

# Secure That Door!

By Lt. Don Hughes,  
HSL-44

Life aboard any Navy combatant is hectic. Within the skin of the ship, Sailors constantly climb up and down ladders and go from fore to aft, and vice versa, to get to their assigned stations. SWOs (surface warfare officers) seemingly always are working to get ready to stand a watch.

As an aviator with a LAMPS detachment, on my first deployment, I had several questions. First, why did the ship's officers always look so tired? Secondly, what, or for what, exactly were they "watching?" And, had they ever lost that for which they were on watch?

I soon found the answer to my first question: SWOs always appear tired because they lack sleep, which leads one to ask, "Why?" The answer to that question is one of time's great mysteries and ranks with, "Is there an edge to space," "What killed the dinosaurs," and "What exactly is a widget in the bottom of a can of Guinness?" Some things never may be answered.

What I often heard was, "There just isn't enough time in the day," and it sounded plausible since we all probably can remember pulling all-nighters in college. But, wait a minute. Sometimes when we would transit westward, an extra hour would be added to the day, so the argument about not having enough time in the day was rendered false.

Amid the frantic day-to-day pace of shipboard operations, something else bothered me. Sailors



would walk hurriedly through doors, leaving them open and swinging freely as the ship pitched and rolled.

All Sailors should appreciate the importance of dogging a door once they've walked through it or properly securing a door should they come across one left swinging. Many Sailors have lost fingers or suffered other injuries when doors slammed on them.

Being a fan of self-preservation, I always secure any freely swinging doors I come across while traveling throughout a ship. I really don't want to lose any fingers or have my face slammed by a swinging door. Besides, how would I manipulate aircraft controls if I had missing digits?

Unsecured doors are some of the most dangerous and overlooked perils aboard ship. It takes only a second to open and then secure a door once you're through it. If you come across an unsecured door, take time to properly close it, or, if you can't secure it, immediately notify someone who can. Investing a few seconds will keep you and your shipmates safe, and you might well prevent someone requiring a medevac flight.

Shipboard life is busy enough without losing someone to a mishap, which makes life underway even harder when others have to fill in because of an unplanned personnel loss. Think about that fact the next time you don't secure a door. **S**