

# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## How About the Tab?

A year ago I printed a story concerning a PV that was ditched about a minute after take-off when the pilot discovered that he had no elevator control. At this time he was heading out over Lake Washington at an altitude of about 50 feet and the yoke simply came loose in his hands. The plane started into a steep climb, and the pilot instinctively pushed the yoke forward. When this did no good, he throttled back and the plane went into a glide. As he applied power again the nose went up sharply. By adding and subtracting power he was able to ditch the plane in a level attitude. All crew members got out safely.

When the plane was lifted from the bottom of the lake, it was discovered that a small nut had backed off the elevator control, rear, push-pull rod. Pieces of the broken cotter pin were found in the bilge after recovery of the plane.

Shortly after this story appeared we had a letter from a reader asking why the pilot didn't continue his flight using the elevator trim tab. Since then the question has come up again several times. One PV pilot states that he was a member of a squadron that used to simulate such an emergency, and that pilots became quite adept at using the elevator tab in place of the stick to make simulated landings.

In this particular accident a radio-man was riding in the copilot's seat, and the pilot certainly had both hands occupied. No change was made in the position of the elevator trim tab during the emergency.

However, it is interesting to speculate on what would have happened had either the pilot or the man in the copilot's seat rolled in down tab as throttle was added. It is probable that a controlled climb could have been established. Reaching a safe altitude with plenty of gasoline the pilot could have practiced flying the plane using the elevator trim tab as a substitute for the regular elevator control. Eventually he would have had to decide whether to attempt a landing or to bail out.

What do the PV pilots think about this? I'd like to hear some more opinions as to whether or not this plane could have been landed successfully by use of the plane's elevator trim tab.



## Controls Jammed!

Two recent examples point up the necessity for making sure that there is no loose gear adrift in the cockpit. In the first instance an unfastened safety belt jammed the rudder controls and caused a plane to veer off the runway towards a group of spectators during a station airshow. The pilot almost had flying speed at this moment and managed to pull the plane into the air just short of the crowd. However, the landing gear injured two observers.

In the second case the pilot of an SNJ made his second pass in a period of FCLP and received a cut. Applying power to go around again, he started the usual gentle turn to the right. When he attempted to level his wings he found that the stick would not come back to the left. It stopped at the neutral position. The pilot was unable to recover from the right bank and consequently chopped throttle and kicked hard left rudder. The plane began to level just as it hit a small embankment. It bounced back in the air, landed again, and rolled along in pretty good shape until it hit a large drainage ditch.

Subsequent investigation revealed that a radio receiver in the rear cockpit of the SNJ had been improperly secured. The lock-down keys came loose, allowing the set to fall down and wedge itself between the stick and the foot board on the left side.



*Gram paw Pettibone says:*

It sure pays to have things properly stowed. I guess we've logged a dozen accidents in the last couple of years where some object jammed a control. These fellows were lucky to get out without personal injuries. No doubt some of our unexplained fatal accidents have been the result of just such unexplained causes.

## Right in the Teeth

A student in basic training was on his first solo gunnery flight. He made a very flat "high side" run and kept the center of his sight on the tow line. He expected the sleeve to pass by at the last minute and did not have it within his vision at any time during the run. The SNJ hit the tow line, shattering the forward portion of the canopy. The towline apparently struck the pilot in the face causing severe lacerations and the loss of a front tooth.

After impact the student says—"I think I pulled out perpendicular to the tow. I remember thinking that I had pulled too many "g's" and looked at the accelerometer. At the same time I put my glove hand up to my face. It was numb and swollen. My front teeth were missing and blood was coming from my mouth. My helmet was gone.

"I circled until my instructor pulled alongside and motioned with his thumb, 'Is everything all right?' I gave him the all right signal and we headed back towards Saufley. When we got as far as Bronson I was pretty dazed and felt I couldn't go any further. I made my landing at Bronson".



*Gram paw Pettibone says:*

Well, the moral of this story should be pretty obvious. This lad is mighty lucky that he didn't lose more than his helmet and a tooth. That fast moving steel towline could very easily have decapitated him.

Local Gunnery Flight Instructions call for the pilots to break-off a run immediately upon losing sight of the sleeve.

## Slick Trick Dept.

If you had a student pilot knock one wheel and landing strut clear off a PB4Y-2 do you think you could bring it in for a landing without damaging the props or engines on the wheelless side? The instructors at Corpus Christi say it can be done and have pictures to prove it.

Here's the way it's done:

"On two recent occasions pilots of this command have demonstrated excellent technique in landing *Privateers* that had one main side mount completely disabled. Exactly the same technique was used in both cases and it has proved to result in a minimum of material damage and maximum personnel safety. When first confronted with the necessity of landing a *Privateer* disabled as

described above, several experienced PB4Y-2 pilots were called together while the aircraft circled the field, and were called upon to consider the problem involved and to derive a system of landing.

