



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Know Nothin'

Bright and early one fine morning, a ferry pilot took off in an F2H-3 *Banshee* from a regular RON stop deep in the heart of Texas. While climbing out, at 4000' above the terrain, suddenly he observed fluctuation of the fuel flow indicator, loss of engine RPM and then some smoke in the cockpit!

Turning back to the field, he secured all electrical switches plus the battery-generator switch and started his let-down, reducing power to 70%. No attempt was made to pull the circuit breakers or isolate the trouble. The smoke was a source of irritation and he switched to 100% oxygen, but failed to clear the cockpit of smoke by using the emergency ventilation handle or by opening the canopy.

He tried unsuccessfully to make radio contact with the tower, but he got a green light after he rocked his wings. Wheels were lowered at 1000 feet above the terrain using "battery only" power. Speed brakes and flaps could not be lowered. After a good approach to the field the *Banshee* touched down at 160 knots, 1000 feet down the 9000-foot runway.



The pilot braked as hard as he could, but the brakes seemed ineffective. He completely forgot the emergency braking system T handle and subsequently ran off the end of the runway! Some 1180 feet beyond the runway, the *Banshee* struck an embankment with enough force to shear the landing gear, then slid and bounced another 200 feet to a stop on some railroad tracks at the airfield perimeter.

The canopy would not open elec-

trically and obviously the pilot didn't know about the internal emergency canopy handle which would allow him to open it manually. Seeing his struggles, rescuers grabbed a piece of sheared nose wheel strut and broke away the canopy, freeing him. As he clambered from the wreckage, the pilot's total flight time in model stood at 3.0 hours.



**Grampaw Pettibone says:**

If this fiasco wouldn't wilt the lily, nothin' would! Maybe there were a few more mistakes this young feller could have made, but I doubt it. The F2H-3 has a good manual system for lowering the gear so there's definitely no need to drain the battery dead. There are also two AC and two DC generators in this flyin' machine and TWO engines! Landing heavy, no flaps, and at 160 knots, that "Banjo" was going down the runway like a runaway locomotive. His chances of stopping were pretty thin.

There's just no substitute for knowledge of your aircraft. If you don't know it as well as you know that face in the mirror as you shave each morning, don't fly it!

## Perfect Set-UP

While a big CVA was in port, the entire air group conducted extensive flight operations from a WestPac naval air station. All squadrons were launching a heavy training program of both day and night flights.

Two young A4D pilots were scheduled for a combination night navigation, instruments, and MLP hop. After a good briefing, they took off on schedule, completed all phases of the planned nav hop plus a couple of Tacan approaches at another field and then returned to home base for MLP.

There were AD's and F3H's and a TV-2 orbiting in the traffic pattern at 1500 feet while he and his wingman were going around in the 500-foot mirror pattern below. The lead A4D took a wave-off twice to avoid AD's and F3H's making normal final landings.



The two landing patterns were not compatible, since the mirror approach placed the A4D's deeper in the groove than the aircraft making normal approaches to landings. All pilots in the mirror pattern were somewhat apprehensive about the aircraft orbiting overhead and were continuously scanning the area for lights.

In accordance with a previous briefing, all attack aircraft were using channel #1 for communications with the control tower and fighters were on channel #2. The tower answered all aircraft with a simultaneous transmission on both radio channels. All aircraft thus heard all clearances and wave-off instructions without having heard the initial call-up.

The volume of traffic became so tremendous that the tower at this point became confused as to the actual positions and call signs of the aircraft in the traffic pattern.

The lead A4D now turned up the groove again, riding a good meatball, but suddenly spotted an F3H turning final right into him with a pretty fair angle of bank, if the lights could be believed! He took a fast wave-off, jogged to the right immediately to get out of the way, raised the landing gear and took it around.

