



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Back to the Barn

The weather was so bad at the advanced training field that safety pilots were assigned to all students on gunnery flights. After checking the yellow sheet and conducting a normal preflight, the safety pilot and his student proceeded in their TF-9J to the gunnery area.

All gunnery runs were normal but on the last inbound run a slight buffet was noted. The buffet was attributed to clear air turbulence so the TF-9J joined the rest of the flight for return to the field.

At 12,000 feet, just short of the approach fix, the student pilot noted a small explosion and a decrease of RPM, followed by a flameout. He immediately informed the safety pilot who read the relight procedure. They were unsuccessful in getting an air-start and, while passing 8,000 feet, broadcast their intention to eject.

At 190 knots and between 7-8,000 feet, the safety pilot ejected, followed shortly by the student. The *Cougar* was in an upright, wings-level position at ejection. Both occupants enjoyed flawless exits and parachute rides back to earth.

Meanwhile, the *Cougar* continued its descent in such a manner that it made a perfect landing in an open field and sustained no more than superficial damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great heavenly days! I know the *Cougar's* been around for a while, but I didn't know we had any of 'em this well trained.

This particular bird was retrieved intact by an Army CH-54 and by now is back in service. But don't get any ideas that I endorse sticking with it in a case like this. These fellas did absolutely right by executin' the nylon let-down. Investigation showed the engine had an internal failure over which the drivers had no control.

Sure as shootin', if the pilots had ridden it in, things wouldn't have worked out this good.



Determined

On the 11th practice loft-bombing run, the *Intruder* pilot saw the port engine fire warning light go on. At the time, the aircraft was 300 feet above the ground, indicating 490 knots, with power set at 94%. Neither the pilot nor B/N was forewarned by sensing either an explosion or unusual vibration.

Seeing the fire warning light go on,

the pilot secured the port engine and made a zoom climb to 8,500 feet. The aircraft was not trailing smoke and there were no other indications of an engine fire.

At about 6,500 feet, the gear handle was lowered, resulting in the following indication: nose gear, *down*; starboard main, *unsafe*; port main, *up*. A visual gear check by the rescue helo confirmed the cockpit indications so the pilot used the emergency landing gear extension. This resulted in *down* indications for all gear.

During this interlude, two approaches were made to the first available runway, which had a downwind component. The first approach wound up in an overshoot caused by the pilot's failure to lower the slats and flaps. After getting the slats and flaps out and completing the landing check-off, the driver tried it again.

The *Intruder* rolled into final with 19 units on the angle-of-attack indicator for the single-engine landing. At a gross weight of 33,000 pounds, the pilot made a flared, full-cut landing. Touchdown was solid on both main gears with the nose gear falling through shortly thereafter.

The pilot checked the brakes in the first 1,500 feet of landing roll. Soon thereafter the port tire blew and the driver was unable to prevent the aircraft from leaving the runway. The *Intruder* crossed a seeded area, an access road, and finally came to rest straddling a six-foot-deep drainage ditch. The right engine was secured.



the canopy blown, and the crew got out safely.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! I like a man with strong convictions, but this is ridiculous.

It ain't considered bad headwork nor would it be injurious to your pride to change your mind in circumstances like this and land on the duty runway with a headwind component, particularly after circling the field a couple of times. The duty runway also had bi-directional emergency gear available. That would've come in mighty handy.

For the Birds

A Fleet pilot and naval flight officer (NFO) were scheduled for a local proficiency/instrument flight in an EA-1F. Engine run-up was normal and no malfunctions of engine or aircraft were noted during takeoff or climbout.

Shortly after the 1,000-foot level-off with airspeed of 180 knots, four white swans appeared in front of the aircraft. The pilot pulled the stick back sharply to avoid them; three of the birds took evasive action by heading for the deck. Unfortunately, the fourth bird entered the propeller arc at the one o'clock position and was sliced in two. One-half stuck in the carburetor air intake while the remaining half struck the right cockpit windscreen, partially shattering it. No more than five seconds later, the engine quit.

Automatically, the pilot retarded the throttle slightly, placed the mixture in rich and turned on the fuel boost pump. The engine made a few half-hearted attempts to run but a forced landing was imminent. The driver and the NFO locked their harness and, squinting through the extremely messy windscreen, spotted a country road to the left.

As the *Skyraider* turned on a high final for the road, with the gear and flaps down, a telephone line appeared close to the intended landing site. The pilot thought better of his original choice, raised the gear and set himself up for a plowed field next to the road. Having exhausted all alternatives, the pilot squeezed the A-1 over a drainage ditch and dike, touching down 190 yards beyond. The plane slid on its radome and drop tank for some 150

Coach, how'm
I doing?



feet, nosed up slightly as the prop dug its furrows and came to rest upright.

The two occupants, none the worse for wear, routinely secured all electrical equipment and nonchalantly left the aircraft. A helo returned them to their home base.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Some days a guy just can't make a nickel and this was one of them.

It seems to ole Gramps that this fella did a good job by setting' it in with only Charlie damage and no injury. But I wonder why he would trust one of those old dirt country roads enough to put the gear down.

You'll have to agree the bird community ain't much different from our society. There's always one in the flock that just don't get the word.

Too Late

Two *Phantom* Phlyers flew a force combat air patrol early one evening. The preparation, catapult shot and mission were carried out normally.

At the assigned time, the *Phantom* commenced the night CCA recovery. The SPN-10 was not operating on this particular recovery and the driver commenced his landing approach from 600 feet as directed by the CCA controller. He reported the meatball at three quarters of a mile with a fuel

state of 4,800 pounds. At that time, he was on centerline and glideslope.

The F-4 went a little low in the groove and drifted slightly to the left of centerline. The pilot corrected for this and, as he approached the ramp, he went high and again drifted left. The *Phantom* crossed the ramp with the nose lowered and the wings banked to the right. It landed in this attitude and, when the left main gear touched down, there was a bright flash and a loud explosion. Fire flared on the underside of the aircraft almost immediately. The *Phantom* continued forward along the angled deck and the hook engaged the number three wire.

The machine came to rest on the port wing, centerline tank, starboard main and nose landing gear. The driver and his RIO activated the emergency harness release handle and rapidly left the aircraft while the flight deck crewmen extinguished the fire.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh, my achin' back! It takes two to tango and, if you dance, you pay the fiddler. Paddles, as well as his buddy driving the bird, has to pay for a share in this one (Paddles for lettin' him get to that point over the ramp; the *Phantom* jockey for correctin' for line-up after he'd brought it across the ramp).