GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Unlocked and Shot

On a night catapult shot, the canopy of an A4D-2 opened. The aircraft immediately settled as it went off the bow, but the pilot recovered, raising his gear. At 1000 feet and 180 knots, the pilot felt the canopy partially tear away from his starboard side and the A4D went into a violent skid! Using trim, rudder, and aileron, he managed to over-ride the skid.

As he slowed to 150 knots, the canopy tore off along the after edge of the plexiglass, striking the cover plate over the ejection handle and narrowly missing the pilot's head. The portion that carried away included the lanyard to the seat arming pin, thereby ARMING the ejection seat.

All this, and on the gauges at night too!

The pilot re-trimmed the A4D, climbed to 10,000 feet to slow-flight test the aircraft, and burned down to landing weight. After jettisoning both 150-gallon drop tanks, he dropped down into the pattern and made a normal mirror approach and a mighty smooth landing on the ship, armed seat and all.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well, fellers, this pilot closed the canopy and obviously did not swing the canopy control handle past the over-center position to "locked". The canopy latch pins will not engage the latches unless this is done.

This outfit had even painted a scribe mark on the exterior of the canopy which, when aligned with a fuselage mark, indicated a closed canopy to outside checkers. There's *no* way to check it locked from outside! For that chore we have to rely on the pilot.

Navy pilots will be glad to know BuAer is working like mad on this problem, and also the canopy shear pins problem on a priority basis. After he had his trouble, this lad proved himself a quick-thinkin' real cool tiger. He'll make out. Bet there ain't a more careful canopy locker no place.

Big Map

An FJ-4B landed at an overseas base after a GCA approach. As the pilot raised the nose for aerodynamic braking, the FJ swerved to the left so the pilot applied hard right rudder to bring it back to centerline. At 90 knots indicated, the nose was lowered but fell on through. The nose wheel was retracted!

Realizing that for some reason he had no nosewheel, although he had checked and double checked it prior to the landing, the pilot dropped his tailhook to engage the runway arresting gear. As he shut down the engine the pilot saw that his gear handle was in the UP position! He put it down and then secured all switches.

Investigation revealed that a *large chart* the pilot was carrying in the *left knee pocket* of his G suit had flipped the gear handle to UP at the time he had hit right rudder to correct the swerve on the runway. During the time the FJ was "riding high" on the left oleo the ground safety microswitch was momentarily de-energized and the nose gear retracted. As the FJ straightened out and rode solidly on the main landing gear, the switch was again activated and the gear retraction sequence stopped.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Ding Bust It! The moral of this story is pretty obvious. Carryin' large charts or even the *new airways facility charts* in the knee pockets of G-suits or coveralls can be mighty dangerous and expensive. This could be a pilot induced booby trap in ANY airplane! Course he sure had the cards stacked against him. That gear never woulda folded if the ground safety switch hadn't been cut out by the swerve on the runway. It wasn't his day; he shoulda stayed in bed.

Scratch One Shutterbug

An F8U-1P *Photo Crusader* had completed six passes in the field mirror landing pattern, one of a flight of two aircraft on the mirror.

Due to the runway being fouled by another plane which had blown a tire on rollout, both *Crusader* pilots had been closely watching their fuel state with an eye to a possible diversion to another field.

The tower finally cleared them for a final landing and the lead pilot swung his photo bird into the downwind leg at 1500 feet, indicating 1400 pounds of fuel remaining. He reported at the 180° position, and also turning final. Suddenly it got quiet in the cockpit. He'd flamed out!

He rolled the wings level and set up a glide. The pilot remembered pushing the throttle forward, then to the cutoff position. He hit the ig-

niters and back to idle. Nothing happened and all the while he descended. He could hear someone yelling: "Get out! Get out!" on the radio but continued to try for an airstart. He pulled the emergency power pack and tried another relight, holding the igniters with his finger. No luck.

