



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Fam Slam

Returning from his sixth fam hop in the A4D, an ensign found himself a couple of hundred feet high at the 180 position and reduced power to 55-60%, setting up a high rate of descent. He detected the high sink rate while turning into final and added a little power. Continuing to sink, he rotated the aircraft to a nose-high attitude and went to 100% RPM.

The *Skyhawk* slammed down 91 feet short of the runway at about 110 knots, collapsing the right main gear. The nose gear sheared upon contact with the runway edge. The aircraft started up the runway, engaged the abort gear with the nose gear stub, severing the pendants, and continued its slide-out on the left main gear, right external tank and nose gear stub. There was no fire, and the pilot emerged unhurt.

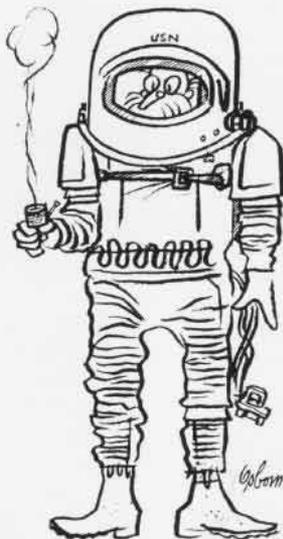
The pilot stated that the accident could have been avoided by: (1) Not trying to land on the numbers, (2) noticing the high sink rate sooner and using more power to compensate, and (3) not over-rotating the aircraft.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

You're right, son, if you'd known then what you know now, the accident shouldn't have occurred.

The damage could have been minimized if shearing of the nose gear on



the leading edge of the runway could have been prevented. Jet blast, erosion, and normal wear and tear can play heck with the ground surface immediately adjacent to the approach end of the runway, and unless under-shoot/overshoot areas are constantly maintained in optimum condition, the resultant aircraft damage will be higher than somewhat.

But there are some other items that need airing. This lad with a total of 400 flight hours had flown only 25 hours in the previous three months. He had not flown for 18 days prior to the accident hop, and had accumulated only 8.7 hours in the A4D. He had only six hours of sleep the pre-

vious night and the only food he had consumed in the 20 hours immediately preceding the accident consisted of two doughnuts and a cuppa coffee, a caloric intake far below the accepted minimum.

For safe flight ops, pilots as well as aircraft and airfields must be kept in the pink. And for the pilot this includes not only adequate food and sleep, but also vigilance and attention to the business at hand and sufficient recent time in the model he is flying.

Let Himself Down

The following drama is so unbelievable that I'm letting the principals—both poor performers—speak their own incredible lines.

Plane Captain: "I followed the pilot out to the plane, an F9F-5. We preflighted it in the normal manner, and I strapped him in the cockpit. We then started the engine. When the plane started, the main landing gear doors dropped down. I tried to signal the pilot that the doors were down, but he didn't understand, and he lowered his flaps and speed brakes. The pilot signaled for an integrity check, so I signaled him that it would be done on the taxi strip.

"The pilot then signaled me to the cockpit and pointed to the landing gear indicator. The nose gear indicated unsafe. The landing gear doors were still down. I thought the pilot could raise them from the cockpit, so I signaled him to do so. He called me back to the cockpit and pointed to the indicator. I shook my head affirmative as I thought he knew more about it than I did so I got back down. He gave me the signal to pull the chocks. I pulled the chocks, went out in front of the plane and raised my arms, then the nose gear fell."

Pilot: "I called him to the cockpit and showed him the barber pole on the nose gear indicator and that the light was on in the landing gear handle. It was then I noticed that the gear handle was in the up-and-locked position. The plane captain shook his



head, acknowledging the indications, and I pointed them out to him again. Again, he acknowledged and climbed down. I received this same signal of the plane captain swinging his arms and crossing in front of his body. I picked up my landing flaps, and the plane captain again indicated where the integrity check would be run. Assuming he was well aware of the situation, I gave him the signal to pull the chocks. Upon releasing my brakes after receiving the taxi signal from the plane captain, the nose gear collapsed."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Great Horned Toadies! This is almost as ridiculous as diving into an empty swimming pool simply because nobody said not to. This pilot really let himself down. While he's not truly representative of Naval Aviation, he was guilty of compound ignorance. (Simple ignorance is not knowing; compound ignorance is not knowing that you don't know.)

Here's what the first and second endorers of the FLIGA report said:

1. "It is very difficult to understand the mental processes which resulted in this relatively experienced pilot's (500 hours in the F9F-5) complete failure to act with any degree of competence when confronted with such an obvious, easily solvable problem.

2. "This needless incident is the result of improperly carrying out inspection procedures by the squadron maintenance section, poor judgment by the pilot, and the assignment of untrained, inexperienced personnel as plane captains."

To set up the foregoing chain of events, an electrician, while performing necessary repairs, had moved the landing gear lever to the UP position and neglected to return the lever to the DOWN position. During the

Don't cut the budget!
cut the accidents!



preflight inspection, both the pilot and the plane captain overlooked the position of the gear handle, but from the way things went it appears that discovering its unsafe position earlier wouldn't have changed the outcome.

I'm reminded of all those THINK posters I've seen displayed in office spaces. And along that line of thought, all pilots should remember that a brain is only as strong as its weakest think.

Timber-r-r-r

In the middle of the night an R5D-4R departed an east coast air station on the first leg of a coast-to-coast flight. Some seven hours later—at 0530 Dallas time—the aircraft landed at Love Field, the refueling stop.

In proceeding to the designated parking area, the pilot was instructed to turn right and then left on the first taxiway. However, he took a wrong turn and he could not proceed to the ramp area because of parked aircraft and an overhead cable.

The copilot called the tower for instructions and was advised to execute a 180-degree turn in order to head back toward the unlighted gravel taxiway that led to the parking area where contractor fuel could be obtained.

The only hazards to a taxi course reversal noted by the pilot were a parked training plane and a storm drain just off the taxiway. Knowing that his wing tip would clear the training plane, the pilot concentrated on seeing that the aircraft landing gear would swing well clear of the drain.

The engine roar drowned out the

copilot's "Hold it!" as the R5D pivoted on the left main wheel and the starboard wing swung rapidly toward a telephone pole which had just been spotted through use of an Aldis lamp. The wing, damaged when it struck the pole and guy wires, snapped off the upper portion of the pole which fell and damaged the aileron.

The accident board blamed the pilot for failing to acquaint himself fully with all conditions which might affect a maneuver in a very congested area. Condition of facilities was listed as a contributing factor—unlighted and incompletely paved taxiways, construction in progress and unlighted obstacles in parking area.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I must confess my first reaction was a wave of sympathy for some poor throttle pusher undergoing the maze taxi test on a strange field in the dead of night, and a mighty durned long night at that.

But on second thought I'd want to be sure he had a durned good reason for making a civil airfield a gas stop when NAS Dallas was virtually a stone's throw away. I know the RaFacs indicates that the Dallas fuel spigot is in the OFF position during the wee small hours, but it's been my experience that with sufficient planning, midwatch gassing is usually avoidable. And when it can't be avoided it's sometimes accomplishable through prior arrangement.

Being a suspicious cuss, I suspect this pilot (or a passenger) wanted to be a few miles closer to town—and brought these troubles on himself.