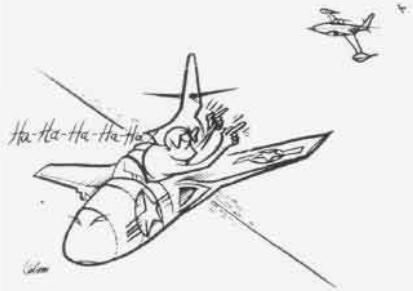
GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Tiger Trap

After finishing his duties as chase pilot for another *Cougar* during a fam hop, the pilot made a simulated attacking maneuver on a flight of four F-80's at an altitude of 20,000 feet. Following the second attack, the flight of F-80's joined the simulated aerial combat.

After the jets had lost altitude down to 8000 feet during a period of air-to-air combat, the *Cougar* pilot rolled his plane to an inverted position and commenced a split-S. During the pull



through to recover, the aircraft struck the ground in a nose-high, right-wing-down attitude on a flight path of 30 degrees. The *Cougar* exploded on impact and disintegrated.

The accident board considered the primary cause of this fatal accident to be the pilot's attempt to perform an evasive maneuver with insufficient altitude to permit recovery. The board also stated that undoubtedly the pilot's immediate attention during the engagement was directed toward evasive maneuvers, and the fact that he attempted a split-S from so low an altitude would tend to bear this out. There is also the possibility that the pilot misread his altimeter.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

It was well known around the base that the pilot was an eager aviator, a tiger who was extremely interested in his flying duties. But a really professional tiger doesn't let his zeal lead him into a trap. This

lad's inability to resist engaging in unbriefed, unscheduled, simulated combat with the four USAF jets cost him his life. The law is spelled out very clearly in paragraph 7 on page 25 of OpNav Instruction 3710.3A:

"*a.* Naval aircraft shall not simulate aerial combat with other naval aircraft except in the course of duly authorized operations and then only after all participants have been thoroughly briefed on the conduct of the flight.

"*b.* Unscheduled simulated combat between naval aircraft and aircraft of any other Service or registry is forbidden."

Reading and following rules is easy, but I wonder how many more pilots will have to learn the *hard* way that the rules were meant for everyone?

Memo from Gramp:

When getting your pre-flight briefing, don't be like a blotter: soaking it all in and getting it all backwards.

The Bounding Mains

Following a normal approach for landing, an SNB-5 touched down, bounced badly on the main gear, and began to porpoise down the runway. The pilot added power after the *fourth* bounce and took it around for another approach and an uneventful landing. Investigation after the flight revealed that both propellers had contacted the runway during the hard landing and suffered scraped and damaged tips.

The CO of the NAS attributed the accident to the pilot for his poor flare out and landing technique and his

faulty recovery procedure from a porpoising condition. He stated that the pilot would be given additional instruction and checkout as to proper landing technique.

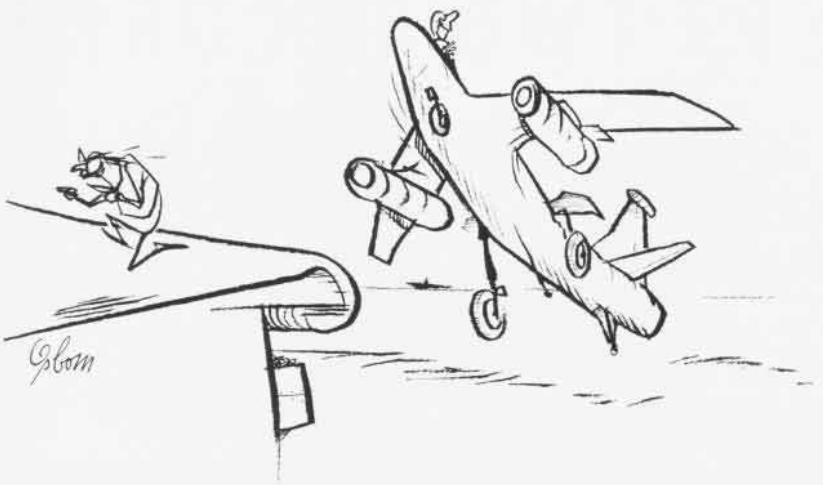
Grampaw Pettibone Says:

If this aerial jockey with the buckin' Beech had ever been to the seashore, he should've noted that sure as night follows day one porpoise follows another.

