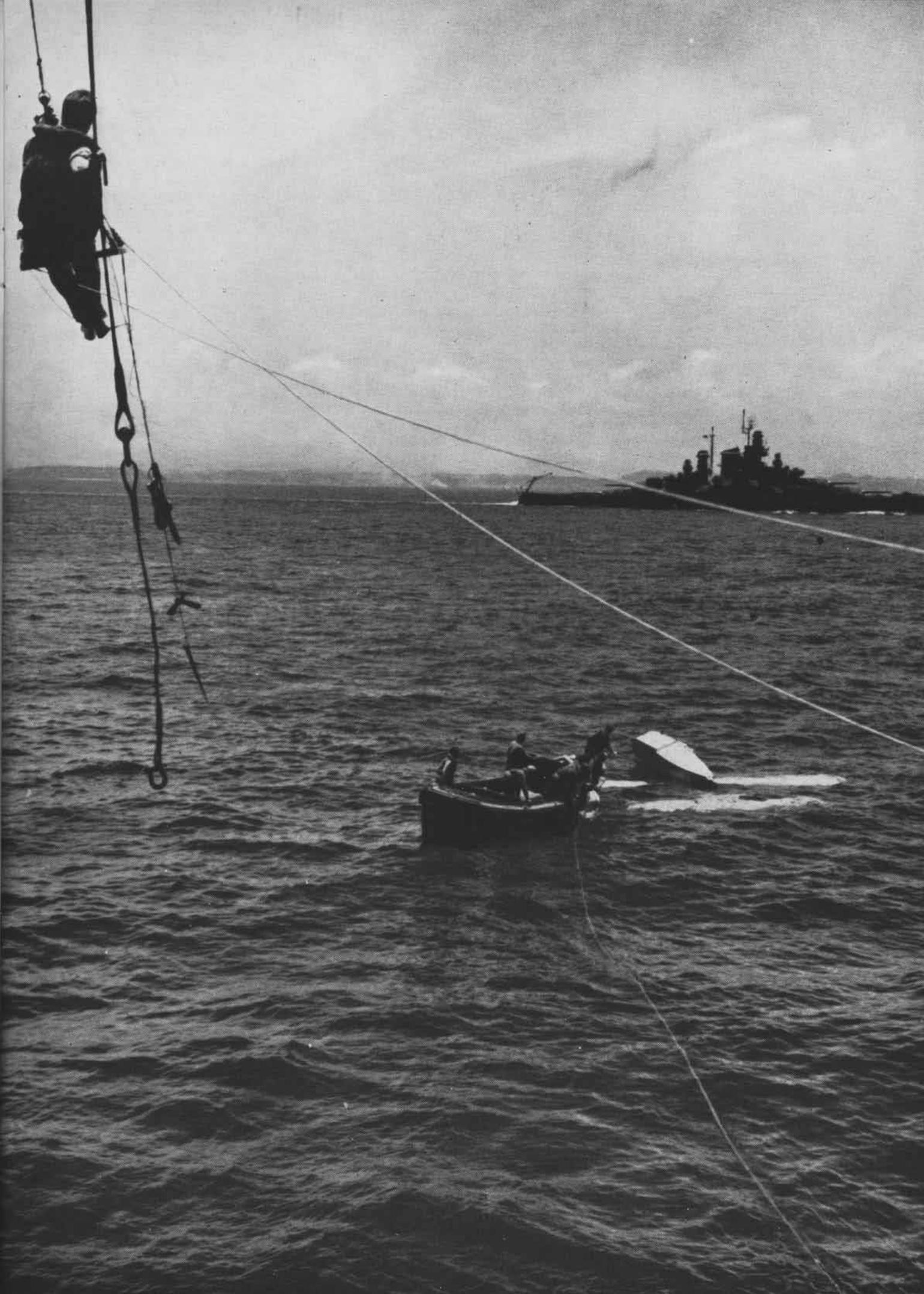
▶ *Comment*—Flight Safety Bulletin No. 10-45 warns: "Beware of attempting to orient yourself by other lights unless their identity is *definitely* established. They may be either on the ground or in the air.

"Check your altimeter for accuracy and make frequent reference to it during your runs so you can make recovery in time."

RETRIEVING AN OVERTURNED KINGFISHER

A RESCUE CREW from cruiser U.S.S. Vicksburg goes into action to retrieve an OS2U that cracked up on landing. Taxiing in to the Vicksburg for a recovery, this scout observation plane struck a wave that tore off a wing pontoon. A Navy cameraman caught the action as the recovery crew swung into action to salvage the overturned Kingfisher. One crewman is lowered in a

bos'n's chair out over the floating plane as other men in a small boat come in with salvage gear and lines. A Tennessee class battleship surveys the salvage operations from a distance. Training coupled with an ability to act effectively and quickly in an emergency are essential in operations of this kind if equipment is to be salvaged and lives of personnel saved, as indicated here.



They Still Don't Mix

A student pilot took unauthorized liberty one evening, went ashore and "tanked up." He returned to his quarters at approximately 0415 and reported to the squadron at 0700. Several of his fellow pilots noticed that he was in poor physical condition and commented about it among themselves, but did nothing else about it.

