



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Snow Job

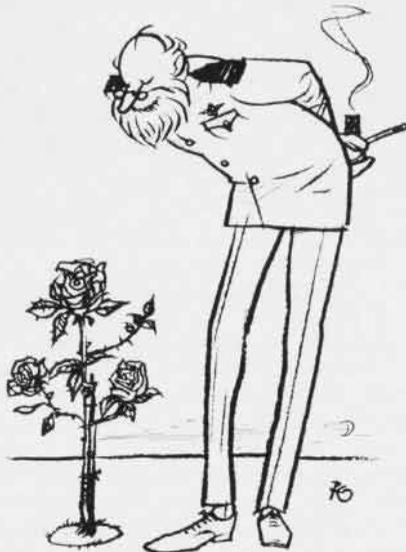
A Naval Air Reserve pilot departed a West Coast naval air station in an A-4 to fly an approved sandblower (low level) route. Shortly after takeoff, he was joined by his chase plane and the flight climbed to flight level 235 (below APC) heading out to intercept the planned route. After passing abeam the designated check point, the flight descended to 500 feet above the terrain and commenced the low level with 200# of fuel below plan.

The snow covering on the route was intermittent. Some places were solidly covered while the open broad valleys were either melted or swept clean by the wind.

Approaching the dry lake, the route crossed two ridges, the first over 5,000 feet and the second about 8,500. Just past the last ridge, the flight pushed over to continue their contour flying and leveled off over the lake bed which was completely covered with snow.

Arriving at this checkpoint (the snow-covered lake bed) on time and with planned fuel, the sandblowing pilot commenced his turn and summarily struck the snow-covered earth.

The starboard drop tank hit the surface first, was crushed and wrapped itself over the leading edge of the wing. The port drop tank then hit the surface and separated from the aircraft, tearing away the pylon and rupturing the wing fuel cell. The nose and lower



fuselage next contacted the surface, damaged the nose cap, forward fuselage and tore away the Tacan antenna and a rocket launcher from the centerline stores rack. After approximately 570 feet of surface travel, the determined machine became airborne. The bird was controllable, despite the asymmetrical result of the deformed starboard drop tank curled around the leading edge of the wing, and the absence of the port drop tank and pylon.

All remaining wing-cell fuel was quickly being lost from the ruptured left wing and upon seeing the fuel gauge rapidly declining, the pilot considered ejecting, but,

after assessing the damage, gaining controllability and reorienting himself, he decided to stay with it. With the help of the chase plane, the warped hawk managed to steer a course to a nearby naval auxiliary air station. Arriving at the field, the distraught driver experienced difficulty extending his starboard main landing gear but, after exercising the emergency extension, succeeded in getting all three down and locked. He then proceeded to engage the Morest in a normal manner and ended an exciting half hour of sand/snow blowing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jupiter! This lad must've been thinking pure thoughts all week.

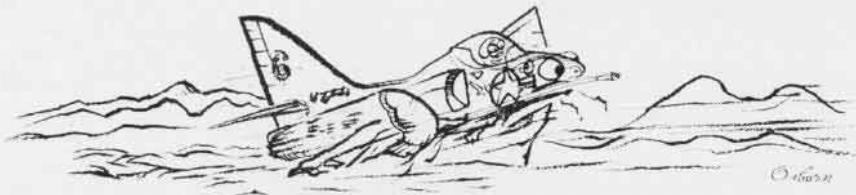
At best, depth perception over the snow is not good and, when you add a driver who doesn't practice this type of flying too often, the ingredients are perfect for this type of mishap. More vigilance on the part of the chase plane and keeping the eyes out of the cockpit will go a long way toward that added longevity.

Whoops!

At 1915 one evening during the fall season, an experienced aviator (ex-instrument instructor) departed a midwest naval air station in a T-33 headed for another air station located near a large lake. The weather en route was IFR and forecast to be adequately above minimums at destination upon arrival.

After a normal departure and climb to assigned flight level 250, the T-Bird driver settled down for a routine flight estimating his destination in one hour and eight minutes with a comfortable 2 + 30 hours fuel on board.

As he approached the vicinity of his destination, the complacent jockey contacted center and requested a radar let-down with a hand-off to GCA. At clearance limit, he was transferred to approach



control, cleared to FL 240 for a radar let-down on a heading of 090°. In his own narrative, he reports, "Prior to leaving FL 240, I turned on my windshield defroster and pitot heater. I was cleared to descend to 2,500 feet and shortly after leveling off my airspeed indicator unwound to zero. I continued to fly the aircraft by attitude, alti-

temperature was and they replied, 'fifty-one degrees.' It wasn't until this time that I realized I had leveled off from my initial descent at 12,500 instead of 2,500 by misreading the altimeter.

