

VP-16 Reunion Association, Inc.

1240 43RD. CT SW, VERO BEACH, FL 32968

WWW.VP-16REUNION.NET

October 26, 2025

Greetings, Shipmates,

I begin this letter alone in our hospitality room on the top floor of the Holiday Inn-Mobile Downtown/Historic District. Over the past week, at this time of morning, sunlight has begun to illuminate the city below. If it weren't Sunday, by now, the large Manitowoc crane's boom at the construction site below would already be extended, and the workers would be arriving and preparing for another day of building the new, world-class entertainment center.

Today, and fittingly, the sky is overcast as I go through a roller coaster of emotions. The tables remain in place, arranged in rounds of six and eight, with only the navy-blue tablecloths remaining. The various sweet treats, the fresh red and white carnations, and the American flags have been removed from the tables. The long, narrow, rectangular tables that once held snack offerings and displays now have only white linen coverings, with leftover food disposed of and the display items packed in our vehicle for return to the Jax storage facility.

My thoughts drift back to the seven days we spent here in Mobile. Linda and I arrived on Monday and unpacked an entire vehicle, expecting to fill it again on Tuesday with the items on the shopping list for the hospitality room. Wednesday was dedicated to organizing this room with the items brought from Jacksonville—the snacks and drinks—all in preparation for our shipmates' arrival. It was a genuine team effort with great camaraderie.

We had a fantastic city tour on the enclosed trolley on Thursday with Arthur, our guide and driver, who shared the history of nearly every building at each turn and block in Mobile's historic downtown before dropping us off at the USS Alabama Memorial Park to explore the ship and many displays. Later in the day, our fifteen-passenger van proved invaluable as we headed out for an evening of Italian dining together.

Wow, everyone had positive feedback on the highly informative and fascinating, never-to-forget Airbus Assembly Plant Facility tour we took on Friday morning. We learned a great deal, including the multiple countries of origin for many of the aircraft's components and modules. Three thousand rivets, we were told, hold each section of the Airbus A-320 together; the entire process was jaw-dropping. Our fantastic guide, Cindy,

was well-informed and explained the whole process of assembling the A-320 aircraft in detail, which was taking place below us.

I notice some stains on the tablecloths; they probably come from remnants or spills of the prime rib or the tasty chicken dish Chef Craig and his talented team served us on Friday night. Our annual meeting and election of our Board of Directors went as planned. It was a wonderful evening of camaraderie.

However, what really triggers this rollercoaster of emotions is that Bob Carlson, Dave and Bobbie Emerick, Bob Goecker, Roger Gulbransen, John and Jo-Ann Hunt, Jim and Mary Ivey, Ron and Pat Malotke, Alvino Sosa, his friend Anna, and Dick Wandersee have all departed. Now, this wonderful reunion of shipmates becomes another treasured memory of spending quality time together. The reunion's shared experiences and memories will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Linda and I will leave soon to head back to Vero Beach, but not before staying overnight in Jacksonville to return the storage boxes and items to the storage unit. I expect we will discuss what went well and what could be improved during our travels.

This will be the final time Linda and I organize the Association's reunions. Our journey began in April 2007, when Ann and Jud Lord announced their retirement from planning reunions, a task they had undertaken since the first group of old Eagles gathered in 1999. Over the years, we met in Cocoa Beach, Jacksonville, Pensacola, New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, San Antonio, and Norfolk. In 2022 and 2024, Ellis and Carol Chenault arranged two reunions in Jax (Orange Park), our second home. Due to Ellis's declining health and eventual passing, we once again took responsibility for the Mobile reunion.

Throughout the years, we've received support and assistance from many people—too numerous to name. This year is no different; Ron Malotke, Jim, and Mary Ivey have joined us on FAM trips to Mobile and have been helping since we began planning in November 2024. Their support has been incredibly valuable, and we sincerely appreciate their contributions.

