GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Beached

A couple of seaplane pilots were out on an engine test hop in a P5M-2. They had climbed to 7500 feet, feathered and unfeathered the port engine, then feathered the starboard engine, and flew on the port engine alone for about five minutes. Unfeathering the starboard engine, they dropped down to 350 feet and commenced practice mining runs.

After making runs, a severe gas leak in the port engine was reported. The pilot immediately commenced to climb and feathered the port engine. As they returned to the home seadrome after declaring an emergency, the leak was determined to be oil and not fuel.

An uneventful single engine landing was made, and a beaching buoy assignment requested. The seadrome tower instructed him to wait until another aircraft was launched.

With a single engine and an on-shore wind, he decided to make a "dry run" on the beaching buoy located about 100 yards off the ramp. While making this trial run, he lost control of his hydroflaps, went to manual operation, and taxied from the beaching ramp area.

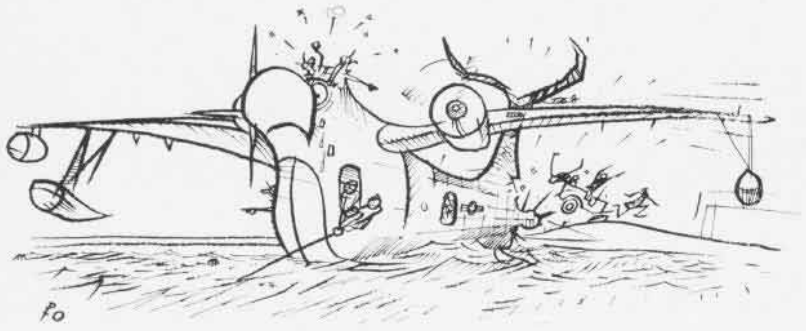
Clearance was then requested to the buoy patch and he practiced making buoys for 25 minutes. Reverse pitch on his one good engine was checked during this time and operated satisfactorily.

Finally directed to the ramp, the pilot stationed three men in the bow

with the anchor broken out and commenced his buoy approach parallel to the sea wall, the good engine outboard to counteract the on-shore wind's weather cocking effect.

He momentarily lost control of his hydroflaps and by the time he had the discrepancy corrected, found the P5M was heading straight for the sea wall! Into reverse pitch went the one good prop, power was poured to the engine, and the big seaplane began to back out of the tight corner, gaining momentum.

The pilot attempted to bring it out of reverse, but finding it wouldn't come out after three attempts, ordered the anchor over the side and cut the engine. The P5M had backed down in a big semicircle, and aided by the on-shore breeze, smashed into the seawall backwards. As is happened, the anchor never had a chance to grab hold.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jehosophat! This lad just couldn't stand prosperity. After making a good single engine return to base and a successful landing, he had to goof around on the water making practice buoy approaches. Under the circumstances and with a strong on-shore breeze, no one woulda thought he was chicken if he'd asked for the assistance of a boat.

A seaplane on single engine IS an emergency and should be treated as such until it's safely beached.

Wheel-Gone

An A3D-2 returned to a CVA after a simulated night radar mission. It had been a long hop and fuel state was about 4500 pounds. The time was 0300 local. The crew had been up and working since 0500 the previous morning, so they were all a little edgy.

Swinging over the ship, the pilot saw the dust pan lights were not on, so he cleaned up, singled up, and proceeded to hold at 1500 feet. About 15 minutes later, he got a green light and the dust pan lights came on. He flew a normal mirror pass and the A3D touched down nicely in a position that looked like a #2 wire, but he boltered.

Four more passes were made on which wave-off lights were received early in the groove, for no apparent reason. He broke radio silence, requested info on what was wrong with his passes, informed the ship he had low fuel state and wanted to get aboard. A calm voice answered "You lost your port main wheel on your first pass!" He was further informed they were rigging the barricade. The thought of a night barricade engagement gave him some misgivings, to put it mildly, and he informed the ship "Negative, I'll make a normal arrested landing."

