



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Boondocks Bound, Jet-Style

About 3000 feet down the runway the starboard engine of an AJ-1 cut out, recovered, and cut out again. Midway down the 8000-foot strip, the pilot elected to abort the take-off and pulled back both reciprocating throttles to the idle position.

Sheets of water covered the runway, and neither normal nor emergency braking produced the desired effect on the slick runway surface. Straight as an arrow, the airplane roared off the end of the runway. *The jet engine was still at 100%.*

While trying to rein in his runaway airplane, the pilot heard the tower transmit instructions to drop the hook to catch the arresting wire at the end of the runway. He dropped the hook, but got no engagement—the wire wasn't rigged!

After crossing a newly-filled ditch which caused the nose gear to shear off and tore both reciprocating engines from their mounts, the *Savage* came to a halt some 500 feet into the muddy overrun area. Not until after the crew had evacuated the aircraft did they discover that the jet engine was still running full tilt.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

The pilot—a LCDR—is probably still running, with the AAR Board in hot pursuit.

Why this chap was still on the deck halfway down the airstrip is beyond



HANGAR FLYIN' like these lads are doing is O.K. in its place, but it can never replace thorough flight planning—the very best antidote for April Folly or year-round goofin' off. SO—PLAN IT, BRIEF IT! FLY IT!

me unless he deliberately held the airplane on the runway. He held his brakes while applying take-off power and, according to the Handbook, should have been airborne at a safe flying speed long before his engine ever started cutting out. He still might have had trouble on the slick runway on the subsequent landing with one engine secured, but he'd have had a fighting chance of stopping and probably would have remembered

to cut the jet on touchdown.

The plane captain, standing between the pilot seats as the AJ started its take-off roll, ran back to the third crewman's compartment and strapped himself in, stood up to take a look when the engine cut out, then strapped himself in again before the airplane ploughed into the mud. He showed excellent timing as a jumping jack, but a miscalculation would have meant one plane captain all broken up. The third crewman, an AT2, occupied the right-hand seat of the pilot's compartment.

And now for the Air Station's responsibility. Leaving the arresting gear unrigged makes about as much sense as wearing an oxygen mask with the hose disconnected.

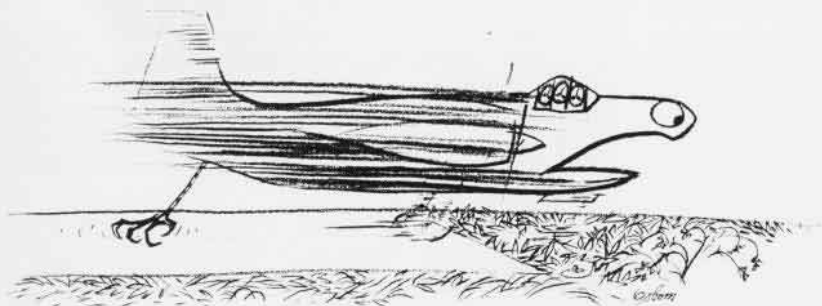
BUAER's "Emergency Chain Type Arresting Gear Bulletin Number 5" states: "The gear when located at the end of the runway shall be maintained in the battery position at all times." Unfortunately, by present estimates, only 15% are now being kept in the battery position. And that's not good, since at least one-third of the time the urgency of the impending arresting gear engagement doesn't permit the 5 to 15 minutes required for rigging the gear. The answer is obvious—keep the gear in readiness at all times.

Bread and Bored

After successfully completing two touch-and-go landings on the angled deck of an *Essex*-class carrier, the pilot of an AD-6 made an uneventful, hook-down, arrested landing. The plane director immediately gave the "hook-up" signal. The landing gear retracted, and the aircraft settled on its belly.

Said the pilot: "Anticipating a 'come-on,' I reached for the throttle and put on a few inches. The director was then giving me a 'hold' so I reached to take off what little extra power I had and then felt myself sinking. I had put the gear handle in the 'up' position.

"I sat for some seconds not comprehending what had happened when I heard someone calling to cut the engine. I pulled back the mixture and



after further hollering noticed that the prop was still trying to turn over. I then pulled the mixture all the way back and turned off the mags, battery and generator and left the aircraft."

Said the flight surgeon: "Presuming the landing gear was actively retracted by the pilot, the explanation for such a confused action is that of disengagement of conscious awareness (or recognition) and the motor responses for a series of rapid manipulations required by the pilot immediately after landing aboard a carrier. This temporary cerebral dysfunction probably was preceded by diminished alertness due to preoccupation and/or boredom."



