

GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Old and Bold?

A gathering storm, punctuated by gusting winds, thunder, heavy rain and plentiful bolts of lightning, was moving swiftly toward the C-131F's destination, an East Coast air station. Although cautioned that the already bad weather was deteriorating, the aircraft commander decided to continue. In the approach, the *Samaritan* broke out temporarily at 600 feet. The aircraft commander pointed out the runway to the copilot who was at the controls and, despite the rain-splashed, distorted view and below-minimum visibility, the transport continued to touchdown. Hydroplaning a bit, it traveled about 1,000 feet down the runway before a sudden blast of crosswind blew the machine off the port side of the runway. The nose gear

struck an old asphalt-covered arresting gear support and mound and collapsed. Both props struck the ground, causing sudden engine stoppage. It was ultimately decided to strike the bird from the inventory.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

What a pain in the pancreas! I feel like hurlin' a few lightning bolts at somebody. This experienced aircraft commander, an O5, pressed on in violation of NATOPS by entering known severe thunderstorm weather without an operable weather radar on board. Turns out that preflight briefing and in-flight crew coordination were way below par to begin with. That crosswind, by the way, was part



Hurrah, Hooray, the joys of May! but gentlemen, pay ATTENTION!

of the downburst from a thunderstorm cell and was calculated to be 48 knots!

Some other accidents in the recent past involved experienced flyers and this adverse trend prickles my neck hairs. Samples:

- Practicing a single-engine landing, a very experienced C-12 crew forgot the wheels, sparked the runway with the props, waved off, secured the severely vibrating right engine and made a real live, single power plant recovery.
- A very experienced fighter crew was making a single-engine carrier approach, got slow and uncontrollable and had to punch out.
- Flying a low-level awareness training hop, a very experienced attack pilot flew into the ground and was killed.

You old, bold heads, beware! Remember, you're supposed to be settin' the example.

ILLUSTRATED BY *Osborn*

Toxic Tales

A C-118B *Liftmaster* was slated to haul cargo that didn't properly match the manifest. The aircraft commander rejected the load. An on-scene departure commander representing the load's "owners" was unavailable. All cruise boxes were opened and reexamined, a task that took five and a half hours. Improperly purged CSDs, fuel hoses and a hydraulic bowser were discovered.

During a transport evolution overseas, a C-130 was on the runway, holding for release from the tower, when the loadmaster reported fumes emanating from a palletized NS-2 light cart. The *Hercules* taxied back to the loading area. There was no fuel gauge and a screen inside the filler neck prevented a dip check. A shipping document indicated that the NS-2 had been serviced with one-fourth of a tank of diesel fuel. But the filler neck was damp from sloshing and the tank turned out to be full. The cart was defueled, reloaded and carried to its destination.

A loadmaster saw orange-hued fluid draining from a container being moved by forklift to a *Hercules* for transport. Movement stopped, the container was opened, and inside lay cans and bottles in a state of disarray. The fluid was presumed to be turbine engine lubricant. After repacking, the container was hoisted aboard for an uneventful flight.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Early on in this aviatin' business, the word "toxic" made you think of somethin' served up at a back-alley pub on the western front. Nowadays, toxic substances — hazardous materials — can spell big trouble. Get careless totin' this snakey stuff around and you're askin' for a prime-time nightmare. It can be flammable or in other ways dangerous to health.

Ladies and gents, the trend is scary. I'm seein' too many reports like the ones above.

Prepare such materials as if you were going to sit next to them on a long hop at altitude. For those of you accountable for such transactions, the bible is NAVSUPP 505. Crews should



receive special training, like CinCLant-Flt's workshop at NAS Norfolk. Packaging, certifying and handling hazardous cargo is no less important than properly cinching down a Hornet on the number one cat!

Lighting the Way

The hard-working HH-2D *Seasprite* crew was at an overseas location transporting passengers and cargo from ship to shore sites. After more than two hours of operations, the helicopter landed aboard the det's host ship, took on three passengers, an external load of cargo slings, pallets, etc. and, with 400 pounds of fuel remaining, launched for a shore site 10 miles away. En route, the 30-minute fuel light flickered intermittently but the *Seasprite* continued, made the scheduled stop and took off for a second shore site 14 miles away. On this leg the warning light became steady. After a quick stop, the helo took off again with a little over 200 pounds of fuel and aimed for the ship, 19 miles away. There was minimum discussion in the cockpit about the diminishing fuel state despite the steady 30-minute light.

The *Seasprite* flew at 110 knots airspeed in an attempt to increase range. Halfway to the ship the copilot reduced rpm to 103 percent. Then as the ship came into view the

fuel boost light illuminated, one minute after which both engines flamed out. The fuel totalizer showed 30-50 pounds at the time. The pilot in command radioed the ship that the helo was going down (the ship's first indication that the *Seasprite* had problems) and autorotated to impact. The H-2 rolled left as all four aircrewmembers egressed safely, and then went belly-up, lingering on the surface for about seven minutes before sinking. A ship's lifeboat retrieved the flyers shortly thereafter.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Fumin' fuel tanks! This *Seasprite* dang near up and told the pilots: "Hurry, feed me some fuel!" But the wicked demon complacency struck again. Takes only 10 to 15 minutes from request to hookup for hot refueling, and no operational commander is gonna kick if an aircrew takes a needed gas break.

These folks got too settled in the routine of point-to-point flying, dug themselves into a hole that got deeper every minute, and didn't even try shutting down one engine for a last-gasp leg to the ship. Brain power took a holiday.

The thought of a perfectly good whirlybird slippin' to the bottom with home base in sight busts my gut. Ain't no excuse for this one.