



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## All Yours

After a complete preflight of their T-34, the instructor and his student took off at 1200 for a pre-solo check flight. The weather was clear and both pilots were in proper mental and physical condition to fly.

Upon completion of some initial high altitude maneuvers, the *Mentor* entered the landing pattern at the auxiliary landing field and commenced practicing touch-and-go landings. After the final touch-and-go and upon reaching an altitude of 550 feet indicating 110 knots, the instructor chopped the throttle, simulating a low altitude emergency. The student executed the initial procedures properly and headed for a farmer's field to the north of the auxiliary landing field.

On final approach to the field, with gear and flaps down, the student noted his line-up was a bit right of his intended point of landing and added left aileron to correct it. (Up to this point the student had correctly executed the maneuver with the exception of trimming the *Mentor* for balanced flight.) Just after adding left aileron, he noted the instructor was

also on the controls although there was no verbal or other acknowledgment by either of them that control had shifted. As soon as he perceived the instructor on the controls, the student released the stick and throttle quadrant. He demonstrated that he no longer had control by holding his hands over his head. The instructor, then in con-

trol, returned the aileron to a neutral position, added full power, and attempted simultaneously to apply left rudder.

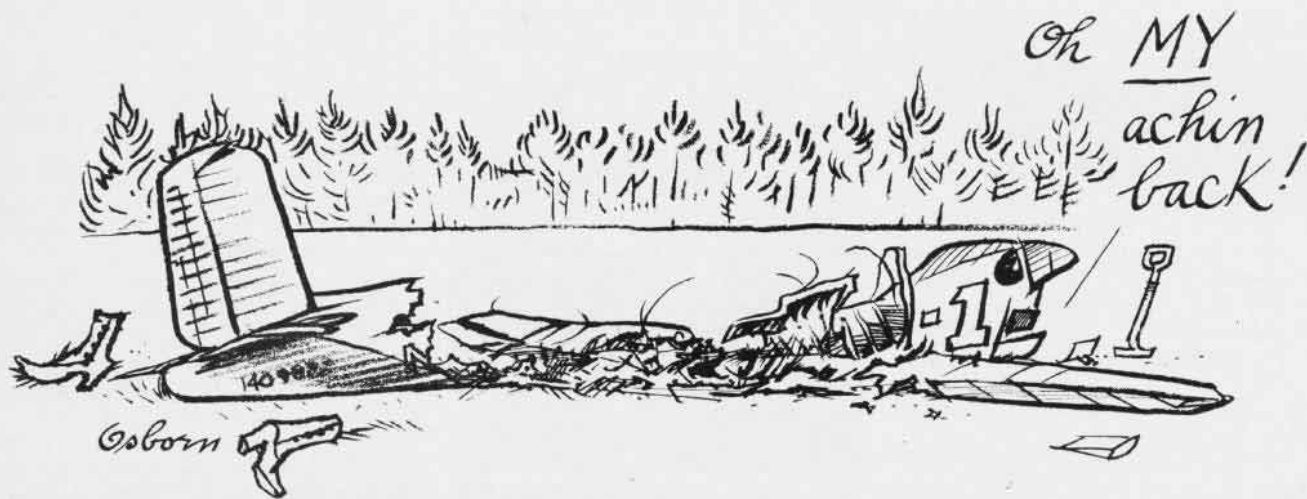
He was unable on the first few tries to depress the left rudder as the student had failed to remove his feet from the rudder pedals. This, in effect, prevented coordination of rudder and aileron movement and resulted in a cross-control situation. By the time the instructor was able to neutralize the rudder, too much altitude had been lost to allow for recovery.

The T-34 hit a fence post, bounced twice and came to rest. The engine burst into fire on impact and the aircraft was destroyed. Both occupants experienced some degree of difficulty exiting the wreck, but finally made it with only minor burns. They retreated to a safe distance and were picked up shortly by the SAR helo and returned to base.



*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Heavenly days! This sort'a foolishness went out'a style with button shoes. If Gramps could only get all throttle jockeys to read OPNAV Instruction 3710.7C and live by it,



