



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

This Bird Will Fly (Again)

It was an afternoon launch from the CVS, the first event of a ten-day deployment. The weather was bright and clear with light winds. The E-1B, with two well qualified lieutenants aboard was catapulted at 1405 for a refresher carrier qualification period.

While circling in the Delta pattern awaiting the completion of the launch, the crew was startled by eight or ten loud backfires from the starboard engine. The pilot, in the left seat, called and advised Primary Fly of the situation and requested a precautionary landing. Given signal Charlie, he began his descent, simultaneously dumping fuel. The *Tracer* arrived at 500 feet abeam the ship on a normal downwind leg.

Three S-2E aircraft on deck were quickly respotted forward, and the flight deck was prepared to recover the E-1B. The aircraft, abeam the ship at the 180° position, was still dumping fuel as the pilots prepared to make an essentially normal landing. They secured the fuel dump at the deep 90° position; both pilots checked to make sure the dumping had ceased. The hatches were open, and ball acquisition was normal though, as the pilot added power slightly, he noted the starboard torque pressure dropped about 80 psi.

He was still receiving adequate power and continued the approach. The ball appeared normal except for being slightly high, and, as the aircraft was on short final, the pilot was "shocked" to see the waveoff lights. As he added power, there was a significant loss of rpm on the starboard engine, and he heard a transmission from the LSO that he was trailing smoke from the starboard engine. The waveoff was otherwise normal with no fire indication, either visual or on the gauges.

Upon reaching the upwind turn,

KEEP those resolutions!



there was a sudden drop of oil pressure on the starboard engine. The pilot and copilot discussed the situation; it was decided to feather the engine. The copilot completed the single-engine checklist while the pilot maintained level flight. During this time the aircraft had lost altitude to 200 feet whereupon the LSO warned the pilot to gain altitude. With 56 inches of manifold pressure on the port engine, the aircraft slowly climbed to about 500 feet. By the time the pilots reached the 180-degree position, Primary had advised that the barricade was being rigged. Both pilots stated that every move was done systematically and discussed prior to its being executed.

Upon acquisition of the ball on final, the gear was lowered, flaps set at 2/3, and a slight high ball was flown with the airspeed at 113 knots. The pilots felt they were fast, though there were one or two calls for power on final. The aircraft passed the round down slightly high but nosed over to engage the #4 wire and simultaneously the barricade. The aircraft came to an

immediate stop. There was no evidence of fire and the crew secured the aircraft, using the ground secure checklist, then made a normal exit from the plane.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Gratifyin'! What a real pleasant change from the S-2 fiasco recounted in the October issue. All it takes is a checked-out crew and followin' the rules. Just like milk for my ulcer!

There was a missed cue or two and some lack of communications, however, which just might've led this flight into more serious trouble. On the aircraft's first approach, the LSO didn't know that he was bringing aboard a plane with a declared emergency. He decided to wave off the *Tracer* 'cause it appeared that it was dumpin' fuel from the starboard engine. Egad! It was smoke from that weak engine, not fuel.

Looks like Primary fell down on the job by not passin' the word, though the people on the platform might have put two and two together and figured it out.

It's a good thing they didn't go swimmin' 'cause the copilot had no life jacket on. Tsk! Tsk!

Stuck in the Mud

On a warm clear day at one of our southern training bases, a JG student aviator launched as second section leader of a four-plane syllabus formation hop in his TF-9J *Cougar*. The flight had been airborne for about ten minutes and was cruising at 5,500 feet msl when the JG heard a loud metal-to-metal sound coming from the engine section. Reducing power, the student informed the instructor flight leader, who was flying the #2 position, of his problem. He then noted rpm and tailpipe temperature decreasing and experienced what he thought was a flameout.

With the assistance of the instructor, who had sent the other two students home, relight procedures were completed. Rpm and tailpipe temperature increased; the pilot turned back toward

home field, dumping excess fuel from his wing tanks. The throttle was set to 86% as recommended by the instructor, and preparation made for a precautionary approach at base. The loud noises then began again, and rpm decreased slightly.

Because of his concern for the continued operation of his engine and the low altitude (6,500 feet) over a populous area – against the expressed request of the flight leader – the student decided to make an immediate emergency landing at the nearby municipal airport. The instructor notified the civilian tower of the emergency while the student set himself up for a seven to eight-mile straight-in approach to the 5,600-foot runway.

At approximately three to four miles at 1,500 to 2,000 feet altitude, the JG lowered his speed brakes and slowed to about 190 knots. When he knew he had the runway made, he lowered the landing gear and flaps and tried to close the throttle. Finding that it would not retard below 79%, he opened the canopy.

Meanwhile the instructor flying wing position was becoming concerned over the way things were progressing. He knew that the *Cougar* was heavy (5,000 pounds of fuel aboard) and that, with the limited runway length and absence

of any arresting gear, a landing would be critical. He therefore told the student several times he was fast and to slow it down.

On touchdown at 160 knots, 1,500 feet down the runway, both tires blew, and the aircraft started a swerve to the left. By using full nose-down elevator and full right rudder, the swerve was corrected but then reversed to the right. Approaching the end of the runway, the airplane was heading back left again, approximately 60 degrees to the runway heading and in a right skid.

As the plane left the runway and started sinking into the mud, the starboard wing dug in causing the craft to roll. The wing then tore off and, as the *Cougar* rolled inverted, the ejection seat was fired by contact with the soft ground. The pilot was ejected into the mud while the plane tumbled on away from him. It shed its other wing, coming to a stop upright some 50 feet away.

With the top of the inverted seat firmly imbedded in the mud, the student had some difficulty extricating himself. Using his knife and shroud cutter, he managed to cut himself free and walked away from the scene unassisted, suffering only a bruised cheek.

The crash crew arrived shortly as well as the SAR helicopter. Discovering

the F-9's engine still running at 50 to 60% rpm, the crash fire captain climbed to the cockpit and retarded the throttle to idle. He was unable to get it into the shutoff position so reached over and turned off the fuel master switch to secure the engine.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies! Talk about buyin' the farm! This lad was doin' his plantin' and plowin' a little early. Or was he just checkin' the quality of the soil before cashin' in his chips for the down payment?

The aircraft accident board determined that his engine never did flame out, nor did he complete proper relight procedures. The clattering noise was made by the right hand ammunition access panel, which was open, banging on the upper fuselage. The throttle problems were probably pilot caused by improper movement and by leaving the friction too tight when setting up for the precautionary approach.

He could have easily made it to his home field or to another NAS even closer. Landing at an inadequate airfield under other than ideal conditions is just askin' for trouble. Even on final approach, he might'a saved the day if he'd either shut the engine down or waved off and tried again.

Since he had almost 100 hours in the F-9, perhaps a little more could be expected. His emergency procedures briefing, although thorough, just didn't seem to sink in. Hopefully his judgment and technique will improve with age and experience – if he lives long enough.

