



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Super Duper Foul Up!

Two recent graduates of a Fleet All Weather Training Unit gave a surprisingly poor demonstration of what they had learned (or evidently not learned) during a flight from NAS SEATTLE to Mather AFB in California.

They were flying two AD-1Q's and each carried one passenger. The flight plan was IFR and there was some initial confusion as one pilot thought that he was on a single plane flight plan, while the other reports that his flight plan was cancelled shortly after takeoff and his plane number was added to the other pilot's clearance.

After takeoff the pilots joined up and climbed through scattered clouds to 18,000 feet to fly 500 on top. The lead pilot in number 383 lost VHF communications about 45 minutes after takeoff and passed the lead to his wingman flying number 358. A few minutes south of Portland, Oregon, the flight encountered clouds with vertical build ups to 26,000 feet.

By this time one pilot had discovered that he had only 1,000 lbs. of oxygen instead of a full bottle. Disregarding the "500 on top" clearance, the flight attempted to go through at 18,000 without gaining additional altitude.

When it appeared that there was no prospect of breaking out, the lead pilot made a 180 degree reversal of course without warning his wingman. In the turn the two planes became separated.

The record strip of the Air Rescue teletype circuit for the next six hours contains many pages of transmissions relative to these two planes. A few samples which tell the rest of the story are printed below:

1525 NAS FROM CAA: FOR YOUR INFORMATION NAVY 383 AND 358 ARE NOT DOING SO GOOD. WE HAVE CONTACT WITH 358. HE JUST REPORTED OVER MEDFORD AT 7502 PST AT 18,000. HE HAS RUN OUT OF OXYGEN AND HAS TO STAY AT 18,000 OR ABOVE TO STAY ON TOP ALONG AIRWAY. HE ADVISES IS GOING OUT TO SEA TO TRY TO GET UNDERNEATH TO PROCEED ALONG COAST. 358 ADVISES 383 HAD RECEIVED ONLY AND THAT HE HASN'T SEEN ANYTHING OF HIM SINCE JUST SOUTH OF PORTLAND. 358 IS GOING TO TRY TO

A.A.R.'s.!



Pity the plight of poor old Gramp—
A PBM blew off the ramp—
An F9F ditched in the bay.
A Corsair spun in yesterday!
Despite his cajoling, pleas and tears,
The Accident Reports are up to his ears.

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- GET INTO MEDFORD.
- 1532 PILOT WORKING MEDFORD SOUNDS WORRIED HE IS STILL AT 18,000 AND LACK OF OXYGEN MAY BE TELLING ON HIM. HE HAS BEEN CLEARED IN BUT SO FAR HASN'T STARTED DOWN.
- 1535 NAS FROM CAA: DO PLANES HAVE MARK 10 ABOARD?
- 1545 CAA FROM NAS: BOTH PLANES EQUIPPED WITH TEN CHANNEL IFF.
- 1547 NAS FROM CAA: ALL STATIONS SOUTH OF MEDFORD ARE BROADCASTING FOR 383 TO TURN IFF ON.
- 1549 NAS FROM CAA: WE HAVE HAD NO CONTACT WITH 358 SINCE HE SAID AT 1541 WAS STARTING DOWN.
- 1555 358 IS DOWN TO 5,000 FEET IN A HOLE BUT IS TRAPPED IN THE HOLE. TRYING TO GET HIM TO PULL UP ENOUGH TO CLEAR TERRAIN TO GET OUT OF THERE BUT HE IS APPARENTLY PRETTY RATTLED, SOUNDS LIKE HE IS SHOUTING INTO MIKE. WE WILL ADVISE HIM AS SOON AS T-33 REACHES THE AREA, SEE IF HE CAN GO BACK ON TOP, BUT HE DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH FUEL LEFT TO FOLLOW THE T-33 TO SACRAMENTO. (A T-33 had been dispatched from Hamilton AFB to search on top as far North as Medford.)
- 1617 358 STILL TRYING TO WORK ORIENTATION INTO MEDFORD.
- 1620 MEDFORD AACs HAS 358 ON DF EQUIPMENT HEADING 145 TO 150 DEGREES TO STATION THINK HE IS DESCENDING TO MINIMUMS. . . . PILOT NOW SAYS HE

IS IN CLEAR AT 5,000 BUT DOESN'T KNOW HIS POSITION AACs STILL GIVING BEARINGS. BAD RAIN STORM 8 MILES NORTH OF MEDFORD.

