



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Bent Wing Boner

Dilbert was scheduled for a hot turnaround for night field mirror landing practice (FMLP) in his A-7A Corsair II. The aircraft taxied from the runway to the line where he was waiting, and Dil exchanged seats with the pilot without shutting down the engine. The bird was in good shape, so he didn't bother with the usual plane captain checks and just taxied out toward the duty runway.

He did spread and lock the wings and stopped so the checkers could go over the plane. He also stopped at the rear of the line and went over the complete checkoff list.

As he approached the head of the runway, he noted four other A-7's waiting for takeoff for the same FMLP pattern. When he called for takeoff, he was advised that there would be a ten-minute delay. This seemed like a good time to take on a little extra fuel, so Dilbert received clearance to taxi back to the fuel pits where he folded his wings and parked to wait his turn.

He then noted that the other Corsairs were taking the runway, so he



called the tower who advised that the pattern was now open. Anxious to join the others on schedule, Dil quickly taxied back out, switched frequencies and received clearance to expedite his takeoff. He quickly went over the items he normally double-checks before taking off, ran up the engine and, because the brakes would not hold the

plane at such a light fuel load, started his takeoff roll before finishing a complete cockpit scan.

Everything was normal until he reached about 100 feet of altitude. Then the aircraft made an unusual noise and yawed to the right. At the same time, Dilbert noted the master caution light was on and a PC-2 hydraulic system failure. He began having difficulty controlling the wing position; the aircraft wanted to roll to the right and also had a very high angle of attack.

At this point, Dil turned pro and quickly completed procedures for a PC-2 failure. He turned right, downwind, and requested immediate landing. He flew a wide pattern while holding full left stick, his altitude varying between 400 and 900 feet. After overshooting the runway, he got the machine slowed down to 140 knots on final and completed a reasonably normal landing.

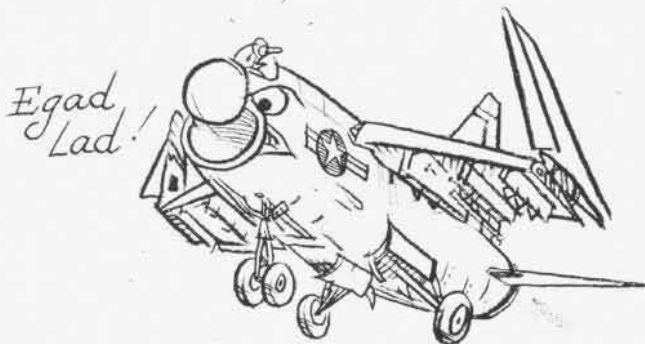
The aircraft was brought to a stop with reserve brake pressure. Dilbert turned off the runway and started to secure the switches in the cockpit. He was suddenly quite surprised to discover the wing-lock handle in the up position and the switch in the fold position. A look at the wings showed them to be folded at a somewhat greater than normal angle.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

