

# Fame and

## *A Glance at Safety Shortcomings Through*

By Fred J. Klinkenberger Jr.,  
Naval Safety Center

**J**ust a quick note about the article, “Fuel Hoses Create ‘Grapes’ of Wrath” (*Fathom*, October-December 2001, p. 13): The article didn’t intend to single out all “Purple Shirts” who work endless hours, around-the-clock on the flight deck fueling aircraft. Rather, the article sought to point out the dangers of not properly faking and stowing aircraft refueling hoses in the catwalk. Most of you do it right, but remember that just one occasional lapse can result in injury or a shipmate tripping over a hose and possibly falling overboard.

• Meanwhile, with the country’s military bases and units on high alert through increased force protection, there is a disturbing number of discharged-weapons incidents taking place throughout the fleet. While more Sailors are carrying shotguns, sidearms and rifles, it appears not all are adequately trained in their operation. A recent message addressing the trend of inadvertent weapons discharges stated, “We must reverse this trend. . . an assessment of these most recent accidental discharges reveals failure to follow standard operating procedures, unfamiliarity with assigned weapons, carelessness, and complacency to be primary causal factors.” All individuals handling weapons should do so only if qualified through appropriate

training. A “crash course” on the ship’s quarterdeck during the changing of the watch is not appropriate training.

• Injuries can result from events and in places where least expected, so operational risk management is a process all hands should bear in mind, no matter where they are and what they’re doing. For example, a participant in a command-sponsored, MWR arm-wrestling contest suffered a spiral fracture of the right humerus. In layman’s terms, that’s a break in the right-upper-arm bone, but instead of the fracture going through the bone (as we envision fractures do) this one spiraled, or worked its way up and around the bone. The command since has prohibited arm-wrestling, and risk-probability has been emphasized as a planning factor for future sporting—and other—events.

• Meanwhile, in a bizarre event, a Navy “A” School student was spit-shining his boots while surrounded by fellow students. He had heated the polish to soften it; unfortunately, he had heated it to the point of ignition. In a panic, he kicked the flaming can of polish and splashed the burning substance onto his legs. He suffered second-

# Pain

## 7 Successes and Throughout the Fleet

degree burns on both lower legs and was hospitalized for a week; he'll probably miss a month's work while recuperating.

☛ In a scene reminiscent of "American Graffiti," a Sailor and his mates were at a deserted country road frequently used as a drag strip because police seldom were seen in that area. While the Sailor decided not to race because his car's tires were worn, he was looking forward to watching his buddies race. During the races, word came that the police were on the way, so everybody scattered, including the Sailor. Unfortunately, as he sped from the scene, he lost control of his car in a turn and ran into a tree. He was thrown from the vehicle.

☛ Let us not think only young Sailors get injured because of their inexperience or youthful exuberance. A chief petty officer walked into a helicopter's rotor arc. The helo crew was having trouble establishing external power and was working on a solution when the CPO approached the helo shortly after its recovery. He asked the landing signalman for permission to approach the craft. The LSE directed the chief to stand fast while he (the LSE) tried to get the pilot's attention. Neither the pilot nor copilot ever gave clearance to the LSE to let the chief approach the helo, but the chief nonetheless took it upon himself to enter the rotor arc. He was struck by the main-rotor blades and instantly killed.

☛ Rarely does one find humor in situations which could have been easily avoided had old-fashioned common sense and ORM been used. However, one cannot help but chuckle over the case of a Sailor wanting to play a prank on his supervisor. The young seaman hid under his petty officer's desk and, when the PO sat down, the prankster

slowly pushed open the center drawer. The petty officer apparently didn't get the joke and simply slammed the drawer shut. The young seaman underneath the desk suffered a one-inch laceration above his left eye and was taken to medical, where he was treated and released.

☛ Always watch where you're going, and don't let a load you're carrying block your view. One Sailor wasn't paying attention while carrying a 60-pound box and narrowly avoided serious injury. The Sailor was carrying the box to his work center via a flight-deck catwalk. He stepped from the flight deck to a deck-edge ladderwell, unaware the ladder had been removed for maintenance. He fell about four feet and landed on top of the box he was carrying. He suffered cuts to his right elbow and bruises to his ribs, shoulder and ankle. It could have been much worse. Not only should the Sailor have been more attentive to where he was going, but the area around the missing ladder should have been clearly marked and roped off.

☛ Let's not forget PPE—wear it. One Sailor didn't but luck, again, was with him. He had just finished doing some touchup painting in a shaft alley. While looking up to inspect his work to make sure he didn't miss any spots, a drop of fresh paint fell into his eye. He flushed the eye and suffered no permanent damage—had he been wearing his eye protection, he would not have had the close call.

☛ Think about what you're going to do, no matter how seemingly simple, or risk-free, of a job or undertaking it appears to be. It doesn't take machinery or aircraft to injure Sailors. Don't ever think, "It won't happen to me."

Chances are, it could. 🌐