



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Bullseye

An A4D squadron was busily engaged in competitive exercises after three hard weeks of bombing practice. Competition was keen and, of course, every pilot wanted to be the "top man."

On this fine autumn morning, a low level napalm lay down was scheduled for a desert target. The run in was briefed for 500 knots at 50 to 300 feet altitude; the target a 29-foot-high "billboard" bullseye.

One young pilot, who was known to the range as the "one who flew lowest of all," had expressed his theory for getting bullseyes to his roommate as "fly low and pickle late." He maintained that if you came in lower than the target structure, the bomb could not possibly go over and had to be a bullseye. At 500 knots and with a 29-foot target, this can get hairy.

This particular morning the young pilot seemed to be proving his theory. His first run was a bullseye! On the second run, he came roaring over the desert at an estimated 20-foot altitude with the target boresighted. The bomb



released, the A4D started to pull up and exploded with a roar as it hit the top of the "billboard." Disintegrating

in a huge fire ball, bits and pieces were scattered for almost a mile beyond the target. His theory had failed.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

This was a terrible waste of a good man and a little elementary arithmetic on a blackboard could have shown him the errors in his theory. At 500 knots and at 50 feet altitude (which clears the target), the bomb-sight setting of 26 mils puts the "pickle off" point only 592 feet and 0.7 second from the target. By the flight surgeon's figures, he had 0.47 seconds reaction time to pull up on the stick on his low run-in. This left him with a .2 to .3 second margin for error. He cut it too thin!

We've lost quite a few pilots on extremely low runs this past year. Maybe they missed the blackboard session too. You're not "Top Gun" if you fudge the rules to make a score.

Real Lash-up

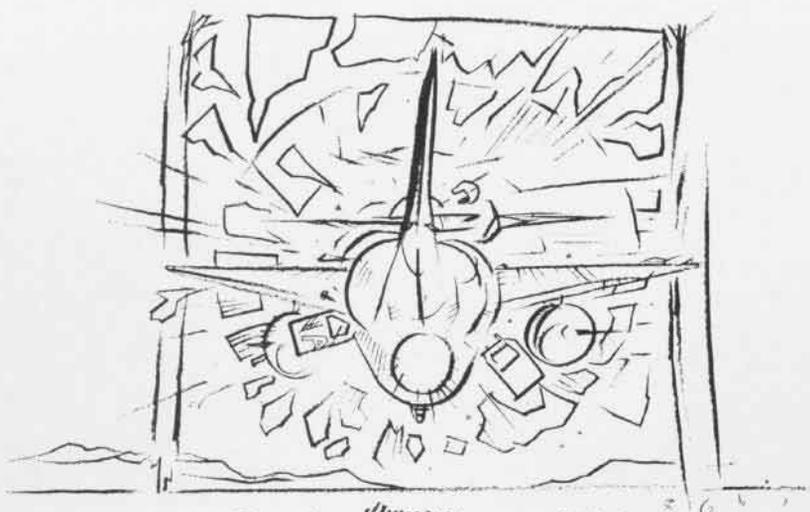
Once in a while an aircraft accident report crosses Ol' Gramps' desk that really deserves a solid analysis and some soul searching on the part of the squadron C. O. who *let it happen!*

An experienced pilot (he had a total of 5500 hours, give or take a few, in many models) was scheduled to fly an F11F on a refresher flight. He had previously flown 18.5 hours in the F11F, but not in the last 17 months. In fact, he had only 3.5 hours of jet time in the last 12 months!

Prior to flight he had a "cockpit checkout" on emergency procedures from a qualified pilot and was cleared to go.

Take-off and climbout to 5000 feet with afterburner were seemingly normal, then the burner was cut and climb continued in basic engine to 10,000. The burner was cut in again and he climbed to 21,000 feet, cut out the burner and checked the F11F in slow flight. The plane seemed sluggish, and acceleration, slow. Afterburner was tried again at this point but it *wouldn't light off.*

Another hour of just cruising around



Bullseye.

and the pilot decided to shoot a few touch-and-go landings before calling it a day. He entered the home field pattern with 3000 pounds remaining but had to orbit a while due to a "scramble" then in progress.

His first touchdown was 1500 feet down the runway and rollout to the 4500-foot marker at 100 knots was normal. He added 100% for the go-around and selected afterburner. No burner. The take-off was continued and a little dust flew as he became airborne right on the end of the runway! Climb-out was slow, and several minutes were required to reach 1500 feet.

The pilot re-entered the landing pattern and made a normal landing without declaring an emergency. On leaving the plane he discovered he had extensive fire damage to the tail fuselage section! The afterburner fuel nozzle had parted at the elbow and resulted in fuel being sprayed on the afterburner section whenever the throttle had been moved to the burner detent. It had ignited and burned the plane, but good.



