



# Living With My 70K Mistake

By AD1 Joan Diaz



**O**n a normal weekend, the duty crew was tasked to test and check a T-56 engine. The engine was mounted on a 3000 transport trailer located inside the hangar bay and parked parallel to and about 10 feet from the hangar-bay door.

I looked around but didn't see anyone who could help me with the engine. I decided to go ahead anyway and got a tow tractor to pull the engine out of the hangar. As I got on the tractor, a shipmate stopped by and hooked up the trailer's towbar to the tractor. The engine was too close to the hangar-bay door, so I had to drive the tractor to the right a couple of feet to make room to turn left out the door. I turned right, then left, when I heard my shipmate shout, "Stop!" I stomped on the brake, but it was too late. The tractor lurched forward before stopping and, as it did, the towbar moved forward, smacking one of the prop blades on the tractor.

The result was a cracked blade and nearly \$70,000 in damage, not to mention many unnecessary man-hours. If I had used ORM, this mishap could have been prevented. I hadn't noticed the towbar was shorter than usual—it should have been extended out all the way. I also should have looked for more people to help me with the task. What did I learn from my mistake? Nothing is more important than safety of personnel and equipment. Never take shortcuts, and always use ORM. ✂

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