- 1623 ALL STATIONS FROM CAA: 358 HAS THE MEDFORD AIRPORT IN SIGHT IN THE CLEAR AND OKAY.
- 1624 MILITARY FLIGHT SERVICE FROM CAA: SUGGEST YOU TALK TO PILOT AS SOON AS YOU CAN GET HIM AT AACs SEE WHAT HE THINKS ABOUT OTHER AIRCRAFT. . . . ALL OUR STATIONS MEDFORD SOUTH ARE ALERTED FOR HIM. ADC ALSO ALERTED IN BAY AREA.
- 1757 FROM CAA: OAKLAND CONTROL JUST ADVISED THAT A TRANS-PACIFIC AIRCRAFT HEARD NAVY 383 TRANSMITTING ON 121.5 MC SAYING THAT HE IS LOW ON FUEL. . . . OAKLAND ALERTING EVERYTHING IN THE BAY AREA.
- 1759 FROM AIR RESCUE SERVICE: WHAT WAS HIS POSITION AT THE TIME OF HEARING THIS TRANSMISSION?
- 1800 FROM CAA: JUST RECEIVED INFO FROM OAKLAND. THEY ARE BUSY AT THE MOMENT. . . . PROBABLY WORKING ON THAT INFO ANYHOW.
- 1819 CAA FROM COAST GUARD: CAN YOU GET INFO AS TO WHETHER THE PILOT OF 383 WOULD HAVE PLANNED TO CONTINUE ON HIS FLIGHT PLAN OR HEAD FOR THE COAST AS 358 WANTED TO. . . . I THOUGHT THAT IF YOU COULD TALK TO THE OTHER PILOT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE US SOME IDEA OF WHERE TO LOOK FOR 383 IF HE DOESN'T MAKE IT.
- 1832 FROM AIR RESCUE SERVICE: WE HAVE INFO FROM OUR UNIT AT HAM AFB VIA RADIO NET THAT 383 WAS PICKED UP ON RADAR SCREEN 65 MI SO OF THEIR FIELD AND HAD DESCENDED FROM 17,000 TO 7,000 THIS CAME OVER 5 MINUTES AGO BUT DO NOT HAVE THE TIME OF PICK UP.
- 1834 FROM COAST GUARD: WAS POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION MADE?
- 1835 FROM AIR RESCUE SERVICE: HAVE ONLY INFO AS GIVEN BUT ASSUME IT WAS PRETTY GOOD AS THEY GAVE THE NUMBER OKAY.
- 1912 FROM COAST GUARD: HAS 358 LANDED YET? HE IS WELL OVER HIS FUEL NOW.
- 1914 FROM AIR RESCUE SERVICE: THE

FOLLOWING INFO RECEIVED FROM HAMILTON BY RADIO AND WAS RECEIVED BY THEM AT 1803 PST AN AIRCRAFT BELIEVED TO BE NAVY 383 WAS ON THE RADAR SCREEN 65 MI NW HAMILTON FIELD AND SUDDENLY DESCENDED FROM 17,000 TO 700 FEET AND DISAPPEARED. . . . AT PRESENT A COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT IS SEARCHING THE AREA. DO NOT HAVE METHOD OF IDENTIFICATION.

2031 COAST GUARD FROM CAA: REPORTS SEEM TO INDICATE THAT HE FLEW FAR OFFSHORE TO TRY TO GET UNDER THE STUFF SAFELY AND THEN FLEW BACK TO THE COAST ONLY TO RUN OUT OF GAS FIRST. . . . WHAT DO YOU THINK?

2149 FROM CAA: OAKLAND ADVISED THAT THE PILOT OF NAVY 383 SWAM ASHORE THE VICINITY OF POINT REYES. . . . NO INFO ON THE PASSENGER AS YET HOWEVER THE COAST GUARD IS TALKING TO THE PILOT NOW AND WE WILL GIVE YOU ADDITIONAL INFO AS IT COMES IN.

2154 ALL STATIONS FROM CAA: THIS WILL CANCEL THE ALERT NOTICE THAT WE HAD OUT ON NAVY 383.

2330 ALL STATIONS FROM COAST GUARD: BOTH PILOT AND PASSENGER OF AD-1Q BUNO O9383 WHICH DITCHED ABOUT 5 MILES NORTH OF POINT REYES HAVE REACHED LAND AND ARE SAFE REPEAT SAFE.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

It's a good thing that an accident doesn't occur everytime a pilot makes a mistake. If this were true, we'd all be dead and the output of the Training Command would be zero for want of instructors as well as students.

