



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Crowd of Two

A Fleet replacement pilot (RP), along with his instructor, was scheduled for a series of syllabus training flights in A-4E's from the home field to arrive at the training field in the desert for a two-week weapons training deployment. The scheduled flights included two fueling stops and an RON en route.

This flight had progressed as planned to the second fueling stop. After refueling, the twosome filed an instrument flight plan to their destination for that day. Following the briefing, they manned their aircraft and called for taxi clearance. Clearance was issued to taxi to runway 26, the wind reported variable, 190 degrees—200 degrees at 20 knots. Shortly after the flight commenced taxiing, they were directed to taxi to runway 21, wind reported variable 180 degrees—200 degrees at 23 knots. The flight rogered for the change and proceeded to the newly assigned runway.

After copying the IFR clearance, the flight switched to tower frequency, then was cleared for takeoff, instructed to switch to departure control and monitor the guard frequency.

The RP led the flight onto the runway and took the left side, the instructor taking the right side. The manual fuel control check was per-



formed, engine instruments were checked and an exchange of "thumbs up" was completed. The RP commenced his takeoff roll. Ten seconds later the instructor released his brakes for takeoff.

After approximately 2,000 feet of takeoff roll, the student's starboard tire blew out, causing him to swerve to the right. He crossed the runway centerline, corrected it back to runway heading and paralleled the centerline. Shortly after this development, the RP elected to abort takeoff and placed the throttle in the OFF position. He then switched to guard and transmitted his decision to abort. Meanwhile, the instructor observed the blown tire after commencing his take-

off roll and assumed that the RP was continuing since he did not hear the call to abort.

Noting a rapid closure rate and within 1,000 feet of the RP, the instructor decided that, in order to avoid colliding, he would have to become airborne. He pulled it up into the buffet, raised the gear and succeeded in clearing the other aircraft.

Still in the buffet, however, and experiencing divergent directional and lateral oscillations along with some settling, the instructor decided to eject.

The ejection was routine and the abandoned *Hawk* came to rest in a flat attitude 2,000 feet from the end of the runway.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh, my achin' back! Why are these fellas always willing to try and beat the odds?

A close look at this one revealed the RP had UHF transmitter trouble on the last leg and a bald spot on the starboard tire before he commenced the takeoff.

Correcting these two discrepancies coulda saved the day, not to mention the leader lining up on the downwind side for close interval takeoffs.

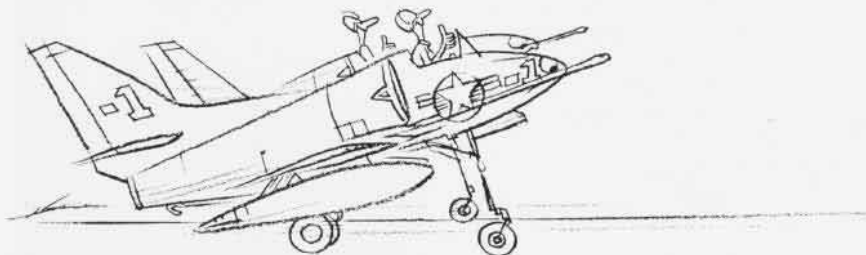
As the old sayin' goes, "A stitch in time saves nine," and, though not modern, it's still in style.

Down and Out

The *Phantom* driver and his RIO were scheduled to participate in an Armed Forces Day demonstration. The sortie involved a simulated attack on a bunker by helicopter-borne troops and close air support bombing runs by four F-4B's. (During the dress rehearsal, this particular driver, flying number four position, was advised that his roll-in point for the bomb run was wide of the intended point and that his run-in heading might violate airspace too close to the spectators.)

On the day of the "demo," the brief was conducted much the same

I hope every one is watching!



as the practice session. At conclusion of the brief, the crew headed out and, after conducting a routine preflight and start, taxied out for takeoff. After becoming airborne, the pilot switched the external fuel transfer switch on and found the external wing tank was not transferring fuel. He cycled the switch, pumped the nose up and down, and selected emergency pressurization, but the fuel still would not transfer from the left tank. To keep both tanks at a symmetrical weight, he secured the transfer.

The flight rendezvoused and formed up in the diamond for some additional practice. When the demo coordinator called for the *Phantoms*, the flight leader signalled for a left echelon in preparation for the roll-in. As number four rolled in, he went to 100% and lit burner as briefed. Shortly after, he noticed he was closing on number three so he started his nose up and came out of burner. When he approached the run-in line, he rolled inverted and pulled the nose through to pick up the dive angle.

Momentarily, the driver took his eyes off the other aircraft and glanced in the cockpit. The next thing he knew, he was going straight down. He pulled the power back to idle but the aircraft shuddered each time and rolled to the right.

Altitude was getting scarce when the RIO asked, "Do you have it?" Noting the gravity of the situation, the pilot issued the order to eject and ejected himself shortly thereafter. Both seats and chutes functioned properly, depositing the RIO and pilot on the ground with minor injuries. The F-4 impacted some four miles from the field and was completely destroyed.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! Now that *Phantom's* really no different than any other fixed-wing bird. You gotta have an adequate number of knots to stay airborne, and that shouldn't be too startlin' to very many people. There's been too many of these stall/spin type mishaps in this bird and there ain't no excuse for it.

When you find that you've bled off your airspeed, it's no sin to abort the maneuver in deference to a spectacular finish like this one. Remember, going into a spin is like stepping out on your wife. You might get away



not exactly professional!

R-6

with it, but if you don't, bub, you're in hot water.

These lads are lucky. They'll get a second chance. Just wonder how much they really learned from this fiasco.

Blunderful

A flight of three F-4's was launched from the deck of a "27 Charlie" in visual flight conditions on a training mission to escort a flight of A-4 aircraft into a target and provide flak suppression.

At approximately 8,000 feet, the two wingmen rendezvoused with their leader. Number two man nosed under and took up a position off the leader's port wing and number three joined loosely on the leader's starboard wing. The leader then gave a signal to number two to cross under and form a right echelon in order to execute a left diving turn at the target. Number two moved down and aft and commenced crossing behind and below the leader.

Number three was worried about the closeness of the maneuver and moved up and outward from the leader. Number two moved his aircraft into a low number two position and was slowly ascending to the parade position when he felt a sharp

downward force aft on his aircraft. He lost control of the aircraft immediately. It assumed a nose high attitude, shuddered and fell off into a spin.

Number three, who had moved up and outward as number two started his cross-under, had attempted to descend back to his original altitude and position. He felt a sudden thud from below and became engulfed in flames.

The two aircraft were on fire and out of control. Both pilots ejected routinely and were retrieved from the water and deposited back aboard ship in good time.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

What a way to ruin the day! These fellas just made one mistake too many and I believe what started the whole mess was gettin' outa bed on that fateful day.

It makes me shudder to think these wingmen hadn't learned better than to violate each other's air space before they ever left basic. It appears to me that the leader of this trio could've eye-balled this situation a little closer, too, and stopped these fellas in spite of themselves.

Aviation safety is an all-hands job that requires team work, attention to detail and the conviction that "I am my brother's keeper."