



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

"In God We Trust"

If you're a skier, the approach of winter may be something to look forward to with pleasure. As regards flight operations, it usually produces a good many headaches. Since we can't do much about changing the weather, let's dust off one of last winter's accident reports and take a look at it.

This fellow violated just about every rule for safe winter flying, and somehow managed to survive.

On a January afternoon, he filed VFR from Denver to Salt Lake City in an SNJ, estimating three hours and 12 minutes enroute. Owing to headwinds and a moist airmass to the northwest, he was told by operations to check both gas and weather at Rock Springs, Wyoming, which is the last surfaced field with facilities enroute to Salt Lake City.

The pilot states that he had more than half of his gas left as he passed Rock Springs, and that he heard a weather report which gave Salt Lake City—4000 feet, overcast. This would require him to go on instruments in order to get over the Wasatch Mountains, and would necessitate an instrument landing at Salt Lake City. He also got word that Ogden weather had dropped to 1500 feet with snow. He had no instrument rating.

In spite of all this he entered the overcast and climbed to 12,000 feet and continued towards Salt Lake City. (IFR minimum is 13,000.) He soon encountered so much static that he was unable to hear the radio range, so he held the magnetic heading of Red Airway 49.

Without going into all the hairy details of the next hour or so, he called Salt Lake City Radio three hours and 15 minutes after take-off to report that he was lost and low on gas. A tower operator tried to tell him that they had no equipment with which to give him a steer.

By this time, both tanks showed empty, so he began a descent hoping that he would not run into a mountain and that he would have a little gas left when he broke out.

The first thing he saw was a snow-covered mountain directly ahead. He pulled back on the stick and started a sharp turn to the right. While in this turn he landed wheels and flaps up, air-speed 50 knots, power on, going up hill at an angle about 25 degrees from the horizontal attitude. The slope was cov-



ered with snow four feet deep and the SNJ slid forward, then turned slightly downhill, and came to a stop. It was damaged only slightly and the pilot was able to call Ogden Radio and report that he had just made a "forced landing." He was rescued by Utah Highway Patrol.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

When last heard from, this pilot was heading for a Naval Aviator's Disposition Board. If he isn't conducting revival meetings now, he ought to be!

4.0 Record

Fighter Squadron 173 recently completed a full year of intensive operation without a single aircraft accident. During this period, the squadron was assigned to three CVB class carriers and flew a total of 7,545 hours. A good deal of night flying and instrument flying was done during this one year period, and 1,393 carrier landings were successfully executed.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Maybe this has been done before, but I'll venture a guess that this is an all time record for safe operations in fighter type aircraft. The squadron had two commanding officers during the period and both have been commended by Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, for this splendid record.

Landing Accidents

A quick breakdown of all navy accidents for the past year by phase of operation reveals that 51% occurred during landing, 24% in flight, 11% in take-off, 10% in taxiing, and 4% in warm-ups and wave-offs.

If we are to make a big dent in the accident rate, a lot of attention must be given to reducing the number of landing accidents. Here's a list of suggestions that may help pilots and safety officers tackle this problem:

1. *Check-outs:* Be sure every new pilot gets the best possible check-out. Complete familiarity with any plane is impossible until you've flown it for a good

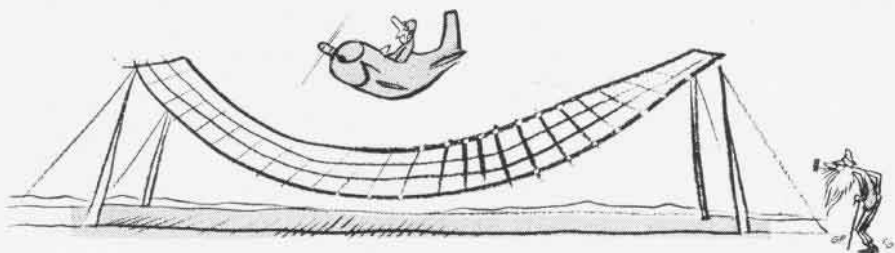


many hours, but a blindfold cockpit check is one way to find out whether a new pilot knows where to reach for the various controls, or whether he'll have to stick his head down in the cockpit and take out a search warrant for some particular item.

2. *Field traffic pattern:* Careful adherence to the pattern approved for the field and for the particular type of aircraft will simplify the landing, and reduce the possibility of mid-air collisions and near misses at busy fields.

Landing Check-off Lists: "You can't remember all you know." Rely on the check-off list rather than your memory. Safety Officers: Does every plane have a readable and complete landing check-off list? Can it be seen at night? Are the items in the proper order?

Approach Speed: Probably the most important single factor in making a good landing is having the proper speed in the final approach. During the war, a



somewhat elderly ex-airline pilot with 14,000 hours was employed by one of the largest plane manufacturers to give check-out rides to pilots who arrived at the factory to pick up new planes. He consistently made perfect landings in a plane that was rumored to have a "built-in bounce", although he admitted that he could no longer pass a depth perception test. His secret—he was always within a knot or two of the correct approach speed. Safety Officers: Do all the pilots in your squadron know the correct approach speeds for various configurations and weights?

Touch-down: Land in the first third of the runway. If you've overshoot, don't be too proud to go around again.

