

# VAN on the



A crowd of people around an aircraft never is a good sign.

*AD2(AW) Therdy Baguilod*

We had been working hard all week long and looked forward to an upcoming break from our hectic schedule. I was assigned to the troubleshooter shop, and, as usual, my morning started with a wipe down of all the go aircraft. The comfortable routine, to which we had grown accustomed, soon would be shattered by a simple mistake would leave me with a lesson I never will forget.

The aircraft wipe down involved two AMs, two AEs, and me. As directed, we headed out to the ramp, walked into an unusually heavy fog, and began our first task of the day. We had seven aircraft to do before the flight schedule, and, because of the size of our flight line and the 30 aircraft that were spread out over a large area, we used the “Shooter Van.” This vehicle is a standard Navy, white panel van with one seat and

an empty back end, which is used to haul parts and people to and from aircraft.

We began with aircraft LL-47 because the AEs also had to fix a gripe on that aircraft. I drove the van to the front of the aircraft, and we all exited to do our respective jobs. When we finished that aircraft, everyone—except the AEs—jumped into the van. We headed to the next aircraft, located only two spots down the flight line. As usual, I pulled the van in front of the aircraft, shifted the gearshift to park, engaged the parking brake, grabbed my tools, and exited the van. This time, however, I left the engine running.

We all went about our business, and, when finished, I noticed the van was missing. I looked around the flight line and saw headlights shining through the fog. The vehicle now was next to aircraft LL-47, and I just assumed someone had borrowed it. I called the AEs on our two-way radio and asked if they had used the van. They said, “No, but you need to get to the aircraft...ASAP!”

# RUN



A van rolling toward an aircraft is scary.

When I arrived there, I found the van wedged between the No. 2 engine and the fuselage. The van's engine still was running.

At some point between leaving the van and wiping down the P-3C, the van had rolled backward three parking spots and had hit a parked aircraft. I had failed to turn off the ignition and to install chocks on the van. These simple missed steps caused this incident. I was somewhat fortunate: A tie-down point absorbed the van's momentum, and the damage was limited.

The command learned our preventive maintenance procedures for ramp vehicles needed to be improved. I learned that everyone must adhere to set standards and practices, such as securing the engine and installing chocks on any unused self-propelled vehicle. I also learned the value of ORM and common sense and know either item would have prevented this incident from happening. My incident was the main topic at a safety stand-down that had been scheduled for the next day. 

Petty Officer Baguilod works in power plants at VP-30.

I looked around the flight line and saw headlights shining through the fog.



Barely missing a prop is fortunate...

and so is stopping on the tie-down point.

