



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

FUBAR?

A pilot in an F9F-2 on a night section tactics flight out of Kaneohe Bay, T. H., was following his section leader on a let-down through an area of clouds. While letting down, the section leader misjudged the distance to the far side of the clear area and entered a cloud layer at 5500 feet. At this point the wingman lost sight of his section leader but broke through at 2500 feet and saw the field entry point below.

His fuel state at the time was 1200 pounds. Because of the mountainous terrain in the area, the wingman elected to make a 270° turn to the right in order to enter the traffic pattern from a better position. Increasing his power to 100 per cent, he commenced the turn. He entered a cloud bank and when he became contact a few minutes later, he was completely disoriented. Here we take up the pilot's statement.

"Coordinating my gyro compass with radio compass on Kahuku Homer, 18 miles northwest, I knew my position to be in the vicinity of the air station at 7000 feet. I thought I recognized the field and commenced letting down, losing contact with the ground at about 3500 feet. I climbed to 12,000 feet and took a bearing from the lights of Honolulu and followed the road to what I thought was Kialua, three miles south of the field.

"I had 300 pounds of fuel remaining and still could not locate the air station. I spotted what I thought was the Kaneohe Beacon through the clouds and again began a let-down when the engine flamed out. I did not attempt an airstart at 9000 feet as I assumed fuel exhaustion.

"At 7000 feet I pulled the ejection lever down and released it as the canopy came back. I pulled the face curtain with no results. The canopy began closing so I pulled the emergency release and tried to fire the seat three more times with no results.

"I slowed the aircraft down to 120



knots, broke all cockpit connections and rolled over in a nose-high attitude, pulled myself toward the right wing trailing edge and pushed away. I felt the tail strike my arm as I went by. The chute opened and I descended through the clouds, making visual contact with the ground at 3000 feet.

"Upon contact with the water, I rode the chute towards the shore, as it was partially inflated by the sea breeze, and inflated my Mae West. The chute collapsed near a fishing boat. I signalled with a night flare and whistle and was picked up by the boat in about ten minutes."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

FUBAR! Fouled up beyond all recognition! And as the Hawaiian sea breezes



FUBAR!

played gently across the bow of the fishing vessel to the tune of Aloha, our hero took pencil and paper in hand and dreamed up a story to tell the Accident Board.

Maybe this lad could have made a few more mistakes, but I doubt it. With approximately 25 minutes of fuel remaining if he had conserved it, he full-bored the throttle and left it there. At no time did he declare an emergency on the radio.

He didn't use his radio compass or try to use his YG-ZB gear. He didn't lock the pre-ejection lever down and the canopy closed when he took his hand off the lever. He was either so confused at this stage of the game that he couldn't think straight or he just didn't know how to eject himself. In spite of his failures, he is still alive, for which we are thankful.

Since this lad has transitted into the ranks of "experienced pilots" the hard way, there is probably very little we can say about this accident that he doesn't already know. What gripes me is the system where pilots so obviously inexperienced in the use of the basic equipment are allowed to tool around at night in marginal weather in jet aircraft—any aircraft for that matter.

Flight Safety is and has been a command responsibility. It appears to me that there is something lacking in training when a wingman flounders around like a fish out of water the minute he finds himself without a leader. In my book, training a wingman starts the day he reports to the squadron, not the day he becomes senior enough to take over a section by virtue of his file number.

Pretty Good Stunt

A Corsair pilot recently performed a maneuver that was a little unusual. While operating over his carrier at 2500', the aircraft began losing power and a fire broke out. The pilot called for an emergency landing and started a 360° approach, losing 1000' on the final mile of straightaway. With a little assistance from the LSO, he landed aboard catching number three wire, and the blaze was extinguished by the prompt action of the crew. What might have resulted in the loss of a plane and a wet, if not injured, pilot turned into

a successful forced landing.

This isn't suggested as a steady diet, but it's a pretty good stunt since statistics show that of all emergency landings attempted at fields with several runways 75% of the accidents are caused by landing *short* of the runway.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone:

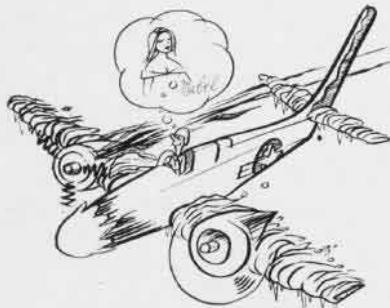
I have done a considerable amount of research and have been unable to reconcile with facts one of your statements on page 6 of the February 1954 issue of NANEWS: "A cowl speed ring was found obstructing fuel flow into the carburetor." Knowing your reputation for being correct and a sage in your own right, how about telling me how that could happen?

