



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Night Belly Whopper

A lieutenant commander instructor pilot and his ensign replacement pilot (RP) briefed for the new pilot's first night training flight in an E-2 *Hawkeye*. A complete brief was conducted, the aircraft was signed for and pre-flight performed. The *Hawkeye* launched from home plate and proceeded to a nearby airfield. The RP was in the left seat and the instructor pilot was occupying the right seat.

Nearing the vicinity of the airfield, a TACAN approach was conducted. Following the approach, the E-2 was cleared into the night VFR landing pattern. Eleven approaches were flown with various flap configurations: full, two-thirds, one-third and no flaps. Of these, eight were terminated with touch-and-go landings.

Approximately one hour after takeoff and still in the pattern, the aircraft reported the abeam position with three down and locked for a touch-and-go with the port engine simulated out. This pass was completed as a simulated single-engine landing with a takeoff using power on both engines.

Following this approach another



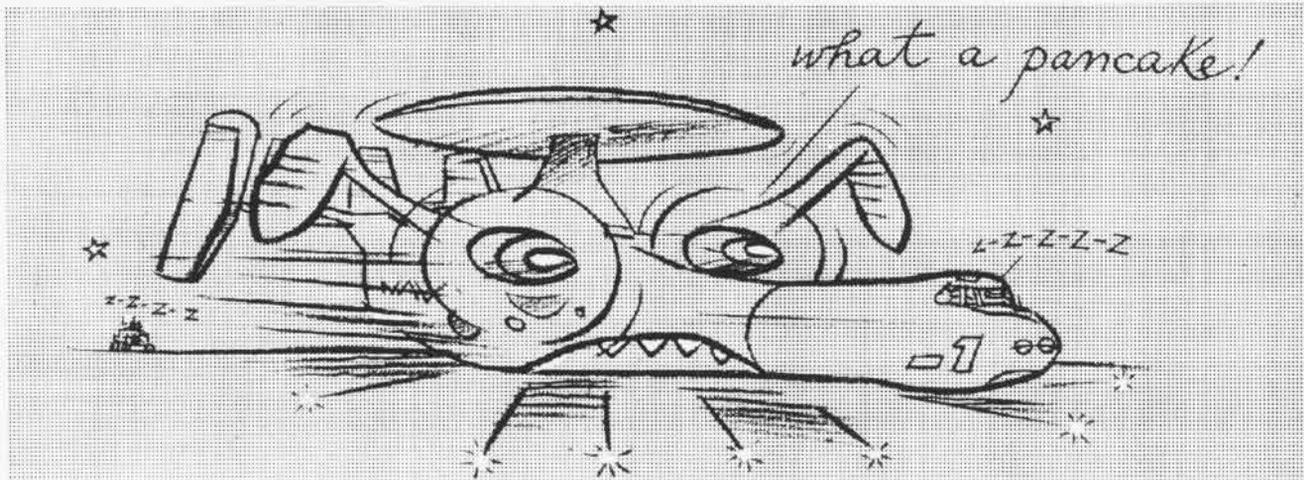
single-engine approach was flown to a touch-and-go landing, and liftoff was accomplished with one engine simulated feathered to emulate a single-engine bolter. (The procedures for a single-engine waveoff or bolter are identical.) After performing the proper procedures, a single-engine climb was accomplished and the E-2 commenced a turn downwind for another simulated single-engine approach. Abeam

the runway, the E-2 reported "Three down and locked, touch-and-go."

During the approach, both pilots were distracted by an F-4 in the pattern, also conducting touch-and-go operations. The single-engine approach was flown fast and the instructor commented that the aircraft tended to float in close. As the *Hawkeye* approached the touchdown point, the instructor added power to the starboard engine (simulated feathered) and told the RP, "Take both engines and let's go."

Immediately an explosion was noted on the starboard engine. The RP reacted by reducing power in order to keep the aircraft on the runway. The starboard propeller contacted the runway, followed immediately by the port propeller. The aircraft had landed gear up on the center line, approximately 2,500 feet down the runway, and departed it to the left.

The plane finally came to a stop, left of the runway, a little past mid-field. The starboard side of the aircraft was in flames as the pilots exited via the overhead hatches. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The instructor suffered minor burns on his hand. He wasn't wearing flight gloves!





