



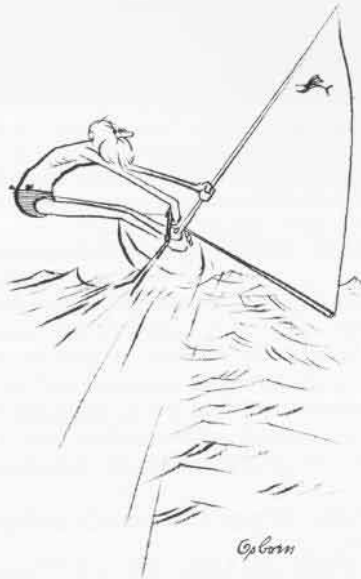
GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Not Specifically

After completing a routine hour and 45-minute training flight, the *Vigilante* pilot came back to the home field and executed two practice GCA approaches without touching down. Light rain was encountered on the first pass, but it ceased after that.

Final landing clearance was issued after the second pass. The tower reported a wet runway with braking action unknown. The approach was routine and the RA-5C touched down at 135 knots on centerline. At approximately 90 knots, after passing the arresting gear, the pilot carefully applied brakes. Almost immediately the port tire blew and the aircraft began to veer to the left. Nosewheel steering and starboard braking corrections were ineffective. Heavy starboard braking caused the starboard tire to blow as the *Vigilante* continued to angle toward the left edge of the runway and entered the mud at 5,400 feet from touchdown.

As the port gear stopped, the air-



craft pivoted to the left and when the nosewheel entered the mud, it sheared off. The nose impacted the ground and broke the fuselage at the reconnais-

sance attack navigator's (RAN's) cockpit. The starboard main gear remained on the edge of the runway and, as the aircraft came to a stop, the pilot instructed the RAN to "get out."

Not fully aware of the situation, the RAN blew the canopy and, noticing a large crack in the fuselage, immediately started to unstrap in anticipation of fire. Meanwhile the canopy, whose trajectory was near vertical, came back to earth and struck the port engine intake, three feet from the RAN.

Fortunately, there was no fire and the two occupants got out safely.



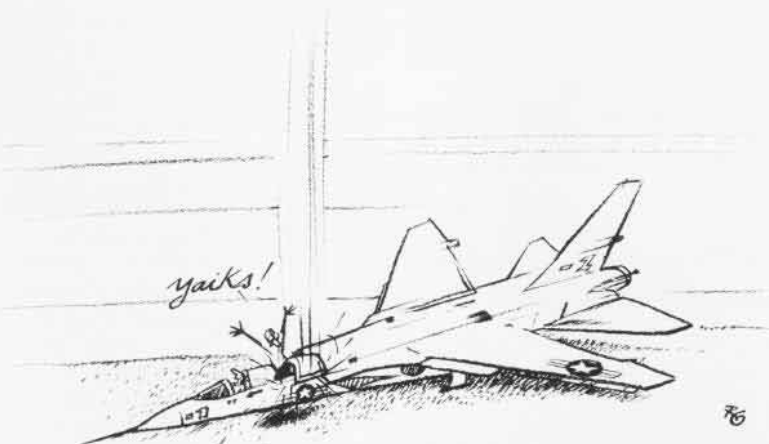
Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies! Somebody could'a got hurt here. Although the lad in the rear seat knew better than to eject below 100 knots, I can see where the order to "get out" could be a little confusin'. In a situation like this, the fella up front could'a been a little more specific. He can be doubly thankful that canopy did miss by three feet.

Acrobatic Elephant

The night was VFR; conditions were excellent for night carrier qualifications on the big CVA deck. An EKA-3B received a technique waveoff, followed by an O.K. pass to a #2 wire trap and hot refueling. The same aircraft was launched again and flew a pass which wound up in a hook skip to a bolter. The A-3 flew normally until rolling into the groove for the next pass. The pilot noted the flight controls felt sluggish—as if they were losing hydraulic pressure. The normal response was to over-control, and this pass resulted in a bolter. The driver, upon informing the ship that he was having control problems, was directed to bingo to the beach (divert to shore station).