I figger it shouldn't take more than a couple of caroms to clue a pilot that the higher they bounce the harder they hit. He's lucky he only squared off his props before he squared himself away.

Home to Roost

The following was excerpted from the minutes of one of the safety councils: "Pilot executing flame-out approach after loss of oil pressure and encountering engine vibration undershot runway and crashed in the water. The pilot had by-passed two good fields in an attempt to return to home base." Apparently, this bird never heard the old saw, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."



Ramp Rammer

One afternoon three A3D-2 *Skywarriors* were launched from an angled deck carrier. The three planes of the flight joined the landing pattern immediately after launch and started to practice mirror landing approaches to wave-offs since the fuel state was too high for touchdowns.

One plane reached landing fuel state after two touch-and-goes had been made, and the pilot was advised to lower his hook on the next pass for an arrested landing. On the first touch-and-go landing, the pilot disregarded a wave-off signal from the LSO. On the second, the aircraft touched down short of the number one wire.

The third approach was normal until the aircraft was approximately 1000 feet out on the approach path. At that point the *Skywarrior* began settling below the descent path, and the LSO notified the pilot. The pilot responded by raising the nose attitude without adding power. He was then given a wave-off signal both by lights and radio. However, the pilot again increased the nose-high attitude without adding power. At this time, the deck changed from a steady deck at the stern to a rising deck.

In an extremely nose-high attitude, the A3D struck the round-down of the flight deck ramp with both the main gear and fuselage section aft of the main gear. The impact broke the empennage and ruptured the main fuel cell. The aircraft bounced upward onto the flight deck, slid a short distance, then became partially airborne before again striking the deck. Fire broke out in the ruptured main fuel cell, and the burning wreckage slid off the angled deck at the outboard edge of the number two elevator. Of the three occupants aboard the aircraft, only the body of the bombardier/navigator was recovered.

The aircraft accident board felt that the pilot's disregard of or failure to notice the wave-off signals was influenced by his desire to be the first operational squadron pilot to land an A3D aboard a Pacific Fleet carrier, and that the pilot, in his own judgment, considered that the landing could be made safely. It was further believed that when the rise of the stern of the carrier became apparent to the pilot as the aircraft neared the ramp he further rotated the nose of the aircraft, thereby increasing the rate of descent and causing the aircraft to strike the round-down.

The following is excerpted from the squadron CO's endorsement on the accident report: "[He] was known to be a professionally competent naval aviator. His reason for ignoring the wave-off signals is not known. It can be reasoned that he failed to see the signal because of concentration on some other phase of the landing such as line-up, or that he shifted his attention to the deck from the mirror pass.

"As a means of preventing the recurrence of this type of accident it is recommended that the right seat occupant in the A3D monitor the mirror all the way to the deck and be prepared to give the pilot a positive hand signal (a slap on the shoulder) if he sees a wave-off signal is being given."

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

And while we're discussing carrier landing accident prevention, it seems to me that a few misguided pilots are tending to think of the LSO as just an advisor. They couldn't be more wrong!

In spite of the increased emphasis on the mirror landing system and the relative safety of the angled deck, the waveoff given by the LSO is still absolootly positootly mandatory today as it was back when F4B-4's were being brought aboard. Offenders were hung from the yardarm, summarily landed aboard and thoroughly dressed down, or were sent to the beach. The LSO's job is more difficult when dealing with today's modern aircraft, but he's still an MIG—Mighty Indespensable Gent who Mustn't be Ignored in the Groove.

For long life, happiness, and retirement benefits, pilots should place self-preservation above pride, for it's well known that pride goeth before the fault.

For the Birds

While the helicopter was being air taxied, two main rotor tips of an HRS-3 struck some small trees. A precautionary landing was made, and the damage was determined to be minor.

Neither of the pilots had seen the trees which suddenly got in their way. They were subsequently reinstructed concerning the necessity of continual vigilance of both pilot and copilot while in close proximity of trees.

Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Like the high-jumping jack rabbit said when *he* made contact with a tree branch, "This is for the birds."

And he didn't mean whirly-birds.