The pilot admitted he "felt tough" but did not report to the squadron flight surgeon. After briefing, he manned his plane, a TBF, for a scheduled division oxygen flight. A few minutes later, at 2700 feet, his plane was seen to enter a gentle right spiral and crash with no apparent change in attitude. The division leader called a warning over the radio but received no answer.

It was believed by the investigating board that this pilot either had fallen asleep or had lost consciousness just before the airplane commenced its fatal spiral.

 **Grampaw Pettibone says:**

Two other men died in the crash because this pilot lacked the proper sense of responsibility. His senses were dulled, however, and therefore his "fellow pilots" also are partly to blame—because they took no steps to keep him from making this flight.

I know this is a tough spot for "fellow pilots." You don't want to get the poor boob in trouble and yet, at the same time, you don't want to let him kill himself and his crew. The only way to be sure of the latter is to keep him on the ground. You "fellow pilots" hold a joint responsibility to insure that this is done.

No Recent Experience

A pilot from a VPB squadron got an F6F from a CASU for a familiarization flight. He lost control of the airplane during take-off. The plane swerved off the runway, ran into a ditch and turned over, resulting in strike damage.

The pilot had 1100 hours flying time, but all his recent experience had been in multi-engine bombers.

Believing that this accident was entirely due to lack of recent familiarity with fighter type aircraft, the ISIC issued an order directing that no twin-engine pilot in his command would be cleared for flight in single-engine combat aircraft until released by a competent board of pilots experienced in such type aircraft.

 **Grampaw Pettibone Says:**

This is far from being the first accident caused in this manner. It isn't only a question of cockpit familiarity. Of equal or even greater importance is the radical difference in control forces and flight characteristics between VPB and VF airplanes.

Multi-engine squadrons always make sure that any pilot who flies one of their



planes is well qualified. It is just as important that pilots be required to prove they are fully qualified to fly single-engine aircraft before being cleared. You owe this to both the pilot and the plane.

The Pay Off

Returning from a practice strike, a CVE fighter pilot found he could not lock his shoulder straps. He was so completely sold on the value of the shoulder harness that he requested and received permission to return to the beach and have the straps repaired.

The wisdom of this strict adherence to safety instructions paid a handsome dividend. On his first landing after returning to the carrier, this pilot's FM-2 took a bad bounce, floated into the barrier and snapped over on its back. The plane was severely damaged, but aside from being somewhat shaken up, the pilot received no injuries.

"G-Suit" Sense

While on a "G-Suit" familiarization hop, an F6F pilot pulled up into a very tight climbing turn at 7000 feet. The air-

plane suddenly stalled out of this maneuver. Before flying speed was fully regained the pilot apparently pulled back on the stick causing another stall from which he did not recover.

It was believed that this pilot inadvertently pulled his plane into an excessively steep turn as the result of not feeling the customary warnings experienced in high "G" maneuvers.

▶ **Comment**—The anti-blackout suit increases your resistance to the effects of high acceleration with the result that your normal reactions are less likely to warn you of the severity of your maneuvers. This increases the danger of overstressing your airplane or causing a high "G" stall, as apparently occurred in this case.

It is for this reason that Flight Safety Bulletin 3-45 recommends that during familiarization flights with the "G-Suit" you practice maneuvers such as are used in combat and determine with the aid of a visual accelerometer the number of "G's" attained. By such practice you will develop a new "G-Suit" sense which may later save your life in actual or simulated combat.

JM Restrictions

A fatal accident occurred recently while a pilot was being checked out in a JM-1.

Reconstructing the accident, the investigating board was of the opinion that the plane went into a spin while stall characteristics were being demonstrated; that one of the pilots held the plane in a stall too long, possibly with power on, thus causing the spin from which recovery was not made.

▶ **Comment**—T. O. 61-45, issued subsequent to this accident, prohibits power-on stalls in the JM, and contains important advice on power-off stalls. VJ-VR pilots take note!

Brain Leakage

Due to a hydraulic leak, an F4U pilot was forced to use the CO₂ system to lower his wheels for a landing. The emergency system worked, as advertised, and undoubtedly saved the plane from overhaul.

At this point, however, a leakage of brains developed among the personnel involved which completely nullified the value of the emergency landing equipment. The pilot reported loss of hydraulic pressure to the maintenance crew but neglected to report having used the CO₂ bottle. The crew refilled the hydraulic system and then relaxed. They failed to check it for leaks, and they also failed to note that the CO₂ bottle had been used, or at least did nothing about it.

The result was exactly what might be expected. The next pilot to fly the plane also experienced hydraulic failure and not having the emergency system working, had to make a belly landing.

GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ



ALL AVIATORS should know the answers to these questions. In the air, the penalty for not knowing may prove fatal. If you miss an answer on the ground, penalize yourself by looking up the reference.

1. Except for landings and take-offs, what is the minimum altitude for flight according to IFR?
2. Does "cruising altitude" mean height above sea level or above local terrain?
3. Should elevator tabs be used as a means of primary control in pull-outs from high speed dives?
4. For a water landing in a single-engine aircraft when immediate rescue is not at hand, should your parachute harness be a. buckled, b. unbuckled but still on, or c. unbuckled and off?
5. Should cowl flaps be open or closed after stopping engine?

(Answers on Page 32)