

actuator were completed as the book described.

During the operational check, the hook would not drop as fast as it should. I referred to the troubleshooting MIMs because I suspected it said to make sure servicing was correct and, if necessary, to reservice it. This step requires us to remove door 103, again.

By this time, shift change was approaching, and chow breaks had begun. Before stopping for chow, another worker and I serviced the tailhook, and we were confident the operational check would go smoothly. We packed up our tools and headed for the shop. Before I left the aircraft, I went up to check the tailhook and speedbrake area for cleanliness, tools and general security. With the operational check in mind, I wanted to make sure door 103 was in place. I looked down, saw the panel, and checked to make sure the bolts were installed. Satisfied with the way things looked, I headed for the shop and went to eat.

When I came back from chow, the original tailhook crew just was beginning to show up. Everything was ready for the operational check, and shift change was only 30 minutes away. I wanted to finish as much as possible before handing the job to night check.

The operational check went well. The hook raised and lowered, and the jet was ready to go up to the flight deck for a final check before it could fly.

With the busy schedule and a lot of maintenance going on, the aircraft did not go up for a couple of days. When the time came, I did the last operational check, and the jet was back in service.

The aircraft flew for several days and performed well. When it came due for a wash job seven days later, the speedbrake was lifted for cleaning and inspection. Door 103 had only two bolts holding it down, and both were only hand tight.

When I tried to reinstall the panel, the holes no longer would line up, and the panel would not sit right. The airframe had been damaged badly, and it needed extensive repairs before returning to a flying status.

After seeing that panel missing all those fasteners, I immediately realized what had happened. I had inspected the aircraft for security and cleanliness but did not get down and touch the bolts and the panel. I saw that bolts were in holes and assumed they were secured. I easily could have and should have prevented this mishap with a little ORM review. 

Petty Officer Parker wrote this story while assigned to the airframes shop at VFA-25.

LETTERS

When Local Practice and the Book Collide *Mech*, Summer 2003

I am the workcenter supervisor for SE cryogenics at AIMD Norfolk and want to comment on the page 30 story. The background photograph purposely showed an operator of a TMU/70/M LOX cart not wearing the proper PPE. He should have worn a face shield and a rubber apron. These items are required in NAVAIR 00-80T-96, WP 007 00, Page 14, Item 86.

The operator also is not using a LOX-converter vent line that attaches to the converter vent port, which is required in NAVAIR 19-25D-26, Page 3-3, Paragraph 3-19, Item G. This incomplete procedure is a dangerous practice because it voids the LOX cart's closed-loop system and allows liquid oxygen to spray out like a geyser. It poses a severe frostbite hazard and allows liquid oxygen more easily to come in contact with explosive hydrocarbons.

I have seen this illegal practice on ship, and I notified the safety officer. He took immediate action and stopped the servicing. Many squadrons still use this unsafe procedure. The cart usually is stowed behind the island near the "bomb farm" and a fuel station. Secretary Rumsfeld's goal of a 50 percent reduction in mishaps would go out the door should a LOX cart cook off that ordnance and fuel. We don't have to make new rules; instead, we should enforce the rules we already have.

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Support Equipment Cryogenics Supervisor

P-3 Intake Covers

A letter to the editor in the spring 2003 issue spoke of a product made by Bruce Covers that might help solve a fall hazard reported in the fall 2002 issue (rotting straps that injure Sailors). PEOAS-WASM, Patuxent River MD issued 281319Z OCT 03, which was a response to a different injury with a similar causal factor. PMA-190's bottom line: Do not use the Bruce covers. Their message says to use only the authorized covers found in NAVAIR 01-75PAC-4-10, P-3 Organizational Peculiar Support Equipment, until new ones are designed and available.

A Special Thank You...

To the hundreds of LDOs, CWOs, chiefs, aviators, and Sailors who wrote e-mails and made phone calls to keep *Mech* alive and separate from *Approach*. For 42 years, this magazine has told the hard-luck stories and hard-learned lessons of maintainers. Your letters explained the value this magazine brings to your shop-training programs, maintenance-training classrooms, stand-down efforts, and day-to-day lives. You consistently said your magazine helps to reduce mishaps and injuries. We must work together to reduce maintenance-related mishaps, prevent needless injuries, and to save our shipmates from death. A 50 percent mishap reduction is possible, but it will take everyone to fight as hard as you did to save this magazine. Your responses made me humble, and I'm honored to serve as the editor of your magazine.