

NANews thought its readers would like to see what Gramps was saying 10, 20 and 30 years ago.

The AWOL Bomb

About 0830 one morning a practice bomb (Mk76) was found downtown, USA, inside an English muffin delivery truck belonging to a local bakery. Military ordnance personnel were quickly dispatched to investigate. They determined that the bomb was inert. The truck's roof was extensively torn where the bomb was reported to have entered. (A damage assessment to English muffins was not readily available.)

The muffin man refused to release the bomb to naval personnel because he needed it for insurance purposes. The identification numbers of the bomb were noted but could not be matched with any "lot" numbers assigned to nearby military bases. Local military and FAA authorities investigated all possible aircraft which could have dropped the bomb — without success. Further investigation traced the bomb to its home base which was over 500 miles away. No connection



could be made between the subject Mk76 and any aircraft.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy bomb squad! Looks like a clear case of muffin' up! You could easily leap to the wrong conclusion on this one. Downtown yet! Well, some good investigating shed light on the mystery of whodun-it — and it wasn't an airplane. Allegedly, a

young lad who was AWOL from the service and driving the muffin truck had misappropriated a practice Mk76. He had accidentally torn the truck's roof when he drove under an overhanging tree branch. He returned the vehicle without reporting the damage. Next time the truck was used, a different driver discovered the hole and found the Mk76 in the back. Understandably, the owner concluded that the bomb was dropped by an airplane.

Sometimes, what seems obvious at the outset disintegrates in the face of evidence. In this case, an airplane didn't assault English muffins. Nuff sed!

(February 1979)

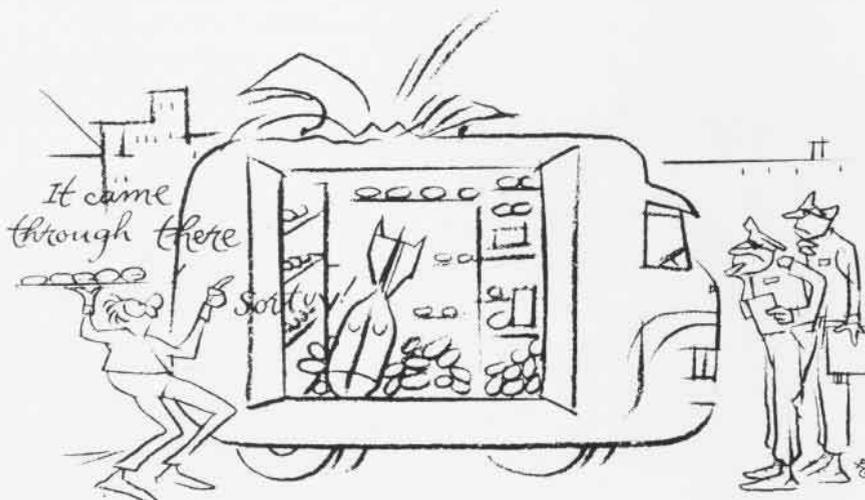
Short Flight

At 0700 one bright frosty winter morning in the Midwest, a Naval aviator/recruiting officer, arrived at the local airport and met his passenger for a flight in a T-34B *Mentor*. The flight was to be a short orientation/indoctrination hop around the city.

Since the assigned plane captain had not yet arrived, the pilot untied the aircraft and performed his own pre-flight inspection. As he helped strap his passenger into the rear seat, he briefed him thoroughly on bailout and general emergency procedures. The pilot then completed the prestart checks but could not start the engine.

The two men then exited the cockpit, and the pilot proceeded to another T-34. Having no difficulty in starting up, he shut down and conducted a pre-flight inspection and again helped strap the passenger in. Climbing into the front cockpit, the pilot started the engine and, as they waited for it to warm up, read the checklist over the interphone to the passenger. When the oil temperature reached 40 degrees, they taxied out. The pilot, on noting the windsock dangling, decided to use the 2,400-foot sod runway with the fewest obstructions beyond the far end. Actually the wind was four knots downwind.

Run-up and engine checks were normal, the takeoff checklist was completed and off they went. At 60 knots,





the nose was raised and the *Mentor* lifted off but then settled back. After further acceleration, it became airborne again at 65 to 70 knots. At 10 to 15 feet altitude, the landing gear was retracted; at 20 to 30 feet, the left wing dropped to about 30 degrees of bank. The pilot immediately leveled the wings, thinking his passenger had inadvertently hit the stick. The wing dropped again and remained there momentarily. As the airspeed decreased and the nose came up, the little plane started to settle and mush toward the ground.

Realizing that he was going down and suspecting a loss of power, the pilot concentrated on keeping the wings as level as possible. The right wing hit first, then the aft fuselage. The craft bounced once, then skidded to a halt on its belly on the frozen sod, 950 feet beyond the end of the runway.

Pilot and passenger quickly left the aircraft after securing the switches to prevent possible fire. The pilot's only comment, heard by witnesses as he walked away, was, "I don't know what happened."



Grampaw Pettibone says:

It happens every winter. Whether it be a T-34, S-2, T-33 or an F-9, the reason is always the same. Why? Don't they teach aerodynamics in preflight anymore? Even ol' Gramps is familiar with laminar and turbulent boundary layer air flow and lift versus drag. It would have taken only a few minutes to have swept the 1/8 to 3/16 inches of frost off the wing and tail surfaces before they climbed in, and, oh, how much better the plane would have flown. Less embar-

rassin', too, than an ignominious slide into the fence, or worse yet, a stall - spin.

(February 1969)

Born Too Late

A young ferry pilot departed from an East Coast base in an HTL-6 helicopter on a 146-mile VFR cross country flight with an enroute fuel stop. Shortly after he left the Naval Air Station local area his chart was blown out of the open cockpit. Undismayed, the intrepid aviator continued on his way, following a highway with the avowed intention of landing at a service station to secure a "road map" which he felt was more suitable for navigation on his trip!

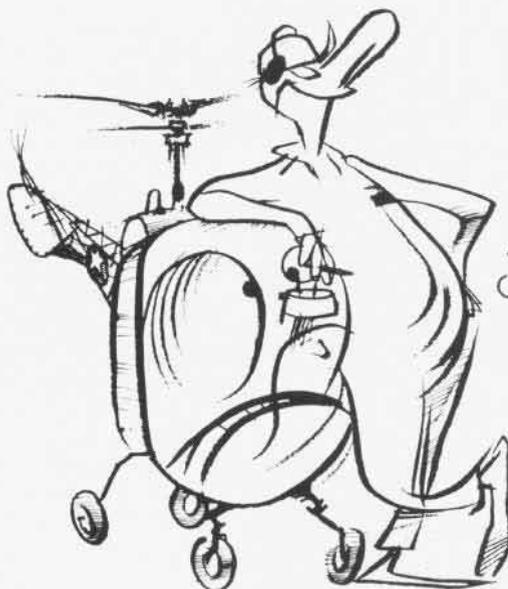


Grampaw Pettibone Says:

Sufferin' catfish! I guess we been wastin' money all these years printing aeronautical charts and Rad-facs. This young man likes the oil companies' products a lot better. The HTL-6 has a good bird dog mounted right in front of the pilot's face where he can see it all the time. His route was a major airway, absolutely straight, with strong range stations at each end. Total enroute distance was only 146 miles, and he had an approved fuel stop enroute. Needless to say, he should have turned back when he lost his chart.

Throughout military and civil aviation, the "state of the art" has progressed considerably in the past 30 years, to put it mildly. We no longer proceed from point to point utilizing land marks, road signs or town names painted on roofs. This young man was born 30 years too late.

(February 1959)



The Most!