



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Whoa, There!

A UH-2C was launched for a local test hop from an attack carrier after maintenance for discrepancies with left cyclic control. As the pilot made a left clearing turn after takeoff, he informed the tower that control malfunctions were still present. He requested immediate landing.

On the approach, the *Seasprite* started to roll right with full left cyclic. The pilot executed a climb to miss the ship's superstructure and began a partially controlled ditching. The helo hit the water 20 degrees right wing down with the flotation bags inflated. Full left cyclic would then hold the aircraft level, so the pilot proceeded to water and air taxi to the port side of the ship. He then lifted off and maneuvered the errant beast to a safe landing on the flight deck. Cyclic trim ran full aft during the landing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

A mighty cool cucumber was at the controls of this one. The superior airmanship demonstrated by this pilot is noteworthy. That machine tried its best to get away from him, but he just wouldn't let it. He faced a mighty tough decision after getting that wild beast onto the water: Should he try to fly it back aboard and maybe lose control again, or should he shut it down and perhaps watch it turn turtle and sink?

You can't argue with success, so we'll

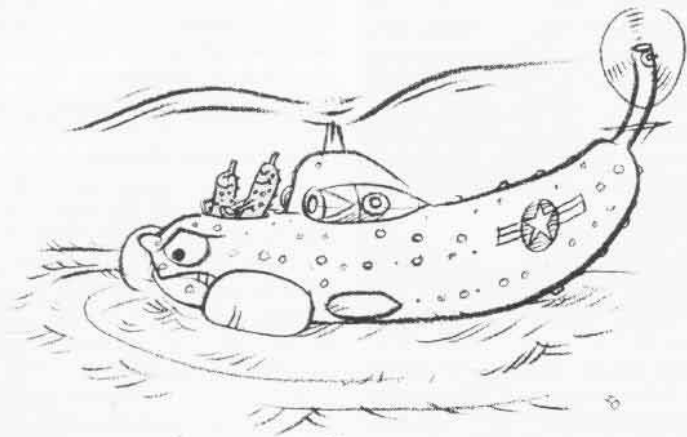


leave it with this thought: The facts should be weighed, the decision made, and the rules obeyed. It's much easier to be critical than correct.

Some Birds Don't Fly

Two lieutenants (junior grade) and two crewmen were assigned a COD (Carrier Onboard Delivery) mission in a US-2C to deliver nearly 1,300 pounds of cargo. An installed Mk 8 tow reel in the aircraft weighed 790 pounds.

At an intermediate fuel stop, a



small oil leak was discovered in the starboard engine nacelle, but the lines were found to be secure and the oil tanks were topped off. The amount of oil added indicated normal consumption on both engines.

The one-and-a-half hour flight and landing on board the CVS went smoothly. Cargo was off-loaded and the aircraft was reloaded with 1,114 pounds of freight and mail for delivery ashore. The crewmen carefully post-preflighted the starboard engine compartment oil lines. Everything was secure. The oil dip sticks were also checked; topping off was not required.

Passing 6,000 feet during climbout after catapult from the carrier, the copilot reported that a considerable amount of oil was leaking from the starboard engine around the propeller dome assembly; oil pressure was still normal, however. The pilot immediately headed back for the CVS, a distance of 26 miles.

Upon receiving the call from the returning COD, the ship immediately started a turn back into the wind. The deck was respotted forward and made ready for recovery by the time the aircraft was eight miles away. Clearance was given for a modified straight-in approach. The wind was down the angle at 28 knots.

When power was reduced aboard the US-2C for descent, the oil leak seemed to subside. Between ten and six miles out, the aircraft was prepared for landing. Full flaps were lowered, the landing gear was dropped and power added. The increased rpm and manifold pressure intensified the oil leak, and the oil pressure started to drop rapidly.

The pilot intercepted the glide path slightly high and commenced his approach. At approximately one mile, the oil pressure fluctuated violently, dropped to ten psi, and the propeller began to overspeed.

The starboard prop was immediately feathered and transition made to a single engine approach. Flaps and gear remained fully down. As the

approach continued, the plane started to settle. Power was added on the port engine several times in response to the LSO's calls. The S-2 arrived at the ramp with full throttle.

At the cut, although the pilot reduced power, the nose of the aircraft came up, and the S-2 floated up the deck. The LSO called, "Land it! Land it!" The nose dropped and the plane touched down beyond the crossdeck pendants.

As the LSO called, "Bolter, Bolter," the pilot added full power on the port engine. The aircraft left the deck under full control, wings level, and climbed a little. The landing gear was retracted and the flaps left fully down.

The then doomed S-2 started gradually losing altitude until it struck the water 23.5 seconds after leaving the deck, about one half mile ahead of the ship.

As soon as the aircraft came to a stop, all the crew exited through the overhead hatches. Rescue was accomplished on the double by one of the carrier's helos.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh, my achin' blood pressure! These guys just plain doped off. With a combined total of over 1,000 hours in S-2 aircraft, you'da thought they'd know a little more about single-engine flight characteristics than they demonstrated.

