

Acting VA inspector general steps down amid criticism



(Photo: Mandel Ngann/AFP via Getty)

From NAVY TIMES, online at
NAVYTIMES.COM

The acting inspector general for the Department of Veterans Affairs on Tuesday announced plans to step down from the post this week, a day after criticism from a group of whistleblowers that he's done little to uncover fraud and abuse in the agency.

Richard Griffin, appointed deputy inspector general in 2008, has served as the office's acting head since George Opfer stepped down from the job 18 months ago. He retires after more than 43 years of federal service.

Replacing him as deputy in-

spector general will be Linda Halliday, the current assistant inspector for audits and evaluations. Last week, a group of 10 senators petitioned the president to appoint a permanent inspector general for VA to ensure stability and continuity in the office's oversight efforts.

In his retirement announcement, Griffin praised the office's "remarkable record of performance and outstanding achievements," highlighting nearly 2,000 reports over the last six years which have led to more than 11,000 punitive actions against individuals and \$22.5 billion in "monetary impact" for the department.

But Griffin has faced harsh words from critics in recent years for not doing enough to hold VA leadership accountable for problems regarding patient wait times, overprescribing by physicians, and medical records manipulation.

On Monday, a group called VA

Truth Tellers blasted Griffin for a "pattern of whitewashing and deceit" and called for his resignation. Several lawmakers have also publicly berated the office in recent months for working too closely with VA officials instead of publicly exposing potential wrongdoing.

Griffin did not respond to those accusations in his retirement announcement. The inspector general's office did not return calls seeking further comment.

Officials have struggled to fill VA leadership roles since the resignation of former VA Secretary Eric Shinsekian in May 2014, thanks to a combination of sparse nominations from the White House and slow confirmation work by the Senate.

Halliday has worked in federal government posts for more than 30 years. She has worked in the inspector general's office for the last 23.



A Word from Lance Wagner:

Look at the list of new members; if you see someone you once knew and want his address and phone number, write to me and I'll get it to you. If you know someone who served on the Lex, let me know and I'll send them some information about our group.

Please remember if you move to send me your change of address and new telephone number. Please be sure to include the area code, as many have changed.

Another thing, **look at the date after your name on the label that was used to mail you this newsletter. It is the date your dues are paid to. If it is 2010 or before, you are behind on your dues.**

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

Remember that dues are **\$15/yr**; make checks payable to: USS Lexington Association.



If anyone has any articles they'd like to see included in the newsletter, please send them to me and I'll put them in, space permitting, including a byline to credit you with the submission. My postal address is: **23428 College Avenue, Robertsdale, AL 36567**. Otherwise for electronic submissions, my e-address is gplante@gulftel.com. PLEASE put USS LEXINGTON or even just LEX in the subject area so that my spam filtering software won't delete it on me. Thanks, Greg Plante.
Editor, Sunrise Press

Sunrise Press Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the USS Lexington Association CV, CVA, CVS, CVT, AVT16. It's Editor is Greg Plante, with contact information in the box to the left, if you have any questions about anything in the newsletter, or would like to offer anything for inclusion.

WEBSITE:

www.usslexingtoncv16.com/

Association Officers:

President: Jim Barnes

Vice President: Keith Connealy

Treasurer: Lance Wagner

Secretary: Jay Southard

Chaplain: Christopher Hagger ThM

WELCOME ABOARD



TAPS



Harold Tendick

Russell A O'Day

Submitted by Shipmate Ron Haag:

A woman was outside pulling weeds on a hot summer day when her husband walked up and asked her what they were having for dinner.

Irritated by the thought of him sitting in the air conditioned house while she labored away on the weeds, she snapped, "I can't believe you're asking me about supper right now! Pretend I'm out of town, go inside and make dinner yourself!"

So he went back in the house and fixed himself a big steak, potatoes, garlic bread, and a tall beer.

His wife walked in just about the time he was finishing up and asked, "Where's my dinner?"

"Huh?.... I thought you were out of town," he replied.

REUNION NEWS

Our 2015, Baton Rouge reunion is fast approaching, now is the time to make your reservations and mail in your registration forms.

Everything is in place to make this one of the best reunions to date.

Unfortunately, the Governor will not be able to attend; he seems to be looking at more important decisions. We wish him well.

The 2016 reunion contract has been signed and we will be going to Pigeon Forge, Tn. More details at the Baton Rouge business meeting.

The 2017 reunion site will be up for discussion, if you have a site in mind this is the time to bring it to the membership.

