

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Cross-Country Accidents

Aviation Circular Letter 133-45 points out that accidents during cross-country flights are increasing. One of the principal underlying reasons is considered to be the return of so many Fleet pilots to shore activities. It is pointed out that these pilots have been flying under combat conditions where they were expected to complete any mission on which they were dispatched, accepting hazards as necessary. This attitude fostered by the Navy was considered inevitable in war. Now it must be tempered with caution and good judgment.

Fleet pilots have acquired great skill in techniques essential for their highly successful part in destroying the enemies wherever found. In order to train pilots in the shortest possible time for wartime duties it was necessary to omit from the training syllabus anything that did not pertain to fighting. But now with many pilots returning to shore duty where they are expected to participate in extended flights over land, it is essential to train them in proper weather briefing, radio range flying, Civil Air Regulations, and all other phases of cross-country flying. At present, the responsibility for insuring that this training is given rests on unit commanders. While close supervision of cross-country flights is imperative, it is emphasized that mere restrictions against flying do not accomplish the desired result.

Aviation Circular Letter 134-45 sets forth the following guide to be used by commanding officers in authorizing cross-country flights:

(a) Weekend flying shall be adequately supervised by the commanding officer of the unit involved, who shall satisfy himself that such flights are bona fide training flights and not flights of convenience.

(b) It is not desired to discourage weekend cross-country flying provided such flights can be conducted for official purposes only or for familiarization of pilots with local areas in which they will operate.



(c) When a weekend flight is authorized, the pilot involved must be thoroughly briefed that safety of flight is paramount and no attempt should be made to return unless weather along the entire route is within limits imposed by the pilot's instrument qualifications and equipment of the aircraft.

(d) Pilots authorized to make weekend cross-country flights shall be thoroughly familiar with Civil Air Regulations and pertinent instructions issued by competent authority. Particular emphasis shall be placed on choosing routes that permit every reasonable precaution against such contingencies as shortage of fuel due to unexpected weather and forced landings from other causes.



This nose-up doesn't look very serious, does it? Look again! A&R estimated it would cost \$10,000 to put this F6F back in the air—five years' base pay of the pilot who caused the damage.

It occurred in the normal manner—the pilot neglected to “S” turn and then slapped on his brakes to avoid cutting up the airplane that was ahead of him.

Glamor Is As Glamor Does

An SB2C pilot had to make a forced landing due to a sudden drop in manifold pressure. Fortunately he found a cleared area and was not seriously injured.

Investigation disclosed that the basic cause of this accident was due to negligence on the part of maintenance personnel. The linkage from the throttle control to the carburetor had become disconnected at the carburetor when the castellated nut backed off because it was not safely wired at the time the carburetor was changed. The plane had flown 17 hours since this change had been made which was sufficient for the castellated nut to vibrate off.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Maintenance is a tough game—lots of work, long hours and very little glory. Don't think that maintenance crews have to wait until the “hereafter” for their reward however, good mechs get their reward every day. It's a real satisfaction to see the plane you've worked on come humming back from each flight. It's proof that you have done a good job.

I heard of an Avenger that was ferried from a jeep carrier to a jeep carrier in mid-Atlantic last year; after landing safely aboard its new home the replacement plane captain found this touching note from its former “owner”:

“This here is the Oklahomer Rose. She dun flew seventy missions this cruze and she ain't missed a beat. Pleze take good care of her like I dun.”

(s) Her plane captain

The grammar may not be up to snuff, but this plane captain and his Oklahomer Rose represent the spirit and the performance we need among maintenance crews.

It takes a little imagination to put glamor into your work. When you stop to think how serious the results of any mistakes on your part can be, however, it doesn't take much intelligence to realize that you who are “meching” and checking planes hold positions of great responsibility in naval aviation. This responsibility demands your best: infinite pains plus careful attention to every detail. The lives of your shipmates depend on your eternal vigilance. Don't ever let them down!

SURVIVAL TRAINING PAYS OFF IN EMERGENCIES

PILOTS and aircrewmembers can never afford to slight survival training. A thorough grounding in correct survival technique was life assurance for the crew of this Avenger when it crashed on take-off from a Third Fleet carrier during the closing days of the Pacific war. As soon as their plane hit the water the pilot

and his crewmembers were climbing out of the aircraft. Survival training can pay off in lives saved during peace time operations as well as in war. Ditching bills and survival techniques are based on exhaustive research and experience and are specifically designed to save lives of aviation personnel in all emergencies.



The Reaper Gets the "Pushers"

Returning from a routine flight, an SNB pilot flew into deteriorating weather (lowering ceiling accompanied by freezing rains), as he neared his base field. Upon reaching the vicinity of the field, he found a ceiling of 200 feet. En-



gine and wing icing were giving him considerable trouble. After many exhaustive but unsuccessful efforts to find the field, he requested tower to advise him of nearest contact field. He then departed for the alternate, which by the time he arrived, also had closed in with a ceiling of 300 feet and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile visibility. One engine was almost out due to icing. Fuel was low. After several hair-raising attempts to get into the field, during which he narrowly missed a hangar and stalled at 300 feet, barely recovering before striking the ground, he managed to land. The wheels struck a snowdrift, turning the plane over on its back.