I can't find fault with the decision to return to the ship. Considerin' the distance to the beach and uncertainty of future behavior of that starboard engine/propeller, it was a wise decision.

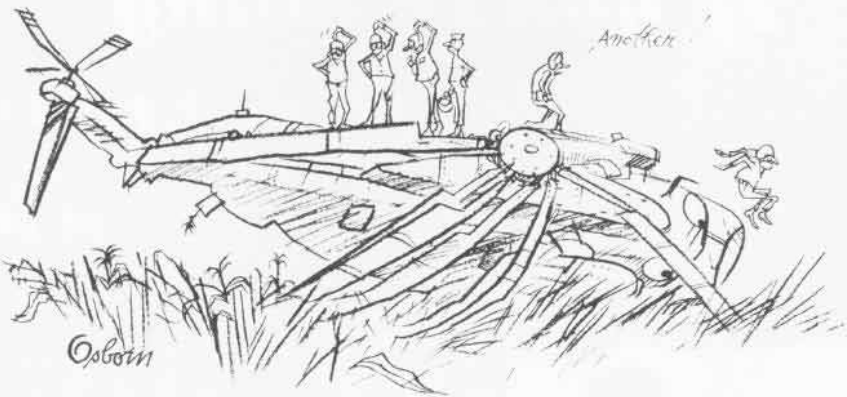
What happened after the engine quit, however, is just too darned much—or should I say just not enough? Where were these guys when the emergency procedures briefings were given? Hadn't they ever been in an OFT? The pilot stated that he "thought it would fly" on one engine with the gear down and full flaps. The copilot said he didn't know if it would or not. And he a designated plane commander, too! Simple ignorance is not knowing; compound ignorance is not knowing that you don't know.

NATOPS plainly recommends 2/3 flaps for single engine approach and 1/3 flaps for a bolter. It's a cryin' shame that two "fully qualified" pilots would show such disregard for a few simple procedures so critical to the continued flight of their aircraft.

This isn't the first time this sorta thing has happened. There are several pilots and crews who aren't around any more, because they didn't know what to do when an engine quits.

From the Sublime to the

Two pilots and four crewmen in a Marine CH-53A were scheduled for a



heavy lift mission at a high-altitude, mountainous training area near a West Coast air station. The aircraft assigned for the flight had an inoperative stick trim.

Takeoff from home station was at 0800 with an IFR departure to "on top" at 2,700 feet mean sea level (msl). The *Sea Stallion* then proceeded to the mountainside landing zone at 8,300 feet. A man was picked up, and the flight continued on to evaluate a small site at 6,000 feet msl where an electric generator was to be externally delivered. After completing the evaluation, they flew back to the 8,300-foot zone, and two crewmen disembarked. After takeoff, an approach was made to pick up the 3,000-pound generator. It took three attempts to lift the generator and then six more approaches to deliver it to the 6,000-foot site.

The H-53 then flew to a mountain top site at 8,500 feet where an electronics van was externally lifted to the 8,300-foot landing zone. The crew then landed in front of the van, so that it could be loaded internally for delivery to an air station.

It took a while to load the van, other cargo, and passengers aboard. And so, after completing this arduous day's session so successfully, the flight departed for the air station. Since the weather was still overcast on the coast, an instrument approach was required. Approach Control said there would be a slight delay, so the pilot slowed the flight to 90 knots. After a turn-away from the field, he finally received clearance for the approach. While descending through the overcast, the copilot, who was flying the plane, experienced vertigo, so the pilot took

the controls, completed the approach and broke out at 1,200 feet.

The landing was made with 100 pounds of fuel indicated in each tank. Cargo and passengers were off-loaded, and the pilot called for takeoff to return to home field, a distance of only five miles.

At takeoff, 1035 local time, fuel indicated only 50 pounds in each tank. About one minute later, as the big helicopter crossed the field boundary, one of the engines flamed out. The pilot started a right turn and began looking for a place to land, knowing the other engine would flame out momentarily. Rotor rpm started to decay as the other engine quit, and the aircraft descended into a cornfield. Flare was rather high, and the *Sea Stallion* landed hard, shearing the nose gear. It then rolled over on its right side and came to rest.

The crew exited the aircraft through the left cargo compartment escape hatch. They were picked up shortly by the air station SAR helicopter; one passenger was slightly bruised.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

It's enough to make a grown man cry. This highly skilled, well respected Naval Aviator was just completing an extremely demanding and difficult mission. He then blew it all by running out of fuel on takeoff from a fully equipped air station because "in my opinion sufficient fuel remained to make it."

As the old saying goes, "Pride goeth before a fall." It seems he didn't have any fuel chits with him. It would'a been a bit embarrassing to have to refuel without them.

The copilot might have made a comment or two on the subject before it was too late. You gotta keep the pilot on his toes. That's what a copilot is for.