Looking forward to seeing and sharing some great time with all of you.

Yours truly, and God bless
Bob DiMonte

A Call to Remember

By: Chaplain Christopher Hagger



When I was a boy growing up in small town named Port Arthur, Texas; there was nothing like the days of summer. Those summer days were filled with riding my Schwinn bicycle throughout the neighborhood with friends. If we got real bold and our parents were at work, we would sneak to another part of town to explore. The fourth of July was always exciting. My

dad would spend all morning preparing to barbeque; it was like a religion to him.

The meat had to be seasoned just right.

We would repeatedly ride by him, eagerly waiting to see when he took something off the grill, so we could be the first to sample the prize.

I remember, once while watching the evening news with my dad; the news anchorman, Roger Mudd was doing a story on Vietnam. I remember watching soldiers walking until they disappeared within the giant green leaves that hid them in the jungle. I asked my dad once; if he thought I would go to war. His reply was a low and barely audible, "No son; it will be over soon." I hoped it would be, and it was. I started noticing my friends' brothers returning from the war. I remember seeing them sitting in the park attempting to put their lives back together. We didn't have a name for what they were doing then, but now we do. I remember listening to their stories; they spoke of their experiences so vividly that you could almost smell the stale jungle water that soaked their boots and socks. In my mind, I could see the flares and smell the cinder; I could hear the

screams and their prayers wishing for home.

I often think of those young men and where they are today. Then, I remember, we still have young men and women away in foreign lands today. I am sure they are thinking of home; I know I did, especially during the holidays. Let us remember not only the sacrifice of others, but also the sacrifice we all made while serving in the military; those who served in the past and those serving now. After all, my brothers and sister, there is a small town somewhere in the USA, where a young boy or girl is riding their bicycle enjoying summer and barbeques. Their freedom is because of you. Our freedom was because of those young men, I saw on television long ago, marching into an unknown certainty in the jungles of Vietnam. God has blessed America, because we sacrifice for the greater good. I am proud of all my brothers and sisters in arms. Let us remember them today.

Happy Fourth of July!

A BETTER NEWSLETTER!... AND IT'S FREE!

The costs of publishing the newsletter, printing and postage, is growing, and a decrease in the number of newsletters mailed out will greatly help.

We are looking for people who have a computer with e-mail, or access to e-mail, and are willing to receive their newsletter in their e-mail.

The Press can be stored and read on your machine at your leisure, or printed to take with you. It is also better than the print version, with color graphics, pictures, e-links

to more info, all sorts of stuff including 2 - 6 bonus pages not in the print version.

PLEASE give this some real consideration !!! To give you an idea of what you're missing, go to the Association website where the last several issues are posted and see for yourself. That's <http://www.usslexingtoncv16.com/>

Send your e-mail address to gplante@gulftel.com. Please remember to put **Lexington** or **Lex** in the Subject line so my virus filter will leave it alone.

EMAIL RECIPIENTS!

I'm often asked in e-mails for dues expirations by various members, since there is no address sticker on a mailer label. We've come up with a solution.

Jay Southard's, databases tell him all of those fine things, and he will do a mailing twice a year (January & July) to anyone that comes up showing in arrears, so, watch your e-mail for a note from Jay and don't delete it. You'll need it to know what you owe.



The patch that Roland King designed and copyrighted is the official Association patch, and the ship's store will soon enough have a supply of both the smaller and larger patches of the same design. Contact for the patches will be:

**Lance Wagner
71-21 73rd Place
Glendale, NY 11385**

From Shipmate Roger Wolfe.....

I am forwarding the below as an FYI to anyone who served aboard the Lex when she was the CVA 16.

I ordered a CVA 16 hat from Militarybest.com. I have a CV 16 hat, but it's the first time I have been able to order a CVA 16 which was the designation when I was aboard in 1955-1957.

Subtotal 18.95
Shipping 3.99
Tax 0.00
Total 22.94

This accompanied a video sent to me by Shipmate Charlie Scott, and I thought it too good not to share... Greg

There is this one conflict that really involved the whole world where soldiers confronted the steel buzz-saw of the Axis Powers with the flesh of their bodies; they are called the 'Greatest Generation'! Recently, when I was getting my 'senior-coffee' at a McDonalds, the young man behind the counter asked if I was a veteran (the McDonalds is close to DM Airbase) and I said yes, I qualify as a vet in both the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts, why do you ask? He asked "Why do they call the WW2 soldiers 'The Greatest Generation'! Well, I haven't read the book of the same name, but my response was this; I think the author of that book used that descriptive term because it refers to those guys that ran up those beaches with the hand of death on their shoulders (really, I said that) and the young man visibly reacted. I continued, I said that I believe a large number of those men carried with them the memories of what the tyrants holding the beaches had done to them personally, or to their parents who had escaped to the United States. The young man's eyes widened and he glanced to my right; I hadn't noticed the old-guy standing there but I saw him turn his head away as he turned and made his way to the men's room! Later, while I was sipping my coffee and watching the BS shoveled by CNN, the old guy stopped by my booth and said he had escaped from Poland in '39. Without another word he shuffled out the door, leaving his story a mystery.

