



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Bear Trapped

A T-28 with a couple of experienced pilots aboard touched down one dark night at a West Coast airfield. They had come in on an IFR clearance and, after a GCA approach, had landed a little long on the runway.

Both of the pilots in the T-28 had been into this field before and knew that the area between the main runways was completely paved with asphalt, in fact, frequently used for take-offs and landings.

During the roll-out and after crossing an intersecting runway, a right turn off the duty runway was requested. The tower cleared them to turn and also to taxi back across the intersecting runway.

Having slowed to below 20 knots, they promptly initiated a right turn, and as they crossed the runway edge onto the mat the nose gear suddenly collapsed, the T-28 came to a screeching halt. They had struck the heavy runway arresting gear chain!



### Grampaw Pettibone Says:

This puts tears in my achin' eyes! I sure wonder how many pilots and these two probably right with 'em have looked at and NEVER REALLY



SEEN those arresting gear chains that lie alongside of 'most every runway in the Navy? Maybe we oughta paint 'em orange too, 'cause they're like a big cocked bear trap waitin' to catch an unwary, non-thinkin' pilot! NEVER turn off a runway at night except onto a marked lighted taxiway! The whole dark area may be full of ditches, pot-holes, parked steamrollers, trucks, or stored aircraft. The tower better get the word too. Some time ago this same thing happened here, only THAT TIME an AD put a wheel in an open manhole!

## Big Help

A P2V-7 Neptune was en route from Argentina to Jacksonville. The weather was extremely rugged with heavy rain and severe turbulence. Suddenly, the plane was approaching a radar check point over New England, the port engine started to go haywire. Things went from bad to worse, the plane commander had to feather the engine and shut it down.

Declaring an emergency, he requested weather at all major airfields in the area and selected a nearby Force base, an all-weather field, his single engine emergency landing. Although the ceiling there was only 200 feet and the visibility one mile, the field had a GCA unit and a 11,400 foot runway with 1000 foot overruns.

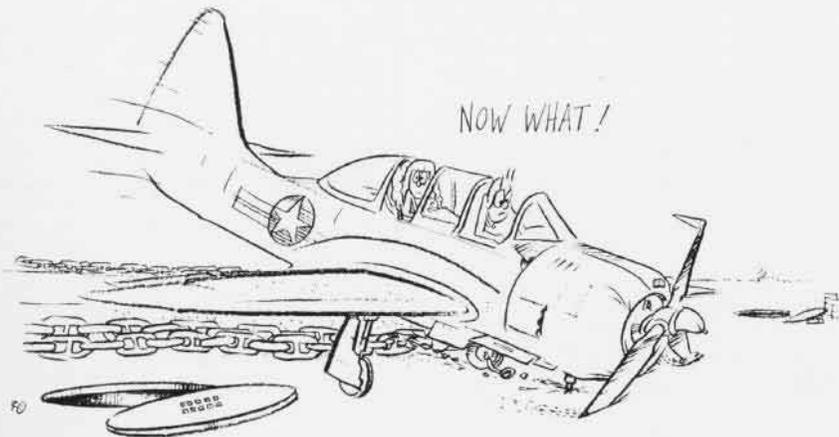
Four actual single engine GCA were made to the airfield without touchdown. A crosswind of 50 knots at 2000 feet altitude created turbulence so severe that it took combined efforts of both pilot and pilot on the yoke to retain control and made a steady approach almost impossible. The PPC decided to have the plane captain come forward to jump seat and monitor the engine instruments and make power changes directed, thus freeing himself for necessary communications.

On the fifth GCA approach, in spite of heavy rain, a successful touchdown was made 4000 feet down the runway.

During the roll-out, main brakes were almost completely ineffective, probably owing to extremely wet runway conditions and a 15 knot 90 degree left crosswind, the pilot was having difficulty in maintaining directional control with the nose wheel steering.

As the P2V slowed down, nose wheel steering became effective, and the pilot began using the emergency brake system. At 1300 feet from the end of the runway, the pilot locked the emergency brake system and concentrated on staying on the runway centerline.

At this point, the plane captain reached forward and, without



pilots' permission, put the starboard engine into full reverse!

The PPC applied full left rudder to no avail, and the P2V came to a skidding halt 85° to the right of the runway heading and 1100 feet from the runway's end.

