



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Hairy Isn't The Word!

The following is an excerpt from the statement of an F9F-2 pilot who made a water landing:

"Upon reaching the gunnery point I joined up with the firing planes and at this time discovered that my transmitter was out.

"I flew alongside my instructor and informed him by visual signals the condition of my radio, for which he acknowledged. After a few non-firing runs the tow plane turned 90 degrees and I repositioned myself for a firing run. At this time I noticed a small fluctuation, (plus or minus 5%) in my tachometer and felt a surge in the engine. In a few seconds the surging had become more pronounced, and I was getting a variation of as much as 20%. I reduced power and switched to 'emergency' fuel system to no avail. I returned the switch to "take-off and flight" and added power to 80%. At this time I turned toward the beach and tried to notify my instructor by radio that I was returning to base. My radio was still inoperative, however, and violent rocking of wings failed to attract anyone's attention.

"By this time the surging in the engine had become very violent, and the tachometer needle was bearing over the entire dial. I noticed that during the entire time my tailpipe temperature and oil pressure remained constant. I decided to secure the engine to prevent a possible explosion, although there was no indication of fire. At 17,000 feet I dumped the tip tanks, secured the engine and set up a glide in a clean condition at 165 knots. I didn't know how far land was, so elected to ditch if necessary, rather than bail out, for several reasons. First, if I could make land I'd be in good shape. Second, if I had to ditch it would be closer to shore and, since no one knew of my emergency, I felt that it would make finding me easier if I stayed with the aircraft.



"At about 5,000 feet I turned off my battery switch and disconnected my head set connection. At about 2,000 feet, I tried to jettison the canopy by the normal method, but it wouldn't jettison. I actuated the pre-ejection lever and the canopy went off.

"Upon leaving 1,000 feet I set up a 150 knot glide, put my left arm across my face, leaned as far forward as I could with my seat belt and shoulder harness cinched down tight, and continued to glide at 150 knots watching my airspeed indicator until I made contact with the water. The plane hit the water at about a 30 degree angle and, immediately upon impact, I felt a tremendous shock, saw a blinding yellow flash, and felt my back broken and my boot stripped off the right foot.

"I released the seat belt and floated to the surface where I inflated my

life vest and released a dye marker. Fifteen minutes later I was spotted by two F9Fs and in another 30 minutes I was picked up by a fishing boat. A helicopter arrived in another 5 minutes and I had to go back into the water to get into the sling. [!!!!]

"I feel that the seriousness of the accident could have been lessened by ejecting rather than attempting a water landing. But even in a water landing, if flaps had been used and the landing been made along the swells rather than into the swells and had I flared out at the last minute, the injuries to myself would probably have been less serious."



Gram Paw Pettibone Says:

Great Horned Toadies! I've been reading hairy tales for years, but after reading this lad's story, about all I could do was sit down and strum my bottom lip.

I won't go into the engine malfunction except to say that it looks to me like a bad case of SURGITIS. (This phenomenon occurs when engine instruments are reading normal and the tachometer fluctuates all over the dial.)

From 17,000 feet down to 2,000 feet it looked like it might be a routine ditching. About the time I was ready to pat him on the back for making the best of a bad situation, he threw the book over the side. All the blood and sweat of other pilots and the millions of dollars lost in establishing emergency procedures just slipped right out the tailpipe.

This reminds me of the fella years back who was driving a pick-up truck through town. The brakes were out and this bird was allowing to his passenger as how there were two ways he could stop this crate if need be. One way would be to slip her into low gear and two-block the emergency brake, which wasn't working too well either. The other way—about this time the light turned red and the line of cars ahead trying to beat the light didn't. Our hero took a quick look at the situation, threw his left arm over his face, and shouted, "No!!!"

The truck stopped all right—about two feet inside of the trunk of the car ahead. The passenger picked himself out from



under the dashboard and said, "Well, you were right as far as you went. But if I had known you were going to use the second way, I'd have jumped out at the last intersection."

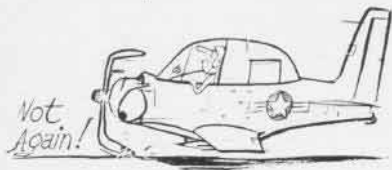
It's one thing to know what to do in an emergency and another to do it. This seems simple enough on the surface, but how many of you who know what to do WILL do it when actually faced with the emergency? If you THINK you will, then you are not sure. The "simulated emergency" is just as important in safe flying as wearing the parachute. If you haven't got the first down cold, Bub, you'd better make use of the second and get out and walk!!

