

GRAMP AW PETTIBONE

How Did It Get There?

The R4D-5 pictured at the bottom of the page seems to be doing a very fine job of blocking traffic. It arrived in this unique position when the pilot and co-pilot forgot to put the props in full low pitch during a touch and go landing.

The pilot was demonstrating a power-off, no flaps, semi-stall landing on a 4000-foot runway. The R4D-5 which weighed only 21,300 lbs. crossed the end of the runway at approximately 70 knots and touched down about 1000 feet down the runway in a nearly stalled attitude. At a speed of about 50 knots power was applied for take-off. Since the props had not been placed in full low pitch, the acceleration was comparatively slow. The pilot noticed this and shoved the props forward, and then immediately closed the throttles to abort the take-off. At this time there was about 1500 feet of runway remaining and the R4D was doing between 60 and 65 knots.

Heavy skid marks were found on the last 1028 feet of the runway plus 291 feet on the grass over-run. The plane then went through a cyclone fence which marked the boundary of the field and rolled down the highway embankment. It hit the rise on the far side still doing about 20 knots.

The fuselage was buckled as far aft as station 135, and the R4D will require a major overhaul. All crew members escaped with only minor sprains and scratches.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

In a poker game a couple of years ago I watched a fellow throw in a hand that contained three Queens rather than call the final \$30 raise. He had already invested about \$70 in the "Three Ladies" and, as it turned out, they would have won him a \$300 pot if he had only called that last bet. He's still trying to figure out why he threw the hand away.

You'd think the pilot of this R4D would be asking himself a similar question. What made him think that it would be safer to



FIGURE OUT HOW THIS R4D GOT IN THIS HOLE



DILBERT GETS A LESSON IN CALCULATED RISK

try to stop than to continue his take-off? Alas, such is not the case. In his statement he says that he thinks his decision was correct because he would have been airborne at less than safe single engine speed if he had continued his take-off run, and he felt certain that he could stop.

According to the pilot's handbook an R4D weighing only 21,300 lbs. can take off from a dead stop in a no-wind condition and clear a 50-foot obstruction in less than 1500 feet. In fact, it takes a greater distance to stop the plane when it is going 60-65 knots than it does to take-off from a complete stop.

While he was calculating the risks involved in the two courses of action, the pilot might also have remembered that his flaps were up and due to the absence of their drag he would require a longer than usual stopping distance.

It seems to me that all he had to do after pushing the props forward was just to sit tight and that R4D would have taken off like a scared jack-rabbit.

Of course, in discussing an accident or a poker hand, *hindsight* is a big help. It isn't nearly so easy to make the right decision on the spur of the moment.

Just to end this discussion with a comforting note, I might add that I spent a couple of hours trying to figure out from our accident records just what the chances were of having one engine quit in an R4D during any given minute of full power operation. I finally gave up, but before doing so, I came to the conclusion that it was less likely than the chances of winning the Irish Sweepstakes on a single ticket. P.S. Check yourself on your next few landings. Do you remember to put your prop or props in full low pitch every time? Check-off lists were invented to prevent just this type of error. **USE THEM AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.**

GRAMP AW PETTIBONE ASKS

Why does the plane taxiing ahead always stop as soon as you lose sight of it?

New Jet Safety Record?

"Dear Grampaw Pettibone,

"Since your comment on VF-11 safety record says 'best monthly record reported to date for jets', we arguably submit this epistle to set the record straight. At the first pop out of the bag, someone may try to disqualify us because we are not a fleet squadron but we feel that since we are assigned a comparable number of planes (20 assigned against 16 for fleet squadron) and since we have to check-out a new bunch of non-jet aviators each month that our problems and risks are comparable.

"During the month of August 1950 Jet Training Unit One flew 1315 accident free hours, racking up an average of 65.7 hours per plane for the month. This beats VF-11's average of 64.0 hours per plane (1024 hours/16 planes). In addition, JTU-1 in the last 12 months of operations has transitioned 284 pilots to jet aircraft and flown 10,328.4 hours without a student fatality.

"The only injury in this period was a pair of blood-shot eyes (looked like he had been on a fortnight of lost weekends) which a student incurred when he exposed himself to excessive negative "Gs". During this time, students were involved in only 4 accidents, instructors accounted for 3 more.

"In this regard, many people think we have two-seater TO-2's to check out these recently designated aviators—Not so!! Comes as a jolt to some of those reporting in. After 4½ days of concentrated classroom, cockpit time, instructor-student dope sessions, questions, answers, reviews, and a pat on the back, off they go—solo!! The runway portable talks them off and back on and they have had their first jet ride. All of their 25 hours during the course is without tip tanks, so they log their time at 55 minutes a clip . . . more landings that way.

"JTU-1 has on board 137 men and 21 instructors which composes the finest crew in the Navy. If you don't believe it just ask one of 'em.

"Yours accident freely,

"From highest to lowest in JTU-1"



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Congratulations on a wonderful safety record.

It is never easy to draw a comparison between the relative hazards of training new pilots in a particular type plane

versus operating the same type in a fleet squadron. Training Command accident rates, however, normally run considerably lower than the fleet rates for the same types.

This may indicate that the Training Command places greater emphasis on safety, or it may prove that Fleet Operations are just naturally more hazardous. My own guess is that both factors contribute to the difference in the rates.

Space limitations prevent the publication of the splendid aircraft availability record which you enclosed, but you certainly must have a cracker-jack maintenance department to "keep 'em flying" so consistently.

