

KNIFE

(only!) in the Knee-How Lucky. . .

By Lt. Jon Sastrom

One evening aboard an aircraft carrier, a Sailor decided to sharpen his knife by using the leather-belt method he had seen in western movies. He used his knife daily and wanted it to be as sharp as possible. The Sailor began honing the blade's cutting edge on a whetstone.

He then took off his unauthorized leather belt and attached one end to the handle on a piece of equipment, while holding the other end between his legs. With his free hand, the Sailor began to sharpen his knife—going back and forth across the belt, just like he saw them do in those movies—but got carried away by putting a little too much “oomph” into his sharpening strokes. He drove the knife into his knee.

A sick-bay examination determined there were no cut or damaged ligaments, but the Sailor needed six stitches to close the bleeding wound.

In addition to a non-regulation belt, also contributing to this mishap was the Sailor's no-fear attitude and the fact that he had worked an entire shift and wasn't as mentally alert as he should have been. Had he been more aware of what he was doing and realized the potential hazards, his common sense would have kicked in and this knifing would have been prevented.

In the future, our western-movie buff hopefully will combine common sense and operational risk management, and apply them—along with the valuable lesson he learned from sharpening his knife—to everything he does. ☺

Lt. Sastrom was the Avionics and Armament Division officer for Strike/Fighter Squadron 27 embarked in USS Kitty Hawk when he wrote this story.



After using a whetstone to sharpen his knife (above), the Sailor decided to use a Western-movie method of using a leather strap (below) to hone the blade. While he was making passes with his knife across the leather belt, his hand slipped, and he stabbed himself in the knee.