MEMO FROM GRAMP:

The quickest way to get there is by the Great Circle Route—except when it runs through mountains or thunderstorms. That could be quick too, depending on where you want to go.

Still With Us

A pilot of an AD-5 departed a local air station for an outlying field to practice touch and go landings. The first seven landings were without incident, using one-half and full flaps alternately. The eighth landing was to be without flaps.



Turning base leg the pilot reported gear down and locked to the tower and was cleared to land. The landing was normal in all respects for a no-flap landing, except for one thing. There were no wheels either.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great balls of fire! We are still being plagued with these belly-scraping, prop-bending, head-up-and-locked, no-wheels landings! I am almost convinced that the only solution to this problem is a Rube Goldberg arrangement in the cockpit that will beat the pilot over the noggin every time he points the nose of the aircraft toward a landing field.

The pilot stated, "I used the check-off list for my take-off from home base and for my first landing at the outlying field. I did not use the check-off list thereafter because I didn't want my attention to be directed too much inside the cockpit for fear I would fail to make good safe landings by lack of attention to my landing

performance." That tore it! Does anyone happen to have an old beat up corn cob pipe with an unbreakable stem?

About the only good thing I can say about this lad is his recommendation for prevention of a recurrence, "Using the check-off list for every landing." He learned the hard way. Are you going to learn the hard way too?

UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR:

The board concludes that the cause of the accident was pilot error in that he landed long, heavy, and fast on a slippery runway.

No Rhyme or Reason

A pilot of an F2H-2 aircraft commenced a practice GCA approach in the company of a chase pilot. On the downwind leg he was instructed by GCA to go through his landing cockpit check. He lowered his landing gear and placed the flap handle in the down position, but the flaps failed to lower because of excessive speed. Upon turning final he slowed down to 150 knots and the flaps lowered.

On the final at one-half mile from the end of the runway the chase plane, which was flying at four o'clock about 50 feet behind the approach plane, was observed to settle into the ground, bounce once, then come to a stop about 200 feet on and burst into flames. The pilot was fatally injured.

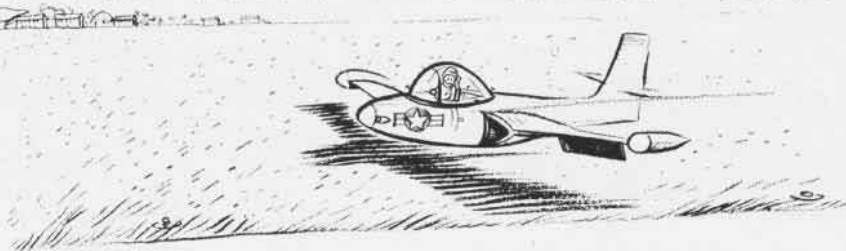


Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sufferin' Sunfish! With 20 feet of altitude, landing gear up, canopy closed, 4,000 pounds of fuel aboard, speed around 130 knots, the pilot put on full throttles and raised the flaps. At least, that's the way the investigation board had it figured.

There was a possibility that a loss of power occurred because the center fuel pump circuit breaker popped out. But a loss of power doesn't seem likely if the flaps were down during the approach. I just can't imagine anyone raising flaps at a low altitude and low airspeed until after full power, higher airspeed, and a safer altitude are attained.

What's WRONG with this Chase Pilot?



KEEP those FLAPS
DOWN!

Not one witness stated that he actually saw the flaps down during the approach. If they were not down, the pilot was flying wing in a clean condition and either got too slow for the weight of the plane or *did* experience a loss of power. But no matter what the cause, several mistakes were made by the pilot for which there is no explanation.

GCA had specifically instructed the chase pilot to hold a position at four o'clock, 600 to 1000 feet from the approach plane and to observe a safe minimum of 300 feet over the field. This was not done. The chase pilot maintained a wing position throughout the run without being in the same landing configuration as the approach plane. He flew down to within 20 feet of the ground at slow speed with canopy closed. For such a thing to happen to a pilot with over 600 hours in type certainly raises the question of *how* it could happen. I'll admit it shakes me!

The only advice I can think of to prevent a similar accident is for all squadrons to review their doctrine and make sure it is spelled out clearly: "All chase pilots on GCA runs will take up a position OUTBOARD and BEHIND the approach plane and 500 feet or more from it during the final approach. They will have the same landing configuration as the approach plane and will under no circumstances go below the minimum altitude prescribed by the GCA Controller."

In fact, they might even go one step further and comply with OpNav Instruction 3721.1A which says the same thing, then warn all pilots that anyone who doesn't heed it will be hanging by his toes from the nearest yardarm. For my money, a red face is a darn sight healthier than none at all.