



GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

The Hurtin' Hercules

Cockpit instrument reconfiguration for a special KC-130 *Hercules* night training mission was completed and a post-maintenance check flight was scheduled. Shortly after takeoff, the check pilot felt a peculiar airframe vibration. A quick check of the cockpit instruments showed nothing amiss but as flight controls were moved, the vibrations increased in frequency and intensity. The pilot yelled to his crewman, "Check the hydraulic pressure!"

Flight control inputs had erratic effects and the vibrations were now violent. The crewman yelled to the pilot, "Get out, get out! This thing is coming apart!" Needing no further encouragement, the pilot made a hasty exit through the back hatch with great vigor. He leaped and landed safely on a platform about six feet from the crashed cockpit section of the *Hercules*. No fire ensued.

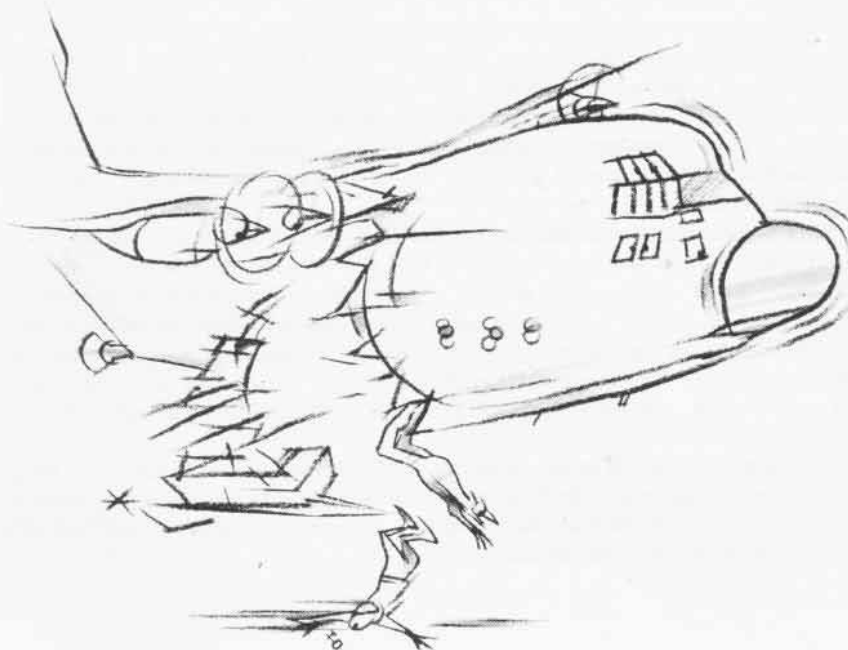


Grampaw Pettibone says:



Holy loco motion!

After all my years in this aviatin' business I thought I had seen it all,



but this one knocks my socks off!

This mishap occurred when the number one motion leg of the KC-130 simulator (2F-107) malfunctioned during normal operation of the six-degree motion base platform. For reasons still unknown, the hydraulic ram shaft disconnected from the piston actuator and came out of the cylinder assembly. This caused the vibrations when the motion system was activated and forced the cockpit to an extreme canted position where the remaining cylinders could not support the 22,000-pound device. The left rear portion of the simulator collapsed with a resounding thud; its steel platform penetrated four inches into the concrete deck, illustrating a most vivid example of an age-old aviation adage, "When the pistons start poppin', that's when the flight's stoppin'" — simulated or otherwise!

The complete motion base assembly was extensively damaged. Surprisingly, the simulator hardware and visual system functioned normally, once righted, and has since been returned to service sans motion system.

It may appear that we have finally arrived in this simulatin' business, gang. Seems we are able to provide that "stimulated" fear-of-death realism that was so noticeably missing in ye old blue box rides of yesteryear.

This pilot received only minor bruises because the hatch from which he jumped was about six feet from the simulator access platform.

Flight simulators are vitally necessary and are highly effective when properly used. This one was, except for the fact that it was being operated with a known discrepancy in the motion arm, the part that ultimately failed. Lack of spare parts was cited.

