

# Getting Tool Control Under Control

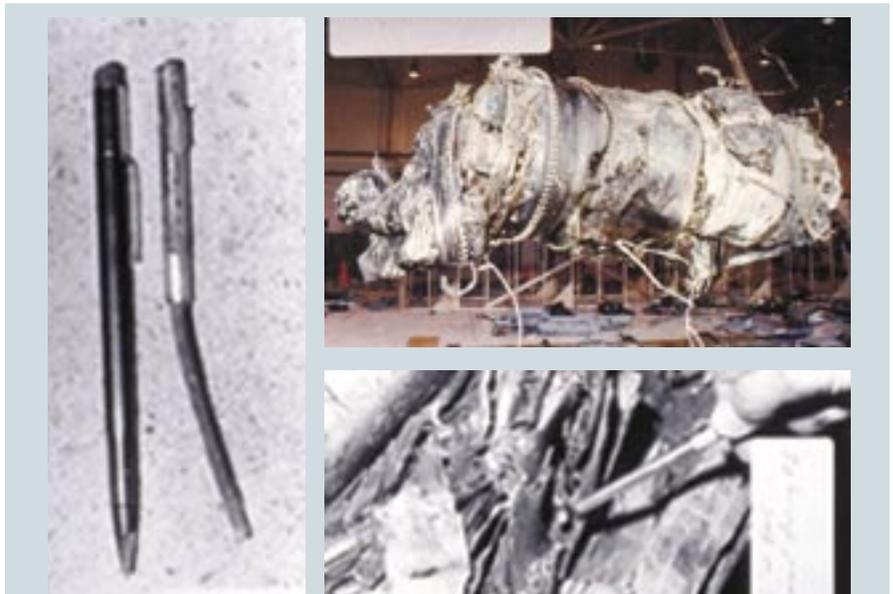
By Dan Steber

The stories begin to sound the same: Missing tool is found after an aircraft is recalled from mission. Lost tool causes an NJP and loss of rank. Tool FODs engine. And the list goes on. We can and must do better.

Lost tools cost us money, time and readiness. I'm not going to bore you with specific passages from a host of manuals and instructions. Rather, I simply want you to know the costs we incur each year in missing, lost, broken, and worn tools. Some estimates say that each year we lose thousands of tools, tens of thousands of manhours searching for lost tools, and spend more than \$1 million hunting for and replacing tools. The fact that we discuss it a lot, worry about it regularly, and train for it frequently doesn't mean we can back off or take it easy.

This issue of *Mech* has several stories that relate to tool control. Some of them are not the typical situations, but they show how broad the program is and demonstrate the problems maintainers face each day. Read the MO's story on the next page. He offers great insight from his nearly 30-year career.

I also ask you to look at photos of damage done in the past and continue to happen each year. The next time you get ready to pencil whip an ATAF, think twice, and remember these photos, stories and lessons learned in the past. The crime isn't losing a tool...it's in not reporting it or following through until you find it. Do your part to maintain positive tool control, and you'll save time, money and lives. ✚



Tools can bring down aircraft, like this hex wrench found in the wreckage of an A-6 Intruder.



Missing tools end up in the strangest places. Can you find them all?