

One of Those Moments

By AN Phillip Williams

The workweek quickly was coming to an end, and I was excited about starting the weekend. My LPO asked me to assist the corrosion-control work center and take a B-2 maintenance stand to the front gate—the squadron was painting the Battle “E” aircraft. We recently had been awarded the 2005 CNAF Battle Efficiency Award, recognizing our squadron for outstanding achievement in combat readiness, operations, safety, and high morale. I wouldn’t win any award for what was about to happen.

The squadron was proud of the recognition as a top squadron, and I was excited to be a part of the effort to paint the aircraft with the squadron’s insignia. My LPO gave me a radio and directions on how to get the stand

to the display aircraft. I wasn’t particularly familiar with the area he was referring to, but the job had to get done quickly. Without thinking the entire job through, I replied, “Roger that!” and hustled on my way.

Looking back on my drive to the aircraft, I now realize that I had a lax attitude and didn’t think the entire process through. But at the time, my mind was focused solely on getting the job done quickly. I wanted to impress the chain of command with my efficiency and decided to take the quickest route, instead of the route I was told to take.

You must keep in mind that the B-2 stand is about 15 feet in the air when fully retracted or in the “down position.” I pulled out onto the main road and cleared





The impact was hard enough to break the frame.

None of the wires for the traffic light were broken, and cars were able to continue on their way. When the stand grabbed the light, it scraped along the ground for several feet and began bending at the base. I had been traveling only about 3 mph, and it's amazing that I caused \$3,000 worth of damage.

I notified my maintenance crew, and they came out to the scene. My line division chief also came to see what had happened. He was so angry I could see the veins popping out of his neck even before he said anything. The wing master chief also was there, and he had a similar reaction. It definitely could not have been more embarrassing. Of

one traffic-light suspension wire that traversed the road. Because I cleared the first wire with no problem, I figured the drive to the aircraft was going to be easy. Man was I wrong!

I really didn't think the traffic lights would be so low. When gauging the height, it appeared the stand would clear every light with no problem. However, I suddenly heard a huge bang, and I was dragging a traffic light with me. The B-2 stand pulled the light's suspension wire, breaking its metal support bar.

course, it did get worse when base security gave me a traffic citation for "reckless driving with GSE gear."

What I thought was going to be an easy job actually turned out to be one of the dumbest things I've done since joining the Navy. Well, at least I learned my lesson. Anyone can have a bad day, but slowing down, making a careful plan, and executing the plan would have made my drive much more enjoyable and less costly. ✈

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