

# One Job at a Time

By AE2 Andrew Peterson

Everyone tried to tell me about the vast differences between the “small boys” and a carrier, in terms of size, speed, and scope of operations. No big deal, I thought. I understood that my role as a maintainer boiled down to two primary functions: to fix and maintain the helos in the hangar bay, and to launch and recover the helos on the flight deck. Well I learned a new lesson one day when I rushed from the hangar bay to the flight deck between jobs.

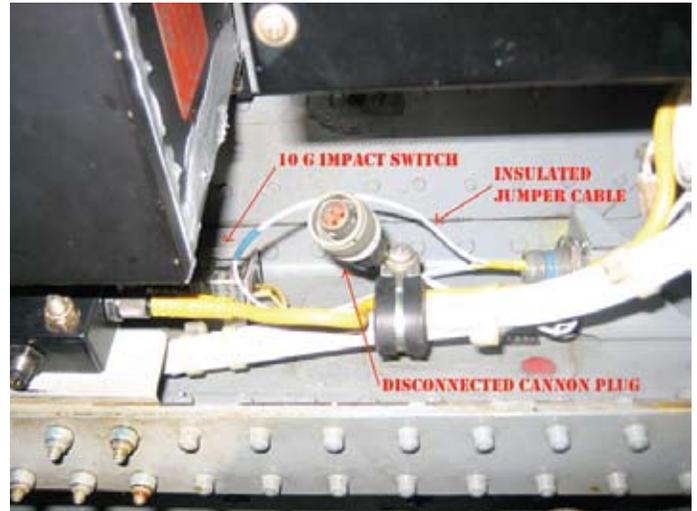
The incident occurred on my first carrier cruise aboard USS *Kitty Hawk* as an SH-60B maintainer for HSL-51 Det. 3. All my previous deployments with the squadron for nearly four years had been on guided-missile cruisers as part of a one-aircraft detachment. I really didn't think this ship would be any different. Boy was I wrong!

Warlord 703 was well into scheduled phase maintenance and fully de-paneled in the hangar bay. I was doing a standard fire-bottle op-check and going step-by-step on the IETMS laptop. The fire bottles and the CADS had been removed from the aircraft, and the voltmeter verified no stray voltage existed. To test the 10g impact-switch circuit, I disconnected the cannon plug and ran an insulated jumper cable across the leads. This simulates the impact of a 10g crash landing when the fire-extinguisher circuit breaker is closed, which then would discharge both fire bottles simultaneously. The fire bottles were removed at this point.

All checks were good! I was in the process of finishing up the last few steps, when I got called to the flight deck to recover Warlord 710. No sweat, I thought, the phase would be over in record time. As I was climbing the ladder to the flight deck, all I could think about was the rapid progress on 703. The fact that I had left the insulated jumper cable attached to the impact-switch leads must have slipped my mind.

We recovered 710 and finished the normal routine of engine wash, fold and stuff in the helo hole. Everyone on night check, including myself, spent the remainder of the evening on inspections and gripes written after 710's flight.

The following day, the AOs began hooking up the CADS and fire bottles on 703. As it so happened,



Knowing the system and how to prevent problems is the key to success.

another maintainer closed the fire-extinguisher circuit breaker during the course of the phase. The inevitable result was the discharge of the No. 2 fire bottle into the No. 2 engine. Fortunately, the No. 1 fire bottle had not been connected yet, or it would have fired, too.

When I got the word, I was in utter disbelief. How could I make such a simple mistake? Needless to say, my senior chief was in utter disbelief as well! I can't repeat some of the words he had for me.

These CADS can injure people. I can't imagine how I would have felt had I been responsible for a shipmate losing his finger, hand, sight, or even his life. Thankfully, no one was hurt because of my carelessness. Despite being the lead AE on my detachment, I put another person at risk because I forgot to remove a 4-inch piece of wire. I forever will be reminded of this incident each time I CDI a discrepancy.

I have heard the words, “In this job, distractions can be deadly,” but they mean much more to me now. I learned an important lesson: Maintainers must do every job, no matter how big or small, from start to finish. And do one job at a time. 🙏🙏

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