

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Must Own Oil Stock

An SNJ pilot on a cross-country flight to a destination 278 nautical miles away filed a flight clearance in which he estimated 2 hours and 10 minutes en route. Shortly after take-off he commenced using a power setting of 33" and 2100 rpm. He failed to keep a close check on his position and became lost when he neared his destination.

After a futile effort to orient himself on the range station he decided on an emergency landing a little over two hours after take-off. At this time he had only 10 gallons of gasoline remaining. While he was dragging a grass field for the second time his engine quit, because of fuel exhaustion. At this time he was in a right bank about 50 feet above the ground with wheels up and flaps down. He had to stay in the banked attitude to avoid trees ahead.

The aircraft hit the ground on the right wing and cartwheeled to the right for 75 feet. Both wings and the center section were ripped in one piece from the fuselage and the pilot's compartment was torn completely apart. Fortunately both pilot and passenger had tightened their safety belts and shoulder harnesses and escaped with very minor injuries, considering the forces exerted in the crash.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

I wonder if this fellow owns stock in an oil company? Seems like he should have known better than to fly an SNJ with these power settings. The pilot's handbook states that the maximum allowable cruising power settings are 30" and 2000 rpm. Using 33 hg and 2100 rpm he burned his gasoline at the rate of nearly 50 gallons an hour. No wonder he didn't have much left when he discovered that he was lost.

It's a good idea to drag a field prior to an emergency landing, but when you're on your last five gallons you'd better be satisfied with one look.


With proper flight planning the pilot need not have become lost in the first place. With proper throttle settings, he would have had at least an hour's fuel left after he discovered that he was lost.

Slipstream Blues

The F4U was idling on the line with a second class mechanic at the controls and a man standing by the winglines. Just as an SNB taxied astern, the mech in the F4U decided to check his mags at 2100 rpm. In the ensuing crash three



airplanes were damaged—the SNB and two planes that it was blown into.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Engage me in private conversation sometime and I'll tell you what I really think about accidents like this and the people who cause them! The Dilbert in the F4U and his partner alongside were thoughtless, negligent and discourteous.

They're first cousins to the character who turns up for a pre-takeoff mag check with his slipstream flowing directly across the path of landing aircraft; to those who blow dirt and debris all over parked planes and bystanders; and to those who turn-up unexpectedly on the flight deck, bowling men over like tenpins.

Remember! Be courteous and thoughtful, consider your slipstream and its effect. And if you are a slipstream offender, keep your neck out of my hands!

On Route #1


Two midshipmen, awaiting transportation at NAS ALAMEDA, were assigned an SNJ for a local VFR familiarization flight. The local area was contact, broken to overcast with 1300 to 3000-foot ceilings during the following three hours. There were showers in the vicinity.

After take-off they proceeded southwest for a few minutes and ran into a shower. The pilot reversed course and decided to climb on top. He broke out at 5000 feet and continued on a northerly heading looking for a hole through which he might let down. About an hour after take-off he found a clear area at the north end of San Francisco Bay and let down to 1000 feet. Low clouds and rain were between him and the base so he climbed back on top and tuned in the San Francisco Range to

check his position. He then proceeded out the northwest leg on top and after a while took up a heading of 270° (directly out to sea). He held for 30 minutes, but found no clear area in which to let down, so he reversed his course and flew back over San Francisco.

He then decided to fly north and after about 15 minutes found another clear area and let down. This time he was over land, so he took up a westerly heading and held it until he reached the coastline. He then turned south, staying under the low overcast, and flying about a half mile off shore as he looked for the entrance to San Francisco Bay. By this time he was flying at 50 feet above the water and could see that the clouds fused with the tops of the cliffs and hills. He reduced his power settings to 1700 rpm and 22 hg as his gas supply was getting low.

He had to make a sharp turn out to sea to avoid Point Reyes just north of San Francisco and thus missed the entrance to the bay. Not realizing this, he continued south for another 40 miles. By the time he discovered that he had missed the bay, his fuel supply was too low to double back. Fortunately State Highway #1 parallels the coastline at this point and he was able to drag a straight section of the road and effect a safe landing. During the roll out a sign post ripped the under side of the left aileron and another post nicked the right wing tip. However, repairs were made on the spot and the next day the plane was flown back to the base.

 *Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Gee, you fellows were born 30 years too late. This sort of up and down, hide and seek flying was considered real hot stuff before they made Von Richthofen a Baron.

Since that time folks have thought up all sorts of new-fangled ways to help you find your way home. I hear tell they've even got two-way radios now, so that you can call the range station and tell them all your troubles. Likely as not, they'd have been real pleased to tell you about 3000-foot broken ceiling and 15 mile visibility that existed all afternoon at Moffett Field. After all, you were practically within spitting distance of that big Navy field until you let your gas supply get so low.

Of course, it *could* be that you didn't want to let them know you were on instruments on a VFR flight plan. But, I can tell you one thing for sure. They'd a lot

rather know what you were doing than have you climbing up and down the foggy airways on your own.

Once you made your first mistake and found yourself up on top, you should have immediately requested a change in flight plan and asked for all the information and advice that you needed.



Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

The enclosed clipping from the front page of the *Manila Times* describes an air show held at the Manila International Airport.