REGISTRATION FORM

USS LEXINGTON ASSOCIATION
2015 BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA REUNION ~ SEPT 27 - OCT 01

Name: _____ Spouse/Guest: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dates on Board: _____ Division: _____

Host Hotel: The Crown Plaza Hotel ~ 4728 Constitutions Ave, Baton Rouge, LA

Room reservations can be made by calling the Crown Plaza Hotel at (800) 678-4065. Be sure and mention that you are with the USS Lexington to get the special group rate of \$95.00 per room per night plus tax. That rate will be good 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion, based on Hotel availability.

Special Rates on these rooms will cease September 6th, 2015

Self parking is free, and airport transportation is available at a nominal fee. Contact the hotel's transportation coordinator at (225) 930-0150.

Please register me for the following:

Registration Fee (not optional): # of attendees _____ x \$30.00/ea = \$ _____

September 28th

Cajun Swamp Tour

and

WWII Museum: # of attendees _____ x \$75.00/ea - \$ _____

(Tour includes lunch, {a Louisiana style lunch of crawfish pasta, chicken and sausage jambalaya, potato salad, bread pudding and drinks} and is handicap accessible)

September 30th

Farewell Banquet # of attendees _____ x \$60 each= \$ _____

Choice of Entrée: Surf N' Turf Chateau Brand with three jumbo shrimp _____

Crabcake stuffed Chicken breast _____

Coat and Tie suggested

All prices include tax, gratuity, and transportation

TOTAL: \$ _____

Mail Registration form and check payable to: USS Lexington CV 16 Association; Cutoff date is September 6, 2015.

**Lance Wagner
71-21 73 place
Glendale, New York 11385**

USS LEXINGTON CV-16
38TH ANNUAL REUNION
BATON ROUGE, LA.
SEPT 27 THRU OCT.1 2015

Sept 27th Sunday

1300 Hospitality room opens; registration begins, rooms #253 and #254
1800 Opening reception, welcoming remarks from the Association President
Heavy Hors-d'oeuvres, cash bar
Location: Cypress1

Sept 28th Monday

0800 Hospitality room opens
0800 Gather in the Hotel Lobby for Tour
Please allow those with special needs to board first
0815 Bus departs for Cajun Swamp tour and WW2 Museum. Cajun Lunch provided
1700 Return to Hotel, Hospitality room opens

Sept 29th Tuesday

0800 Hospitality room opens
0815 ~~Breakfast with the Governor and Memorial Service. Location Cypress 2. All Members and guests welcomed~~ ***TBA***
Doors will close at 0830. (For security reasons)
Welcoming remarks from the President
Invocation and Pledge
Breakfast Buffet
Remarks from Governor Bobby Jindal
10 minute break
Memorial service.
Hospitality room opens

Sept 30th Wednesday

0900 Business Meeting, location: Mississippi/ Delta room
All members and guests welcomed
Raffle door prizes
1800 Banquet, Social hour, cash bar, location Cypress 2
Group Picture
Coat and tie suggested
1900 Remarks from the President
Invocation
Presentation of the colors by Lexington Color Guard
Dinner served
Entertainment by Cajun French Music Dancers

Oct 1 Depart Baton Rouge, have a safe trip home



Sunday, 27 September, 2015



The Hospitality Room opens at 1pm.



And at 6:00pm, the Social Hour and Welcome Aboard Reception Begins in Cypress



Monday, 28 September, 2015

The Hospitality Room opens at 8am. Gather for 8:15 departure of Cajun Swamp Tour and WWII Museum



Tuesday, 29 September, 2015

The Hospitality Room opens at 8am. Breakfast and an address by ~~Lou Babin~~ Governor Bobby Jindal, followed by a memorial service, with hospitality room re-opening afterwards.



Wednesday, 30 September, 2015



9:00AM Gathering for our Business Meeting, including raffle and door prizes.



