

# Double



## Absent-Minded: Thinking Only of Liberty

By AM3 Archil Norzea

The time was 1900 on a Friday. It was a nice October night and was the last workday of the week at NAS Oceana, Va. The line division had had a heavy flight schedule all week long, and we had been at work since 0600 that morning. The whole shop was tired, and my mind was elsewhere.

I was thinking about Halloween parties, and how great my girlfriend would look in her costume. Outside, the jets were put to bed, and the flight line was secured. Toward the end of my shift, the final job of the evening was to move one last Hornet into the hangar. My supervisor told another PC and me to open the hangar doors.

We had to move two doors in the same direction because of the way the hangar doors were stacked. My partner moved the first door, and I began to move the second one. Taking a look at the hangar, I knew we would have the right clearance when the doors were even with the storage cage. It would leave just enough room to get the aircraft inside the hangar.

Looking to see if doors had moved far enough, I stuck my head between them, which I quickly realized was a terrible

mistake. Just then, my shipmate stopped door number one, but I still had my hand on the open button. I couldn't stop the door in time, and my head became lodged between the two. As I hit the deck, I screamed for help and passed out.

Several shipmates came to my aid, got my head loose, and called for an ambulance. I was rushed to a civilian hospital, where doctors found I had a fractured jaw, broken bones in my face, and crushed sinuses. I later was transferred to a military hospital for four days and had reconstructive surgery to my face and head. The military doctors said my cranial had saved my life.

It took three months to recover from my injuries, and I still suffer from numbness to my face. If only I had taken the time to think through the hazards of this simple operation. A third person, whom I did not use, would have been the safety observer. I also should have moved one door at a time.

Shortcuts and a lapse in judgment almost cost me my life. I am fortunate to be alive today, and I owe that blessing to my cranial. I now focus on liberty after I'm through with work and have learned to keep safety on my mind, even when doing simple jobs. 

Petty Officer Norzea is assigned to the line division at VFA-83.

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