



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

More Fuelessness

An R4D-8 with six hours of fuel aboard was nearing its home base after a three-hour cross-country flight. When 16 miles short of the field, the port engine began to cut out, followed by misbehavior of the right engine.

After securing the port engine, and with the starboard engine running only intermittently, the pilot, a Reservist, placed his *Skytrain*, gear up, flaps down, on a hillside 13 miles from the home station. The eight occupants of the aircraft were uninjured; the R4D sustained substantial damage.

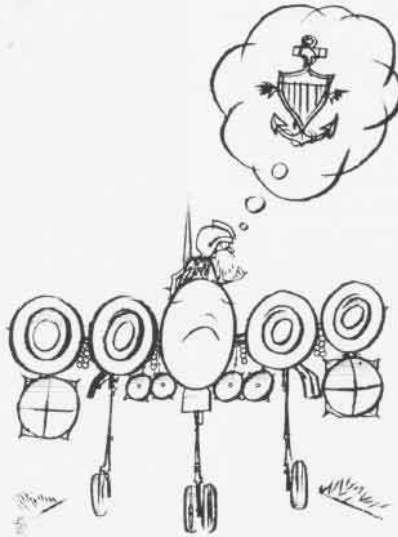
The pilot was a 6000-hour aviator with a valid special instrument rating and with hundreds of hours in the R4D. The copilot was a qualified naval aviator with 1500 total hours, of which 120 hours had been flown in R4D's. He held a standard instrument rating.

The investigation into the aircraft's fuel system and engine operation showed no malfunction or abnormality of any nature. No leakage of fuel could be discovered and the fuel tank selector valves operated normally. Both engines can be operated so as to draw fuel from the same tank at the same time, not an unusual situation.

A fuel log was not kept on the flight. The pilot switched to several different tanks in rapid succession after the engine failure, indicating a lack of definite knowledge as to whether any fuel remained aboard or the location of any remaining fuel.

The accident board concluded that the pilot inadvertently operated both engines from the right rear auxiliary fuel tank simultaneously while the fuel quantity indicator was indicating the quantity of fuel remaining in the left rear auxiliary tank. When the tank in use ran dry unexpectedly, the pilot used improper restarting procedures, according to the report.

The board recommended that pilots be cautioned against the possibility of placing fuel quantity indicators and tank selector valves on different tanks



and that all pilots comply with regulations pertaining to the utilization of fuel logs.

In his endorsement on the AAR, the CO of the air station stated: "Crew error, aside from the plane commander, is considered a secondary cause since the copilot and the plane captain should have been fully cognizant of the fuel management being employed. If the hypothesis of the board is correct, both engines ran from the same tank for a period of about one hour with no change in the quantity indicated by the gauge which was on an-

other tank. The copilot and the plane captain should have noted this.

"The copilot was not designated a T2P, and the plane captain appears to have been not properly qualified. Supervisory error is, therefore, included as still another secondary cause of the accident."



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Here we go again, my achin' blood pressure! This pilot just plain doped off. There's no other explanation for such an experienced aviator to get booby-trapped this way.

There's been such a rash of multi-engine fuel mismanagement accidents this year that the old pea patch is gettin' mighty crowded. I'm convinced that this country's highways would be traffic-jammed with stalled automobiles if the gasbuggy drivers had more than one fuel tank to select from.

It's high time any airplane drivers who don't recognize the need for being constantly aware of the quantity, location and availability of the fuel aboard got with the program. Maybe if all commands and all pilots would undertake a fuel management education program and would also insure that all flight personnel are fully qualified for the jobs assigned, just maybe we'd have this thing licked. The time is now—before the engine and old Grampaw Pettibone start sputtering and blowing their gaskets.

Boy! From NOW ON we bring in the FUEL LOG!