**6:00PM Banquet, Social hour, cash bar, (location Cypress 2)
Group Picture (coat and tie suggested).**



**Remarks from the President
Invocation
Presentation of the colors by Lexington Color Guard
Dinner served
Entertainment by Cajun French Music Dancers**



Contributed by Shipmate Hoyt Wood (I found this very interesting and hope you do as well. I wish the quality was a little better, but I made it as clear as I as able... Greg)

GOOD LISTENERS MAKE GOOD HAMS

◆ My dad got me my first shortwave radio in 1960. As a boy, I spent all my time listening to the shortwave and ham bands when I wasn't building radios. I collected more than 400 QSL cards, including Radio Moscow.

In 1967, I joined the Navy and was trained in electronics. My first duty station was in Spain. It was our job to listen and record radar transmissions over Eastern Europe, analyze the signals and develop appropriate counter measures. We flew in unmarked planes and never transmitted.

In 1970, I was transferred to the USS *Lexington* out of Pensacola. Our mission was to train pilots for day landings and night onto the carrier landings. I worked in Primary Flight Control for the "Air Boss." It was my job to listen on a stereo headset to two frequencies and write the planes' fuel state on a status board. While I was on duty one night, a plane cut into the

pattern; he was one mile from the ship and next in line to land. I picked up on the plane's call sign and realized the mistake: The arresting gear wires on the landing deck were set for a different plane! This would be a disaster, ripping the plane apart! I had to think quickly.

I called out to the Air Boss to wave the plane off. He turned and said to me, "Wood, you had better be right!" I responded, "Yes, Sir! Wave him off!" He hit the red deck foul button; red lights flashed on the deck, warning the plane to abort his landing attempt. As he screamed past our window, the Air Boss could see it was in fact the wrong plane. We finished flight ops and nothing was said about a very close call.

Each day when flight ops ended, the Air Boss would go to dinner and leave the Assistant Air Boss to finish up by bringing the helicopters on board. But this day was different. He sent his assistant to dinner and turned to me, saying, "Wood, could you do me a favor and wrap up air operations for me so I can go to dinner?"

I took the Air Boss's seat and picked up the microphone. I called the first helicopter gave its pilot the wind direction and a signal of CHARLIE, clearing him to make his landing. After securing the helicopters on board, my final act was to call down to the Bridge and turn control of the ship back to the Captain. I was only 21 at the time and didn't realize until years later what an honor that had been. After all that listening, it was finally my turn to talk.

HOYT WOOD, K4YYY
Lake City, South Carolina

In my Email....



I want to thank you for the fine report on my visit to the CV16 Reunion in Corpus Christi. I have read many posts from members of the CV16 crew and I do try to answer some as I am able to. I would welcome receiving the Sunshine Press by e-mail. Thank you

Ralph Blackford
chiefyeoman1946@gmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PROGRAM

USS Lexington CV-16 Association Sponsored

The Association Scholarship Award is a one time award to a graduating Senior in the amount of \$1000 to assist them in furthering their education at a college of their choice. It is open to any senior who is a family member (son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, niece, nephew, etc.) Complete this form and send it to the address shown at the bottom of the form before the deadline.

Name: _____

Address: _____

High School Name: _____

GPA: _____

PSAT Score: _____ (or circle) Did Not Take

ACT Score: _____ (or circle) Did Not Take

Attach a typed Essay of 250 words or less concerning the United States Navy of a historical nature, or more topical with respect to the current US Naval fleet.

