



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE



The Big Demonstration

A crew was scheduled for a shipboard operations training flight in an H-46 *Sea Knight*. The flight was to include shipboard landing qualifications for the copilot. Following a complete briefing, the H-46 departed home plate for the ship which was a short distance out to sea. The pilot-in-command (PIC) occupied the left seat with the pilot-under-instruction in the right seat.

The PIC announced his intention to demonstrate the first approach and flight attitudes associated with various hover modes. Ten miles from the ship, he took the controls and notified the crew to man stations for landing. At about five miles he requested landing clearance from the ship. He received the winds, the ship's course and the deck conditions. He confirmed the wind by visually checking the ship's smoke.

The *Sea Knight* was approaching on a southerly heading to the starboard of the ship. An initial low pass was made around the ship, passing astern, and a right turn commenced to permit the

pilot-under-instruction to view the flight deck. During the low pass, a "green deck" condition was received from the ship. The landing approach was commenced about 500-1,000 yards from the ship's starboard beam at an altitude of approximately 200 feet for an athwart ships approach and landing. At 200-300 yards from the ship, the airspeed was noted as 40 knots. The landing signal director was on the flight deck center giving line-up signals. As the approach continued, the landing signal director moved backwards along the landing centerline to the middle of the port touchdown circle. The aircraft's approach was slow, flat and low.

As the nose of the aircraft crossed over the flight deck, the director moved backwards and to the left. During the transition for final landing, the pilot (in the left seat) began to have some difficulty seeing the director since the latter was in his blind spot. The pilot lowered the collective and continued forward.

The right main mount hit a mooring bitt and sound-powered phone junction box. The middle of the aircraft's stub wings and main fuselage settled onto these obstructions and the deck edge. The pilot asked the first crewman to find out what was wrong. The crewman reported an external fuel

leak. The pilot requested over the radio that the ship tie down the aircraft. When there was no response from the ship's personnel and after determining that the aircraft was controllable, the pilot lifted and safely repositioned the helicopter onto the flight deck.

The pilot secured the engines without starting the auxiliary power unit for fear of fire. Once the rotors stopped, the flight deck crew began to wash the fuel off the deck. There were no injuries. However, the aircraft sustained damage which required over 150 man-hours to repair.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great gallopin' ghosts! The potential here for a "fire on deck" was fantastic! Talk about "uncoordinated effort." First of all the pilot made a low approach (some "demonstration" to the pilot he was checking out), then he over-rotated. The landing signal director never knew which pilot was making the approach, so he moved in position to be seen by the other pilot - Great!

The thing that bothers me is why the heck didn't the pilot wave-off when he lost sight of the landing director! That's too simple, I guess! Could this be a case of too much pride on the part of the pilot in that he was demonstrating "how to do it" to the other pilot? Think about it.



ILLUSTRATED BY

Opbom



Chain Gang

The pilot and his radar intercept officer (RIO) commenced their briefing for a practice instrument training flight. They covered the route to be taken and the conduct of the flight. The pilot was an experienced aviator with over 3,000 hours and more than 800 hours in the F-4 *Phantom*.

Following the weather check and filing of the flight plan, the two airmen completed a preflight, strapped in and made an uneventful departure. The flight route was to an airfield approximately 350 miles away where the crew planned on hot-refueling and returning to base. This portion of the flight was conducted without incident as was the hot-refueling.

The *Phantom* departed for the return night flight, climbing to 18,000 feet for the first part of the hop. Passing a predetermined point, the pilot climbed to 40,000 feet in an effort to burn excess fuel. Prior to descending to home base, 1,000-1,500 pounds of fuel were dumped to further reduce landing weight.

Passing 7,000 feet on descent, north of the airport, the aircrew was switched from the center frequency to local approach control. The *Phantom* pilot was told "to expect radar vectors to the runway entry point." The surface winds were reported to have a velocity of five knots. The aircrew requested radar vectors to a GCA.

They then received a radar vector to fly a heading of 190 and were told to expect "radar vectors to the preci-

sion final runway." This runway was 7,000 feet long. At this time the RIO asked the pilot if he wanted to land on the long runway. The pilot declined and assured the RIO that he could land safely.

While on vectors for final approach, the pilot and copilot discussed arresting gear locations on the runway. The pilot decided to make a long field arrestment in the event of a drag chute failure. A normal GCA was flown with clearance to land given at three miles on final and winds reported at five knots by GCA.

At decision height the aircraft was slightly above the glide path and on course. An on-speed touchdown was made 500 feet down the runway. The drag chute was deployed on touchdown but failed to blossom. At 120 knots the pilot commenced very gentle braking. At mid-field (3,500 feet remaining) the air speed was approximately 110-120 knots.

The pilot then lowered the tailhook with the intention of engaging the long field arresting gear. The arresting gear marker was unlighted. Passing 1,500 feet remaining and feeling no engagement, the pilot selected afterburner, jettisoned the drag chute and initiated a go-around.

The aircraft, in full afterburner, engaged the chain arresting gear located 950 feet from the departure end of the runway on centerline. When he realized he had engaged the arresting gear, the pilot pulled both throttles to off. The aircraft continued to decelerate as it entered the prepared

overrun.

The aircraft departed the end of the overrun, continued approximately 160 feet over an unprepared surface and entered a saltwater pond at a speed of 15-20 knots with the arresting cable still attached to the tailhook.

The pilot and RIO exited the aircraft unassisted, walking along the top of the fuselage and stepping from the stabilator to the pond bank.

Neither crew member received any injuries. The aircraft remained semi-submerged in the pond for approximately six hours before the recovery was completed. The aircraft sustained extensive saltwater corrosion damage.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!!! How could so many mistakes be made in one flight? On drag chute failure this driver should'a immediately two-blocked and gone around like Natops sez! When you add this to the pilot's unfamiliarity with the runway, using that runway at his aircraft weight and poor braking technique, this gent just dug the hole deeper and brought himself nearer to disaster. The RIO could have made a stronger case for the longer runway instead of just suggestin' it!

There was a lotta talk about this accident being helped along by the conditions existing at the airfield — as one endorser puts it, hogwash! We just don't have the money to fill in every "pond" or correct what appears to become a discrepancy only when some driver violates Natops. Then we hear the cry WOLF! Nuff sed!