The trouble with these AD-1Q pilots was that they weren't content to just make one or two mistakes and then knock it off. They just kept piling one error on another until they were in very sad shape. They are mighty lucky to be alive, and I imagine that their two hitch-hiking passengers are now great advocates of travel by train.

Both of these pilots were ordered before Aviator's Disposition Boards. One was re-classified to duty not involving flying and the other was placed on probation for six months. In addition both received disciplinary letters which affect their permanent records at BuPers.

The moral of this story is—"Leave yourself a way out!" Check and double check your equipment before you get airborne. Plan what you will do if the weather won't permit you to carry out your flight plan. If you have a radio failure, or trouble with your oxygen system, don't be too proud to turn around and head for fair weather.

In The Bite

The F4U pictured above looks a bit like the little pig who cried, "Wee, wee, can't get under the barn door."

The *Corsair* was being taken topside for turn up, and plane handlers had just started pushing it towards the elevator when the latter started rising without any warning or signal. The plane's wheels were not yet on the elevator, but the prop blades were about two feet over the edge. A mechanic, who was in the cockpit during this unexpected ride, slid down the tail uninjured.



Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

I have been reading with interest the number of letters sent to NANews by various squadrons and air groups regarding carrier landing records. All of them so far have been from squadrons whose operations consisted of carrier qualifications or fleet exercises. To start a new avalanche of letters to your office, I would like to submit the carrier landing record of Air Group Nineteen while based aboard the USS *Princeton*, CV-37, during six months of combat operations against the Communist forces in Korea.

The Air Group consisted of one squadron of F9F's, two squadrons of F4U-4's, one squadron of AD-4's and detachments from VC-3, VC-35, VC-61 and VC-11. Combat operations commenced on 4 December 1950 and ended on 19 May 1951. During that period 6,001 landings were made by the Group, of which 1,156 were jet and 114 were at night.

Weather conditions varied from bad to horrible with winds ranging from 30 to 50 knots a common occurrence and temperatures rarely above freezing. Only 11 landing accidents occurred during the six months with no serious injuries either to pilots or deck crewmen.

Of the 11 accidents, one was a no-hook landing because the tail hook mechanism was shot up and the pilot was unable to lower the hook; one pilot had his hydraulic system shot up and was unable to lower either wheels or flaps; another pilot had his engine cut out in the groove on an emergency pass and hit the ramp shearing off his landing gear. That leaves just eight accidents in 6,001 landings that could possibly be

attributed to error on the part of the pilot or LSO.

Nearly 100 emergency landings are included in the total. Three of these were made by pilots whose vision had been impaired by severe facial wounds, and another was made by a pilot who had his rudder controls shot away.

From 11 February 1951 to 29 April 1951, 2,529 landings were made with nothing more serious than a couple of broken tail wheels and a dragged flap. . . . I again emphasize that these records were under combat conditions.

The success of CVG-19 can be attributed to excellent training and inspired leadership, and I cannot praise too highly the members of the ship's company for the large part that they played. The USS *Princeton* was a fighting home for a fighting air group.

LT. USN, ex-LSO,
CVG-19



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

By way of comparison and to give you an idea of what an outstanding performance this was—an average carrier group has about 23 or 24 accidents in 6,000 landings. CVG-19 had less than half this number in a combat tour. Congratulations!

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

I have a problem that is a little too tough for me to handle alone, and I am bringing it to you for an answer. My present duty is intelligence work in a joint Air Force-Navy outfit. During a recent discussion on general aspects of air operations in Korea, one of my co-workers in the Air Force made the following observation, and posed the resulting question, quote:

"In the Air Force if a pilot knocks down five enemy jet aircraft, he becomes a Jet Ace. Navy claims of damage done in the Korean air war often include numerous references to destruction of carts and horses. Consequently, if a Navy pilot knocks out a total of five enemy horses, what kind of an Ace is he?"

I think that you will agree that this is a rather tough one to answer.

Sincerely,
LCDR



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

If he is the kind of ace I think he is, he ought to have a ribbon to prove it. I am referring your question to the Board of Decorations and Awards.

I suggest that the next time you talk to your co-worker you tell him about the time that you stuck up for him in an argument with some Marines who said that he wasn't good enough to eat with the pigs. Tell him how violently you disagreed and how you finally convinced them that he was plenty good enough to eat with the pigs.