

49 YEARS OF SERVICE

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### **OCTOBER 2021**

### A 'persistent, proximate threat': Why the Navy is preparing for a fight under the sea

By Diana Stancy Correll Navy Times, 10 Sept 2021

A s Russia and China bolster their own submarine fleets and capabilities, the U.S. Navy has renewed its focus on undersea threats and has labeled anti-submarine warfare a priority for all sailors — and perhaps some Marines, too.

In August, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans to acquire two nuclear submarines equipped with interconti-

nental ballistic missiles, and two dieselpowered submarines. And China, which owns four ballistic missile submarines, boasts a force of The Virginia-class attack submarine Indiana departs Newport News Shipbuilding in 2018 to conduct Alpha sea trials in the Atlantic Ocean. (Matt Hildreth/General Dynamics Electric Boat via Navy)50 diesel-electric attack submarines, the Nuclear Threat Initiative reported in February.

To counter these threats, the

Navy reactivated its 2nd Fleet in 2018 to focus on threats from Russia — including those under the ocean — and more recently it has held exercises to improve its ability to fight enemy submarines.

"This is where the fight is ... where the competition is," retired Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, then the commander of U.S. 2nd Fleet, told reporters in September 2020. The Los Angeles-class attack submarine Houston completes an exercise with Japan in the Northeast Asia Pacific region. (MC3 Casey H. Kyhl/Navy)

"Anti-submarine warfare is a primary mission for everybody in the United States Navy, regardless of what you wear on your chest," Lewis said.

In recent years, Navy leaders have cautioned about increased Russian undersea activity in the Atlantic Ocean, and have warned that the continental United States is no longer a sanctuary safe from such threats.

"Over the past several years, we've realized that there is a persistent proximate threat in the western Atlantic, primarily from Russian Federation Navy Forces, that has drawn a lot more attention due to the challenges that poses to our homeland defense," Rear Adm. Brian Davies, commanding officer of Submarine Group 2 and deputy commander of the 2nd Fleet, told Navy Times.

Although the Russian submarine fleet is dramatically smaller than it was at the height of the Cold War, it still has 11 ballistic missile submarines and 17 nuclear-powered attack submarines, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative. These ballistic missile submarines are capable and technologically on par — at least in some ways —

with the U.S. submarine fleet, said Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. "You've got this numbers challenge from the China side, the

missiles that have the range and accuracy to strike military and civilian targets throughout the U.S. and Canada and as a result, we put a

lot more focus in the area of theater undersea warfare," Davies said.

"Specifically, Russian submarines now have advanced cruise

"You've got this numbers challenge from the China side, the capability challenge from the Russian side, which in some ways demands different approaches to anti-submarine warfare, but it cre-

ates for both cases a big problem," Clark said.

Bryan McGrath, a former destroyer captain who runs the FerryBridge Group, a defense consulting firm, noted that while the Chinese fleet is not as technologically advanced nor as capable as the Russian fleet, they do have a "ridiculously capable shipbuilding base" that's churning out submarines.

The undersea threat has become critical now, given the investment Russia and China

have made into expanding their submarine forces, McGrath said.

"Bottom line for why now is that both of our major competitors are putting money, resources and technology into this domain," McGrath said.

#### Why the Navy re-established the 2nd Fleet

When the U.S. 2nd Fleet was dissolved in 2011 amid the war on terror, undersea warfare was put on the backburner. But the command was resurrected in 2018 in response to greater levels of Russian activity in the North Atlantic and Arctic, including undersea.

For the same reason, NATO's Joint Force Command Norfolk was stood up and the command reached full operational capability in July 2021. According to Lewis, who was also the commanding officer of JFC Norfolk, the command "creates a link between North America and Europe and helps to further develop the desired 360-degree approach for our collective defense and security."

# It is the only operational NATO command on the North American continent, and has air, surface and subsurface capabilities.

The Navy also revived Submarine Group 2 in September 2019 to streamline the Navy's ability to command and control undersea warfare assets in the Western Atlantic.



The Virginia-class attack submarine Indiana departs Newport News Shipbuilding in 2018 to conduct Alpha sea trials in the Atlantic Ocean. (Matt Hildreth/General Dynamics Electric Boat via Navy)

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# **Ĵ** Newsletter notes & information

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### **Executive Officers:**

President: Gary Shorrel Vice President: Christopher Hagger Treasurer: Lance Wagner Secretary: Greg Plante

### **Appointed Positions**

Chaplain: Christopher Hagger Sunrise Press Editor, Webmaster, and Data Base Tech: Greg Plante Historian: (open)

**WEBSITE:** www.usslexingtoncv16.org

### A Note from Lance...

If you know someone who served on the LEX, let me know and I'll send them information about our group. If you move, please send me your new address.

