

# The NAM I Could Do Without



Putting a Z-kink in a fuel hose will stop the flow.

By AMC(AW) Ward Toner

It was a typical day on board USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75). We were conducting cyclic ops and trying to deal with 100s: the temperature, humidity and days to the next port visit. I was on Zapper 500, the “Electric Fat Kid,” and it just had been taxied into a spot on the forward half of elevator 2. I had called my trusty CAG rep in flight-deck control and requested a grape for a hot refuel on my jet. I didn’t realize it then, but the flight deck was going to get even hotter before the next launch.

Our plane captain secured the starboard engine to prepare for the fuel hose. He dutifully reminded the purpleshirts to stay aft of the boarding ladders when routing the fuel hose—an important precaution in case a fuel hose ruptures. About this time, things got interesting because a Tomcat just had taxied into the spot forward of my Prowler. Its exhaust raised the temperature to an almost unbearable level.

My airframe troubleshooter then pointed out a problem on the nosewheel shimmy dampener and asked me to investigate. My attention now was diverted from the hot-refueling task. The grapes struggled with the fuel hose but eventually were able to hook up. Another Zapper plane captain signaled for the purpleshirt to start fueling, and pressure soon began to build in the fuel hose. A noticeable kink formed in the line and rapidly moved along the hose to the fitting that was attached to the aircraft.

This kink caused the hose to rupture and to separate completely from the fitting. Fuel sprayed into the air and all over the deck, soaking the airframe troubleshooter, plane captain, and me. Realizing immediately the wet soggy feeling was not sweat and the ever-expanding pool beneath me was not water, I scrambled to the port side of the aircraft. I signaled frantically for an emergency shutdown and for the aircrew to exit the aircraft.

In my haste to avoid becoming another flight-deck statistic, I failed to notice the heroic and quick response from my trusty flight deck crew: AD2 Dan Cowan, AT3 Kyle Mahaffey, AO3 Yara Quintana, and AN Nino Noriega. When the hose ruptured, Petty Officer Quintana grabbed the end of the hose and covered it to keep the fuel away from the aircraft. Meanwhile, Petty Officers Cowan and Mahaffey skillfully applied a “Z” kink in the fuel hose, reducing the spray. Airman Noriega quickly removed the hose fitting from the ground refueling port, preventing fuel from draining out of the aircraft. Their quick and decisive headwork prevented fuel from going down the Prowler’s port intake and starting a fire. 

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This flight-deck crew knew how to handle a sudden emergency.