

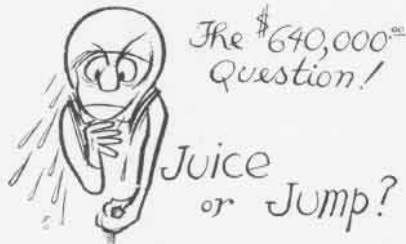


GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Orchids or Lilies?

Cruising along at 34,000 feet, the pilot of an FJ-3 noticed an engine rumble followed by a loud explosion. Engine tachometer and tailpipe temperature immediately dropped to zero accompanied by loss of thrust. The pilot set up a 220-knot glide toward the home field.

At high key of 6200 feet, he lowered the landing gear by the emergency procedure, then he held 155-160 knots to the 45-degree position where he lowered the flaps and increased his speed to 170 knots. Touchdown was



made 1000-1500 feet down the runway at 130 knots to terminate the flight, and the pilot secured to get a cup of coffee.



Gram paw Pettibone Says:

Just how cool can you get? There's no question about it—this lad with only 15 hours in model and less than 500 total hours handled the situation like a veteran. He did *well*, but did he do *right*? He saved himself and the airplane by skill *and* luck.

In the FJ the safe conclusion of an air emergency caused by engine seizure is directly dependent on the effective amount of reserve electrical power held by the battery at the time of seizure. However, the exact amount of battery time left cannot be calculated since battery condition is related to the quality of ground servicing and maintenance received, how quickly the pilot shuts off electrical systems non-essential to emergency flight, ambient temperature, and other factors.

Since the electrically-operated emergency flight control system in the FJ is dependent on battery power, the ques-



tion facing a pilot is which will come first—a successful touchdown or a pooped out battery.

To eject or not to eject, that is the next question. Squadron policy and pilot's discretion provide the answer—the local people should know how well their batteries are maintained and whether they have a fighting chance of getting down before control of the aircraft is lost following engine seizure. But the element of chance is involved, and control of an aircraft could and has been lost after it was too late for successful ejection.

This pilot rates orchids for a professional performance in saving an expensive airplane—but the price of failure would have been a bouquet of lilies.

I'm told that Aircraft Service Change No. 381 will provide for installation of a drop-out generator to furnish electrical power in case of engine seizure in the FJ-3.

Clipped Wings

The pilots of two F9F-5's scheduled for simulated instruments engaged in some low, unscheduled passes across a busy highway and into a canyon. During what became the final pass, the pilot of the second aircraft, close behind and overtaking the first, flew under some high tension wires and

then, seeing a steep hill just ahead, pulled up abruptly.

In order to avoid a collision with the first aircraft, the second one executed a sharp climbing right turn as the lead pilot swung to the left. The second airplane mashed over the first, his low right wing striking the high right wing of the first, resulting in a mutual wing-shearing.

The overtaken aircraft crashed and exploded before the pilot had a chance to eject. The overtaking aircraft gained some altitude and the pilot ejected, but for reasons unknown failed to actuate his parachute.



Gram paw Pettibone Says:

Two lives clipped short—tragically and unnecessarily.

The *immediate* cause of the accident was assessed as improper technique employed in the attempted recovery from the low pass; the *overall* cause, the fact that the pilots engaged in improper and unsafe flight conduct by performing an unscheduled, unbriefed, low-level pass in unfavorable terrain, placing the aircraft in perilous positions and resulting in a mid-air collision.

One pilot had a total of 400 flight hours, the other a shade over 500. Hence, both were in the "danger area" that we've talked about so many times before. It seems like just about every pilot has to go through a period when he decides that the rules were made for other gents less daring and skillful than himself.

Maybe some of you lads right out of flight training will take note of what happened to these pilots and temper your enthusiasm with a full measure of caution as you approach the 400-600 hour danger area. After all, it's your neck.

Dear Grampaw Pettibone,

Maybe this is a little out of your line, Gramp, but we think you are pretty good at reaching those who can best profit by your sound advice. And since in your day the pilot who pressed the trigger was also the man who supervised the boresighting of the gun, I'm sure you qualify as an expert on our problem. Will you give the youngsters a few words of wisdom on situations similar to the following?

About a year ago, after boresighting



the guns of an airplane at the sighting-in butts, the crew tested their handiwork by firing. But somebody forgot! The muzzle end part of the boresight equipment had not been removed when the gun was loaded and fired. The flying debris from the barrel rupture killed a man who was too close for safety. As a result of this, BUORD provided a red warning flag for each boresight kit, with instructions posted in the kit requiring conspicuous display when the muzzle end assembly is installed in the barrel.

Now the second ground range accident has been reported. This time they had the flag and the instructions, but didn't use them. The two Ordnancemen, Second Class, and Mechanic Third doing the job were not injured, but the resulting damage to the aircraft was significant indeed.

Grampaw, Sir, will you tell them about officer responsibilities and officer supervision, checkoff lists, and check-and-double-check?

Capt., USN BUORD



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Now I don't imagine either one of these lads would try to shoot rabbits if they had a rifle barrel that was full of mud. And if they did, the only way they'd get any rabbits would be to club them. These boys were either just plain careless or blind—and there's no vision like supervision. There's no point in my saying any more—it appears to me that the good Captain has done an excellent job of getting the idea across himself.

What's that light?



Dear Gramp:

With all the pro and con discussion on the mirror system these days I thought you might like to know how some of us who have been using it feel about it.

As to the overall picture, I think it's a great improvement for day work, and for night work, there is no comparison. It makes everything real simple—which, in my opinion, is the biggest drawback. People tend to become overconfident. I know, because last night I left a hook mark on the ramp, and it was nothing more or less than getting careless. I've checked with other pilots in the unit and they feel the same way as I do about this business.

You can't do away with the LSO at this time for the simple reason that since the mirror is a mechanical gadget, it can foul up at any time. However, we have had phenomenal luck with this one—we've never had to use the paddles. Another thing, an aircraft might hit the mirror and damage it. This almost happened to us one night when an AD went over the side on takeoff.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not running down the mirror system. I think it's the greatest. But I can't help wondering how much of the reduction in landing accidents is due to the mirror and how much to the angled deck. However, I realize that's an academic question since it can't be used on a straight deck anyhow. It really is the finest little gadget that was ever invented.

LCDR, USN



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The boys who grind out the statistics say that *both* the angled deck and the mirror landing system increase

the safety record for carrier landings. Recent operations show that pilots are less than half as likely to incur major damage accidents when landing on angled instead of axial decks. This reduced likelihood is again cut in half if the angled deck carrier has the mirror system installed.

Anybody Looking?

Have you ever watched your copilot set the directional gyro? Then have you watched him tune the radio, noticing very carefully the frequency that he is selecting? *You have?*

While you were doing this, *who was watching outside?*



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

There's a time and place for doing everything that has to be done in an airplane, but it should be coordinated well enough for someone to be watching outside at all times. Mid-air collisions are still relatively rare occurrences, but closing speeds are increasing, and we don't usually get to interview any survivors from head-on collisions.

Held Himself Together

A *Banshee* made a forced landing at a civil airport in the Caribbean, hitting the airstrip at higher than normal landing speed and traveling the entire 5000 feet before coming to a stop at the end of the runway.

One of the speed brakes did not retract during a rapid descent, causing an off-center drag which made the aircraft difficult to handle and led to the forced landing. To complicate matters further, the port wheel was damaged but, fortunately, the tire did not blow out.

The pilot pulled through on a combination of skill and good luck—over a hundred boxes of dynamite were deposited only a short distance from the end of the runway.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Congrats to this lad for not going to pieces.

