



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Good Head

An F-3B (F3H-2) was launched from a carrier off the East Coast during a post deployment fly-off. Immediately after launch, the pilot discovered that his nose gear would not retract. As he turned back toward the ship, the fire warning light came on. All engine instruments appeared normal and a visual check of the aircraft failed to indicate a fire. The fire warning light went out after approximately five minutes and the pilot elected to burn down external fuel before shooting an approach. While orbiting, waiting for burndown, the pilot noted the fire warning light flickered, then came on steady. The fuel gauge went to zero and the cockpit filled with light smoke, but there was still no external indication of fire. All engine instruments appeared normal.

At this time, the pilot decided to jettison his external stores and recover immediately. As he rolled into the groove, he noted that full power would not hold the aircraft on the glide slope. He also noted that the nozzle indicator showed the nozzles were partially open and that the TOT was about 50 degrees below full military. The A.C. control circuit breaker was pulled with no apparent effect.

The fire warning light continued to burn and the cockpit was filled with smoke. But rather than take it around and make a modulated afterburner pass, the pilot maintained glide slope and airspeed by selecting, then deselecting, afterburner twice.

A normal landing was accomplished with an estimated 3,000 pounds of fuel aboard. After shutdown, an after fire resulted but was extinguished with no further damage to the aircraft. Post landing investigation revealed the most probable cause of the fire and partial



power loss was an engine hydraulic system leak.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well, pop my buttons, that's really usin' the ole noggin!

The aircraft was pretty severely damaged by fire, but this lad certainly had nothin' to do with it. He just calmly analyzed his hot problem and dealt with the hairy situation like a real professional. You just can't beat that kind of airplane drivin'.

I'm a great believer that NATOPS is the greatest thing since bubble gum, but nothin' will ever replace this kind of headwork. It's a pleasure to add another name to that "Real Pro" list. (September 1964)

Sailing in a Helicopter

Two Marine Aviators were scheduled for a morning flight to deliver a CH-46 *Sea Knight* to an overhaul activity. The pilots were accompanied by two enlisted crew members and one passenger. The crew obtained a weather brief by phone although a face-to-face brief would have been available locally 45 minutes before scheduled departure time. The freezing level was forecast at 6,000 feet. The pilot filed an IFR flight plan via telephone and requested an altitude of 3,000 feet.

Completing a normal preflight, the pilot started the aircraft and put the clearance on request. He did not have the engine inlet screens removed because of the forecasted freezing level and flight level temperature. He noted a cockpit outside air indication of plus two degrees C. but decided the forecasted temperatures were adequate, and the screens still were not removed. The IFR clearance was received and the aircraft was cleared for takeoff.

Takeoff and climb to altitude were normal until the aircraft reached 2,500 feet where the pilot noticed ice forming on the windscreen. He immediately leveled off and requested an emergency descent and vectors back to home field. Vectors and clearance to descend were given immediately and the aircraft was handed back to local approach control.

The pilot reported descending to 1,000 feet which was acknowledged. At this time approach control did not have the aircraft in radar contact. The crew chief then reported to the pilot, "The #2 engine inlet is icing up pretty fast." Momentary visual contact with the ground was made by the crew chief and the pilot. The pilot reported this to approach control.

About two minutes later the pilot noticed the #2 engine temperature increasing through 800 degrees. He told the copilot to secure the #2 engine. The *Sea Knight* was slowed to 70 knots and power on #1 engine was increased. The pilot reported the engine loss to approach control and requested an emergency descent. The descent was approved and, at 500 feet, a turn was made to a westerly heading toward a river in an effort to return low-level. Once over the river, the pilot continued the descent to maintain visual contact with the surface of the water. At 300 feet, power on the #1 engine decreased to 70 percent. An

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autorotation was commenced to the river below. The helo landed after the rotor rpm was reduced to cushion impact with the water.

The airframe appeared to be intact and the copilot immediately started the auxiliary power unit to regain electrical power in the aircraft. Approach control was contacted and advised that the aircraft was in the water. Next the pilot successfully restarted the #2 engine while the #1 engine was still producing only partial power. He radioed approach control that he would attempt a water taxi to home field.

A shoreline was sighted approximately 500 yards to the crew's left which was thought to be the west bank of the river and water taxi commenced toward land. The emergency throttle was armed but not activated in anticipation of a need for additional power to lift the aircraft out of the water upon reaching the shoreline.

Nearly 100 yards from land, the #1 engine failed completely and about 70 feet from the shoreline, the #2 engine

also failed. The pilot allowed the rotors to coast to a stop.

The river current caused the aircraft to drift downstream towards shore, at which time the crew realized they were on the eastern side of the river instead of the western side. The pilot reported this to the tower.

The tower launched the crash rescue boat down the western side of the river and had no communication with the boat at that time. The aircraft had been afloat for almost 20 minutes with the power off when the SAR helo arrived.

Shortly afterwards, the right MLG and nose LG appeared to run aground approximately 40 feet from the shore. The copilot and passenger attempted to throw a line made up of cargo tie-down straps to the crew of the SAR aircraft who had landed on the nearby shore. These attempts were unsuccessful because the straps were not long enough.

The rescue boat arrived and threw a line to the copilot. The aircraft began rolling to port causing the rotor blades to contact the top of the rescue boat.

The crew and passenger then boarded the rescue boat. The boat forcefully pulling away from the aircraft dislodged the rotor blades which caused limited damage to the boat. Once the boat was clear, the aircraft continued to roll to port, inverted in the water and sank.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great grumblin' gremlins! I don't know where to start - with the first accident (the airplane) or the second accident (the boat). Obviously the boat fared much better than the helo.

This driver made so many mistakes I don't know where to start! Seems to me he should'a been a suspicious cuss when he noted the outside air temperature to be two degrees. Doesn't take a math major to figure out that the freezin' level is pretty near the ground.

Then, of course, he never removed the screens which didn't help the engines much when he started to ice up. And why in the heck didn't he check with his local weather people before calling a weather facility miles away? UGH!

I can't say much for the pilot's surface navigation ability either - heading for the wrong side of the river. What was wrong with the wet compass? Oh well, all in all, a pretty poor showin'.