Maintain Directional Control: Don't wait too long to correct for a swerve. A quick, light application of brake when the swerve is just starting, is a lot more effective than a heavy boot after it is well under way.

Retracting Flaps: In normal wind conditions, wait until you have completed your landing roll-out and turned off the duty runway before retracting flaps. If you make a habit of doing this while you are going down the runway at 50 or 60 knots, you may reach for the wrong lever. Wait until you can see what you are doing.

P.S. Now that the landing's over, don't relax until you have her in the chocks. That will help to keep the taxi accident rate down.

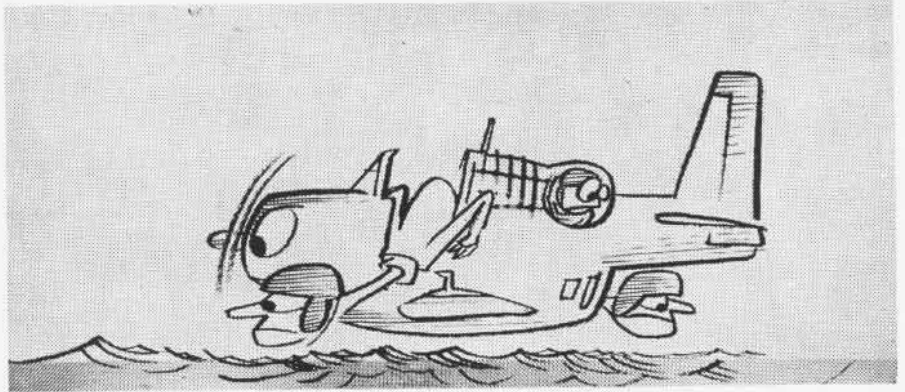
New Dilbert Posters

Here's a real safety scoop. A brand new set of seventy Dilbert Posters has just been published. One set will soon be on its way to each air activity. The new series is entitled MORE BONERS and was drawn by Robert Osborn, whose illustrations are familiar to readers of NANews. Before doing this series of posters, he visited a number of Naval Air Stations to get the word on Dilbert's latest boners.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

You'll get many a chuckle out of these posters, and they'll help you avoid some of the pitfalls that beset Dilbert. Here's a suggestion on how to use the posters. When your set arrives, don't put them out all at one time in the ready room. The kit contains instructions for the local manufacture of a suitable display case. Rig up a good display, post the drawings one at a time, and change them on a scheduled basis.

If your outfit doesn't receive a set of posters sometime this month, the safety officer can order a set (limit one to a squadron) by using the regular order blank in the back of the Aeronautical Publications Index. The order number, just assigned, will be NAVAER 00-80ZZ-41.



Strike Two

During a night searchlight training flight, the pilot of a TBM-3S was orbiting a few miles away from the target submarine waiting for his section leader to complete a practice run.

It was a dark, hazy night and there was no visible horizon below about 1200 feet. The pilot glanced at his pressure altimeter during the turn and noted that it read approximately 500 feet. He then gave some instructions to a crewman over the ICS, using a lip mike which did not require him to divert much of his attention from flying the plane.

Seconds later the plane flew into the water. It did not break up too badly on impact, but sunk very rapidly. The pilot and two crewmen managed to get out and inflate a life raft. They were unable to locate the searchlight operator after the crash.

The section leader did not observe the crash, but when he completed the run and discovered that he had lost radio contact with his wingman, he commenced a search. Within a half hour he spotted flares fired by the survivors and started giving the submarine course instructions.

He decided to make a searchlight run on the men in the water to determine whether they were in a raft or floating in their life jackets. While making a flat turn preparatory to starting this run, he too flew into the water. The last time he looked at his altimeter it read 400 feet.

In this case, as in the first accident, the pilot and two crewmen got out without serious injury. The searchlight operator was not seen after the crash although the plane stayed afloat long enough for three complete inspections of the bilge compartment.

During the next half hour, the submarine picked up the six survivors from the two crashes. The body of one searchlight operator was found floating face down in the water the following day. He had evidently suffered severe injuries on initial impact, but his life vest was

partially inflated.

As a result of these two accidents a number of changes are being engineered in the TBM-3S. The arrangement of certain switches and controls in the bilge compartment will be modified, so that the searchlight operator will be able to reach them without loosening his safety belt. A crash pad will be provided for the periscope which he uses.

A new type radio altimeter has been developed which is easier to read in the altitude range from 0 to 1000 feet and pilots are cautioned to test the operation of the radio altimeter over water or over terrain of known altitude immediately after take off.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

We might as well face it. Flying around at low altitude on a dark night looking for a submarine is not one of the worlds safer ways of making a living. In fact, you'd probably be a lot safer washing the outside of the windows on the top floor of the Empire State Building. There the hazard is too much altitude rather than too little.

When an accident occurs in this type of flying, it usually happens without any warning. For this reason everyone in the crew must be protected as fully as possible and must take full advantage of the survival equipment available.

The allowance lists have recently been revised to provide protective helmets for all crew members in these planes. If you haven't received your helmet yet, take my advice and start screaming for it. You don't stand a Chinaman's chance of getting out of a sinking plane if you are unconscious from a sock on the old noggin!

