

# PON-6 on the Run

By ADAN Craig Black

**W**e were preparing for a 0900 recovery of an E-6B at VQ-4's Pax River detachment. Around 0830, the crew radioed maintenance control with aircraft status and fuel requirements. At 0920, the Mercury landed and taxied to spot two at the alert facility. The weather that morning was clear, with winds at 19 knots, gusting to 22, and heading 320 degrees. That should have been an omen to the maintainers of things to come.

Immediately after engine shutdown, the line division started daily and turnaround inspections. After servicing the engine, a plane captain placed a PON-6 beneath the aft lower-lobe door to service the APU when the power unit cooled down. The servicing unit was on a "Low Boy" cart, which has wheels that don't lock. We lodged one of the cart's four wheels in a padeye to keep it from rolling around. At 0945, the refueling began and was completed at 1055.

While disconnecting the truck's fuel hoses from the Mercury, ATAN Hall, AMAN Long and I noticed the PON-6 cart rolling across the flight line, on a collision course with the No. 4 engine cowl.

ATAN Hall, who was assisting with the hoses and standing near the No. 3 engine, saw the unit roll, ran toward the cart, and slowed its momentum but couldn't stop it from hitting the cowling.

The engine received a 2-inch-by-2-inch dent on the inboard side of the cowling—at the 5 o'clock position. The line division notified the flight engineer, aircraft commander, and maintenance control, and a discrepancy was typed into NALCOMIS.

We researched the gripe in the appropriate publications and found the dent was within limits. But this minor mishap made us think about our actions. We all were trained and were equipped to do post-flight procedures. We clearly recognized the wind threat and tried to prevent this hazard by using ORM and deciding to lodge the wheel in the padeye, but we did not go far enough. A better solution would have been to use chocks, to tie it to the padeye, or to have someone

man the cart. The best solution would have been to use a cart with locking wheels, which we bought after the incident to prevent it from happening again.

Airman Black works in the VQ-4 line division.



How long will a cart stay in a padeye on a windy day?



Not long enough to keep it from rolling down the ramp.



A wayward cart had enough force to ding this E-6B's engine cowling.