Grampaw Pettibone says:

My achin' ulcers! With all the emphasis on safety and NATOPS in this day and age, we still have those few drivers who don't listen! There are a multitude of excuses (I was distracted by the F-4, etc.) but no new ones.

Would you believe that we had a wheels watch posted in this case? He was worse than the pilots. He saw the machine with the wheels up but never fired his flare gun.

I've said it at least 100 times in the past 32 years: Use the checklist! It provides an "aircraft-back guarantee." And it's free!

## Nostalgia

Several instructors were parked at an outlying field, talking to their students. The first instructor to take off climbed steeply, then turned and dove at the other planes. This "hot pilot" evidently got a thrill out of seeing everyone duck as he missed them by only a few feet.

He pulled up steeply after the first pass, made a flipper turn and started down again. This time something went wrong, however—either in the turn or in the dive. Whatever the cause, he was still nose down when he hit at high speed. Fortunately, he missed his pals.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

One irresponsible act cost this pilot his life. Many pilots are killed in similar, idiotic low-altitude maneuvers. You might try to pass it off by saying that anyone who pulls a crazy stunt like that rates what he gets, but that isn't enough. From an entirely impersonal point of view, this country just can't afford this waste of personnel and material, either in war or peace.

In the present stage of aviation development, some training and operational losses are inevitable. They are only justified by the greater good obtained in training and operations. The attrition which results from unauthorized low-altitude maneuvers, however, has no justification whatever and, therefore, must be eliminated.

As I've often said before, it's worse for instructors to flathat than anyone else. That may seem unfair, but that's the way it is, because instructors involuntarily set the standard for their students. If students see their instructors do these things whenever they get away from official observation, students will get the idea that this is the accepted practice.

Lest some pilots already have the wrong idea, let me give you the inside dope—flathatting is definitely not the accepted practice. You may get away with it for a while in isolated cases, but not for long. And death isn't the only punishment you face. Court-martial, kick-outs, heavy fines, loss of wings and even commissions all help weed out the offenders.

For those who don't see their moral responsibility in this matter, don't say I didn't warn you. (April 1945)

## The Violator

Two F-4 *Phantoms* launched on a training flight involving visual identification of various simulated targets. This was the second flight of the day for both crews. The takeoff and climb to altitude were uneventful. Upon completion of the identification portion of the mission, the two F-4s joined for some basic aircraft maneuvers (BAMs).

They conducted various BAMs with the flight leader acting as interceptor and the wingman functioning as bogey. During one of these maneuvers, the flight leader informed the crew of the other *Phantom* that the next pass

would be an extension to a pitch back. Neither crew member in the bogey F-4 sighted the intercepting aircraft making the initial pass.

The intercepting F-4 then made a nose-low turn from 20,000 feet to a position level with the bogey which was at 16,000 feet and approximately two miles in trail. At this time the wingman, still acting as the bogey, called "Tallyho! I'm gonna extend." The bogey extended for a short period and then executed a slice turn to the left. The flight leader maneuvered to the outside of the wingman's turn and rolled out high at three o'clock. He estimated his wingman to be 5,000 feet below him and at an airspeed in excess of 500 knots. The wingman then rolled left and started what appeared to be a second nose-low turn. The flight leader broadcast "Watch your altitude" and looked in the cockpit to note his altimeter at 11,000 feet.

He then re-acquired the wingman's F-4 just before the aircraft impacted the water. The aircraft attitude at impact appeared to be 60 degrees nose-down, with 60 degrees angle of bank in a right-hand turn. No canopy separation or other evidence of attempted ejection was observed. Due to the water depth, the aircraft and crew members were not recovered.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! I can't believe it! The flight leader allowed and participated in unbriefed maneuvers — in violation of NATOPS. Additionally, neither the wingman nor the flight leader called off the "has-sling" when they descended below 10,000 feet — another violation of NATOPS. Sound like a broken record? You bet it does! There ain't no excuse for this needless loss of life and flyin' machine. Solution is easy — let's just "can" the few guys who *intentionally* violate existing regulations! Nuff sed!

