



# grampaw pettibone

## Distraction/Retraction/Crunch

A crew was scheduled for a four-hour instrument training flight in a US-2B. Both pilots were experienced Naval Aviators, each having in excess of 1,000 flight hours. Following a standard brief, weather check and uneventful preflight, the crew departed a civilian airport to commence their flight.

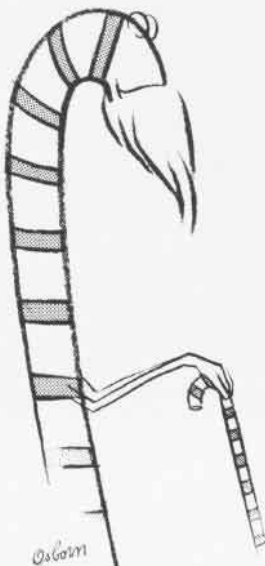
After approximately one hour and thirty minutes in the air, the pilot noticed a chip light and elected to land at the departure field. The primary instrument runway was closed for resurfacing so an ADF approach was begun to that runway with the intention of circling and landing on another runway.

The aircraft made an uneventful landing. The chip detector light was caused by an electrical malfunction and minor repair was made. The crew departed again. They planned to terminate the flight back at the same airport at the scheduled time in order to permit an afternoon crew to utilize the aircraft.

Nearing completion of the flight, the plane returned for landing. The airport had an unmanned tower but was equipped with VHF unicom for runway advisories. Unicom reported a certain runway was the "favored runway." Because the US-2B is not equipped with VHF, the crew did not receive this information. Approach control provided no runway advisory but gave the weather as 600 broken, wind calm.

The pilot at the controls elected to circle and land on the runway from which he had departed earlier. The actual weather was much better on the approach with 1,200 feet broken, and five to seven miles visibility.

A circling approach was commenced. On short final, with the landing checklist complete, a light civilian aircraft was observed approaching the runway apparently intending to land. The pilot initiated a wave-off, planning



to remain in the landing configuration. He set up for a left downwind to an alternate runway since the other traffic was using his runway. The copilot raised the gear after the power application and while they were making a right-hand turn to clear the traffic. The pilot did not realize the gear had been retracted.

At a close-abeam, left-hand 180-degree position, a misunderstanding existed between the two pilots. The pilot intended to land on the runway he was approaching but the copilot thought they would continue around

for another approach to the original runway.

During a dialogue concerning propeller and flap settings, brought about by the misunderstanding, the landing gear was never again considered and an unintentional wheels-up landing was made. There were no injuries; however, the aircraft required numerous man-hours to repair.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

**Blubberin' bellywhoppers! Must this continue to happen like clockwork? Why?**

The reasons are always the same:

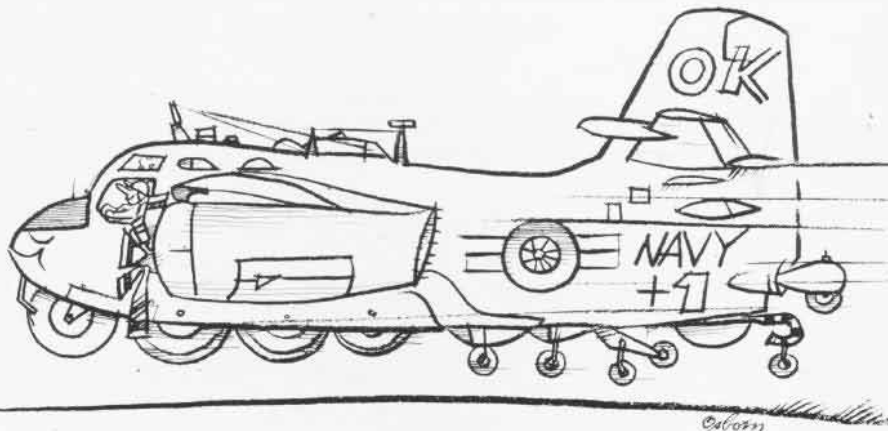
Distraction of some kind — in this case the other aircraft in the traffic pattern.

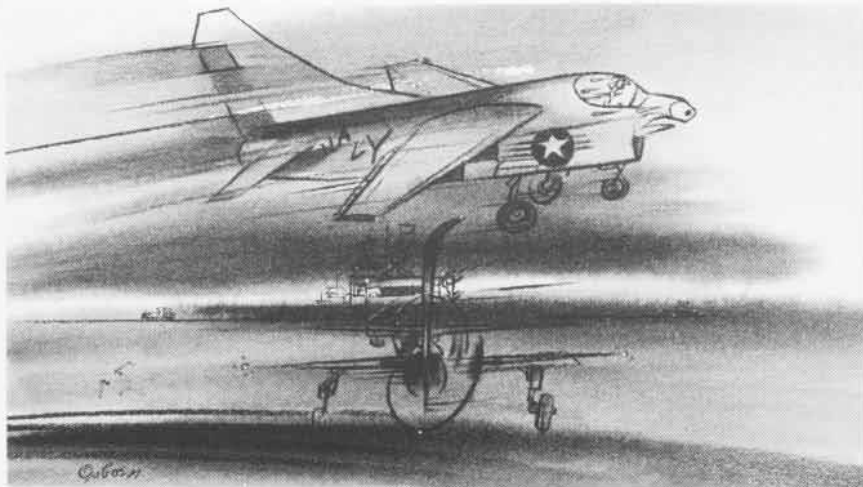
Failure to go over the checklist. The acting copilot was a lotta help by raising the "rollers" and not letting the pilot know it.