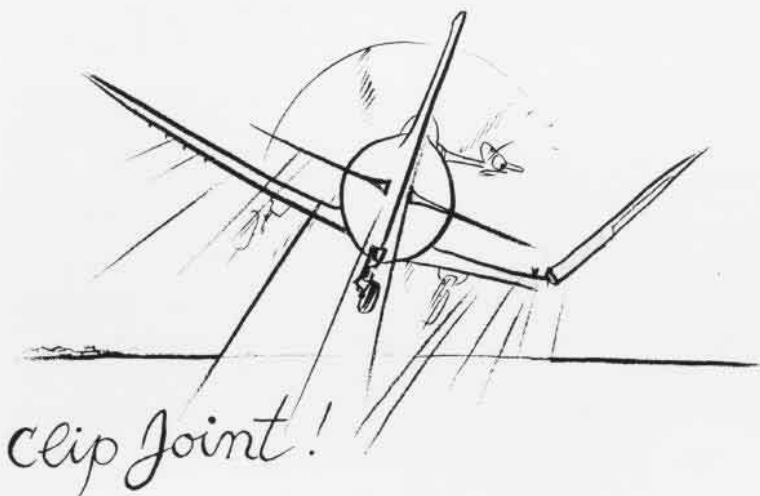
Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Well, Doc, the fog count for us pilot types is a little high in that last paragraph, but I take it the lad was preoccupied or bored. And that's what a pilot can't afford to be, in spite of the long-standing definition of flying—endless hours of boredom punctuated by brief moments of sheer terror.

Reminds me of the story about the two Mexicans who were so preoccupied in racing their dynamite-loaded trucks that they failed to notice the train into which they crashed. A number of lives were lost in the ensuing blast. And blast it was, for, according to the story, when a balcony in a theatre a mile distant collapsed, Pedro, who had been enjoying a matinee with a new companion, was moved to say, "But *Senorita*, how you can kees!"

The truck drivers were led into their final spectacular escapade simply because they were bored. Hauling explosives had become so routine that they raced to ease the monotony. While their solution to the problem worked on a one-time basis, it wasn't worth a plugged peso on the second go-around.

The same is true of aviation. If flying has become monotonous, taking risks or relaxing vigilance is *not* the answer and it *can* get pilots killed. It doesn't matter whether daily bread is provided through driving trucks or airplanes, the solution lies in having an interest in one's job, studying it from every angle, and finding ways of doing it better. In addition to the more obvious benefits, the relief from monotony is automatic, since a job gets tedious only when there is time left over to make it that way. The professional approach in the pursuit of the better mousetrap allows no extra time for being bored to death.



'Way Below Par

The tow target plane had already taken off, so the lieutenant piloting the AD-4 chase plane hurried to follow. Because of congestion along the taxiway which necessitated leaving the wings folded, the pilot delayed starting the spread cycle of the wings until just prior to pulling out onto the duty runway. He taxied into position, checked his mags, and took off.

Two ordnancemen in the process of laying tow lines noticed that the starboard wing was not fully spread, but they were unable to attract the pilot's attention. The pilot of an aircraft awaiting arming (engine cut and radio off) couldn't sound a warning in time. The crash crew got the word and was underway before the inevitable crash.

The AD got five feet in the air, then crashed in a nose-down, right-bank attitude when the right wing folded. Some of the side forces were dissipated as the airplane shed its engine and landing gear.

The pilot remembered looking out of the right side of the cockpit while the plane was still sliding sideways and seeing the burning engine in hot pursuit. When the airplane stopped sliding and the flames began licking around him, the pilot stood up in the cockpit—parachute still attached—and dived headfirst into the marsh grass, tearing his flightsuit and underwear, spraining an arm and scratching his abdomen. As the pilot put it, "I felt this would be the speediest exit and the safest, considering the circumstances."

The accident board determined that the pilot failed to check to see that his

wings were completely spread, did not attempt to lock his wings, and didn't go over his check-off list. Secondary causes of the accident were the probable physical and mental fatigue of the pilot and his haste to join the tow plane.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Bub, I hope your belly-whopper into the marsh had a sobering effect on you. CNAResTra's Weekend Warriors have an excellent safety record, no thanks to the likes of you.

This pilot knew he had a flight the next morning, yet he partied at the "O" Club and didn't turn in until about 0100. He failed to get sufficient sleep and rest, and he accepted the flight when he didn't feel well. Following the accident, the pilot couldn't remember whether or not he went through his check-off list, whether he made a visual check of the wing lock indicators, or whether he locked the wing lock. I'm surprised that he remembered his attempted take-off.

A lot of reports cross my desk and too many of them give accounts of pilots who aren't with us any more because their pride or their devotion to duty kept them from speaking up when they didn't feel up to par or who disregarded the need of getting sufficient food and rest. It's pretty easy to see that if a pilot "feels poorly," he flies poorly.

It's high time every pilot realized that taking to the blue is not to be taken lightly. Flying is serious business requiring an alert mental attitude, a healthy respect for physical condition, and the exercise of mature judgment—in short, the professional approach. Anything less—by either full-time flyer or part-time pilot—is a flaw in the Navy's combat readiness and a threat to the happy homestead.