

Three's a Crowd

A T-2C *Buckeye* rolled down the runway and rose into the hot, southern sky. As it did so, a UFO, quickly identified as a sizable black and yellow bee, buzzed the instructor in the aft seat, then winged into the front cockpit. The student Naval Aviator (SNA) forward was startled but quickly calmed himself and did battle with the intruder. The student won but the bee went down with his stinger stinging, through the flyer's glove, no less.

There was redness at the point of impact but the SNA felt fine and wanted to continue the flight. After an hour in the air, however, his hand was swollen. The *Buckeye* landed safely and the student was grounded for two days of treatment.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

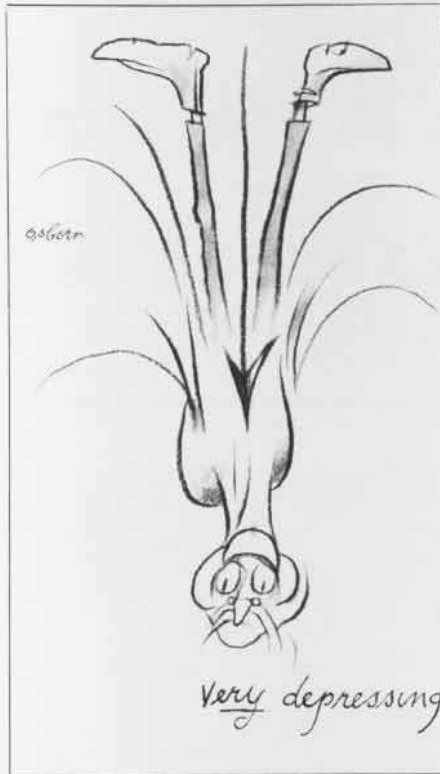
Reminds me of a long ago story, never fully proved, but worth tellin'. A highly experienced pilot in a single-engine prop plane was making practice night dive-bombing runs. There was no sign of trouble with him or his bird, but he flew into the ground anyway and was killed. So I was told, a bee was found imbedded in his forehead. Could very well be that the creature stung and distracted the veteran to the point that he lost control — and his life.

Ole Gramps doesn't want anybody hung up on what the dictionary calls *Apis mellifera* (bee), but don't take 'em lightly.

Gramps Looks Back to the Training Command, Circa WW II

Solo Flight

A cadet pilot landed at an outlying field, retarded throttle, set parking brakes and left his N2S-4 unattended, with the engine running, while he walked over to chat with two other pilots. The little "yellow fighter" took in the situation and considered the time opportune to make a dash for freedom. Its throttle began to creep forward, the



brakes became disengaged and the plane began to move. The cadet, observing the motion, ran to his plane and grabbed a wing, but by this time speed had increased so that he was unable to do more than just hang on, causing the plane to commence a series of ever widening circles. Speed continued to build up and the cadet lost his hold, admitting defeat by turning tail and scampering over a fence to safety.

The other two students joined the chase, also leaving their planes with engines running, unattended. The contest proved too much for these last two entrants and they were forced to return to their own planes and taxi them out of danger. By this time, the renegade N2S was pretty mad, digging a wing into the ground now and then just to show its temper. At last the little fighter apparently became weary of the sport and decided to spread its wings. Speed was sufficient so that when coming into the wind for the last

time, the plane straightened out, took off and climbed normally until reaching an altitude of about 50 feet, at which time it apparently decided to make a steep turn and zoom the field downward. But like so many foolishly piloted planes before it, this trainer stalled in the turn and dived to earth.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Wasn't that funny! I smiled, too, but the thing that wiped the smile off my face was the realization that an airplane was completely wiped out because a pilot deliberately disobeyed orders. The money value of this plane was approximately \$10,000, but money won't replace the loss of critical materiel and labor involved. (Reprinted from January 15, 1944).

Ejection Rejection

A T-2C *Buckeye* on a familiarization flight was warming up for aerobatics with a vertical recovery maneuver. The instructor pilot (IP), while demonstrating the maneuver to his student, noticed the number 2 hydraulic pressure fall to 0 psi, but quickly return to normal. (A drop or fluctuation in hydraulic pressures during this particular maneuver is not uncommon.) Upon completion of the IP's demo, the student Naval Aviator (SNA) in the forward cockpit took control as the IP coached him through a similar maneuver. The SNA commenced a 4-G pull at 280 knots, 11,000 feet. At approximately 80 degrees nose up, 180 knots, 15,000 feet, the SNA initiated a recovery by applying forward stick to five units angle of attack with power advanced to military.

During the recovery, the number 1 and 2 hydraulic pressures fell to 0 psi. The IP took control and with maximum backstick pressure applied could not bring the stick back to the neutral position. He then told the SNA to help pull. With no effect and the aircraft passing 7,000 feet, 300 knots and a nose attitude approaching 90 degrees nose down,

ILLUSTRATED BY *Osborn*

the IP called for ejection. The SNA pulled the upper ejection handle without result. He then pulled the lower ejection handle. Again, no ejection.

The aircraft was beginning a dramatic buildup of negative Gs as it accelerated downward through the inverted position. The IP was unable to reach his upper or lower ejection handle as he was forced to the canopy by excessive negative Gs. The aircraft continued through its uncontrolled 'outside' loop at 2,000 feet AGL and 400 knots. As the aircraft transitioned to a nose-up attitude, inverted, at the completion of its outside

loop, the IP suddenly regained elevator authority. With full control of the aircraft, the IP returned to base for an otherwise uneventful landing.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Whew! What a wingdinger of a roller coaster ride these gents had!

Due to a mix-up during post-flight examination of the T-2's elevator boost actuator, the cause of this hazardous condition is undetermined. The hydraulic and flight control systems otherwise

checked out okay. It's possible that the lead seal on the elevator boost pack may have been the culprit. The aircraft should have been flyable with the boost off.

The best lesson from this loop-the-loop adventure focuses on ejection procedures. The IP forgot to tell the student to reposition the ejection command selector handle. Even though both flyers were harnessed in tight and locked, the increasing negative Gs prevented the IP from initiating ejection.

These Buckeye drivers lucked out. Others in the community should take a hard look at ejection procedure briefings. And be wary of control loss possibilities during such maneuvers.

From the Mailbag

Dear Gramps,

While reading "And How Was Your Day?" in the July-August 1986 issue, I was reminded of a situation involving the loss of radios on a carrier recovery with a VS squadron. I was the plane's AW2 sensor operator.

It was a night recovery. An errant lightning bolt zapped the aircraft, disabling our HF and UHF radios. The situation was sticky and ejection was discussed when I remembered that we still had four radios in excellent condition aboard. The aircraft commander reminded me that the lightning had knocked out our radios and asked me to please stop jabbering while we were in an emergency state.

Four radios remaining following an in-flight lightning strike? Yep! PRC-90s in each SV-2 left pocket. So, Vinegar 607, ON GUARD! A little reshuffling of the stack, and eventual recovery on board USS *America* (CV-66).

Please reemphasize to all readers that the contents of the SV-2 needn't be saved until the aircraft is abandoned.

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Grampaw Pettibone says:

Well done to AZ1 Coleburn!