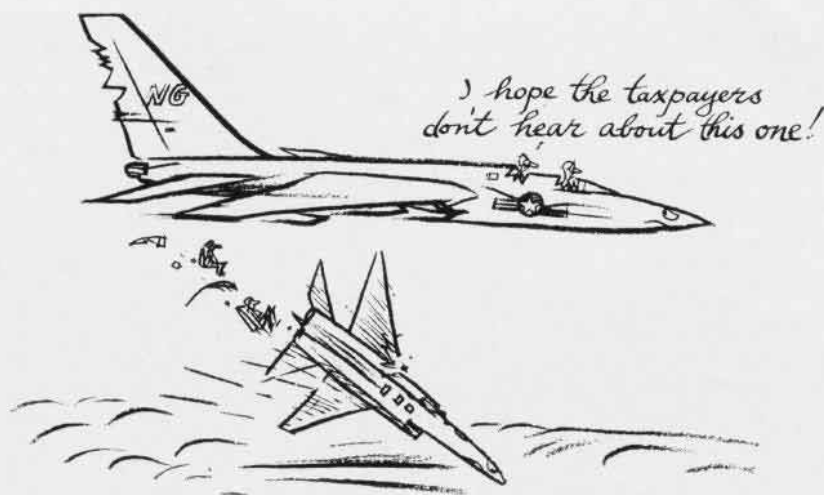
how serene life would be. Para 411 on page 4-2 of this book covers the change in control procedure extremely well. It was written just to prevent this sort of thing because it has happened before. A wise man learns by his mistakes; a wiser man learns by the mistakes of others.

## 'Over Exposed'

Monday's schedule called for this pair of *Vigilante* crews to brief at 0830 for a chased familiarization flight. The senior RP (Replacement Pilot) had considerable experience flying the A-5A in the past and just recently had completed the "difference" ground course for the RA-5C. (Normal procedure for pilots with past experience such as this was to commence photo reconnaissance training rather than go through the complete fam stage of the RA-5C.)

Concluding their brief at 0900, both crews proceeded to their respective aircraft and conducted the preflight inspections. Both aircraft checked out okay and the instructor became airborne at 0935. The RP took off some two to four minutes later and, following the instructor's track, rendezvoused about 60 miles out from base. The RP felt real comfortable in the new bird and informed the instructor that he would like to take the air-to-air photos, acquiring some oblique shots first. He then positioned his aircraft some 800 to 1,000 feet abeam to starboard and about 300 to 400 feet above. The sun's position was poor, so the student informed the leader that he would move to the port side which he did by dropping back and down, passing beneath to the opposite side. After completing several oblique shots, he informed the instructor that he was ready for the vertical photos and would maintain 15,000 feet. The leader agreed to drop down and back and to fly under #2, holding 14,500 feet.

The instructor lined up with the photo plane and established a closing speed of five-eight knots while holding his altitude at 14,500 feet. The vertical separation appeared to be at least 500 feet and remained so until the aircraft were nearly in line. At about this time, the instructor lost the RP from his normal field of vision and



shortly thereafter heard the transmission—"You're too high."

Meanwhile in the photo plane, the B/N reflectively positioned himself tightly back in his seat as he continued to watch the closure in the viewfinder. The RP was startled by the appearance of a vertical stabilizer rising up rapidly in front and to the right of the cockpit. He felt as though he could almost reach out and touch the vertical fin and instinctively tried to pull up and roll to the left.

There was very little, if any aircraft response. A mild thud was felt, followed rapidly by a loud roar and blast of air. Simultaneously with the air blast, the pilot was aware of a dark, ill-defined mass heading for his face from above and to the right. As he recoiled in the seat, he turned away and felt a stunning blow to the right side of the head. He gritted his teeth and, thinking the aircraft was disintegrating, elected to eject immediately. Pilot and B/N were ejected without further incident while the abandoned *Vigilante* rolled over and headed for its doom.

The chase plane, suffering minor damage, was able to remain on the scene until the two airmen were recovered before returning to home base for an uneventful landing.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! It's a downright shame that these here characters were allowed to pool their complacent attitudes and misguided talents for this sort of production. Regardless of the RP's rank or experi-

ence, our RAG instructors can't afford to let this influence their judgment or permit deviation from the approved syllabus. We all know that when you assume that your thousands of hours in the air make you immune to accidents, you're a candidate for the "Deep Six" or the wrong end of the long green table.

## Only for a Pro

As the A-4 approached the rendezvous and added power, there were severe engine chugs and explosions. Retarding the throttle to 92% and below smoothed it out; nevertheless, the pilot turned toward the ship and dumped fuel.

He leveled off on instruments as the cloud deck ran from 500 to 5,000 feet. At 3,000 feet, the driver extended his gear and flaps. He descended to 1,000 feet at 180 knots and 90% for CCA, decelerated to approach speed, and acquired the meatball, intentionally holding it a bit high. He eased throttle at the ramp in response to Paddles' call.

At touchdown, the hook skipped #1 wire, tipped #2, skipped #3 and 4. As the pilot applied power, the engine chugged severely and would not produce sufficient thrust to stay airborne. The unfortunate *Hawk* driver pulled the curtain some 15 to 30 feet above water in a wing-level attitude and made it without injury.

*Grampaw Pettibone says:*

You did your part like a pro, son, but this coulda' turned real wormy. It's no license for any inexperienced types.