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"Don't mess with that!" barked a BM2 who saw a BMSN raising a Mk-166 launcher. His order came too late, though. The BM2, a BM3 with him, and the BMSN could only watch as both SLQ-49 canisters slid off the launcher, went over the side, and harmlessly deployed. The BMSN had asked the BM2 and BM3 to help him.

This mishap's outcome could have been much different. Why? Because each canister contained a nitrogen cylinder pressurized to 4,500 psi.

The chain of events leading to this mishap started when the BMSN's supervisor told him to move a spool of line from portside forward to a ship's fantail. "It'll be easier if you first raise the launcher," said the supervisor.

What You  
Don't Know  
Can



You

“No problem,” thought the BMSN. “I’ve done that before.” Even after he realized the launcher was loaded, he didn’t hesitate. “So it was unloaded the first time,” he rationalized, “how much different can it be to raise the launcher with it loaded?”

The BMSN got his answer soon after he and the supervisor were dismissed from an awards ceremony. The BMSN headed back to the launcher where he had left the spool of line. He arrived there ahead of the two shipmates he had asked to help him, and, instead of waiting for them, took matters into his own hands. He had pulled the stow pins and was lifting the launcher when the two helpers arrived on the scene.

After reading this account in an explosive mishap report, I had several questions:

- Where were the ship’s EWs? Why weren’t they called to raise the launcher?

- Did the maintenance people correctly do PMS on the launcher? According to the BMSN, he pulled only the stow pins—not the release pins. Records showed that PMS had been done two and a half weeks earlier. Did the maintenance people re-install the release pins when they completed the check?

- Why was the BMSN operating the launcher? Was he ordnance-certified? Was he PQS-certified on the decoy-launching system?

- Where was the BM2 who told the BMSN to raise the launcher in the first place? Why didn’t the BM2 call the EWs?

One phone call could have prevented this mishap, which cost someone the time and aggravation to file a report, as well as \$28,000 to replace the expended decoys. The bright side to this situation is that no one was killed or injured. 🌐

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## Second Verse Same As the First

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Ninety days—that’s how long it took for an EW2 aboard another class of ship to repeat the mistake the BMSN made in the previous article.

The EW2 was placing the starboard-side, Mk-166, Mod 0, SLQ-49 launcher in its down-and-stowed position when it stuck. His solution to this problem was to pull the stow pins from the launching mechanism, which released the SLQ-49. One of the two canisters activated and deployed the inflatable reflector.

Failure of the second canister to deploy caused a hazard, so a SAR swimmer attached an activation lanyard to the canister, and ship’s force activated it. Both inflatable reflectors were punctured, and all equipment was recovered.

Human error was the primary cause of this mishap. The EW2 was PQS-qualified on the launcher, but, after the incident, he admitted he wasn’t very familiar with it. 🌐

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