

Job Complete or Not?

By AD2 (AW) John Ridgeway

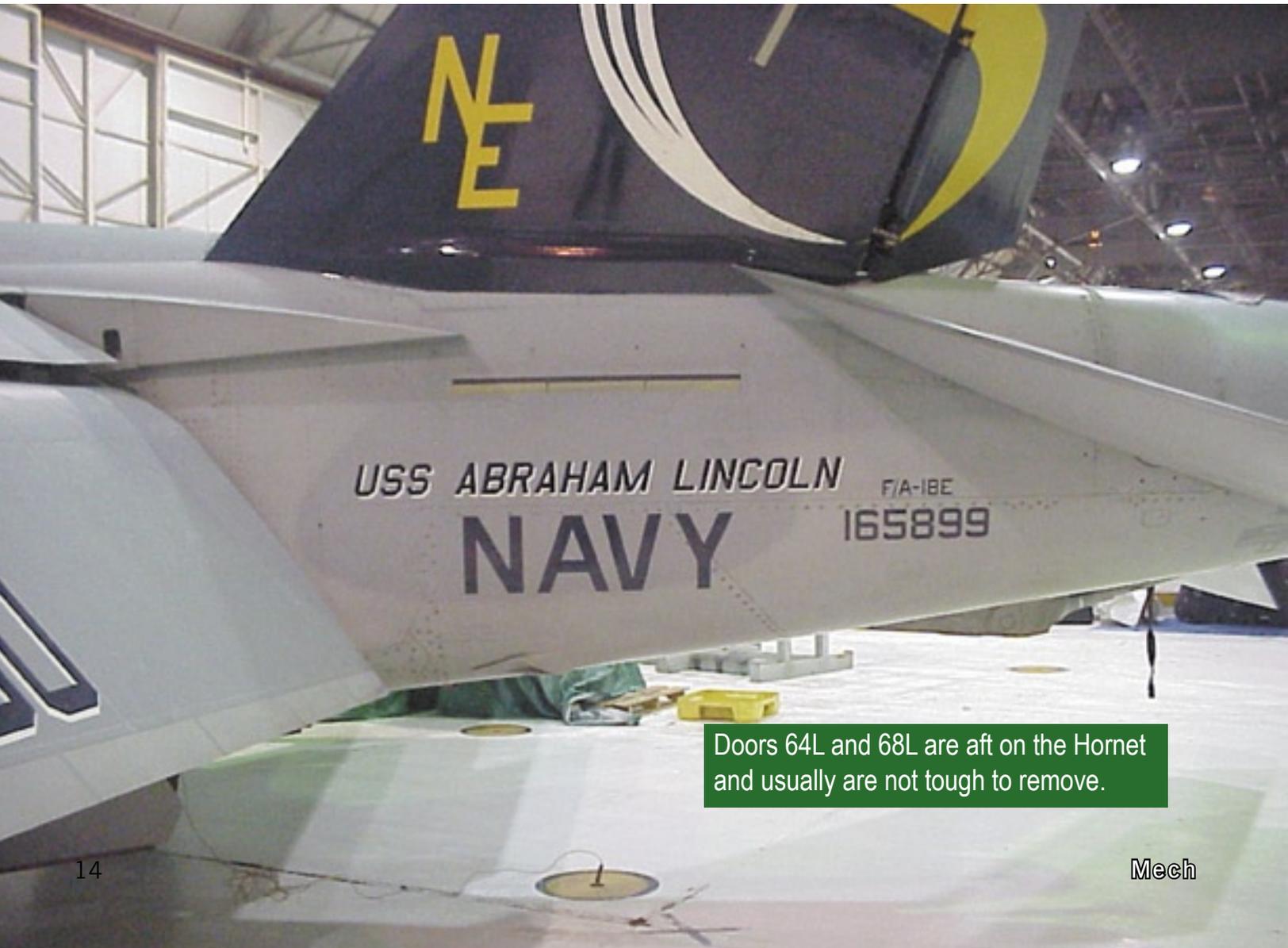
I arrived at work on time and began the morning tool-inventory check. It looked like a slow schedule for my work center—a bit unusual for the troubleshooters. It felt like it just would be another routine day at our super hornet squadron, but that confidence was about to change. Little did I know that, before the day was over, I would make a mistake that could have hurt or killed a shipmate.

Because the workload was light, I offered to help my fellow mechs install a few 414 engines. Since the shop was short-handed and busy as usual and because I am a collateral duty inspector (CDI), they gladly accepted my offer. The job began like all engine installs do: nice

and slow to make sure all cavity inspections and run-on torques are done thoroughly before the engine gets installed. As the CDI in charge of the evolution, I was responsible for making sure that all procedures in the maintenance instruction manual were being followed.

After fully installing the port motor and all accessories and doing a QA check of all torques, the aircraft now was ready for the engine-bay doors: 64L and 68L. Door 68L quickly was installed, but door 64L only was tacked on, so we could drop it during the low-power turn to check for leaks.

The low-power turn was a complete success, and the only thing left was to “button up” door 64L com-



Doors 64L and 68L are aft on the Hornet and usually are not tough to remove.



All panels must be securely fastened before flight. A quick look usually can determine if all fasteners are in place.

pletely and have QA check it. Once that was done, we could sign off the MAF as job complete. Unfortunately, it was time for shift change, so we had to stop the job and sign the job as “in process.”

Three of us did an ATAF of our tools and took everything back to the shop, so we could do a proper day-check/night-check turn over. I next marked the MAF as “in process” and gave the oncoming night-

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checkers a complete passdown of what was left to do on the aircraft.

Everything sounds good so far, right? Well, this is where my normal habit pattern broke down. Because of a strange quirk in NALCOMIS and because I wasn't a troubleshooter CDI yet, I couldn't be identified permanently in NALCOMIS as a CDI just for power plants. Every time I have to sign off a MAF as a CDI for power plants, I have to ask the AZs to give me the permissions in NALCOMIS. Like I said, the procedure is a strange quirk, but one the department implemented to comply with the NAMF.

I headed over to the AZs to ask about my log in. They explained the procedure to me, but I got frustrated and lost my temper. That action was the first step in the wrong direction. I honestly can remember every last word that I had with the AZs about log in, but I cannot remember at what point I got it in my mind that the job was complete. Unfortunately, that false notion got lodged in my head, and I went back to the shop to sign off the MAF as job complete.

In reality, though, door 64L only was tacked on, and now the MAF was signed off. The system showed the jet was available for the flight schedule.

It was dark outside when the PC started his walkaround, getting ready to launch the jet. The pilot who was going to fly the jet did a preflight. Neither of them noticed that door 64L simply was tacked on. Fortunately, the jet went down for an unrelated gripe. It wasn't until another PC went to put the pins in the jet that the tacked-on door was noticed.

I was the CDI and had lost focus of the job at hand. I was so concerned with my log in that I completely forgot door 64L wasn't installed completely. I had let my emotions get the best of me and did not think clearly when my normal habit pattern got disrupted.

I truly am grateful that 205 didn't taxi and didn't fly. It could have ended in tragedy. I am wiser and learned a very valuable lesson that every maintainer should know. We must stay focused on the task from beginning to end. Our shipmates count on us, and people's lives are at stake. ✦

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