A discussion ensued, the gist of it being:

"You are cleared to come into the barrier."

"Please lower the barricade and let

me aboard. Do you want to kill this crew?"

"We can only take you aboard in the barrier."

"I'll have the crew bail out before I put it in the barrier."

Finally the pilot won. The ship ordered a low pass to recheck the port gear. After the pass, he was told he still had the brake assembly on the axle and was cleared for a normal arrested landing.

The A3D was now down to 1800 pounds of fuel, so he offered the crew an opportunity to bail out. They refused, said they would stick with him. The pilot then informed the crew he would make two passes. If unsuccessful he would tidy it up, and they would all step out the chute.

His first approach was right on glide slope, slightly high at the ramp with 124 knots. He angled slightly to the right and kept the starboard wing down just a little. The hook grabbed #4 wire, and as the port gear assembly struck the deck during the run-out, the big A3D slewed gently around to the left and came to rest about four or five feet from the deck edge. Safely aboard!

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Shucks! I really see this feller's point in being a little edgy about a night barricade engagement, but the ship was thinking only of his safety. The barricade engagement IS safer!

***If* his port gear had collapsed on touchdown, he *might* not have picked up a wire and a successful bolter under the circumstances would have been questionable.**

That's a lot of *ifs*, but I think the ship was right.

The ship should have broken radio silence to tell this pilot to "*single up and DOG it*" instead of letting him make four fuel-wasting passes to wave-offs while they rigged the barricade. You don't suppose they weren't going to tell him they had it up?

Gramps' Advice to the Airborne

Trust everybody — but cut the cards!

On Again, Off Again

A young helicopter pilot did a thorough pre-flight inspection of his HUP-2 whirlybird, strapped himself in, and proceeded to start the engine.

On his first attempt, the engine flooded and he pulled off the mixture. During the second attempt, the engine flooded again and he pulled the mixture off, but also cut the fuel pump off and gas off. While clearing the engine it fired, and the crewman turned the fuel and mixture on and the pilot turned the fuel pump on. The engine got up to 500 RPM and then quit again so the pilot turned the fuel pump, mixture, and gas off. Again the engine fired while clearing it, so the pilot kept the primer on with his right hand and with his left hand turned the gas, mixture and fuel pump on, or so he thought.

It kept running and was within limits on the mag check and clutch disengagement check, so he engaged the clutch, got clearance from the tower and lifted off.

The pilot climbed the HUP to 600 feet and circled the field. The mech meanwhile had scanned the engine instruments. As he checked the lower pedestal panel containing the mag switch and fuel selector, to his horror he saw the fuel was OFF! He immediately called the pilot's attention to the fuel selector and they both checked it visually. The pilot, annoyed, stated that it was ON and commenced his approach to a hover. The attention of the mech for the balance of the flight was riveted to the fuel selector handle, which he could see was clearly in the OFF position!

As they came out of hover and commenced to move forward, the engine suddenly quit and the HUP hit hard, driving the starboard landing gear strut up through the deck of the aircraft.

The fuel selector WAS in the OFF position, but just open enough to allow sufficient fuel to pass for engine operation. Vibration in flight had finally fully closed the spring loaded valve.

The pilot had not used a check-off list at any time during the brief flight, a habit he had picked up during a previous deployment aboard ship.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sufferin' catfish! This lad was real thorough on his outside inspection, but as soon as he strapped in, all his trainin' jest seemed to go down the drain.

Ever try to sit down and write your aircraft's check list strictly from memory? You always miss an item or two! It's there in the cockpit. USE IT!

That HUP fuel selector is a real booby trap. Point it straight up for ON and straight down for OFF, and both ends are kinda pointy. This outfit now paints both the ON half of the pointer and the upper half of the selector plate white. Gives a good positive visual check on settings.

When your crewman calls your attention to somethin' he thinks is wrong, it pays to give it more than a cursory glance. Remember, the valuable life you save might possibly be your own.