

else. This work philosophy works well, but it led me astray one time and almost got me a visit with the commanding officer.

It had been a long Saturday and Sunday of work. At 1800, I asked my supervisor about coming in late for mid-check. He told me to come in around 0300, meaning I could get some rest, so I headed home.

Once there, I cleaned up, ate and got ready for bed. Before I could nod off, however, my son started to feel sick. My wife was recovering from a serious back injury and was asleep, so I had to care for my 6-year-old son.

I stayed up with him until almost midnight and finally headed to bed. After three short hours of sleep, I dragged my carcass into work for the last half of mid-shift.

During that shift, our shop had to service our aircraft's oxygen systems before the morning flight schedule. When I returned to the shop, we had a few gripes to fix, so I sent my airman out to get started. I stayed in the shop to take care of any preflight gripes that might come up. Sure enough, I got a call about 10 minutes later for an oxygen gripe. I said, "No problem," and headed off to take a look.

On my way to the plane, a flight engineer from another aircraft asked if I'd take a look at his oxygen. I parked my tractor and obliged. I decided the system

needed about 100 psi for a top off and told the flight engineer I'd take care of it. Without thinking, I grounded my oxygen cart, purged the servicing line, and hooked up to the aircraft. I put in about 100 psi and disconnected from the plane.

After wrapping that job, I jumped into the tractor to finish my first task. Before I could leave, another flight engineer stopped me and asked what I just had done. I told him about the 100-psi shot to top off the plane. He proceeded to chew my butt because I had serviced an aircraft while a power cart was hooked up to the plane. That was bad enough, but aircrew still was on board doing a preflight.

I hadn't noticed the NC-10 on the other side of the plane until he had mentioned it. He then reminded me about an oxygen incident that had burned an aircraft to the ground. I admitted my mistake and knew my momentary lack of judgment deserved his reprimand.

I should have gone back to the hangar, grabbed a shipmate, and then returned to the plane. I should have made everyone get off the plane, except for my observer. We then would have made sure no power was on the plane and the battery had been disconnected.

My inattention could have caused a serious injury or death. I also learned to keep my eyes on my troops to make sure they are not too tired to do a job—like I was. 

Petty Officer Hedrick works in the AME shop at VP-30.



Photo by PHAM Brad Garner

# LETTERS

## The Value of a Safety Center Survey

*Mech*—Crossfeed Winter 2002/2003

I would like to add a few comments to the article appearing on page 32, regarding FLIR pods.

I am the safety petty officer for VFA-81. While on deployment, one of my maintainers submitted an ANYZAP (our ANYMOUSE), regarding a lack of support equipment for the FLIR pods. Our SE was broken, and no other squadron on the ship had equipment that worked. We brought the problem to the ship's attention, and AIMD immediately ordered the parts to return three pieces of gear to an up status.

After-action reports showed this equipment often is broken, and most activities load the pods by hand, rather than turn in the equipment for repair. Maintenance control tends to turn a blind eye to the practice, but, after our ANYZAP and *Mech's* repeated stories, our CO, XO and MO gave everyone 20/20 eyesight.

ATCS Williams was right on the money about "accepted practices." We used the message in the article to drive home the point that serious damage or injury can occur when we don't use the required equipment. My old shop now does not move pods without this gear, and maintenance control does not require them to do so. We have learned from the mistakes of others, rather than from our own experience.

ATI(AW) Larry P. Card  
VFA-81 Safety

## Wrestling Wild Huffer Hoses

*Mech* Winter 2002/2003

I work at a waste isolation pilot plant and use a range of various size hoses that are pressurized to 120 psi. We use an item called a "Whip Check" to prevent separated hoses from becoming a danger. It's a device that goes around the hose, attaches securely to the connection ends and ensures the hose does not flail should it rupture.



Curtis J. Sanders (curtis.sanders@wipp.ws)  
Public Works Center, Carlsbad N.M.

*Thank you. I'm sure our SE maintainers will check various websites for this product.—Ed.*

## Bravo Zulu Policy

*I misplaced an e-mail from a shipmate who wrote about BZs being "watered down." That section of Mech is dedicated to maintainers who do something above and beyond the norm. The reader was concerned that some BZs missed that mark.*

*Every BZ received is reviewed by our informal "BZ board," which involves a chief (for questionable issues), the maintenance officer (a Navy commander), and the aviation directorate head (a Marine colonel). I don't vote but do offer my opinion. They give me a thumbs up or down on each BZ. The submittal package includes an endorsement from the command's CO, showing support for their Sailor's exceptional find, save or maintenance action.*

*We approve almost 90 percent of the BZs received. An example of a rejected BZ is a plane captain who dives the duct on a clear day as part of a daily or turnaround inspection. The PC is supposed to look for nicked or damaged blades, and it should not be a surprise when he finds one. What happens when the scenario now changes? It is dark, windy, cold, and ice or rain hampers every action. We take the environment, extenuating circumstances, and the benefit of doubt into account when deciding which BZs will appear.—Ed.*

## News You Can Use

### Hearing Protection Technical-Data Indoctrination Package Forthcoming

The first in a series of technical-data indoctrination packages (TDIPs) dealing with hearing protection should be available to the fleet sometime late summer or early fall. NavAir and FAILSAFE currently are producing a video package directed at educating the fleet in the various authorized cranial configurations, the proper maintenance of their head gear, and the correct use and procedures for foam earplugs.

Occupational hearing loss resulting from exposure to hazardous noise is a primary concern to the Navy, both ashore and afloat. The goal of the series will be to reduce hearing loss, to improve productivity and efficiency, and to cut the high cost of compensation claims.

For more information on the TDIPs, contact Mr. John Birtwistle at [BirtwistleJG@navair.navy.mil](mailto:BirtwistleJG@navair.navy.mil) or by phone at (301) 342-9242.