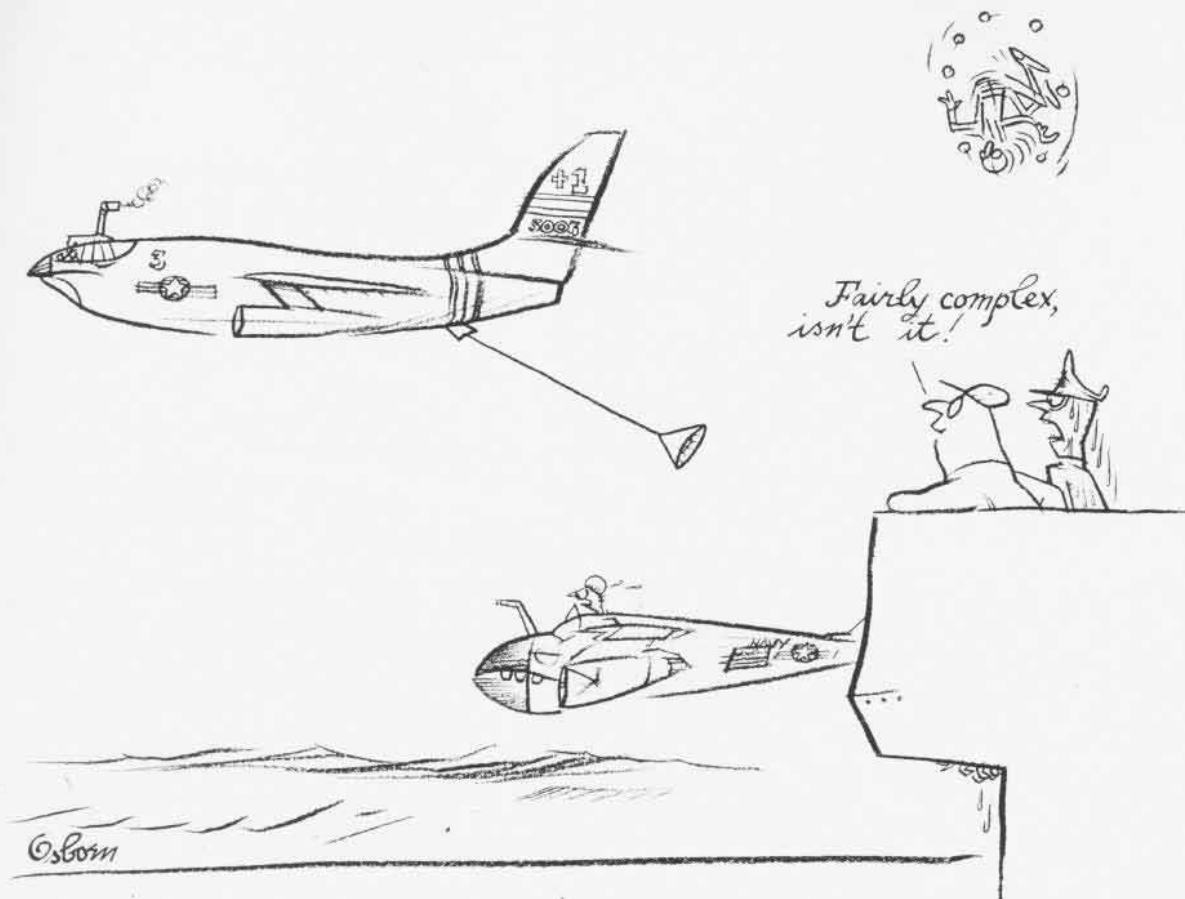
Che-ri-men-mentlies! We've dun it agin! As the flight surgeon said, "Failure to spread and lock the wings of an aircraft prior to launch is certainly not unique in the history of Naval Aviation." In fact, I'd bet we've flown, or tried to fly, every fold-wing airplane the Navy ever owned with its wings folded.

Same old saw, CHECKLISTS. Guys just don't seem to learn. Even the wingfold warning light doesn't help. What do we haft'a do, install a hammer to beat 'em on the head when the plane isn't ready to fly?

A heavier load or a hot day would'a spelt curtains for this lad.



Osborn



Show Time

Whenever an air wing puts on an airshow, there's likely to be trouble, and this one was no exception. The in-flight refueling demonstration was to include an A-6A *Intruder* and an F-4J *Phantom II* refueling from two EKA-3B *Skywarriors* while flying by the aircraft carrier which was carrying VIP guests. After launch, one of the *Skywarriors* went out of commission, so the air wing commander air-briefed the F-4 to unplug ahead of the ship and the A-6 to plug in while passing down the port side.

Things went smoothly with the three plane flight at 500 feet and 280 knots. The *Phantom* unplugged at 1.5 miles ahead and the Ltjg. in the *Intruder* quickly moved into position so that he would be plugged in by the time the formation passed the ship.

As he made contact with the drogue, he noted too rapid a closure rate and brought both throttles to idle, simul-

taneously pressing the speedbrake switch on the side of the throttle.

Inadvertently, both throttles were "brought around the horn," shutting down both engines. The pilot immediately recognized what he had done and unplugged, transitioning to a 250-knot glide. He advanced the throttles and depressed the airstart buttons with no result. Quick recycling of the switches followed, again to no avail.

The pilot then ordered his bombardier/navigator (B/N) in the right seat to "get ready to eject." Needing no encouragement, the B/N immediately pulled the face curtain and was gone at about 400 feet altitude and 250 knots.

Meanwhile the pilot deployed the emergency generator. A third airstart attempt was successful, bringing a slow rise in exhaust gas temperature and rpm on both engines. Acceleration was slow and the pilot planned to eject if the airplane went below 100 feet.

As he reached for the face curtain, the rpm increased through 60 percent, and the *Intruder* levelled off at 50 feet and 220 knots. The pilot climbed to 500 feet and flew back to orbit his B/N in the water below.

The carrier planeguard helicopter picked up the B/N, and the pilot landed his crewless aircraft back aboard with a normal recovery, 45 minutes later, getting an "OK three wire" from the LSO.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

O, my achin' bones! What can an old man say?

Son, yuh had a purty narrow squeak. It beats me the things som'a you cats get away with these days.

What in thunderation were you doin' closing so fast on the drogue that you needed idle power and speedbrakes to slow down? By golly, didn't you learn that yur supposed to sneak up on it like a cat after a mouse?

Sure, everybody likes to look sharp. Even so, too many guys end up, like yourself, with gravy all over their faces.