The *Skywarrior* driver retracted the hook and gear and made a starboard turn with full flaps at 1,000 feet. Flaps were retracted at 1,500 feet, and the climb continued to 3,000 feet at 220 knots. Then the aircraft snap-rolled



360° to the left. The pilot dropped the flaps again, added full right aileron and rudder, throttled back the starboard engine, and advanced the port to 100%. The big bird rolled to the left again. Midway through the second roll, the boost disconnects were pulled, 100% power was added to the starboard engine, and the command to bail out was given over ICS.

The third roll to the left resembled a barrel roll with a scoop out to 600 feet. During this last maneuver, the navigator unstrapped and climbed into the overhead hatch he had blown open. Although the pilot felt he had regained control and countermanded his order to bail out, the navigator already had unplugged his radio cords and exited thru the upper hatch. (This fortunate young man bumped along the upper fuselage, endured a glancing blow from the vertical stabilizer and, suffering no more than minor injury, parachuted safely to the water.)

Meanwhile the pilot managed to restore the big bird to normal flight, established a climb and, passing 5,000 feet, retracted the flaps. He then aimed for the divert field. At 12,000 feet with 2,200 pounds of fuel remaining, he sighted the air station just as he crossed the coastline.

Once oriented over the field, the driver executed a very gentle left turn to the duty runway, dropped his flaps in quarter increments and held the airspeed between 175-185 knots. Touchdown occurred at 165 knots and, when he was firmly on the runway, he deployed the drag chute. He dropped the hook for the midfield arresting gear, but the hook failed to engage the wire. Braking action was good, and the A3 was stopped in ample time to turn off on the taxi strip. The pilot and the second crewman left the aircraft without incident. The aircraft had suffered no more than minor damage.

The navigator meanwhile, using his survival gear, was retrieved by the ship's helo and returned on board with only minor injury.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy mackerel, that was some ride! Inspection of the aircraft showed failure of the bolt in the aileron actuating assembly to be the culprit which caused this fiasco. Old Gramps takes his hat off to this pilot for his cool head, skill, and professionalism. My only criticism is the navigator's exit through the overhead vice the laundry chute (emergency escape chute).



The Wrong Way

The day was essentially a beautiful one. Ceiling and visibility were virtually unrestricted. All in all, the bombing flight was a huge success right up until the final AF-9J of the group of five *Cougars* departed the pattern for home plate.

After completing his final pass, number five was going to join up with the rest of the flight but, owing to the sun's position, he was unable visually to regain contact. The lead aircraft notified him of the group's position and heading for the return to home plate. During this interlude, number five had some difficulty reading his instruments and selecting the correct heading. As a result, he shortly found himself lost and, having remained at 5,000 feet altitude, became aware he was using his reserve fuel at an alarming rate while aimlessly flying about trying to locate his position.

The wandering *Cougar* flier finally found himself (with the help of the nearest ARTC center) to be approximately 80 miles from his home station. As he was closer to a satellite field in the same training complex, he requested and was given vectors to this field. By the time he arrived at this

alternate, fuel remaining on board was a definite problem. To aggravate things further he found himself, when he received landing clearance, 180 degrees out of phase with the duty runway.

The situation was not improving at all and, encouraged by an extremely low fuel state, the distressed driver elected to land downwind. He dropped the arresting hook and made an uneventful downwind landing until such time as the hook engaged the arresting wire. Needless to say, the arresting gear was rigged for the duty runway and the chain, laid out as it was, had no difficulty at all in pulling the tail section from the *Cougar*. Fortunately, the *Cougar* pilot came through the entire ordeal with no injury, but the *Cougar* suffered overhaul damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! If this don't take the booby prize, what will?

It appears to Gramps that when a junior birdman gets this far along in his training, his thoughts should be a little better organized. Secondly, the instructor responsible for the group should show a little more concern over his students' whereabouts.

This mishap proves one thing: *There ain't no substitute for experience.* This accident and whole comedy of errors would never have happened if the instructor had taken charge and expended some of his know-how.