### Office of the Treasurer...

Membership Dues: \$20/year - Due by Dec. 31st. Make checks payable to: USS Lexington Association. **Send Dues to Lance or Pay Online** 

MAIL to: Lance Wagner 71 - 21 73rd Place Glendale, NY 11385

**PAY ONLINE:** website: usslexingtoncv16.org CLICK: "Dues and Donation"

### A Note from the Editor:

Have you read an interesting article or story recently? Or maybe have some memorabilia from your time on the LEX? Share it with your shipmates! Just send them to me and I'll print them in the Sunrise Press, including a byline to credit you with the submission.

> My postal address is: 23428 College Ave. Robertsdale, AL 36567 For electronic submissions, email me at: editor@usslexingtoncv16.org Greg Plante, Editor of the Sunrise Press



### 2022 Reunion USS Lexington Association September 26th - 30th

### Sunrise Press - EMAIL Version:

The email version is better than the printed, with color graphics & pictures, e-links and more.

For those receiving the email version of the Sunrise Press: You will receive an email stating that the Press is available for viewing on the website. Follow the link to the Association website where you can view or download the current issue of the Sunrise Press. <u>www.usslexingtoncv16.org</u>

# ΓΔΡς

#### Davis, Donald W

05/08/2020 - Vancouver, WA Onboard: 1944 - 1946

### Graziano, Guy J SR



Zliceski, Joseph A

06/30/17 - Clifton, NJ

Onboard: 1942 - 1946

### Help us keep our "TAPS" records up to date...

We need your help. Our only way of knowing our members have passed, is if someone tells us. We ask that you please notify us of any members who are no longer with us so we can update our records and honor our deceased shipmates in the Sunrise Press.

Email notifications to: editor@usslexingtoncv16.org Snail Mail to: Greg Plante, 23428 College Ave, Robertsdale, AL 36567

### WELCOME ABOARD: NEW MEMBERS

Korhonen, Loren K Onboard: 1968 - 1972 V1

Lester, Garey W Onboard: 6/1972 - 10/1973 V1, Fly3

**McQuiston, Jeffrey R** Onboard: 1977 - 1978 S2

Smith, Craig A Onboard: 1980 - 1983 V6 GSF

Walker, Gary F Onboard: 8/1959 - 7/1962 W

### **USS Lexington CV16 Association: MEMBERSHIP**

The Association welcomes all shipmates, navy, marines, Ships Company, air group personnel who served at some time on a USS Lexington CV 16 (all her designations) or on the USS Lexington CV 2. Dues are \$20/year, and due at the end of each year. Dues can be paid online at: <u>www.usslexingtoncv16.org</u> Dues paid by mail: Make checks payable to :USS Lexington Association Send your dues to: Lance Wagner, 71-21 73rd Place, Glendale, NY 11385

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# 🗘 Presidents Message



### **Gettysburg 2022**

Fellow Association members and shipmates, a brief letter this quarter as I have not been well for some time now. It is unfortunate that we had to cancel the reunion two years in a row. We had little turn out for the Omaha reunion and it was financially impossible to hold the reunion. Hopefully all viruses will be in the past for the Gettysburg reunion. Speaking of Gettysburg, planning is well underway and more information will be in future editions of the Sunrise Press. The Association is hoping for and planning for a great turn-out.

After two years of having to cancel the reunion many of us are eager to get together with our friends and shipmates.

That's all for this edition of the Sunrise Press. I hope you are all well and looking forward to a great reunion n Gettysburg.



# Finishing Max's mission — parents of corpsman killed in Kabul offered home for Afghan child



This Aug. 25 photograph shows HM3 Max W. Soviak holding the Afghan child his parents would later try to adopt. (Facebook photo courtesy Thomas Praxades).

#### By Rachel Nostrant Navy Times 16 Sept 2021

Retired Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Praxades was working to get Afghan citizens evacuated when he was contacted by Marines on the ground in Kabul.

Praxades, whose evacuation efforts included numerous interpreters he'd worked with, was informed that the mother of Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Maxton "Max" W. Soviak had made contact with a heartbreaking request.