Grampac Pettibone says:

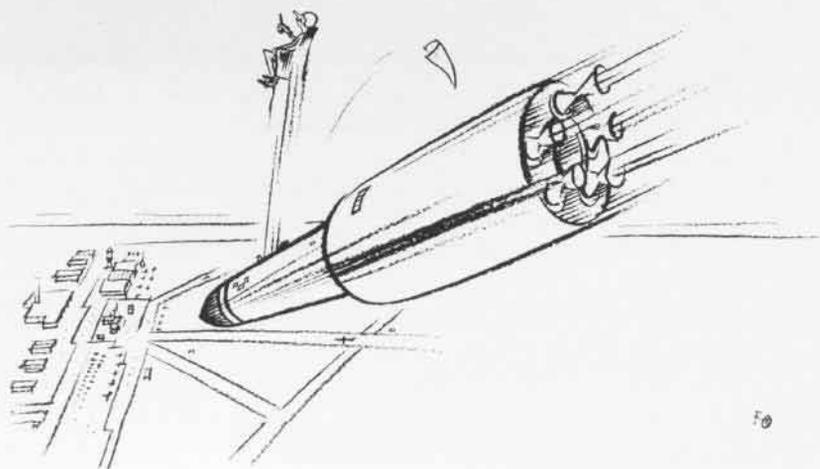
Sufferin' catfish! CNO has been pretty doggone specific on what constitutes a good check-out in model: the RAG or its equivalent or *don't fly it!* This man had some NAMO trainer time, and a factory check-out some 18 months previously. With a total of only 18.5 hours in model, a *cockpit check-out* doesn't fill the bill. A pilot with 3.5 jet hours in the last 12 months is *not* jet qualified!

Whatever made this pilot think the burner would work on a touch-and-go after it failed to ignite at altitude is beyond Gramps' comprehension. Shooting touch-and-goes in an F11F on a relatively short runway with a dead burner is not conducive to long life. He coulda bought the farm!

The F11F costs \$1,215,000. This was playing fast and loose with a pretty expensive piece of equipment. Although this pilot has 5500 hours, he sure didn't show it here.

Unguided Missile

An FJ-4B pilot commenced his run-in for a medium angle loft maneuver. He was at 100 feet above the water and .72 IMN carrying a 1000-lb. GP bomb. All switches had been checked O.K. and reported so to the flight leader. As he passed over the pull-up point he pressed the bomb pickle and



ceased back on the stick to commence the lofting maneuver.

A sudden impact raised the port wing slightly. The bomb had released prematurely and exploded under him!

The pilot continued pulling through, completing a smooth loft run and rolled out on top with a constant buzzing vibration running through the airframe. The flight leader told him to "get some altitude and head for home," so he put it up to 100% power and climbed to 15,000 feet, heading for the home base.

He had a hole in an outboard wing panel and was streaming fuel vapor behind. The fuel low level warning light came on as he arrived over the home field and the flight leader advised him to point the FJ seaward and to eject. The pilot of the stricken plane found himself in a perfect high key position and broadcast that he would make a precautionary flame-out approach. The tower cleared him to do so. Both the Moreset gear and the field chain arresting gear were ready for engagement. Knowing the pilot's skill the flight leader did not transmit disagreement and followed him at a safe distance.

At the 180° point flames suddenly erupted along the entire lower fuselage of the FJ, and at this point the engine flamed out. Informed of the fire by his flight leader, the pilot pulled the nose up in a turn away from the field and ejected. Everything worked as advertised, and he was soon floating down under a beautiful canopy.

Meanwhile, the pilotless plane had turned toward the naval air station and was plunging toward the hangars. The flight leader transmitted a warn-

ing to the tower and alarms were sounded. The FJ again veered, however, and headed broadside for a big CVA which was tied up at a pier adjoining the airfield. Fortunately, the deadly plane, now turned missile, continued to turn and crashed in the water directly under the stern of the carrier.



Grampac Pettibone says:

Sonofagun! It's mighty difficult to chew out a man who's done everything just about perfect—kept his head, brought his machine home like a real pro, and made an attempt to steer it clear before he ejected after having an excellent precautionary approach turn to a can of worms.

When you've got a wounded bird and the chances of getting it on the runway in one piece are only so-so, WHY AIM IT AT THE HOME FOLKS AT ALL? That crippled job becomes a missile when you leave it and could wipe out a whole flight line, a hangar, barracks, or housing area.

If it looks like it'll be an ejection anyway, it's far better to do it over a *safe zone* and cut down on the chance of a major disaster.

Memo from Gramps

Just having returned with Ye Editor from a two day story collectin' tour via a trusty SNB Ol' Gramps has to report nottin' but good things about NAS MEMPHIS, NAS NEW ORLEANS and NAS ATLANTA. Towers gave out with plenty of info to this ignorant transient. Follow Me vehicles were right there, servicing was excellent, hot food available for a man in flight gear, meteorology and flight planning areas 4.0, and RON accommodations at NAS NEW ORLEANS outstanding. They get a Gramps gold star for effort PLUS!