Can any other jet outfit top the safety records of VF-11 and JTU-1? If so, don't be too modest to write in and tell about it. I don't have a large enough staff to keep a running check on every squadron . . . and sometimes don't have all the necessary figures.

Get That Frost Off

Every winter we lose two or three planes because pilots attempt to take off without thoroughly removing snow, ice, and frost from the wings.

The aviation supply officer stocks a defrosting fluid which works quite well at temperatures near the freezing level. The fluid can be applied by swabbing, brushing or spraying. The stock number is R51-F-537.

In addition to removing the accumulated ice and frost, the fluid remaining on the surfaces should provide protection for approximately two hours provided the temperature is not below -10° centigrade.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Reports from the field indicate that this stuff works like a charm when the temperature is just a few degrees below freezing. It will *not* work when the temperature is more than 15° below freezing. When it gets that cold, anti-icing fluid or denatured ethyl alcohol will have to be used. Technical Note 23-50 gives additional information on the removal of frost, ice, and snow.

Remember—the neck that's out is your own. Don't try to take off with even the smallest amount of snow or frost on wings or control surfaces.

Atomic Energy Areas

By now all Navy pilots should know that all flying over the atomic energy installations at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and Hanford, Washington has been prohibited by Presidential Order.

Nevertheless there have been some recent violations due to poor navigation or careless flight planning.

Both of these errors can be corrected by the pilot himself, and operations officers can help by briefing pilots to

avoid these areas on cross country flights.

New charts have been printed which show the boundaries of these three prohibited areas very distinctly. Study them carefully and avoid the embarrassment of being followed and identified by the fighter aircraft assigned to patrol boundaries of these prohibited areas.

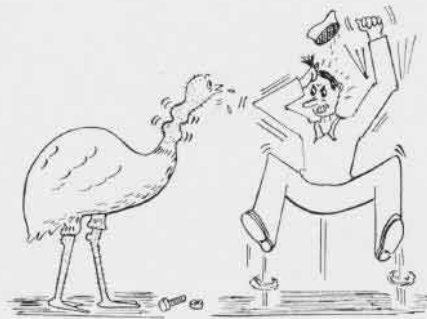
Rather Tasty

Mechanics take heed! From Brazil comes this story of a mechanic who encountered an extremely unusual maintenance problem.

While working on a DC-3 at an outlying airport, the mechanic carefully removed the necessary parts and laid them on a clean newspaper in order in which they were removed. He then went out to lunch.

When he returned, he was just in time to discover a bird known as an Ema, swallowing the last bolt and looking around for something else to eat.

After a chase by the airline staff the bird was caught. The subsequent surgery proved fatal to the Ema, but all the parts were duly recovered and reinstalled.



Dear Grampaw Pettibone,

"This, I'm sure, will strike you as a rare request but I'd like to say at the outset, it is in no way a 'jab' at the supply situation or anyone responsible for the shortage of the 'hard hats' among us 'old men' still 'drivin' the piston driven aircraft.

"If you will supply me with the address, name and so on, of the concern manufacturing the crash helmets, I'll honestly be happy to buy my own. At present I'm flying in a combat zone and since I'm loaded with insurance of one kind or another, I won't mind the expenditure for an item I feel is a must for people flying the Corsair at night.

Note of interest: the only serious accident our squadron has had involved two landing aircraft. Ironically the lad who got hit by the aircraft landing behind him, had on the only crash helmet in the squadron. The canopy was slammed shut injuring one arm and putting a deep scar in the top of the helmet. He is, of course, tickled 'pink' to be the proud

owner of the only 'hard hat' in these parts.

"I will honestly appreciate your attention to this little matter.

"Sincerely,

"1ST LT, USMC"



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I'm hoping that by the time you see this in print new H-3 helmets will have arrived for every pilot in your squadron.

It wouldn't do you any good to write to the firm that manufactures the helmets because they are on the critical list and the Navy is buying them just as fast as they can be made. The cost of the new, more comfortable, H-3 helmet, complete with inner liner, earphones, and boom mike is quite considerable.

I understand that a great deal of work went into the design and testing of the new type helmet and that it is so good that the Navy has ordered 10,000 of them.

One pilot whose life was saved by a "Hard Hat" and who was in an area where he could get a replacement sent the battered helmet to us by way of showing what would have happened to his head if he hadn't been wearing it. From the looks of it he would have been "pushing up the daisies".

In the meantime keep your straps tight, and sit low enough to get as much protection as possible from the overturn structure.

Can You Top This?

About three months ago I asked Navy pilots with over 5000 hours or with 500 carriers landings and no pilot error accidents to write me giving their total time and a brief resume of the type of flying that they had done.

So far no one has claimed 500 accident free carrier landings. Does anyone have 400?

However, I have heard from eight "old-timers" each with over 5000 hours. Their flying experiences stretch back over a 21-year period, and I guess its not surprising that the years had dimmed the memories of a groundloop in 1930, a wheels-up landing in 1935, a nose-up while taxiing in 1938, a brush with the trees around Clay Pits in 1938, and a waterloop in 1940.

Even so their safety record is remarkable considering the varied types of flying that they have done.

The pilot who didn't mention the waterloop was later awarded the Navy Cross for heroism when he rescued a number of Army men adrift in heavy seas. Incidentally he didn't mention this either, but it shows up on his card.

Here's the one to top—but no names as yet.

He's a lieutenant commander, USN, with 7,831 hours of flight time in the last 18 years. He hasn't scratched one yet. Can you top his excellent record?