Rachel Soviak wanted to find and potentially adopt the little boy featured in one of the last pictures taken of her son before he was killed by a suicide bomber on Aug. 26 along with 12 other U.S. service members.

According to Praxades, sources from 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines the outfit Soviak was working with in Afghanistan — said the child had ended up at the Abbey Gate of Hamid Karzai International Airport after his parents had been killed.

Praxades was told the boy had been escorted to the gate by locals before ending up in the care of the 22-year-old corpsman.

Troops who knew the young corpsman wanted to help Soviak's mother, but "their hands were tied," Praxades said, adding "mine weren't because I was no longer active duty."

Praxades reached out to Soviak's mother on Facebook a few days later and received permission to put the request on social media. The subse-

quent Sept. 5 Facebook post quickly went viral, being shared over 11,000 times.

In response to comments on the post, Soviak's mother reiterated her support for the efforts to find the child.

"To our knowledge, this picture was taken the morning before our son passed," she wrote. "We feel in our hearts that Max was doing what he felt called to do. He was, in that moment, trying to keep these children safe.

"If Max was willing to put his life on the line to do what he was called to do, we feel we can continue where he left off and provide [the child] a safe, loving home ... we are prepared to do that."

Before long, offers to help began pouring in from around the globe.

"It was crazy," Praxades said, "It was a total shot in the dark, we didn't even have a name, just a picture. ... There were people in Cuba, Norway, Germany and Qatar all offering to help. This was definitely a multinational, multiagency effort."

"The efforts taken to find this kid were amazing," Praxades said. Praxades noted that for the Soviaks, who had 12 children and experience with fostering, there were two best-case outcomes.

The first, he said, would be to find the boy and bring him safely home to be adopted, the way Max would have wanted.

"[Rachel Soviak] told me that Max comes from a family that adopts a lot of kids, and that he was always around kids," Praxedes said. "So, to her, it was only natural that he wanted to be a corpsman and be working this mission with the young kids."

The second outcome would be the child would be found safely alongside his family and that they might be able to provide support in other ways.

That result, he said, is exactly what happened.

Praxades received confirmation that the child had been found by UNICEF workers within days of posting on Facebook.

"When I got the word that the kid was found, I was kind of still questioning it," he said. "But I had another contact from Department of Homeland Security come out of thin air and work his contacts within the Department of State to help confirm this was the right boy."

According to Praxades' contacts, the boy had been reunited with a legal guardian in Afghanistan. Still, he remained moved by the Soviak family's eagerness to help and their strength throughout the ordeal.

"[Rachel] told me that she felt called to complete that mission for Max," Praxades said. "That's the word she used. 'Called.' That if Max's mission was to save these kids, and if this kid had no parents, she felt called to do this, to complete the mission that Max started."

"They just wanted to do this out of the kindness of their hearts," Praxedes added. "It's inspiring."

Soviak's remains were returned to the family on Sept. 8. He was laid to rest Sept. 13 in Milan, Ohio.



### RESPECTFUL

About a year ago or so my sister retired, and being that we are getting up in age, I felt it was best if she would move down to Odessa with me. The only ones left are me, my sister and my brother, so we

need each other now more than ever especially since we are all senior citizens now. However, in doing so she will be building a house next to mine, so it is necessary for her to move in with me until this is done. What we did not figure into the equation was the covid pandemic and the problems thereof. Nevertheless, I feel it was a good move at the right time. Living together with a sibling has its challenges on a daily basis, everyone has a space or shall I say everyone needs their space, but if one needs their space then they would need a place for their space. So, needless to say it has been trial and error; from let's not bump hands today, to I will go to my room while someone else enjoys my space in my place. I have learned to be content and be thankful. A friend who I care for deeply called me a few months ago at 2:00 a.m. and she said with such a feeling of defeat in her voice, that her sister had died in Florida while on vacation. I went to the funeral with her, and as I sat there with my friend consoling her, I thought of my situation and how blessed I am to have my sister still with me.

You know, when I look at it as much as I can through the eyes of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, He loves and cares for those that were all up in His space and place. He ministered to their needs and listened to their concerns. In the book of Philippians, Paul writes and says "Let this mind that be in Christ be also in you." That is saying a lot, it is saying that I am to show the love of Christ in my life, because the very space and place that I have, God blessed me to have it so that I can share with others and maybe during that time they could see the love of Christ shining in me.

When I look at America, and what she stands for welcoming those that are hurt, and broken and confused and lost, who would have known that Lady Liberty had so much weight on her shoulders? I have learned that sharing my space and place helps me to stand in my sisters' shoes; it was not easy leaving her space and place. And even though I might become sort of agitated, I have more than enough room to share the love of Christ. I believe we all do.