"None of the pilots concerned had ever been confronted with such a situation, but by pooling their opinions on the matter they arrived at a system which was recommended to the pilot of the disabled aircraft by radio. The pilot involved agreed on all points of the system recommended and carried it out successfully. The system in brief is as follows:

- (a) Drop bomb bay tanks if aircraft is carrying them.
- (b) Send crew to ditching stations.
- (c) Select runway most into the wind and have ground personnel clear area about the runway of all movable obstructions.
- (d) Pilot makes normal approach to runway except that approximately five knots additional speed is carried in final. On this pass, pilot experiments with actual technique involved in making the approach, determines drift and takes a wave-off.
- (e) If pilot is satisfied and all ground preparations are complete, pilot is cleared for a landing.
- (f) Pilot effects same approach to landing and just prior to touching down applies wing down correction toward good side mount and touches down on that mount with nose held high.
- (g) Both engines on the disabled side are feathered by copilot as soon as aircraft touches down.
- (h) Pilot holds aircraft on good mount *only*, by aileron and elevator pressure as long as possible and then eases nosewheel to deck.
- (i) Employ full throw of aileron to hold up disabled side, and as wing commences to drop on that side apply brake on good mount intermittently. Copilot pulls crash-bar.
- (j) Continued intermittent braking action will now have triple effect of preventing swerve to disabled side, of throwing wing on disabled side into the air and of slowing aircraft.
- (k) When wing on disabled side can no longer be held clear of the runway by aileron and brakes, lock brake on good mount to prevent violent groundloop to disabled side and to stop forward motion.
- (l) Abandon aircraft through emergency exits.

By employing this method, both pilots so involved, have been able to keep the aircraft rolling directly down the runway for distance in excess of 3000 feet before touching the wing down, and on neither occasion was quick stoppage of an engine experienced. On the first occasion no propeller damage was experienced, and on the latter occasion one blade on each

of the engines on the disabled side had approximately 1/4-inch filed off the propeller tip. On both occasions the structural damage to the aircraft was at a minimum that could be expected under these circumstances."



### Too Close Abeam

The pilot of the F4U-4 pictured here had been scheduled for FCLP. This practice was cancelled because of considerable water on the mat and the pilot was instructed to make a normal approach to a landing.

On his downwind leg he was too close to the duty runway and started a steep nose down turn from an altitude of about 400 feet, carrying a lot of power. As he passed the 90° position he reduced power slightly. Turning into the groove, he noticed that his rate of descent was too great.

He added throttle to slow down his descent and as his left wing began to settle he added more power, right rudder and right aileron in an effort to set the wing up. When this failed he added still more power and dropped the nose in an attempt to get straight and level. The plane hit 160 feet short of the runway on its left wing tip and cartwheeled.

It was a broken twisted mass by the time it came to a stop on the duty runway. The pilot unfastened his shoulder harness and safety belt and was standing clear of the wreckage when the crash crew arrived.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

This lad must have been thinking pure thoughts all week in addition to having his shoulder harness good and tight . . . because it certainly is amazing that he could walk away from this crumpled Corsair.

The mistakes that he made killed another pilot at the same field just a few weeks before. All student pilots have been cautioned concerning the hazards of starting an approach too close abeam, and have been instructed, when not engaged in FCLP, to maintain a wide margin above stalling speed.

Remember that stalling speed increases tremendously in a steep turn. Once you find that you are having difficulty getting a wing up, get the nose down quickly then add throttle. Adding power in a nose high, steep, left turn is a sure recipe for trouble.

Before starting Field Carrier Landing

Practice, read Flight Safety Bulletin 1-47 which describes some of the most frequent causes of accidents in this phase of training.

### Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

I thought you might be interested in an experience that I had on a recent cross country trip. After landing, the tower directed me to the area marked for transient aircraft. I was then pleasantly surprised to see a jeep arrive to take me to operations. There the driver directed me to the desk where I closed out my flight plan, sent an R.O.N. and signed a gas chit.

The operations duty officer handed me a mimeographed sheet which told of the facilities on the base, gave information relative to quarters, transportation to town, etc. As I left the building for the ride up to the B.O.Q. I noticed that my plane was already being serviced.

The next morning when I got ready to depart a lineman handed me a small sheet of paper with several questions which could be answered by YES or NO answers and asked me to put check marks in the appropriate boxes. The questions were relative to the service afforded me while at this base. Was I provided with prompt transportation, was the plane serviced efficiently, were the facilities at the B.O.Q. satisfactory, etc.? Did I have any suggestions for rendering improved service to visiting aircraft?

About this time I ran my hand up towards my collar to make sure that those (jg) bars were still there, because I was beginning to feel like a V.I.P.

I left that station with the feeling that it certainly must have a very sharp commanding officer.

Sincerely,

.....Lt. (jg), USN.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Since the publication of ACL 88-48 concerning hospitality and services to be accorded visiting aircraft, I think there has been a noticeable improvement in courtesy and service at most air stations.

Some years ago I used to accompany a Vice Admiral on occasional trips and I never ceased to marvel at the things people would do for us and the speed with which all the services were accomplished.

It sounds to me like you've discovered a station which operates on the policy that every visiting pilot is entitled to the same quick, courteous, service afforded a high-ranking official. After all, when you stop to think about it, a station is going to have to provide the services a pilot needs sooner or later if he is ever going to get on to his next stop. It doesn't cost any more to do it with the accent on hospitality. I hope more of our stations will adopt this attitude toward all transient aviators.