GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Necktie Trouble

A primary flight training student was completing his approach to a landing and just about ready to break his glide when suddenly his necktie came out of his flight suit and started flapping around his face. In trying to hold down the tie and control the aircraft during the landing roll-out, he caused it to swerve slightly to the left by applying left brake.

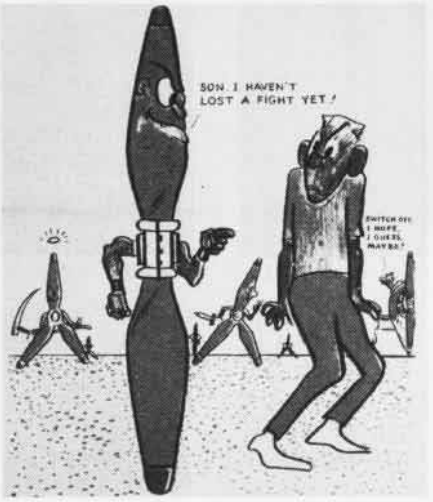
He then applied right rudder and brake but continued to hold left brake as evidenced by the skid marks. The aircraft swung slightly to the right and then back to the left as the braking action on the left wheel took hold. A second later the plane nosed-up on the runway damaging the engine and propeller.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Take it off—take it off—take it off! I'd a lot rather see you violate local uniform regulations than see a nice new trainer on its nose because of a fluttering necktie. It's a good idea either to remove your tie or to tuck it securely inside your shirt before take-off. If you wear a flight scarf, be sure that it isn't going to blow loose and obscure your vision on take-off or when you open the canopy for a landing. This isn't the first time that this has happened.

Prop Wins Again

Case 1. The picture below shows the results of a taxi collision between an F4U-4 and an automobile parked on a yellow center line and directly over the word "TAXIWAY," which was printed in large yellow letters. Occupants of the car were two experienced aviation pilots, one of whom managed to escape from the car in time, while the other, trapped in the rear seat, tried to bore his way through a rear seat door which happened to be locked. Fortunately, the propeller stopped its mad march before



getting to the back seat and to the man trapped there. No injuries to personnel—but look at that car!

Case 2. This is a case of a taxi collision between an SNJ taxiing out to take off and a car parked in the middle of a busy taxiway. At the request of the rear seat occupant, the driver stopped the car on the taxiway to ask directions from a mechanic. At that moment the SNJ churned into the car and severed the arm of the mechanic standing at the side of the car. Occupants in the car were not injured.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I have never known of a prop losing an argument with an opponent—be it plane, car, building, CO bottle, cow, post, or human being. Pilots who do not insure clear areas directly ahead before taxiing into them, and automobile drivers who use taxiways or runways for highways or parking areas, are asking for trouble. Our accident files are chock full of these AVOIDABLE accidents.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

"I can make it; I'll just lean it all the way back."

Double Trouble

At one of our Pacific bases recently a young ensign took off for a rocket firing hop in an SB2C carrying a rear seat passenger. While recovering from one of the firing runs, the pilot noticed that the engine was rapidly losing power. Application of full power was ineffective.

At an altitude of 1500 feet he retarded throttle, nosed over in a dive in order to maintain safe airspeed, turned on the primer hoping to regain power, and then informed his flight leader that he was going to ditch. As the altimeter was reading 900 feet he gave his passenger ditching instructions. A few seconds later the pilot made a good wheels-up water landing and the plane remained afloat for about 30 seconds.

The pilot made the following statement: "The passenger did not get the life raft out of the rear seat, nor did I get my pararaft inflated due to the fact that I had considerable trouble (no details given) with my passenger. He did not comply with any of the ditching instructions I gave him prior to the ditching." Fortunately both the pilot and passenger were rescued one hour later.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Fine time to check out a rear seat man in ditching procedure and in what to do after a water landing! This young ensign knows now that it is a darn sight easier to check a man out in the rear seat while on the ground than to check him out in the air in a few seconds while preparing for an immediate ditching.

Ninety seconds is just about the longest interval of time that any of the present day landplanes will stay afloat, but more frequently the time is closer to 30 seconds and teamwork on the part of the pilot and rear seat man is absolutely necessary.

Both must act quickly and automatically to extricate themselves and all their safety equipment from a rapidly-sinking aircraft. A pilot must not assume that a passenger knows all the safety precautions and instructions. He must be certain that the passenger is thoroughly checked out before permitting him to ride the rear seat of any plane. Undetermined power plant failure is enough to struggle with at one time—add to it an uninstructed or inexperienced rear seat man—and Son, that means double trouble in any man's language.

Let this man's experience be a lesson to all hands—commanding officers down to the enlisted men—check your squadron doctrine on this matter.

Mae Wests do come in handy, don't they?

Department of Confusion

A flight of four F4U's which were being ferried from San Diego to an East Coast air station, was cleared in the late afternoon from Lake Charles, La. to NAS NEW ORLEANS. The weather at the time of clearance was marginal with 1200 to 1300 feet ceilings along the proposed route. The flight leader estimated that the time en route would be one hour and that the flight would arrive in New Orleans 20 minutes before sunset.

On departure from Lake Charles, the lead was turned over to one of the other pilots in the group. He attempted to compensate for a strong southerly wind which had been predicted by altering the course 15 degrees to the right. When the Lake Charles radio beam faded out and he was unable to pick up the New Orleans range, he turned the lead over to one of the other pilots who realized that the flight was too far south.

