



# Washing Eyes With Soap

By AN Derick Jaramillo

**M**y story is about another simple job gone wrong. We just were washing an airplane; what could go wrong? Yes, I have heard the stories of turco and other people, but this job is easy. I didn't believe anything could happen to me. I'm smarter than that, and I always wear eye protection...well, almost always.

One evening, my shipmates and I were washing one of our E-2Cs. Everything was going smoothly, and the job was getting done rather quickly.

When we finished, I removed my PPE and started to clean up the area. I was moving a bucket of wash soap out of the way when some of it splashed into my eyes. I immediately ran to the eyewash station to rinse out the soap. I rinsed several times, but the burning did not stop. My vision began to blur badly and my eyes began to swell.

I told my supervisor about my problem, and he told the maintenance-control chief. I was rushed to medical,

and they flushed out my eyes several more times before sending me to a hospital off base. When I arrived at the emergency room, I barely could see anything at all. I was admitted and stayed there over night with a saline solution hooked up to my eyes—a very painful process.

In the morning, I went to see a specialist to see if any permanent damage had occurred. Luckily, the diagnosis was favorable, and I wasn't going to have any long-term side effects. I did, however, receive a prescription medicine to help with the healing. On top of having to take medication for two weeks, my vision was affected for the whole period. It took a while to return to normal. The biggest lesson I learned from the entire experience is that we use PPE for a reason, and it should be worn anytime hazmat is handled. Unfortunately, I had to learn the hard way. ✈

*Airman Jaramillo works in the line division at VAW-116.*