The carrier plane referred to was a TBM I flew to Manila from Sangley Point for exhibition purposes. Due to crowded conditions of the taxiways I had to taxi with folded wings. This article should clear up a lot of arguments about whether the TBM can fly that way or not. Twenty-five thousand people saw it, according to the writer.

Thanks for a lot of helpful hints in your column in the NEWS.

Yours with folded wings,

AD1 (NAP)

"THOUSANDS ENJOY AIRSHOW"

"More than 25,000 people witnessed the opening of the first air show in the Philippines held yesterday in conjunction with aviation week at Nichols Field (Manila International Airport), Baclaran, Rizal.

"Thirty-six P-51's of the United States Air Force passed in review. . . .

"U. S. Navy planes, including a carrier plane, followed next. The carrier plane came in with folded wings and opened up as it showed up over the airfield. The planes landed at the airfield and were immediately put on display to the public."

Grampaw Pettibone says:

You can fool all of the people some of the time.

For no particular reason this reminds me of something that happened to me a good many years ago. Returning to base late one night I went to throttle back for a landing, but couldn't budge the throttle control. After several attempts I gave it a really hard pull and it just came loose in my hand. I could move it in both directions, but the engines continued to run at full cruising power. I realized that I would have to get all squared away for the field with plenty of altitude and cut the engine by bringing the mixture control back to idle cut-off.

I called the tower and told them what I planned to do, but they insisted that I circle the field while they alerted the crash and ambulance crews. After about 20 minutes they cleared me to land.

The field was one of the largest in use at that time, and the landing was uneventful. As I rolled to a stop the crash truck pulled alongside. A young and sleepy sailor looked at me from the back of the truck with an expression that conveyed a mixture of wonder and admiration and asked, "How long have you been without power, Sir?"



Two's A Crowd

Two midshipmen were on their first night flight after reporting to an F8F squadron. Upon returning to the base they landed—the first fairly short and the second fairly long. Both were on the right side of the runway because of a FCLP platform set up on the left side.

About 3000 feet down the runway the second F8F overtook the first. The ensuing crash completely demolished one plane and caused major damage to the other. Fortunately both pilots escaped without serious injury.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Obviously the pilot of the overtaking aircraft was at fault in that he failed to take sufficient interval for a safe night landing. However, I'm reluctant to place the entire blame on him, since he apparently wasn't briefed on the proper interval for night landings and the accident board pointed out that the squadron had no doctrine regarding this important point.

I will stick my neck out a mile and say flatly that "Two make a crowd on a runway at night." During darkness it is hard to see far enough ahead to avoid collisions. In addition, pilots are likely to land a little short of or a little beyond the desired touchdown point. Also it is more difficult to keep the plane rolling straight ahead. For these reasons merely alternating landings from left to right side is not sufficient.

Night landing collisions will not be entirely eliminated until safety officers and commanding officers get together and revise squadron doctrine to allow only one plane at a time on the landing runway. In most cases this will not result in much loss of time. Normally if the number two plane is just turning off the down-wind leg when the first plane lands, a safe interval will be maintained.

Who Forgot the Hammer?

The following pilot's statement gives a good account of what can happen when checks and pre-flight inspections are performed in a careless manner.

"I took off at 1450 in an SNJ for a local flight which was to include acrobatics. I was just finishing a barrel-roll at 8000 feet when I felt and heard a noise that sounded like some member of the fuselage had snapped or bent. My first impression was that too much stress had been put on the aircraft, but

after thinking over the maneuver, I concluded that it was not done in a vicious manner and the amount of G's pulled was only normal. I continued to fly for the remaining thirty minutes of my flight, testing my plane by maneuvers, changing prop settings, lowering wheels and flaps, and visually checking the aircraft.

"I could not locate the trouble as everything functioned in a normal manner. After landing it was noted that the tip of one prop blade was bent, various portions of the cowling were bent, a spark plug lead was broken, and a push rod housing was damaged. A handle which appeared to be from a hammer or mallet was lodged between the cowling and the engine.

"The only conclusion that I could draw was that someone had left a hammer in the engine area when the aircraft came out of check. During my maneuvers it had caused the aforementioned damage."



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Earlier in the day a rawhide mallet was used in some work which was done on the prop of this SNJ. The aircraft was given a post-check inspection, but neither the inspector or the plane captain who gave the plane its pre-flight inspection noticed the mallet, which was evidently left inside the cowling.

This is the sort of boner that really makes my blood boil. Something was wrong somewhere and it wasn't in Denmark. Slipshod maintenance can be costlier than the dickens, and what's more, it is easy to prevent if the inspection crew is on the ball. Mistakes like this have caused tragic accidents in the past. There is no room for such errors in Naval Aviation.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

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Would you be kind enough to answer the three questions below:

1. Can a naval aviator count flight time while in a leave status for qualifying time for flight pay?
2. Can a naval aviator count passenger time for qualifying time for flight pay?
3. Is it permissible for a naval aviator who is under orders to duty involving flying to pilot a Navy plane while on a leave status?

Thanks a lot,

—Lt. USN.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Everyone ought to know these answers by now, but here we go again:

1. No. This is because flight pay is based on the requirement to perform regular and frequent flights. If you fly on leave you are not doing it as a requirement.
2. No.
3. Yes. Orders to duty involving flying continue in effect while on leave.