"I immediately notified approach control that I was at 10,000 feet. They then cleared me down with close vector headings to make another approach. I sighted the runway about four miles out and was cleared to land. I thanked the controller and made an uneventful landing, turning off the runway with 40 gallons of fuel remaining."



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sonovagun! The fog count must a been pretty high.

Your old dad wasn't cut in on the full transcript, but I'm a suspicious cuss and can't help wondering why GCA didn't smell a rat on at least one of those passes. This lad had plenty to keep him busy and could'a used a little help. Don't think it can't happen to you!

Bypassed

An instructor and his charge mounted their T-2A *Buckeye* one day for a scheduled instrument hop. After an uneventful (under the bag) takeoff, the student climbed to 18,000 feet where he performed some turns and a transition to slow cruise. After several recoveries from unusual attitudes, the combo climbed to 20,000, executed a yoke pattern and cleaned it up at 165K. The instructor took over, added 100% power and descended to 2,000 feet at 300 knots.

At 2,000 feet, he reduced power to 95% and noted the console landing gear warning light was glowing. Without adjusting power, the instructor struck the gear handle a few times. While still at 300 kts. or more, the instructor pilot loosened his harness lock and, grasping the handle, moved it downward. The aircraft made a sudden yaw to the left and decelerated. The left main gear was noted to be down and hydraulic fluid was draining overboard.

After turning the hydraulic boost off and reducing power, the gear windows were noted to be unsafe for both main gear. The instructor informed the tower of his predicament

and requested the arresting gear be set up. Another squadron aircraft joined up and visually checked the gear to be locked outward. With the hook extended, the bent *Buckeye* proceeded to an uneventful arrestment. The gear held and the two drivers exited without further ado.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh, brother! Some people just can't stand prosperity. This lad should'a got the message but allowed the signal to bypass his brain and proceed directly to the left hand without interrogation. The warning light on the panel and the brain in this lad's head were installed for a purpose, but they've got to be used if we're gonna eliminate this type of idiot's delight.

Letter to Gramps

DEAR GRAMPS,

After reading your comment in the February *Naval Aviation News* that "I ain't missed one of my three square meals a day yet," I've decided you're not the tiger you purport to be. We'll all agree with the flight surgeon about needing "fuel for the tank," etc., but during the 10 years I've been flying I started missing occasional "square" meals in the training command and I still do.

The fix for the problem is not telling a pilot that he needs "X" amount of nourishment each day. Those of us who are fulfilling operational commitments, or just taking flights because we love to fly, can't always be around during meal hours. I recommend a poll of Fleet pilots for suggestions. You may get a solution. But until then, what is your secret method?

FLEET PILOT

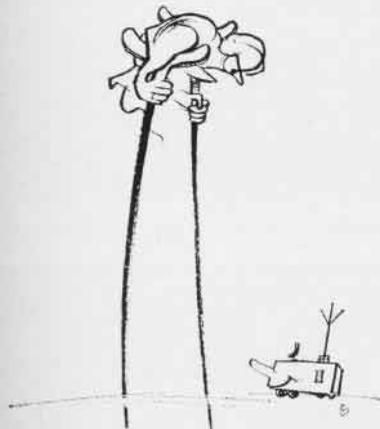


Grampaw Pettibone says:

Now hold on a minute, bub. I said I ain't missed one. What I didn't say was how many times I had to postpone 'em.

Memo from Gramps

Thought about operatin' in the summer temperatures yet? When was the last time you traced through the take-off chart? Hot, sticky days are here. The professional tiger never gets caught on a hot runway with any doubt about required takeoff roll or refusal speeds—he knows 'em cold.



tude and predetermined power settings, notifying approach control that I had lost my airspeed indicator. They asked me if I wished to continue the approach and I replied, 'Affirmative.'

"I was turned over to GCA but was unable to see the runway on the first approach and took a wave-off, climbing to 2,500 feet on a heading of 360. I was then directed back to approach control. (At this time I was having difficulty flying the aircraft without airspeed indication. I had to illuminate the radio control box with a flashlight in order to reset the frequency.)

"I notified approach control that I had waved off and was subsequently vectored back around and turned over to GCA for the second approach. Again I did not sight the runway and was waved off.

"Returning to approach control, I requested an ASR approach to the municipal field. I did not see the runway on the first and second approaches and my fuel state was now critical with about 70 gallons remaining (approximately ten minutes flying time). After the wave-off from the second approach, the illumination from the field enabled me to notice quite a bit of ice on the wings. Thinking this strange, I asked approach control what the