

Sailors and Marines reducing mishaps

BRAVO Zulu



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Airman Brandon Howard
HS-3

While assigned as the plane captain for Troubleshooter 610 and during the pilots' preflight, Airman Howard noticed the oil level on the No. 2 engine had decreased significantly since he had serviced it an hour earlier. He immediately told the pilots and maintenance control about the problem.

A closer inspection showed the carbon seal was damaged, causing oil to leak into the "A" sump. The pilots hadn't noticed the problem and would not have without Airman Howard's assistance. They could have launched with a degraded and damaged engine, which could have malfunctioned in flight.

AD3 James Henneman
USS Vella Gulf (CG-72)

After engine shutdown, following a routine flight, Petty Officer Henneman discovered an excessive amount of grease on the inside of the No. 5 tail-drive-shaft cowling. After further investigation, he found the disconnect seal was broken. If left undiscovered, the disconnect jaw and tail-rotor drive could have failed in flight.



AM3(NAC) Bradley Johnson
HM-15

While doing a daily inspection on an MH-53E, Petty Officer Johnson discovered severe scoring on the drive shaft for the accessory gearbox from an improperly routed hydraulic line. He immediately notified maintenance control and QA to investigate the damage.

Petty Officer Johnson's sudden find enabled the aircraft to be inspected and returned to the flight schedule in time to meet the next day's event. It also prevented the catastrophic failure of the shaft.





AM3(AW) Steven W. Pamplin
HS-3

On New Year's Eve, Petty Officer Pamplin was assigned as the plane captain for an SH-60F undergoing an FCF after sustaining damage to its trim tabs. After an unsuccessful afternoon of performing track and balance evolutions, the aircraft was shut down for the day, and Petty Officer Pamplin was assigned to complete the daily and turnaround inspections.

Demonstrating exceptional attention to detail, he discovered and reported that the lower centering sockets were loose on two blade spindles. This discrepancy was discovered, despite the fact that the lower centering sockets are not an inspection item for the maintenance being performed.

His discovery enabled the aircraft to receive critical maintenance and minimized delay to the FCF. His efforts helped prevent potentially catastrophic damage to the main rotor-head spindle and the loss of aircraft and crew.

AMC(AW) Charles Riese
VAQ-139

Chief Riese was the flight-deck coordinator during Operation Northern Edge in the Gulf of Alaska. He was making sure everything was set to launch Warcat 503. As the Prowler taxied forward to the waist catapults, a Hornet in the landing area swung its exhaust toward a group of flight-deck workers, blowing down several people.

Chief Riese saw a blueshirt swept off his feet. The Sailor was rolling uncontrollably toward the turning Prowler. The chief immediately dove onto the airman, pinning him to the flight deck less than five feet from the aircraft's intake.



AA Andrei Nijnic
VAQ-134

While deployed with the 'Garudas' of VAQ-134 at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, Airman Apprentice Nijnic was doing his preflight inspection on aircraft 541. He was preparing the Prowler for a critical mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Always thorough, he discovered a crack on the port side of the aircraft in the uplock hook for the main landing gear. This component is not examined routinely during daily and turnaround inspections.

Recognizing the hazard, he immediately advised the aircrew to man the spare, averting a likely airborne, landing-gear emergency. His attention to detail ensured the safety of the aircrew and support for ground forces.





AE2 Jimmy Schmidt
VFA-86

Petty Officer Schmidt discovered a broken bracket and chafed hydraulic line while troubleshooting a separate strobe-light discrepancy. After removing the strobe light's power supply, he thoroughly inspected the access area, finding the bad bracket. It was in an area that easily could have been overlooked, causing a catastrophic failure.



AD2 Faulkner
VP-8

While installing an engine fuel control, Petty Officer Faulkner noticed that an engine mount was not connected to the engine nacelle. He took it upon himself to investigate the problem further and even got QA involved. They found that the engine mount was, in fact, not connected and needed repair.

On Sept. 22, 2003, VP-8 celebrated 25 years and more than 157,000 hours of mishap-free flying (last class "A" mishap was in Poland Spring, Maine in 1978). The cause of that mishap was a defective engine mount. Twenty-five years later, when faced with a similar situation, AD2 Faulkner's attention to detail may have saved a repeat of the Poland Spring incident.

AM1 Eddie Walker
VFA-37

During the morning FOD walkdown, Petty Officer Walker noticed the main-landing-gear assembly on aircraft 303 didn't look right. Being curious, he took a closer look and found the top of a bolt had sheared off from one of the Hornet's planing links.

The remainder of the bolt might have stayed in place long enough for the next pilot to get airborne without any clue of failure. However, the landing would have ended with a loss of directional control and possible loss of the aircraft.



AO2 Christina Hosler
VR-52

Petty Officer Hosler is a transport safety specialist (TSS) with VR-52, and she was doing a routine preflight inspection of the tail-cone area of aircraft 160049. She discovered the port side's lower support pin for the diverter flapper on the ram-air duct had fallen out and was lying on the deck of the tail cone. Although this item was not on her checklist, she did an immediate FOD search, finding all the hardware and eliminating a potential hazard.

**AMC(AW/SW) Curtis Marcantel,
AMC(AW/SW) Laura McCammon,
and AM1(AW) Richard Bunton
VAW-121**

These three Bluetails saved a shipmate's life during a night launch of Bluetail 600 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A weight-board trainee and his instructor had become distracted and turned their backs to an approaching Hawkeye and its deadly propellers.

As Bluetail 600 taxied toward the catapult, Chief McCammon and Petty Officer Bunton noticed the Sailors were unaware the starboard propeller that was turning at 1,100 rpm. The prop was about to hit them, but Chief McCammon and Petty Officer Bunton lunged for the two Sailors and pulled one of them to safety. Chief Marcantel ran and grabbed the other weight-board operator a mere two feet from certain death.



From (L-R): AMC (AW/SW) McCammon, AM1 (AW) Bunton, and AMC (AW/SW) Marcantel



**AE1(AW) Price
VAQ-139**

During the launch of Warcat 501, Petty Officer Price, who is assigned to QA, noticed a small crease in the nose radome of the EA-6B assigned to the Cougars of VAQ-139. After a closer inspection of the Prowler and a conference with the airframe troubleshooter, they determined the crease actually was a large delaminated spot in the nose radome. Petty Officer Price's keen attention to detail saved the day.



**AMEAN Allen Sturm
VS-30**

While doing routine maintenance, Airman Sturm heard an unusual noise coming from the lox compartment of aircraft 703. Taking a closer look, he found a bulge on the bottom of the lox bottle. Acting with a sense of urgency, he cleared the surrounding area, ran to his workcenter to get an emergency-drain tool, and quickly drained the bottle.

AIMD's routine inspection showed that the inner cylinder of the lox bottle had ruptured violently. Airman Sturm's meticulous attention to detail and quick reaction clearly saved lives.