Who's in charge here!? Believe me gents, if you wanta avoid a "rollers-up" landing, go over the checklist!

## Close Shave

A night duty section was to tow a TA-4J *Skyhawk* across the field to the high-power maintenance turn-up area. The area was located east of the north-south dual runways. A radio truck was dispatched by the air sta-





tion operations department to serve as escort. The crew assigned to tow the TA-4 was qualified and the aircraft was properly lighted.

The escort truck arrived and the towing process began. The escort driver requested clearance from the tower to cross the north-south dual runways. Actually, he was on a different taxiway, west of the runways. The tower operator did not see the escort truck and asked if it was on the near side or far side of the runway in relation to the tower. The driver responded, "far side."

Still not having visual contact, the tower operator again asked the same question and received the same reply. Clearance was then issued for the TA-4 and tow vehicle to cross the first runway and hold short of the second runway due to landing traffic. The towed aircraft and truck proceeded across the runway *immediately in front of an A-7 making a touch-and-go landing*. Clearance between the lifting A-7 and truck and its tow was *approximately ten feet!*

 Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy Hannah! If you wanna close shave — see a barber!

Operating around an airfield, especially at night, requires the utmost care. Anyone charged with escorting towed or taxiing aircraft must be *completely*, I say again, *completely*, familiar with the airfield.

In this particular case the driver became disoriented and didn't know his location on the airfield. (I call that "ground vertigo.")

The tower operator had an oppor-

tunity to prevent this close call by knowing where the escort vehicle was *before* clearing him to cross *any* runway.

Unfortunately, things like this don't get much attention unless they wind up in a catastrophic accident.

I think it's a good idea for all air station ops officers to recheck all of their procedures and people relating to escorting aircraft. Nuff sed!

### Photo Bird

A lieutenant Naval Aviator and a sailor, who was to act as aerial photographer, were to fly a T-34 to photograph a civilian canoe race. The pilot had previous low-level navigation

photography. The T-34 arrived at the scene of the canoe race and the pilot made one pass but photos weren't taken. The area to be photographed was between peaks located in a valley. On the second pass, the pilot flew between the peaks at tree-top level.

While the pilot was looking for the subject, the T-34 port wing struck some one-fourth-inch utility wires. The wire hit the leading edge of the port wing and became entangled between the aileron and the flap and then partially wrapped around the vertical tail. The pilot climbed immediately, experiencing some difficulty because of the limited aileron/rudder movement available.

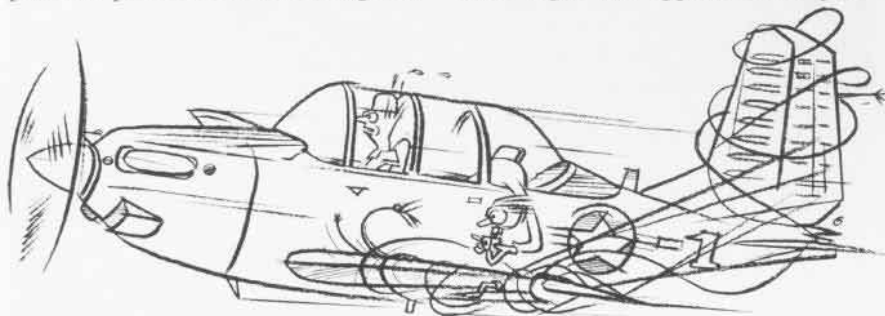
The "shocked" aviator flew the aircraft back to the civilian field and with some difficulty landed. The investigating team found that the aircraft had struck what was the lower of two "identical" wires suspended from wooden utility poles. The lower wire was located 50 feet above the ground.

The approval authority for this flight was unaware of the potential dangers involved in the mission.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy Hannah!!! I can't believe it. This is the worst violation of common sense that I've seen in a long time. Using a T-34 for a photo bird is really way out. Then, once the ill-fated flight was approved, the pilot



and air-to-ground photographic experience in fleet tactical aircraft. This was, however, to be the first attempt by both the photographer and the pilot from this type of aircraft.

Following completion of routine navigation planning, passenger brief and weather check, the T-34 departed a civilian field and proceeded to the area where the crew was to do the

should at least have made a higher altitude check and a "walk-down" of the area to be photographed.

One of the gents in the chain of command called this just as it was — a direct supervisory error! If you have an aerial photographic requirement, let the pro do it with the aircraft designed for it, with the equipment designed for it, with the people trained for it. Need I go on?