Chaplain Hagger pastors All People Worship Center in Odessa, Texas . He also overseas the operation at All People Hospice and Healthcare. Contact: Address: 4745 N. Sierra Ave, Odessa, TX 79764 — Phone: 432-258-7751 / FAX: 432-381-5272 / Cell: 832-312-0892

Chaplain Hagger can be reached anytime.....no matter what the time.



### Let's Get Together in Gettysburg

The Lexington Association will have its 2022 reunion in the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. On July 1,1863, the opening shots were fired in a battle that lasted only 3 days. Many considered this battle to be the bloodiest of the Civil War. General Robert E. Lee brought the Army of Northern Virginia, to confront Union Forces and seek a victory that would bring a truce to end the war.

We will be staying at the Windham Hotel, which is next to the battlefield. Our tour will take us to the site of the Union Army's positions and the advantage of having the high ground. We will tour Little Round Top and look down on the field that cost Lee's forces a total defeat. We will also go to the site of Lees army and see the open field and the challenges that they faced. This is where Lee gave the command to General Pickett "General Pickett, you have the honor to take the middle." We all know how that turned out.

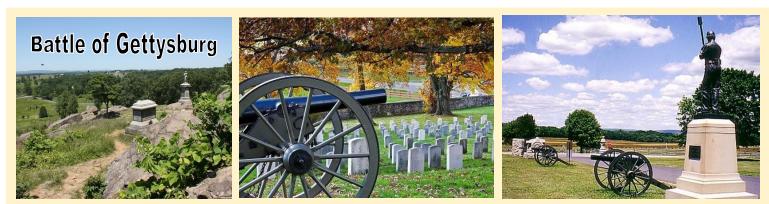
We will visit the Seminary Ridge Museum and the National Visitors Center and the site were President Lincoln gave the Famous Gettysburg Address. Lunch will be in one the oldest restaurants in the country.

This reunion will give us a sense of what these men endured and bring history alive. You do not want to miss this opportunity to relive one of the greatest battles in American history.

Shipmate, Bob DiMonte



# HOTEL INFORMATION - WYNDHAM GETTYSBURG Address: 95 Presidential Circle, Gettysburg, PA 17328 Phone: 717-339-0020 September 26th - 30th, 2022 (\$128/Night)



Submitted by: Shipmate Gary Shorrel

I don't know who wrote this but it's really good! We Are Veterans. We left home as teenagers for an unknown adventure. We loved our country enough to defend it and protect it with our own lives. We said goodbye to friends and family and everything we knew. We learned the basics and then we scattered in the wind to the far corners of the Earth. We found new friends and new family. We became brothers and sisters regardless of color, race or creed. We had plenty of good times, and plenty of bad times. We didn't get enough sleep. We smoked and drank too much. We picked up both good and bad habits. We worked hard and played harder. We didn't earn a great wage. We experienced the happiness of mail call and the sadness of missing important events. We didn't know when, or even if, we were ever going to see home again. We grew up fast, and yet somehow, we never grew up at all. We fought for our freedom, as well as the freedom of others. Some of us saw actual combat, and some of us didn't. Some of us saw the world, and some of us didn't. Some of us dealt with physical warfare, most of us dealt with psychological warfare. We have seen and experienced and dealt with things that we can't fully describe or explain, as not all of our sacrifices were physical. We participated in time honored ceremonies and rituals with each other, strengthening our bonds and camaraderie. We counted on each other to get our job done and sometimes to survive it at all. We have dealt with victory and tragedy. We have celebrated and mourned. We lost a few along the way. When our adventure was over, some of us went back home, some of us started somewhere new and some of us never came home at all. We have told amazing and hilarious stories of our exploits and adventures. We share an unspoken bond with each other, that most people don't experience, and few will understand. We speak highly of our own branch of service, and poke fun at the other branches. We know however, that, if needed, we will be there for our brothers and sisters and stand together as one, in a heartbeat. Being a veteran is something that had to be earned, and it can never be taken away. It has no monetary value, but at the same time it is a priceless gift. People see a veteran and they thank them for their service. When we see each other, we give that little upwards head nod, or a slight smile, knowing that we have shared and experienced things that most people have not. So, from myself to the rest of the veterans out there, I commend and thank you for all that you have done and sacrificed for your country. Try to remember the good times and forget the bad times. Share your stories. But most importantly, stand tall and proud, for you have earned the right to be called a Veteran.