We buy aircraft to fly 'em. Mean-

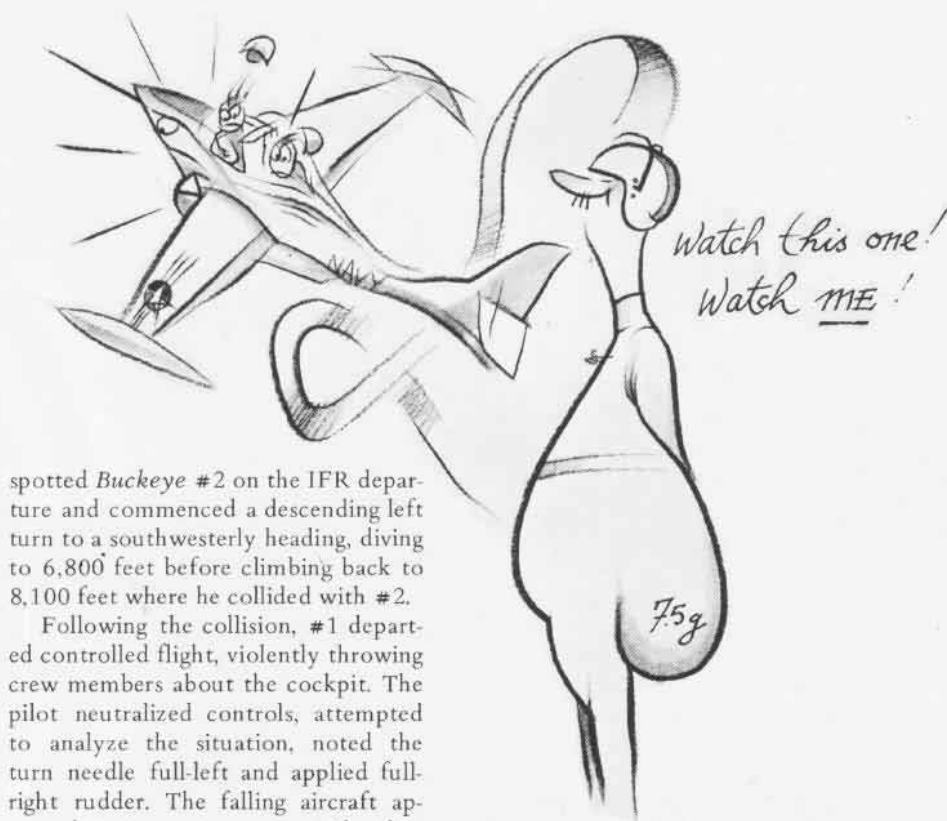
while, we're much better off figuring how to simulate accidents than havin' them for real.

Thump - Bump - Jump

"I'll see you first this time!" . . . "No way, you still owe me a coke for the last time," exchanged the pilots as they manned their assigned T-2C *Buckeyes*. One was flown by an instructor and a student on a training flight, *Buckeye #2*. The other pilot was on a post-maintenance check flight (PMCF) in *Buckeye #1* with another aviator on board.

Buckeye #1 took off on a VFR clearance. *Buckeye #2* was holding short for clearance and the pilot said to his student, "Watch out for those guys, they're going to try to mess with us in the air." At 1105, #2 departed IFR and proceeded to the working area. At 1107, IFR control was terminated and the aircraft continued on a southerly heading, wings level, climbing. After it traveled about two miles and reaching 8,100 feet, an explosive impact suddenly threw the aircraft into a nose-high, left-wing down attitude. The startled instructor took control. Noting both engines unwinding, he attempted dual air starts while turning back toward home field. The starboard engine relight attempt was unsuccessful but the port engine regained partial power (70 percent). *Buckeye #2* continued an emergency approach to home field as the student dumped fuel and transmitted Mayday calls. They executed a safe midfield arrested landing.

After takeoff, *Buckeye #1* had climbed to 3,000 feet, leveled off, accelerated, and at 11 miles south, executed a rapid climbing left turn to the north to an altitude of 10,700 feet. He



spotted *Buckeye #2* on the IFR departure and commenced a descending left turn to a southwesterly heading, diving to 6,800 feet before climbing back to 8,100 feet where he collided with #2.

Following the collision, #1 departed controlled flight, violently throwing crew members about the cockpit. The pilot neutralized controls, attempted to analyze the situation, noted the turn needle full-left and applied full-right rudder. The falling aircraft appeared to recover momentarily, but then departed controlled flight again.

The pilot decided to eject and pulled the lower handle but got no response. He reached for the upper handle, pulled it, but got no response. The back seat passenger, noting the pilot's attempt to eject, pulled his lower seat handle as the pilot pulled the face curtain the second time. Both crewmen were ejected and parachuted to a safe landing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy colossal collision! This has got to be one of the poorest displays of airmanship in Old Gramps' log.

The pilot of *Buckeye #1* said that his intention was to join up (unbriefed) with the other aircraft. However, the

excessive closure rate and other evidence strongly suggests he intended to thump or fly under at high speed and pull up immediately in front of the other aircraft, forcing it to fly through his jet wash. The objective was to startle the thumped aircrew.

This pilot had a reputation of being exceptionally aggressive, self-assured and even a braggart. He was also considered a fully capable aviator. He had overstressed his aircraft (7.5 Gs), executing a carrier-break at home field on a previous flight.

The price for stupidity was one T-2C and significant damage to the other. Miraculously, there were only minor injuries to two of the four aircrewmen involved. Old Gramps experienced a severe rash!