Applicants Signature

Date

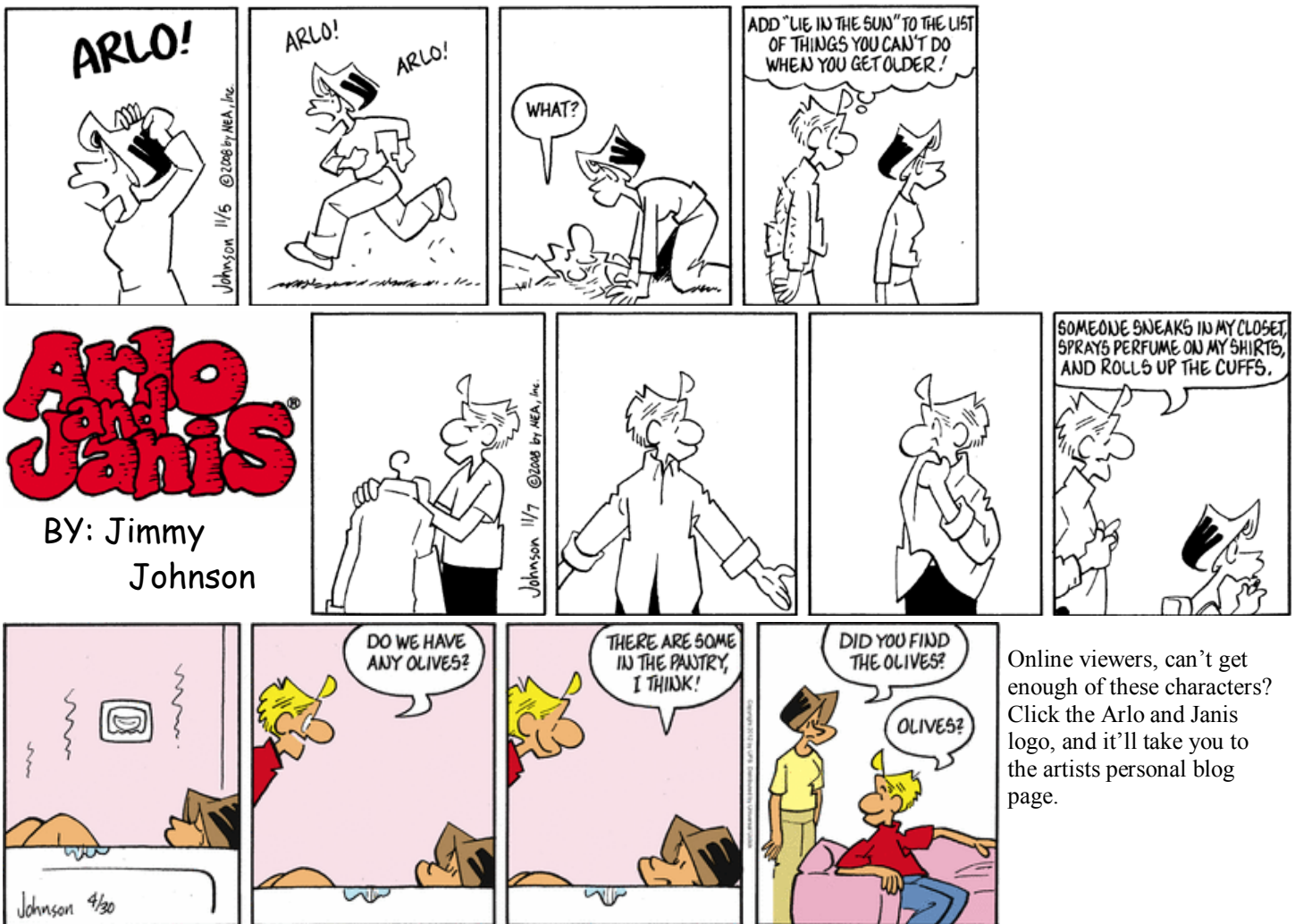
USS Lexington CV16 Association Member Info: Name: _____

Address: _____

Association Member's Signature

Mail this form and essay to: Scott and Missy Redding
11032 W. Crestline Drive
Littleton, CO 80127

All Submissions must be postmarked no later than 31 August 2015



Online viewers, can't get enough of these characters? Click the Arlo and Janis logo, and it'll take you to the artists personal blog page.

There was a man who had worked all of his life, had saved all of his money, and was a real misery when it came to his money.

Just before he died, he said to his wife, 'when i die, i want you to take all my money and put it in the casket with me. I want to take my money to the afterlife with me,' and so he got his wife to promise him with all of her heart that when he died, she would put all of the money in the casket with him.

Well, he died. He was stretched out in the casket, his wife was sitting there in black, and her friend was sitting next to her. When they finished the ceremony, just before the undertakers got ready to close the casket, the wife said, 'Wait just a minute!'

She had a box with her, she came over with the box and put it in the casket.

Then the undertakers locked the casket down, and they rolled it away.