A glance at the instrument panel showed under 1100 feet and 150 knots. He sat up in the seat, reached up with both hands, and pulled the curtain. The chute seemed to open almost immediately, and fortunately so, for he was only about 200-400 feet above the desert floor as the canopy blossomed. His time of fall was short and there was nothing he could do to avoid hitting a tree; the only tree for miles around. The station rescue helicopter picked him up within minutes. His injuries? A broken ankle from hitting the tree. Competent witnesses stated he had ejected at 400 feet, give or take a couple of feet.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

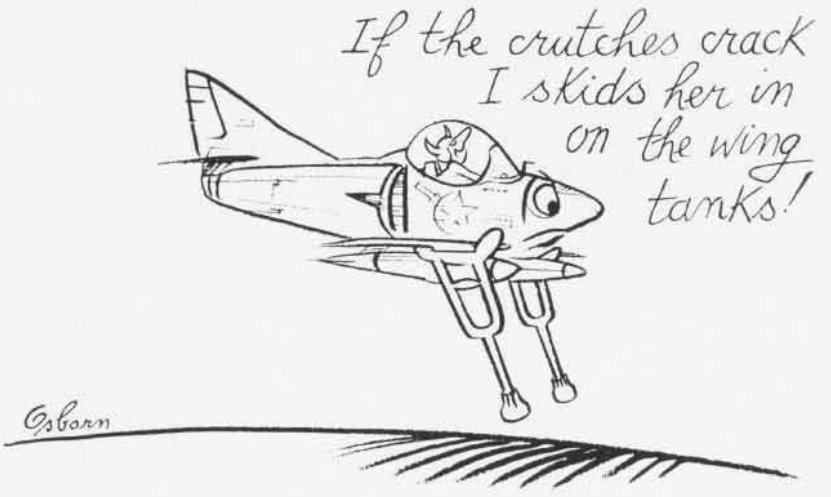
Great Balls of Fire! This lad (I use the term in relation to my own somewhat advanced status) nearly got kilt! He was the squadron X.O., a real fighter pilot type, and hated to lose an airplane, so he tried the relights. If he'd gotten one he'd never have gotten enough power in time to stop that sink rate. So he actually *was* lucky!

His F8U-1P had ASC 131 incorporated. This gave him an ejection seat system which has a low altitude—slow speed capability. Its flawless functioning was a sight to behold and saved his life. This new seat rig is a real jewel!

The reason he flamed out indicating 1400 pounds fuel state was—an F8U-1 fuel quantity indicator had been installed in this F8U-1P. The gauges are *not* interchangeable! In the rush to get the aircraft ready for deployment, it had *not* been defueled to "zero" on the gauge after installation, nor had it been calibrated before installation.

Furthermore, there was an error in the Illustrated Parts Breakdown which indicated the parts *were* interchangeable merely by absence of a usage code in the proper column. A whole series of errors and omissions made scrap out of a million-dollar bird.

Only trouble is, we can't get a million bucks for the heap of junk we've got left, so it's all loss.



Wheels, Wheels, Wheels

An A4D squadron had been deployed to an inland NAS to take part in an aerial demonstration.

After flying a practice session on the day before the scheduled show, the squadron did a routine break-up and commenced landings. One young pilot, who had flown the previous day as a fill-in with another outfit, decided to try their techniques and make the entire approach and landing with speed brakes extended. (His own extended brakes only after touchdown).

He broke with 45° of bank, pulled power back to 70 percent, put the flaps down at 165 knots, pumped the brakes, and called "at the 180, gear indicating down and locked."

His approach from the 180 was tight, in a constant bank, and neither the control tower men with binoculars or the runway wheel watch could see his gear until he rolled level on a very short final approach with gear UP.

The wheel watch man was momentarily confused, for this A4D was coming in close behind another A4D, also on final. He thought the pilot was taking it around again due to the close interval, but suddenly realizing this pilot *did* intend to land, ran to hit the switch to the flare gun cart. The flares went off just as the A4D settled onto the runway gear up! Very little damage was done, since the A4D was carrying two 150-gallon drop tanks. The aircraft slid out very nicely on them, coming to a stop about 1000 feet from the touchdown.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Bust my Blood Vessels! This guy came out smellin' like a rose from a situation that in any other plane but the A4D would have meant an overhaul job! This baby lands on drop tanks like it was meant to come in that way.

What got my goat was the way everyone blamed the runway and tower wheel watches for not waving him off. It's the responsibility of the PILOT to get those wheels down!! Using the wheel watch for a *crutch* or *excuse* for a *Boo Boo* is not facing up to the fact that he just plain DOPED OFF!

Gramps' Advice to the Airborne

Every young aviator at one time or another grapples with a vital decision. Should he marry that girl he's found or stick with the so-called carefree life of a bachelor? Lookin' at statistics I can't help him a bit, but one advantage of being married is that you can't make a fool of yourself without finding out about it. This takes some of the load off Ol' Gramps.