It took 400 man hours to repair the damage to the aircraft's landing gear. It's going to take more than that to repair the PPC's confidence in his plane captain.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Sufferin' catfish! This lad undoubtedly had good intentions, but he showed darn little confidence in his plane commander. They still had 1300 feet to go and 1000 feet of good over-run after that. Anybody (other than the pilots) who grabs controls in the cockpit without being asked oughta get his arm busted! The same goes for passengers who get on the intercom with all kinds of bright ideas, usually delivered in a sort of high-pitched scream.

In one year such volunteer assistance has contributed to the loss of a P2V, an S2F, a TF, an R4D, and substantial damage to an SNB, and now another P2V! NO ONE should initiate any power or control changes unless the pilot orders it! You COULD surprise him to DEATH!

As a pilot friend of mine said to some apprehensive passengers the other day, "When I'm up front, DON'T SWEAT! It's when I go by, heading aft in a hurry, that the worry starts!"

## Rugged Bolter

After a normal mirror approach, an F4D touched down on the deck of a big CVA. It felt like a good landing, the pilot was sure that he had gotten No. 2 or No. 3 wire. As the FORD decelerated after engagement, the pilot advanced the throttle to MRT, following squadron SOP.

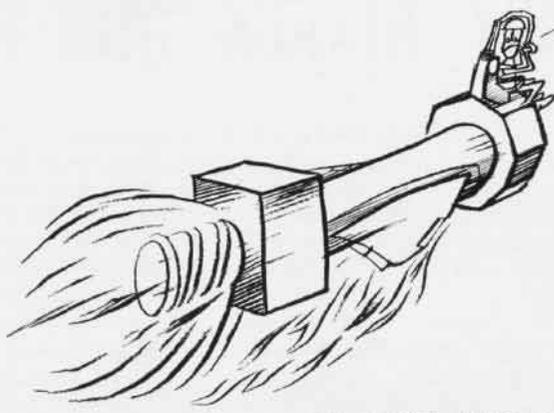
At this point the deceleration ceased, and he realized something had gone wrong. He was going to bolt! He selected afterburner and continued down the angled deck! The light-off seemed excessively delayed, but the burner finally cut in, and he lifted off safely, pulling up in a left bank, wondering what had happened. Perhaps a wire had broken. This had happened only the day before on an FSU engagement.

As he thus calmly thought over the bolter, the relative calm of the land-

launch radio circuit was shattered with cries of "Pull up and get out!" "Eject," "You're on FIRE!" and "Helos, go get him!" This last little phrase really did it.

With adrenalin surging through his system, the pilot made some lightning calculations. He had his zero lanyard hooked up, had about 750 feet of altitude and was still climbing. He'd read of another pilot making it under similar circumstances after a catapult shot.

Positioning himself in the seat, he reached up with both hands and pulled the curtain...hard. The curtain extended about eight inches and stopped abruptly! He jerked hard two more times! Nothing happened! Not even the canopy had left.



Releasing the face curtain, he looked out to find himself in a nose-low, left bank, descending through 500 feet, still in burner. He leveled the wings, pulled the nose up and came out of afterburner, thinking this might diminish the fire and give him a little more precious time.

He wasn't particularly interested in ditching, so he decided to try ejection again after first blowing the canopy, or as a last resort to try to bail out over the side.

As he pulled the canopy jettison handle, all the fire-warning circuits were activated, but he didn't need those...he was riding the apex of a big ball of flame!

The canopy separated normally, so he reached for the curtain again—to

find the handle flapping in the breeze! Grabbing the cloth portion, he worked his way up to the handle and PULLED. The seat fired and he felt himself tumbling violently, followed by a feeling of no motion at all. The chute had opened! He was safe! Or was he?

He found himself looking straight at an oncoming A4D and waved violently. The A4D man saw him, banked left and whooshed by. A few seconds later, after unbuckling his leg straps he looked down to see how high he was and saw himself looking back up, reflected in the glassy surface of the water.

After rescue by a helo a few minutes later, he found he had torn his exposure suit and was wet to the

waist, the water sloshing around as he moved about the helo. In the excitement of rescue he hadn't even noticed it before.



*Grampaw Pettibone Says:*

In case you're awonderin', this lad's tail hook tore clean out takin' quite a bit of the tail structure with it. We can't PROVE what happened to prevent normal ejection, but there's been quite a few cases these past six months or so of seat failures which could have been prevented by good comprehensive periodic "dry run" checks.

That seat's only purpose is LIFE SAVING. Any time spent maintaining it in tip top shape is never wasted! This cool headed lad pretty well "made his own luck." ★ ★ ★