



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Tightrope Act

A young lieutenant junior grade replacement pilot (RP) and his lieutenant instructor pilot (IP) were scheduled for a two-plane navigation training hop in A-7 Corsair IIs. As is customary, the instructor pilot would fly in the chase position. The weather was predicted to be generally good in the area. The flight was to include both high and low-altitude navigation training.

The brief, preflight, start and subsequent departure were uneventful. The radars had ground-checked OK, but during the high-level portion of the flight the RP reported having difficulty with the radar display. The flight continued in hopes that the display would return on the low-level portion. During the low-level route, the RP entered a narrow valley with 1,500-foot hills to the right of track and 1,000-foot hills to the left.

He noticed a rise ahead and commenced a slight climb. At this time the RP noticed some power cables go underneath the aircraft, followed by a loud bang.

His Corsair had hit the static cable of a power line crossing the route of flight. Immediately following impact, he climbed and was joined by the IP. The IP informed the student that the

outer wing panel had been damaged. The instructor directed him to continue the climb and head south.

Then the IP detected additional damage on both sides of the intake area, a potential for foreign object damage to the engine. The IP didn't inform the pilot of this in order not to unduly alarm him.

The instructor asked the RP several



times if his engine indications were normal. The RP did not experience any control difficulties or notice any unstable engine indications. The instructor then elected to return 300 miles to home field instead of diverting to the nearest suitable airfield. A precautionary straight-in landing was executed upon return to home field.

The investigation revealed that the power lines were, in fact, listed on the navigation charts. The estimated height of the power lines was approximately 300 feet!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy Hannah! I wonder what happens to a "driver" who fails to avoid *obstructions* which are *listed* when he is in an actual situation which contains many *uncharted obstructions*!?!

Kinda funny that some people think we should raise the minimums for low-altitude work. Bull Hockey. The corrective action is to keep the eyeballs looking around, before and during the flight.

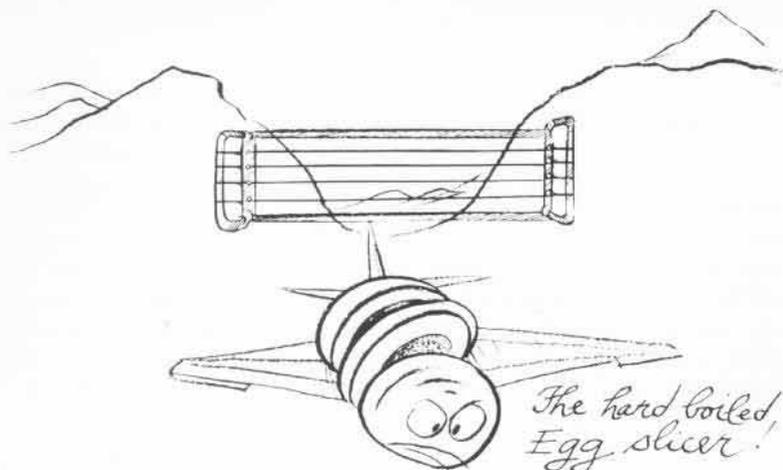
I take a dim view of the instructor in this case because he didn't have the damaged bird land at the *nearest* suitable field. All in all, we were darn lucky on this one.

Items for Disaster

This was to be the instructor's second hop of the day, a radio instrument training flight. Following a proper brief, he and his student departed the ready room for their assigned T-28 Trojan.

The preflight, taxi and run-up were uneventful and the Trojan was cleared number four for takeoff. As is customary on these flights, the instructor was in the front and the student in the rear seat.

As the aircraft ahead of him began



its takeoff roll, the instructor added 30 inches of manifold pressure and held brakes according to standard procedures. He noted an aircraft at the 180-degree position at this time. When the aircraft ahead had lifted, the instructor released the brakes and added power for takeoff.

The tower cleared the aircraft in the approach for landing. The instructor began rushing himself in order to expedite his takeoff. (Later the instructor did not recall scanning airspeed, map or engine rpm, but feels

striking the runway. As the prop continued to strike the runway, the prop, prop dome and reduction gears were torn away at the forward engine casing and became wedged under the aircraft against the nose gear strut.

The instructor did not use braking because he thought the aircraft would flip on its back. He used rudder to maintain runway alignment as the aircraft slid to a stop. Final resting point was approximately 100 feet right of centerline and 1,300 feet from the initial point of prop contact with the

Nostalgia

The crotchety old *Beechcraft* keeps provin' to pilots who have enough experience to know better that you can't take the *Bug Smasher* for granted. In spite of its advanced age, the *Beech* is still an aircraft that has to be flown skillfully with full knowledge of its systems and quirks of character. Here's a pretty good example:

Two Marine Aviators took off in an RC-45J (SNB-5P) intent on some GCA practice at a nearby naval air station. While en route they checked all systems thoroughly, including the autopilot, which is not standard equipment on most *Beeches*. After ten minutes or so, the autopilot push-pull switch located on the panel directly behind the prop controls was disengaged, although the autopilot amplifier switch was left "on."

The initial GCA approach was normal in all respects and carried through to a touchdown. The pilot let it roll out about 500 feet on the runway, then added takeoff power. Almost immediately the *Beech* commenced to nose down in an extremely tail high attitude. The pilot heard the props hit the runway as he exerted all the back pressure he could muster on the yoke. The plane became airborne and reached an altitude of 50 to 60 feet, but with such severe engine vibration present that the pilot re-landed it immediately.

The flight controls were apparently locked and only freed after the engines were secured. As the props stopped, eight inches of each tip could be seen, bent back 90 degrees. No wonder they vibrated!



Grampaw Pettibone says:

When he checked the props full forward on the roll-out, this pilot engaged the autopilot by bumping the "off-on" switch with his knuckles. If he'd shut off the power amplifier switch, this never would have happened. Another "I didn't know it was loaded" story. This was a kind of a pre-loaded booby trap though—this item is *nowhere* on the pilots' check-off lists. (April 1963)



sure that he utilized 48 inches map and full rpm for takeoff. The student stated that 48 inches and 2,700 rpm were utilized, but he did not note airspeed.)

During the takeoff sequence, the instructor judged that the aircraft had become airborne since he did not feel any of the "bumps" which he associated with gear contacting the runway. He also felt he was "moving at a pretty good rate." He began raising the gear handle. As soon as the gear handle began coming up, he realized that it was too soon for this transition and immediately placed the gear handle down. He did not have to overcome pressure while raising or lowering the gear handle.

Almost immediately the main gear re-extended fully but the forward stick pressure, induced by the instructor, trapped the nose wheel between the aircraft and the runway and thus prevented full extension. The prop began

runway. The instructor blew the canopy open as the aircraft came to a stop. Both pilots unstrapped and egressed uninjured.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Oh my achin' ulcer! This instructor had a very consistent day—he did everything wrong!

To begin with he was "self medicating" himself in spite of the fact that this item was mentioned recently at the "all pilots" meetings. He had had a "couple of sandwiches" to eat all day (no breakfast). He was "rushing" himself. As he later mentioned, he was over-confident about the flight. And he was distracted by landing traffic. The final result was raising the gear handle early—that simple.

It becomes clear that all of these adverse items lead to disaster. Any time you feel "rushed" or "distracted," slow down and take stock of things lest you wind up like this fella.