Home-Made Mush

A ski-equipped P2V-7 had returned from a routine supply mission to the Geographic South Pole, IGY Base, evacuating 11 huskies from that base for humanitarian (canineatarian) reasons. The dogs were offloaded and three handlers hitched them to a sled. Upon the command "mush," and undoubtedly because of recognition of their home, the dogs took sled, handlers *et al*, in a straight line home.

The P2V-7 just happened to be in the straight-line path. Prior to impact, the drivers and handlers evacuated the sled, allowing the unattended vehicle to hit the underside of the empennage of the *Neptune*, slightly denting the side of the tail skag. The runaway dogs and vehicle were not recaptured short of their objective.

It seems that the dogs were hungry and cold and had their kennel of the previous winter and an ample supply of seal meat in sight. Action to omit further occurrence of accident was listed as follows: (1) park aircraft carrying canine passengers with unobstructed trail line to kennel, (2) no more transportation for dogs being scheduled.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Doggone, they shoudda checked where they parked before they debarked.

Deadly Friendships

Aviation is a highly skilled profession and a camaraderie develops among men wearing wings. The strong bonds of friendship which evolve sometimes cause the shortcomings of one of the brotherhood to be "overlooked" after he has had an accident.

Investigation of a recent fatal accident to a junior officer disclosed that his squadron mates, motivated by a

false sense of friendship, failed to make known to their senior officers that this particular pilot was endangering his own life by continuing in a flying status. A series of related near-accidents, and a lack of motivation (of which other junior officers were individually aware) established a pattern which indicated that this pilot should not have been in the cockpit of a high-performance airplane. The right word at the right time might have saved a life.

Commanding officers must re-emphasize the inherent responsibilities and supervisory duties of all officers to



recognize and advise the senior squadron officers of those aviators whose flying abilities are sub-standard and/or dangerous.



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

I had intended to sound off on the same subject, and since those aviation safety specialists down at the Naval Aviation Safety Center stated the case so well in a *Weekly Summary of Major Aircraft Accidents*, the story is told in their words. Nuff sed!

Dear Gramp:

In the March issue you wrote an article, "Gramp Roars," which we feel is more roar than truth. Possibly you will blush again if you reread OPNAV Instruction 3750.12 and discover that the scope of the instruction is for jet type aircraft and that no mention is made of other tricycle gear aircraft.

We feel that your expansion of the scope of this instruction to include *all* tricycle gear aircraft is a mistake, particularly for the S2F. The S2F main gear is considerably heavier and heftier than the nose gear, and it would appear that a landing in the boondocks would cause the main gear to dig in, putting great stress on the nose gear which would cause it to collapse. Should this occur it seems that the pilots



would be staring clods in the face.

In conclusion, we feel that your piece has caused some confusion and consternation among us propeller pilots, particularly S2F drivers. Until further clarification on this subject is presented, we intend to advise our pilots to land wheels up on unprepared terrain.

LTJG, USNR, VS
(Safety Officer)



Grampaw Pettibone Says:

You've given some convincing arguments, and a little local poll I've taken shows that there are some others who agree with you concerning the sub-hunting S2F.

But I won't blush, as you suggest, upon discovering that the instruction refers only to jet aircraft because, as a matter of fact, I had read the rough draft and was present at the birth of the instruction. It was issued only after considerable statistical study which clearly indicated that gear should be down on boondocks landings of jets and gave good indication that gear should be down for most tricycle gear recips.

I'm stickin' to my guns on the general rule I tried to present in the March issue—greater safety to the greater number would result if all boondocks landings of tricycle gear aircraft (jet and prop alike) were made with the gear down, as opposed to all having the gear up. To keep the small uproar down, mebbe I shoulda sed that any general rule is subject to possible exceptions. But, at least, a lot of thought has been provoked, along with a few pilots.

The people at the Naval Aviation Safety Center are well along on a study looking into the entire gear up/down problem as it relates to the various aircraft models. I'm reserving judgment on the S2F until I read their findings which, I anticipate, will provide a good statistical basis for squadron CO or individual pilot decisions.