



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
9TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (ACC)
HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO

19 Mar 96

MEMORANDUM FOR: 49 OG/CC *[initials]*
49 FW/SE *[initials]*
IN TURN

FROM: 9FS/CC

SUBJ: Maintenance Professional Safety Award

1. SSgt Darren L. Hensley
2. Material Application and Repair Technician, 2A773
3. 9th Fighter Squadron
4. Date of Accurance: 5 Mar 96
5. Supervisor: MSgt Thomas W. Watson

6. On 5 Mar 96, during routine MARS maintenance on an F-117A Stealth Fighter Aircraft -0797, SSgt Darren L. Hensley discovered an unusual sound echoing within the airframe. While accomplishing the task of Radar Absorbant Material (RAM) removal in the area directly aft and inboard of the right main landing gear, he detected the alarming noise. Suspecting the sound was coming from a loose item in the exhaust chamber, SSgt Hensley contacted the flight line supervisor to report the discrepancy. Utilizing a drain hole located in the area of the sound, a visual inspection confirmed a bolt was loose within the exhaust duct compartment. The decision was made to accomplish the removal of the loose item. Following removal of the access panel a bolt was found resting on the lower structure. The bolt was the main forward exhaust duct hanger bolt for the exhaust system. The bolts loss caused a serious duct misalignment from engine vibration. Repair involved realignment and reinstallation of the exhaust duct. Possible savings; prevention of damage to exhaust duct and bulkhead assy. Prevention of loss of right aft section of airframe due to exhaust burn through. Possible loss of aircraft in flight due to exhaust malfunction. Possible loss of aircrew.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Russell P. Schmitt".

RUSSELL P. SCHMITT, Lt Col, USAF
Squadron Maintenance Officer