At the 180 position he checked his wheel indicators, saw no barber poles, reported gear down and fuel state and that this would be a final landing. All through this mirror pass, he was scanning continuously for other traffic, but had a good meatball all the way down. As he touched down there was an incredible grinding noise. The wheels were UP! The A4D slid out to a stop on its drop tanks, finally coming to rest just right of the centerline.

Other aircraft now began calling "Low Fuel State," and several F3H's were forced to land on the same runway with the crashed A4D. One F3H flamed out during the landing rollout, and a TV-2 diverted to another field 40 miles distant, also flamed out on touchdown after making a precautionary flameout approach.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Great jumpin' Jehosophat! If this Air Group had stuck to their shipboard organization on the beach, this could never have happened! Just a little coordination on the various squadron flight schedules was needed,

for you can give pilots a "Launch" and "Charlie" time ashore too! For the tower's benefit, if your pattern gets too crowded, you can always order a carrier pilot to "dog it and conserve." Get a few of 'em up in the "Dog" pattern and the pressure eases considerably.

Or better yet, the Operations Officer better set up a procedure, so that when base loading is high, all aircraft check in at an assigned altitude at a predetermined marshal point before being cleared into the pattern.

There's no excuse for a wheels-up landing and any pilot will curse only himself for making this horrible boo-boo, but let's not set the stage for him. This wreck was pretty near an "All Hands" job, a set-UP.

### By a Hair

During preflight of his F4D for a scheduled four-plane launch from a big attack carrier, the FORD pilot noted that there was no zero delay lanyard in his plane. He ordered the plane captain to get one for him and sent him off to look for it. After some delay, the plane captain was successful in his search and returned with the lanyard. Now securely fastened in, the pilot fired up, completed all checks and taxied forward for the catapult shot.

The cat shot felt completely normal. All engine instruments checked out O. K. and no warning lights were on in the cockpit. As he cleared the bow and pulled the gear handle up, almost immediately he felt a terrific explosion and saw through the rear view mirror that he was on fire!

At the same time he had a definite loss of thrust and almost all cockpit warning lights came flashing on, including the fire warning light. Some one yelled on the air "Fire, fire, you're on fire!" He figured he was only at 100 feet now and was slow, so back pressure on the stick was "real easy." He had to get the bird in a nose high ascending position before ejection.

By now he was followed by a huge orange fire ball and, at best, had only



*The PROS carry COMPLETE Insurance, but not Dillbert!*

seconds left. The F4D was definitely climbing, so he reached up and pulled the curtain. The ejection was normal. He remembered tumbling in the air and seeing the flaming plane moving away from him. Knowing the altitude at ejection couldn't have been much over 200 feet, he had an agonizing moment, waiting anxiously for the 'chute to fully open. Suddenly he felt the opening snap, his feet came together abruptly just as he hit the water, feet first at a sharp angle.

Somewhat dazed and realizing he was under water, he immediately pulled the CO<sub>2</sub> bottles on his Mae West. Popping to the surface he pulled off his oxygen mask, which he had retained, found himself coughing up blood and having a hard time breathing, but afloat and alive.

Right then, when things were tough, the rescue helo showed up overhead, Johnny-on-the-spot, dropped its crewman into the water, and after some real sharp work on the part of both the crewman and the helo pilot, he was



*I want FULL protection!*

safely hoisted and returned to the big CVA he had left a few LONG minutes ago. The zero delay lanyard he had demanded on preflight had definitely saved his life.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Singe my old gray whiskers, but this lad had a real close one! 'Course the ONLY reason he's a livin', breathin', kickin', complainin', aviator today is because he KNEW his survival equipment, what its capabilities were. When the chips were down, he went through the whole routine just as though he was in an old rockin' chair instead of riding an about-to-blow bomb. Cool!

It takes a real PRO to send your plane captain off for the missing piece of gear you WANT and MAY NEED when the flight deck crew is hollerin' at you to "get with it."

Every piece of survival equipment was born after great travail and much bloodshed. Use it! Remember the life you save will be YOUR OWN!