# Veterans treatment court program working, but needs VA improvement to increase access: watchdog



Associate Judge Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer embraces a U.S. Army veteran after completing a program at the Veterans Treatment Court at the Kent County Courthouse in Warwick, R.I., Friday, May 13, 2016. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

#### By Leila Barghouty Navy Times 15 Sept 2021

The growing Veterans Justice Outreach program, which has helped ease criminal justice problems for veterans' across the U.S., is working, but the Department of Veterans Affairs needs to make some improvements for more veterans to participate, according to a new watchdog report.

The VA needs to improve training, outreach, and planning, among other actions, according to a new report from the Government Accountability Office.

The report names four key barriers identified by both VA and GAO that justice-involved veterans face in accessing the specialized services through the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018. According to GAO's report, these barriers included Veterans Justice Outreach specialists failing to identify veterans eligible for their services, lack of awareness of the program within jurisdictions, workforce capacity constraints among specialists, and confusion within the veteran community on eligibility. In the jurisdictions where they work, these specialists assist justice-involved-veterans in navigating the courts in order to decrease subsequent risks of recidivism and homelessness.

"VJO officials have said that additional research will help them to identify how VA can improve access to the program and VA services," Elizabeth Curda, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security Issues for GAO said in an email to Military Times. "However, VA hasn't fully demonstrated through its research or other efforts what or where the needs are." Over 50 percent of veterans involved in the justice system live with mental health or substance-abuse issues, according to VA research. GAO notes that arrest and detention can further increase veterans' risk of mental health conditions and home-lessness. This increased risk is, in part, why Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) were first established in 2008. These courts operate parallel to state and local criminal courts, modeled after drug courts, with staff specifically trained to address needs that veterans facing charges might have. Between 2009 and 2016, the number of these courts in the U.S. grew from 25 to 461. From 2017 to 2019, over 40,000 justice-involved veterans were assisted by the program, according to the Sept. 14 report (that number dropped to just over 36,000 in 2020, but the VA attributes the drop to COVID-19 restrictions).

Retired Army Colonel D.J. Reyes, a senior mentor program coordinator for the 13th Judicial Circuit's Veterans Treatment Court in Tampa, Florida, said improvement to the program comes down to resources.

"The VJO program is a vital and critical requirement for the [Veterans Treatment Courts] to continue to be successful," Reyes told Military Times. "Having said that, there are challenges."

In 2018, Congress mandated that VA hire at least 50 additional Veterans Justice Outreach specialists to help execute this veteran-focused avenue of criminal justice. Since the passage of the bill, GAO found VA hired 51 such personnel, bringing the total number of specialists to almost 400 nationwide. However, VTC courts and VJO specialists are not evenly distributed across the country. Data mapped by GAO showed that the number of jails where veterans might be detained was far higher than the number of VJO specialists available per state. In many cases, the report notes, large distances between VA facility locations where VJO specialists work and justice jurisdictions limited their ability to provide services.

While VA concurred with the findings, GAO said the agency did inadequate planning to address them. "Absent a comprehensive risk assessment, VA is not well-positioned to develop appropriate strategies to mitigate the greatest risks, which may limit its ability to help justice-involved veterans receive assistance and avoid re-incarceration," the report reads. In Reyes's county in Florida, three available VJO specialists mean that the veteran-focused courts can be reach more justice-involved veterans. Ultimately, Reyes said he hopes these services continue to grow in availability, particularly in communities where substance use and mental illness may be elevated. While the recommendations from GAO may seek to improve the system, Reyes says execution of a better program is actually hinged around funds rather than organization. "Our problem, which is the problem of 99.9 percent of all jurisdictions," he said, "is money."

# 🗘 From my Email

#### Received from Shipmate Gary Shorrel

The U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides), as a combat vessel, carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (i.e. fresh water distillers). However, let it be noted that according to her ship's log, "On July 27, 1798, the U.S.S. Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum ." Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping." Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November.. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine . On 18 November, she set sail for England . In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war ships, and captured and scuttled 12 English merchant ships, salvaging only the rum aboard each. By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home. The U.S.S Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky, and 38,600 gallons of water.



Have you read an interesting article or story recently? Or maybe have some memorabilia from your time on the LEX? Share it with your shipmates! Just email them to us and we'll print them in the Sunrise Press.