.....
CDR., USN.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Well, bub, it ain't easy. You see, this AF-2S sustained a high G impingement upon a barrier cable during carrier operations. This encounter caused the cowl speed ring to deflect upward thereby restricting the flow of ozone to the intake duct of the carburetor. The deformation of the cowl speed ring was such that it caused a severe twisting effect of the airflow across the fuel nozzles, which in turn — all right, I give up. It was a slip of the pencil and a mistake in editing. Let me up, fellas.



Destination or Bust

An F7F-3N was cleared IFR from McClelland AFB to NAS SEATTLE to cruise and maintain 13,000 feet. A stationary front lay between Mt. Shasta and Medford with the freezing level predicted at 8,000 feet. The pilot was told he could fly at 500 feet on top at 16,000 feet and be above all weather. However, because of lack of oxygen equipment, the pilot elected to fly at 13,000 feet in the overcast.

In the vicinity of Red Bluff he noticed rime ice forming on the wings and windshield, so he called Red Bluff Radio and requested permission to climb to 15,000 feet. This request was granted. At 14,500 feet and at an indicated airspeed of 160 knots, the aircraft shuddered and went into a spin to the left. A successful recovery was made.

As any further back pressure on the stick resulted in a near stall, the pilot decided to return to Red Bluff descending at 150 to 200 feet per minute. Shortly thereafter, the plane again stalled and spun to the right. Once again a successful recovery was made.

A few minutes later the pilot noted a new hazard: A fire had broken out in the starboard engine and was spreading rapidly. At this time, the plane again stalled and spun violently to the left. He was unable to regain control of the aircraft.

With the knowledge that his last observed altitude was 11,000 feet over uncertain terrain, right engine on fire, a heavy load of ice, and an airspeed in excess of 300 knots; the pilot elected to abandon the aircraft—which he did post haste. He landed safely on the slope of a hill. The aircraft exploded and burned eight miles further south.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Jeeppers Creepers! This one is really for the birds. About the only nice thing that this lad did for himself was to get out of his flying machine in one piece. He certainly wasn't doing himself any favors when he allowed himself to get into his untenable position.

You usually assume that a pilot holding a Special Instrument Rating and having better than 5700 hours of flight time would have been aware of the possible, if not probable, icing conditions that would be encountered in the clouds for the weather conditions predicted at the altitude requested. Knowing that he had no oxygen equipment and that the plane's only de-icing equipment was alternate air and pitot heater, he didn't use his old noggin when he decided to plow through the soup in order to reach his destination.

Personally, I'd be interested to know what was important enough at his destination to risk an expensive airplane and possible loss of his life to get there. Could it be reluctance to admit defeat in the battle of the elements? Or could Mabel have been waiting?

It's a lead pipe cinch there wasn't a

whale of a lot of good judgement used in the planning for this flight. The decision to execute a 180° turn has saved many a pilot and airplane, but it was made before reaching the point of no return.

Let's take time to really look the situation in the eye before you push that throttle forward to take off into the wild blue blunder. Old Lady Luck is pretty well over-worked as it is.

Sans Briefing

Unexpected interplane communications failure can sometimes lead to a pretty sad sequence of events when pilots are not prepared for it. Cranking in the extra hazard of a known



radio communications problem without proper briefing on the use of visual signals is just asking for it. Take the case of a recent flight of F9F's on a tactics hop which ran into this problem and hadn't been briefed.

The lead plane had VHF and the wingmen had UHF. At 8,000 feet, the flight leader looked around and discovered Tail End Charlie pulling away from the formation with black smoke streaming out behind. He called on the radio for the pilot to bail out, but naturally his warning fell on deaf ears.

He motioned to his wingman who was between him and the stricken plane and pointed frantically. The wingman nodded and started to take over the lead. The flight leader then broke away and started down toward the aircraft on fire, but by this time the aircraft had gone into an uncontrolled dive and the pilot made no apparent attempt to bail out, therefore the plane crashed and burned.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The Ready Room is the place to brief,
The signals there rehearsed,
Not in the air where haste is waste
And meanings can be reversed.