



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Fingered

Two instructors were taxiing out to the runway in a T-28 for take-off on an instrument familiarization hop. When the pilot closed the canopy as he approached take-off position, he inadvertently left his right hand in the path of the canopy. The canopy mashed his right forefinger. He checked the finger, and since it seemed only somewhat skinned he proceeded to take-off.

After they'd climbed to 1500 feet, the co-pilot went under the hood and took control of the aircraft. At that point, the pilot felt as though he might pass out so he told the co-pilot to take the plane back to the field. True to his word, he passed out. The co-pilot came out from under the hood and headed back for the home field.

After three minutes, the pilot regained consciousness to find that his feet had slipped under the rudder pedals and were caught. Action of the pedals on his ankles caused such severe pain that he again lost consciousness as the plane turned on the downwind leg.



He regained consciousness as they taxied in from the runway.

Before his feet could be released, it was necessary for two men to lift the rudder pedals with a lever.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sounds like this lad really

suffered from his mashed finger and pedal-chafed ankle-bones. I'm glad there was another pilot along to save his neck.

Closing the canopy on his finger didn't show optimum use of the head-bone, but most of us have pulled enough darned fool stunts to recognize that it could happen. However, this lad might have been spared the raw ankles if he'd worn boondockers instead of low street shoes. In case of bailout, the odds are that both these boys would have tripped barefoot through the boondocks.

The Case For Ejection

OPNAV Instruction 3750.12, now reaching the field, is chock-full of ejection pointers for jet gents. During a recent 33-month period, engine failures in Navy jet aircraft produced these vital statistics: Three-tenths of the water ditchings were fatal. One-fifth of the flameout landings in the boondocks were fatal. Of 136 attempts to shoot flame-out landings on runways, half resulted in strike or major damage, with 1 in 14 fatal. Of 33 ejections following engine flameout, only 1 was fatal.

In the old days a pilot just plunked his machine in the pea patch. Not so today's jet driver. To retain your right to life, liberty and the pursuit, if flamed out and re-light fails, you'd best shun the pea patch by heeding these neck-saving hints:

1. When you can't reach a runway, if altitude is sufficient—EJECT!
2. If you've not currently demonstrated the capability of making successful simulated flameout approaches in model being flown—EJECT!
3. If you're down to high key altitude and still in the soup—EJECT!
4. If faced with a night flameout approach, unless you're a highly skilled pilot and conditions are nothing short of ideal—EJECT!

And remember, a peek at the poop-sheet shows if a forced landing on unprepared surfaces is unavoidable, for Pete's sake, get that landing gear UP!



Squeeze play!

Hung his Head

Two SNJ-5's constituted a two-plane, free-cruise, solo formation flight with an ensign as the assigned instructor and chase pilot, and a NavCad in the lead. After falling slightly behind while performing a modified wingover, the instructor over-corrected while turning inside and closed the gap too rapidly. On turning to the outside to avoid the leader, the instructor lost sight of the other aircraft and a collision resulted.

After impact, the airplanes separated and began to spin individually. The NavCad managed to recover from the spin, but the poor performance characteristics of his crippled J-bird prompted his bail-out at 800 feet. He was uninjured.

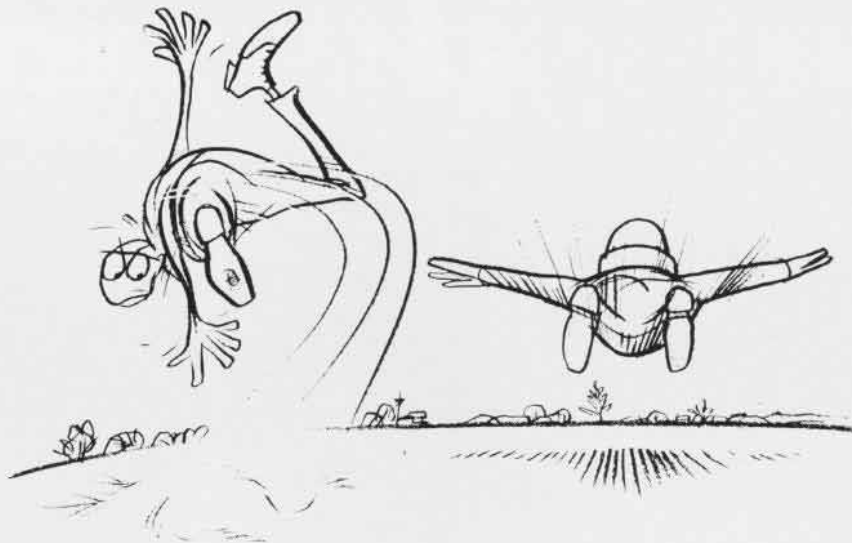
The ensign attempted to go over the left side, but was thrown out to the right. He struck some part of the disabled aircraft, causing injury to his back and damaging the seat-type parachute. These are the pilot's own words:

"Once I had cleared the plane, I pulled the ripcord after some difficulty in locating it. The chute opened promptly and I found myself hanging by my right ankle which was entangled in the parachute harness. I pulled myself up and sat in the harness. As there were trees below, I crossed my legs and covered my face. Fortunately I fell between trees and landed smoothly with my feet just touching the ground."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Maybe if a few more pilots



were subjected to hanging head-down held only by an entangled leg strap, they'd remember that keeping other aircraft in sight at all times is a must during formation flying. The statistics show that seventy per cent of the Navy's mid-air collisions occur during formation flight and that one-third of these collisions result in fatalities.

It's a well known fact that a mid-air collision can ruin your whole day.

A Turn for the Worse

Following take-off for a local VFR dart tow flight, a Panther pilot returned parallel to the runway for the dart pick-up, snatched up the loop, and pulled up in the normal manner to lift the dart off the cradle and into the air.

Near the top of the pick-up flight path, the pilot reported that he was

losing power. Releasing the tow, he commenced a nose-high left turn. The tower cleared him for a runway landing. He couldn't make it.

Upon impact the Panther slid approximately 150 feet. The engine and tail broke loose and landed ahead of the wing and cockpit section. Fire and explosion followed.

The pilot actuated the pre-ejection mechanism, but the canopy opened only six inches so he ejected through the canopy. The ejection was dampened by the partially opened canopy, so that the pilot and seat landed just behind the main wing in the ruptured fuel cell area. Unconscious, the pilot died immediately from severe body burns.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Ejection through the jammed canopy of a crashed and burning jet was the best action this unfortunate pilot could take at this point. While it's true that, normally, serious injury is the best a pilot can hope for from an on-the-deck ejection, in this case the limited arc taken by the seat might have let him off with only minor injury. His death resulted from the fact that he landed in the middle of the burning fuel.

Dealt a power loss at a very critical time, this Ltjg. made the fatal mistake of going into a slow speed, nose-high turn at minimum altitude in an attempt to get back to the field. It was bound to be a turn for the worse.

Since he had not yet reached a safe ejection altitude, the best action he could have taken in this situation was to follow the old rule: *Level the wings and then land straight ahead.*

Think it over!

