



The tyre and scrape marks the next morning on the 'round down' edge of Melbourne's deck after it was struck by Phil Thompson on the night of 1 September 1971. By that afternoon, the marks were painted over. The Admiral's cabin is directly under the impact point. (Phil Thompson)

Another gear problem

There was another A-4G incident while the ship was in Hawaii, also involving one of the sprogs.

On arrival in the Hawaii Operational Area on 24 October, Sub-Lieutenant John Hamilton and his aircraft were among four A-4s to disembark to Naval Air Station Barbers Point. On 27 October, during an air-to-ground sortie on the Kaho'olawe Range, John's aircraft (887) suffered a malfunction, forcing him to carry out an emergency wheels-up landing at Barbers Point. The aircraft suffered minor damage and was subsequently made airworthy before rejoining the carrier on 17 November.

The malfunction was a worn latch on the undercarriage lever which allowed the undercarriage to extend during the weapon release recovery. Strong as it was, the undercarriage was not stressed to 450 knots and broke, necessitating a slow transit from the range and then a short-



John Hamilton's aircraft after a short-field arrest on its tanks at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, on 27 October 1971. The officer in short summer whites is the AEO. (FAAAoA)