



grampaw pettibone

Fuel Saved — Aircraft Lost

An SH-2 was away from NAS Home Plate completing a cross-country instrument training flight. It stopped at AFB #1 for fuel and would require an additional stop at AFB #2 prior to arriving at that day's final destination. Before leaving AFB #1, the aircraft was fueled with JP-4.

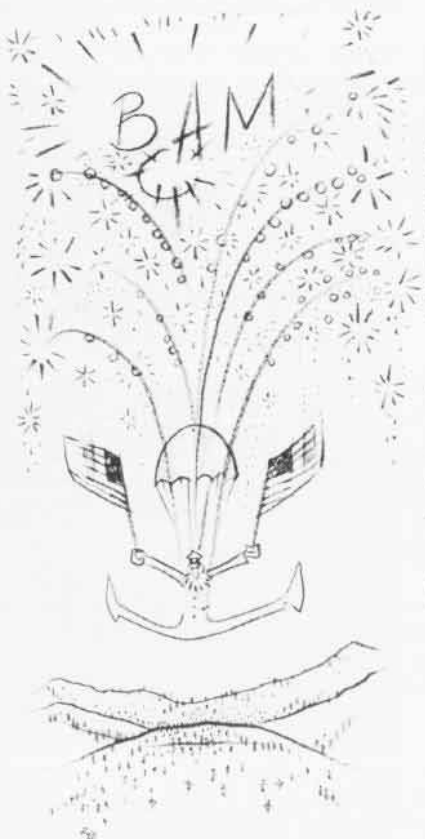
The only preflight discrepancy noted was a slight oil leak in the vicinity of the number one engine speed deaccelerator gearbox. Preflight checks were normal. After some difficulty in getting both engines started, the aircraft departed for AFB #2. Because transient service would be closed by the time they arrived, the pilot in command elected to re-file in-flight to an NAS en route that would have transient service available at their ETA.

The request for change of routing was approved and the flight continued climbing to assigned altitude. The crew next noticed that the auxiliary fuel system had failed to pressurize and that fuel transfer was not possible. The cause was suspected to be an open fuel precheck panel door which prevented auxiliary fuel tank pressurization.

The aircraft commander computed and the copilot confirmed that the NAS refueling stop was still attainable with either single or dual engines. In order to increase the fuel reserve for landing, the aircraft commander elected to secure his number two engine and continue on his re-filed route of flight.

Consideration was also given to diverting to four possible landing sites. The ultimate decision was to "press on" on single engine.

At approximately 6,000 feet, 39 miles south of the NAS refueling stop, the *Seasprite* crew heard a loud scream from the number one engine and saw flames and sparks erupting. The aircraft commander took control



of the helo from the copilot and entered autorotation. The number one engine was secured while an attempt was made to start number two. It failed to start and, after several tries, it was secured.

The crew tried to restart number one but it oversped and was secured again. An attempt to autorotate to a private airstrip along the flight path was made but the SH-2 touched down about 600 feet short of the runway. The helo landed tail first and rolled over on its side, sustaining strike damage. The crew egressed uninjured.

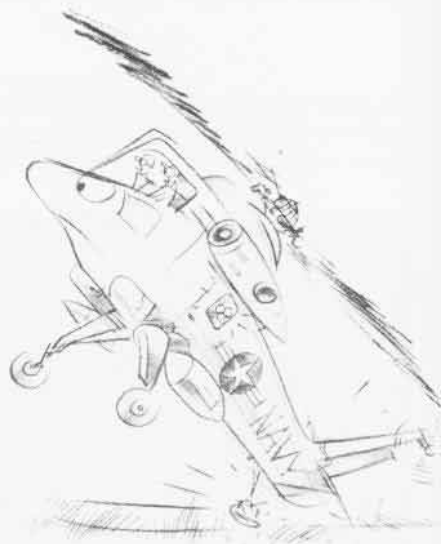


Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy smokes! Charge this one to a faulty safety device — between the ears. These fellers were obsessed with gettin' to their final destination. First they decided they could

fly a trip segment routinely on a single engine. Next they elected to shut down the only engine developing power before bringing the other engine up to speed. There is strong evidence to suggest the copilot never recognized the number two engine had actually attained idle power and kept attempting restarts.

It would have been a lot more professional if this crew had turned around when the fuel transfer problem was first encountered and AFB #1 was only 25 minutes away. How long would it have taken to secure the suspected fuel precheck panel door? Passing up available divert fields was just plain foolish. This was a preventable loss and that really upsets my ulcers. Don't ever be so anxious to "get on down the road" that you lose foresight and sound judgment.



Blow the Bugle — Beat the Drum

Your ole Gramps wishes to acknowledge the aeroplane flyers and fixers of VA-37 who have completed six years of accident-free A-7 driving. A sensational all-hands effort never before accomplished by a single jet jockey CV bomb dropping outfit. I got so excited one of my suspenders broke. Good on you guys! Whoopee!

Pettibone's Mailbag

Dear Gramps,

I am a naval reserve officer and captain for a major commercial airline, with 23 years aviation experience. On my drill weekends, I have access to *Naval Aviation News* and particularly enjoy G.P. The recurring accident themes I have read and continue to read prompted this letter. I sometimes wonder if we aviators will ever get it all together and reduce the accidents resulting from judgment, supervisory and pilot error. Specific recurring errors I have noted over my career cover a wide spectrum and include:

- supervisory disregard for Natops
- supervisors succumbing to the pressure of operational necessity
- supervisory disregard for aircrew fatigue

aircrews flying low altitude routes with no idea of en route altitudes, topography or hazards

aircrews who do minimum cross-country flight planning

aircrews who consider only VFR conditions and are not prepared when IFR conditions are encountered

aircrews who are in such a hurry to launch that they launch with a wingman who is marginally briefed

aircrews who only nod in agreement with a flight weather briefer and do not ask questions about the content or significance of the briefing

aircrews who, once away from home plate, perform flathatting or unauthorized flight maneuvers

aircrews who do not use FSS metro en route

aircrews who perform IFR section departures on cross-country flights with existing weather below minimums for a return landing should it be necessary

aircrews who never question the pilot-in-command or flight leader just because he is senior or is the squadron Hot Rock

aircrews who do not routinely use the takeoff, penetration or landing checklist

aircrews who overstress aircraft and don't report it

aircrews who won't admit when they are too fatigued to fly or emotionally upset by severe personal problems that make them safer on the ground

aircrews who still suffer from get-home-itis

aircrews who still confuse exceptional skill with faulty judgment

aircrews who think a wave-off or missed approach is a sign of weakness

aircrews who fail to recognize the importance of reporting flagrant flight violations to proper authority

aircrews who still fail to recognize

SOP violations as indicators of poor pilot judgment vice superior piloting ability.

Hopefully, you can share this list with your readers and the minority it addresses will take heed.

I. M. Concerned



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Amen! Aircrews and supervisory types can use this list as a review of past and current problems. Read ye the list and heed this shipmate. He has spoken the truth! Perhaps it will be news to pilots and NFOs of recent vintage, but the aviation types referred to in this letter have been around a long time. Only their gravestones are different. Nowadays you gotta do more than kick the tires and twang the wires!