After flying north for a while the group came to a large body of water which was incorrectly identified as Lake Pontchartrain. The leader then turned towards the east expecting to see New Orleans in a matter of minutes. Actually the flight was over Barataria Bay some 60 miles south-east of the assumed position. The easterly heading was gradually increased to about 125 and the flight encountered an area of extremely low ceilings and reduced visibility.

At this point all pilots realized that the flight was completely lost and the bad weather added to their confusion. After wandering around aimlessly for about 45 minutes, no one in the flight could determine which direction to fly in order to reach better weather conditions or a suitable landing field. Darkness set in and radio reception became poorer. The pilots were experiencing great difficulty in communicating with each other.

The officer-in-charge of the flight was unable to read communications from any other plane. Since he was hopelessly lost he decided to ditch his plane beside a lighted oil derrick. He called all planes and announced his decision and recommended that the other pilots follow him. One pilot, who incidentally could not hear this transmission, decided that all the pilots had agreed to ditch in this spot so he circled once and ditched a few minutes after the leader. Both planes landed wheels up and flaps down in about three feet of water, and the pilots made their way to the oil derrick without great difficulty.

The two remaining pilots decided to fly north as they had approximately 120 gallons of gasoline left. After about 20 miles they broke out into better weather and were able to maintain contact flight at 1500 feet. Shortly afterwards they observed the lights of New Orleans to the west and headed for them. They effected normal landings at the municipal airport.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

This one takes the cake. From start to finish it is such a series of blunders, violations, errors of judgment, that I can easily understand what one of the pilots meant when he said: "By this time there was quite a bit of confusion. . . . . the flight was tending to break up."

In the first place, poor judgment was exercised in varying from the regular ferry route in an effort to go around bad weather. Secondly, a clearance should not have been requested that late in the afternoon under marginal weather conditions. Most important of all, *only one pilot in the flight had charts of the area south of the airways between Lake Charles and New Orleans.*

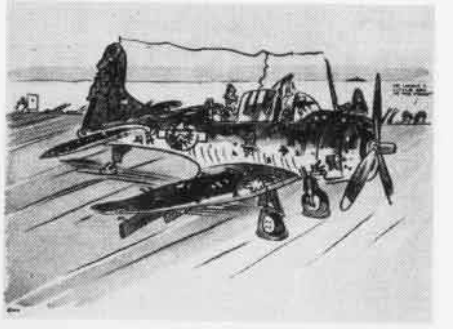
Under these circumstances the officer-in-charge of the ferry flight should most certainly have held the flight at Lake Charles until better weather conditions prevailed. Having made the initial mistake of departing, he should have directed the flight to return to Lake Charles when weather below CFR minimums was encountered.

Sometimes I think you young fellows forget the oldest method of aerial navigation—piloting. I know it's not an up-to-date way of getting anywhere, but when everything else fails it's a darn good idea to start looking for a railroad track or a main highway. The nice thing about them is that they all go *somewhere*, and in the area where you were milling around most of them converge on New Orleans.

How to Lose Friends

Gunnery can be fun but when there is a Dilbert in the flight, it can be murder. Recently a flight of six F4U-4's were engaged in making flat-side firing runs on a towed aerial target. The flight leader, in making one run, was sucked flat and held his fire. As he was making his recovery, paralleling the course of the tow target, his plane was struck by a .50-caliber slug fired from the plane immediately following his.

The culprit who fired the shot said that he did not realize that he had lost sight of the plane ahead. He assumed that his flight leader had made a recovery and was clear of the firing area when he (the culprit) began firing. The victim of this small oversight managed to fly to the base and to land safely. Later it was found the bullet had entered the accessory section, loosened a hydraulic line, punctured an air duct and severed one of the main engine mounts. The pilot, however, did not receive a scratch.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I thought the shooting war was over but I can see we have some young ones with fighting spirit. However, there is no excuse for shooting up a friend these days. This is an ideal example of what not to do in gunnery and it is a direct violation of the basic gunnery precaution: *BE SURE THE AREA IS CLEAR BEFORE YOU SHOOT.*

As I see it, neither of the pilots showed heads-up gunnery sense. The flight leader should have been more prompt in clearing the firing target. I believe it is preferable to make flat side recoveries to the side from which the firing run was initiated, using plenty of speed. The other pilot had the wrong idea on gunnery and should not have fired one round, or even flicked the master switch until the firing area was cleared. Sloppy air discipline in gunnery can lead to plenty of trouble. The presumptuous Dilbert featured in the case got five days in hack.

Watch Your Step

A pilot flying an F4U made a normal approach to a landing, correcting adequately for a 10-knot crosswind, 60° to the runway. During the landing rollout the fighter swerved to the left, starting a groundloop. As the pilot corrected with right brake, his foot slipped into the opening at the top of the pedal and the plane headed for a coral shoulder.

After tremendous effort our pilot managed to extricate his foot and to straighten the fighter out on a taxiway paralleling the runway. All was well until he ran smack into a coral mound left on the taxiway by construction workers.

Off came the landing gear and the F4U screeched to a stop 120 feet beyond the pile. The cause of this accident was not crosswind, as it was not of sufficient force, but rather a little bit of oil or grease which the pilot had picked up on his shoe before entering the cockpit.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Gosh, fella, you almost made it except for that coral mound. Actually, though, that little bit of grease or oil on your shoe was the root of all your trouble. I once knew a fella who didn't pay much attention to a little bit of oil on his shoe and he slipped off a fighter wing. The next week he had to eat his meals standing up. These little things do count, so beware of that oil puddle and that grease spot. There are plenty around planes.