▶ The ISIC said:

"When returning to base, this pilot left an area of contact weather and entered an area of increasingly poor visibility, low ceiling, heavy snow and freezing rain. He elected to stay in this area, and attempted to land at his base field under impossible conditions. He then delayed his decision to fly to an alternate field until his fuel was low, one engine almost out and propellers and wings badly iced. The pilot violated Contact Flight Rules and almost paid with his life.

"The stage was set for this accident, when, prior to take-off, the pilot failed to acquaint himself with the latest weather sequences and forecast for the area. Had he done so he would have been able to avoid bad weather and would have had an alternate airport in mind."

▶ **Comment**—There have been a large number of recent accidents similar to this one—many of them fatal. All of the pilots involved were violating Contact Flight Rules under which they were cleared for flight. They were trying to "push through" bad weather and either flew into rising ground, or lost control and crashed. In not one single case was there real justification for the pilot to risk continuation of the flight through adverse weather. All of the pilots passed up alternate fields where they might have landed and awaited better weather.

Fatal Spins

"I was behind Ed—I mean Lt. — — in the landing circle and saw him start

his final turn toward the field. Right in the middle of the turn, his left wing seemed to drop out and the plane dove into the ground and burned. It looked to me as though he got too slow in the turn and spun in. . . . One thing more might help the Board in analyzing this accident . . . Lt. — — was in the habit of making his approaches slower than necessary. He said he preferred a slow approach and seemed to pride himself in being able to make them without any trouble."

This case as told to the investigating board by a witnessing pilot is an example of the spin-stall accidents that result in so many fatal accidents in naval aviation. The latest statistical report shows that in the last six months spin-stall accidents have increased both in number and in proportion to other types of fatal flying accidents. The most striking feature of these crashes is that so many took place during field landing approaches. In terms of hours flown they occurred at a rate exactly double the incidence of such accidents during the preceding six months. All general stages of training showed an increase in stall-spin accidents.

For the most part, inadvertent stalls and spins are the result of careless, sloppy flying or a lack of understanding of the aerodynamic factors that cause an airplane to stall. To stop these needless accidents with their resultant loss of life and equipment, all pilots must be impressed with the seriousness of the situation. Safety officers are urged to execute an elaborate campaign toward this end. Posters, lectures, bulle-

tins and movies all are good mediums. *Flight Safety Bulletin No. 21-44* should be thoroughly understood. Flight Safety film MN 4353(A) entitled *Spins and Stalls* should be seen by all pilots.

Safety in Altitude

Case 1. After finishing a gunnery training flight, a group of fighters in column commenced a shallow dive at 2000 feet, the leader recovering at 500 feet. The tail man pulled out considerably lower than the remainder of the group and at the bottom of his recovery, flew into high tension wires that were stretched across the river at a height of 120 feet. The airplane immediately went out of control and crashed.

Case 2. Following a gunnery hop a formation of eight F4U's began losing altitude in a steep gliding turn. At 300 feet, they leveled off, all that is, except the last man. He failed to pull out in time and flew into the ground.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

A flight leader must watch out for the safety of his entire group at all times. Before starting any low altitude maneuver he must be sure that every member of his flight will have sufficient space to make a safe recovery. This must take into account the tendency for succeeding pilots in step-down formation to pull out at lower and lower altitudes.

At the same time, no wingman can afford to overlook his own safety. He should always check his altitude and if he sees it is going to be a close call, he should pull out of formation before he gets into a position from which he can't recover.

As far as I'm concerned any flight leader who so maneuvers his group that anyone following him has to break formation in order to avoid flying into something—that guy shouldn't be allowed to lead another group until he's gone back to flying wingman for a few months and acquired a proper sense of responsibility.

Late To Class

A TBM pilot allowed his fuel tank to run dry while operating at low altitude. He immediately shifted tanks and started his auxiliary fuel pump, but since there was insufficient altitude to regain suction, he was forced down at sea.

The pilot's statement included the following: "A good lesson I learned is to switch gas selector valve at a higher altitude. There is too little time to act at 75 feet."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I refuse to get mad at this pilot; this type of accident has happened so often I've exhausted my indignation! I'm glad he finally got the word. But it's tough to have to watch pilots learn everything the hard way. In this case, a little serious attention to *Flight Safety Bulletins 7-44* and *25-44* would have taught him the same thing and at a much cheaper rate, to say nothing about the real danger involved.

GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ



1. During simulated instrument flight in solo aircraft, if the hooded pilot does not hear from the safety pilot at the end of a 3-minute interval, what should he do?
2. The oil dilution system is used prior to stopping the engine when outside air temperatures below 35°F or 2°C are anticipated before or at the time of the next start. True or False?
3. The air-traffic rules established by the Civil Aeronautics Board are binding on naval personnel. True or False?
4. Why should cowl flaps be open after stopping engine?
5. Who is responsible for the application of the weight and balance control requirements?

(Answers to Quiz on Page 48)