Email:editor@usslexingtoncv16.org

These warships are leaving Japan after more than two decades overseas By <u>Geoff Ziezulewicz</u>



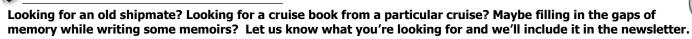
Sailors man the rails aboard the guided-missile destroyer John S. McCain as it departs Yokosuka, Japan on Sept. 17, 2021, after more than two decades overseas. The warship is enroute to its new homeport in San Diego. *(Ryo Isobe/Navy)* 

The U.S. Navy warships John S. McCain and Curtis Wilbur are moving to new West Coast homeports following more than two decades forward-deployed to Japan, the Navy announced this week. John S. McCain has been based with U.S. 7th Fleet out of Yokosuka, Japan, since 1997,

Following the 2017 at-sea collision that killed 10 sailors, the destroyer went through extensive repairs and returned to operations in the summer of 2020. It left Japan Friday and is headed to its new home at Naval Station Everett, Washington, where it will now fall under the command of U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Meanwhile, Curtis Wilbur arrived at its new San Diego homeport on Thursday after more than 25 years in Japan, making it the longest forward-deployed ship in recent history, according to a Navy release.

### SHIPMATES LOOKING FOR...



**NAME:** John M. McCarthy **EMAIL:** <u>jmminnt@aol.com</u>

#### Subject: Looking for Crew Members

Looking to get in touch with persons that were in the Supply Department in 1964 - 1965. Particularly looking for Bill Stroh, Bo and Ernie Harsiney from Cleveland, and Dave Lassiter from Baltimore. Also looking for Earl Wayne Goddard - I have some pictures of him sitting at his desk.

> To place a notice in the "Looking For" section of the newsletter, go to the website and click on "Contact CV 16" and fill out the form. Or send an email to <u>editor@usslexingtoncv16.org</u> Written submissions can be sent to:

Greg Plante, 23428 College Ave, Robertsdale, Alabama 36567

# 🗘 Spot-Light on Veteran's Memorials



This issue's memorial, is in downtown Pensacola, FL. What started out as a small memorial many years ago has become quite a nice attraction, and if you're ever in the area, worth your time to visit. It covers veterans in general, and by war in specific. The replica of the Viet Nam memorial wall is somberly reflective of the lives it honors. I only wish we had more room for the many picture we took here. I would like to encourage you all to please take picture of any memorials you come across as you travel about the country and send them to us to put in this feature.



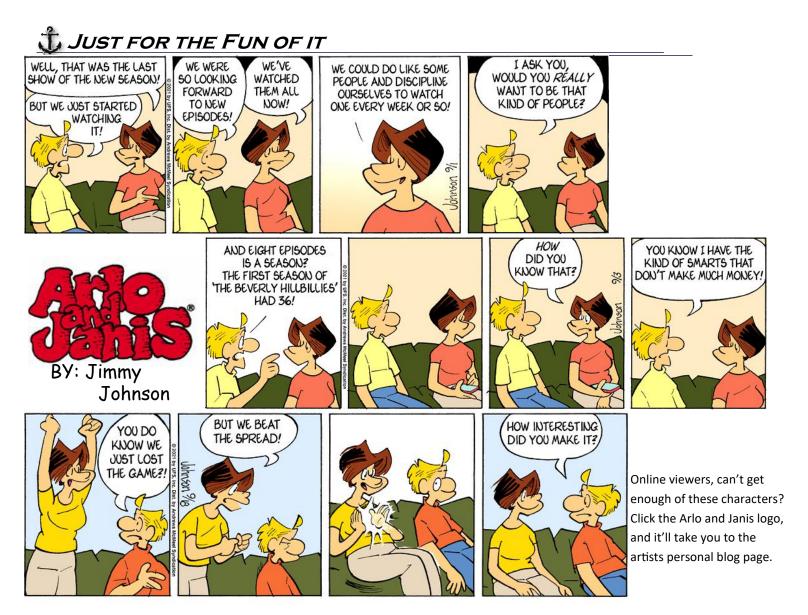












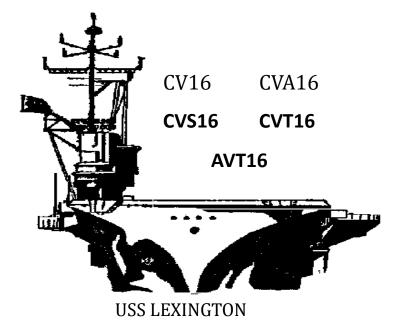


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