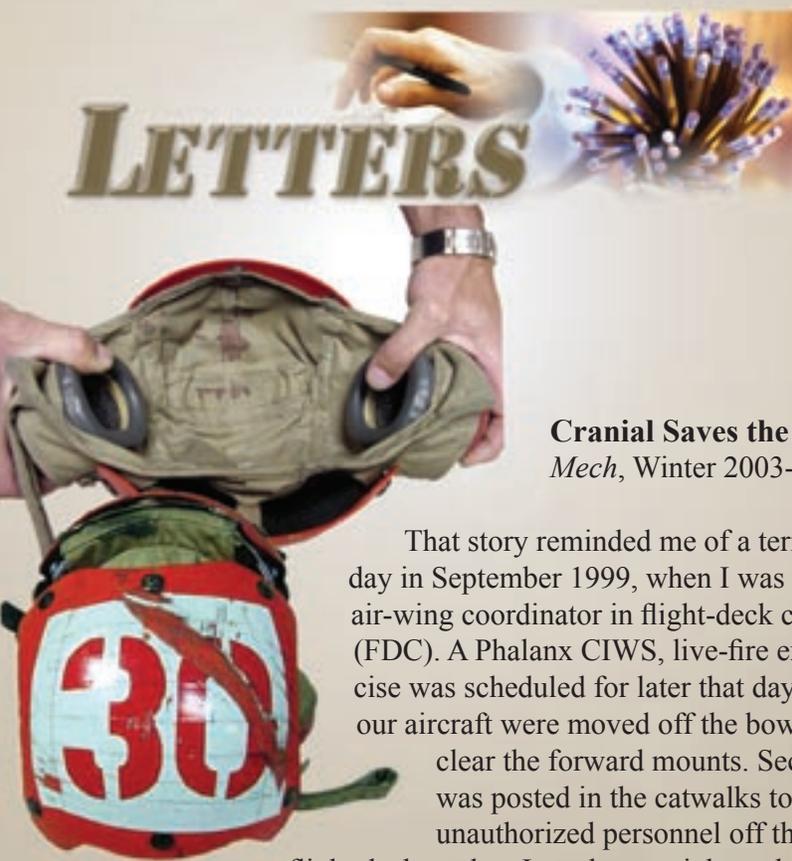


LETTERS



Cranial Saves the Day *Mech, Winter 2003-2004*

That story reminded me of a terrible day in September 1999, when I was the air-wing coordinator in flight-deck control (FDC). A Phalanx CIWS, live-fire exercise was scheduled for later that day, and our aircraft were moved off the bow to clear the forward mounts. Security was posted in the catwalks to keep unauthorized personnel off the flight deck, and an Intruder was inbound with a target drone. The Air Boss called over the 5MC, "Strike below and clear the flight deck." The day soon would end in horror.

I peered out a port hole in flight-deck control, looking forward of the island. Ordies had formed a daisy chain around the CIWS mount to keep people away. During the drone's last pass, I saw terror on the flight deck.

CIWS engaged the target, and its Gatling gun sheared the tow cable, sending the unguided, orange drone into the starboard side of the ship—just below the scupper. Its tow line whipped across the flight deck and wreaked havoc.

The cable shredded an ordnanceman's arm, and he ran toward FDC, screaming in agony. Another ordie saw the cable coming and raised his hand to protect his neck, but the cable cut off his fingers, sliced into his neck, and killed him.

After this incident, more stringent safety precautions were put in place. We learned that a low-probability-of-risk event can happen when you least expect it. Don't go on the flight deck, unless you have business up there. No one should witness the horror I saw.

—Lt. Dave Rodriguez, HSL-47

New C-40A Maintenance Stand Gets an Overhaul

Mech, Winter 2003-2004

ATCS(AW) William's story mentioned the help our command received from PWC. The article should have given credit to the maintainers from Dynacorp because their help was invaluable.

—VR-59 Maintainers



Newer, Safer Cordless Drill Authorized for Aircraft Maintenance

Mech, Winter 2003-2004

We read that story with interest and wanted to order one. Using the model and NSN provided, our supply folks tried to get the drill through GSA. They found a big surprise. The cost was almost \$2,000. We still want one, but the price is too steep.

—MAG-24, 1st MAW

I called GSA, verified the price, and then called the manufacturer. The cost is a bit high (about \$1,850), but no other manufacturer would take on the RDT&E for this item. It had a small-production run and is a specialized tool that can be used in an explosive environment. The GSA markup also is steep. NAVAIR and Makita feel time saved and reduced effort will pay for the HAZLOC in a short period.—Ed.