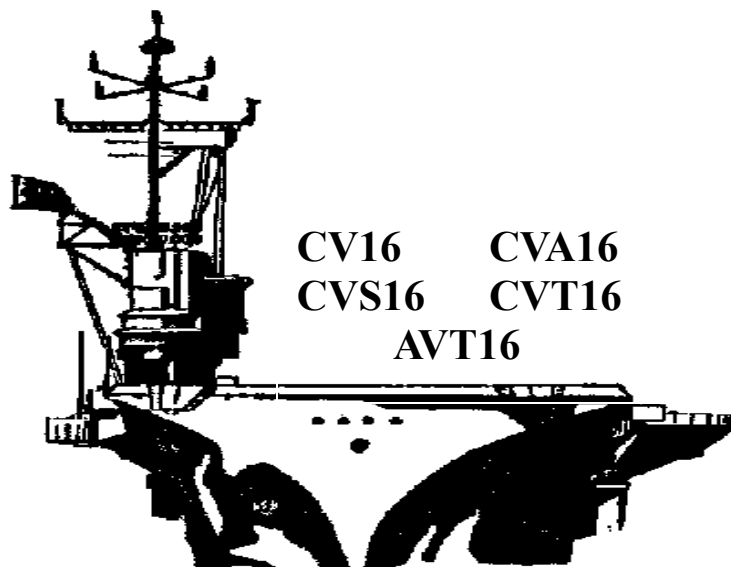
Her friend said, 'i know you weren't fool enough to put all that money in there with your husband.'

The loyal wife replied 'listen, I'm a Christian, i can't go back on my word. I promised him that i was going to put that money in that casket with him.'

'You mean to tell me you put that money in the casket with him!!!!?'

'I sure did' said the wife. 'I got it all together, put it into my account and wrote him a cheque. If he can cash it, he can spend it.'







Home Port of:
USS Lexington CV 16 Association
P. O. Box 16
Lexington, IL 61753



CV16 CVA16
CVS16 CVT16
AVT16

USS LEXINGTON

****** IN THIS ISSUE ******

-  VA's IG Steps Down Pg. 1
-  A Message from Chaplain Christopher Hagger Pg. 3
-  Registration Form for 2015 Baton Rouge Reunion Pg. 5
-  Schedule of events for 2015 Baton Rouge Reunion Pg 6
-  Scholarship Application Form Pg.10
-  Humor Pg. 11



** E-mail Version ONLY*

The Grab Bag

This page is for various links to websites sent me in my email from shipmates wanting to share things they've found. Some are serious, some not so much. Some political, some day-to-day. Just putting them out there for whomever might be interested. Though we're all adults, I still attempt to keep things rated at the worse, PG. Greg

Shared by Shipmate Tom Hounder:

Who built it and how did it get there? In the middle of nowhere!

This video was taken by some dirt bike riders along the continental divide in Colorado, who stumbled upon a Vietnam memorial in the woods. Whoever did it, put a lot of time and money into it. Evidently hunters and possibly some Vets must be aware of it as there are numerous 7.62, 30.06 rounds and good luck coins on the ledges between the stones.

Its a Soldiers Memorial, a tribute to all soldiers and allies who fell in Vietnam dating back to 1945, built by some dedicated Vietnam veterans at their own expense and who wish to remain anonymous. It's rumored that ashes of Vietnam vets have been scattered there.

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=axhZOTx2L4U

Shared by Shipmate Ron Haag:

For those of you who haven't personally experienced Naval Aviation from the cockpit, this is as good as it gets in a video clip. For those of you who have, you'll understand. Play it on a big screen if you can. Additional medley will follow.

CLICK ON : [//www.youtube.com/embed/wfOD2y_AD_w?feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/embed/wfOD2y_AD_w?feature=player_embedded)

Shared by Shipmate Varney Milner:

PEARL HARBOR AFTER THE TOURISTS HAVE GONE

Pearl Harbor: This is what takes place after the tourists have gone for the day. I never knew this.

http://www.youtube.com/embed/MgE2KiPd3xg?feature=player_detailpage

Shared by Shipmate Lloyd Friedli:

WOW! Someone even posted a copy of our old "welcome aboard" video that we use to show people when they came aboard! For those of you that I haven't mentioned this to, we always referred to The Lex as a "floating public relations campaign" in the 80's. We would spend @ a week and a half in the Gulf each month training pilots then the rest of the time we'd be tied up at the pier on the base. Since we didn't really hold a bunch of "military secrets" and most of our stuff was old news at the time, we'd give tours of the ship from time-to-time and allowed civilians to come aboard. Not sure how or when they scheduled it but, every now and again, you'd walk down through the hanger bay and see a heard of civilians walking through it. Of course that wouldn't happen in the post 9/11 world! Anyway, we had some of the crew that would show them this video, hand out a small 6-7 page pamphlet (That I still, to this day, have a copy of. ha!), take them through certain common areas of the ship, answer their questions and so on. That's some fine video and quality production. LOL!!!

Lou

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDgH67nazj8>