The obvious question of when and where the next reunion will be, however, remains unanswered. The answer depends on others. Linda and I volunteered when Ann and Jud were ready to step down, and now it's our turn to hand the responsibility to another couple or group of volunteers. Of course, we are prepared to assist if or when needed. Meanwhile, as your President, I will do my best, in collaboration with the Board of Directors, to stay in contact with our members, remain available for support opportunities for the squadron, and hold annual membership meetings, as required by our bylaws, as I promised at our annual meeting on Friday evening.

Linda tells me it's time to leave. I depart this place with memories of a wonderful week here in Mobile, AL, sharing great times with shipmates and friends. Smiling and

touched by emotion, I say, not goodbye, but “Bye for now!” I’m confident Linda and I will return to Mobile with fond memories of this past week. Perhaps some of you will want to reconnect with us at another time.

For all who were unable to be with us and would like to see the assembly of the A320, follow the link, albeit much of the construction alluded to in the video is completed since it was filmed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPT9nrCXZ2U>

Check our website’s “past reunion photos” tab for a picture of our group.

November 12, 2025

Now that we have completed the initial duties of the Board of Directors, I am ready to finalize this communication.

Board of Directors:

The organizational meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) was held yesterday, November 11, 2025, via Zoom.

Your newly elected BoD is posted on the website under the “Updated” tab, and the officers’ positions were set as follows: President, Bill Sherman; Vice President, Lt. Jim Ivey; Secretary – TBD; Treasurer, Bob Goecker; Members at Large, CAPT Anthony Corapi, Ron Malotke, and Dave Emerick. Also, under the “Updated” tab, you will find the unapproved minutes of our membership meeting on Friday evening. If you attended the meeting, please review and let us know of any errors or omissions.

Before meeting in Mobile, I emailed the BoD members to see who wished to remain as a director. As a result of the responses, there is still one open seat on the board. My sincere thanks to Kaydale Cruz for her past service. If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors, please contact me or any Board member for consideration. Our bylaws state that we have “no less than three or no more than seven” members.

Finding new shipmates, communicating, and visibility:

The Squadron leadership has suggested, and many of our members agree, that Facebook (FB) should be an active part of our visibility. Not only to our current members, but also as a way for prospective shipmates to find us. Following the passing of our past president and shipmate, Ellis Chenault, who managed the current Facebook page, we are seeking a volunteer willing to take Ellis’s place and keep our Facebook page updated. If Facebook is an area of interest to you and you are willing to take responsibility for keeping it up to date, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regarding all-hands communication via USPS and/or email, we have noticed that many emails and USPS mailings are not being delivered, and in the case of emails, many

have not been opened or read. When we do not receive responses, we are unsure if they have reached the intended recipient. Much is due to the lack of regular or updated information, or, as the old saying goes, garbage in, garbage out. This will be a total revamp of our database.

To lower mailing costs, update the database and remove unconfirmed information from our email system, please provide the information below. For USPS responses, fill out the requested details, use the cut line, and send it back to the address on the letterhead. For all others, you can submit the information via the website or email. For email replies, use my address: billsherman.vero@me.com and include the requested details. It's important to provide the requested information so we can properly direct future communications. When mentioning the website, I want to recognize Jim Ivey's dedication to keeping it current. Maintaining the site is an ongoing, often demanding task as he works to make it both streamlined and informative, while also useful for our members.

We understand that many of our shipmates either do not use email or do not have access to it. Please do not interpret this message as suggesting we want to eliminate all postal communications. If you can communicate via email, we prefer that method since it is clearly less costly. We look forward to staying in touch with you and appreciate any opportunity to communicate.

If anyone has thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve our visibility to potential members, please share them.

Until we meet again, shipmates and friends, please stay in touch with us. Be well, and we look forward to our next opportunity to meet.

Very Respectfully,

Bill

If you verified your email address via our 11/15/2025 email, please disregard

-----Cut line for USPS response: -----

Name:

Mailing address:

Additional ailing address:

Email address:

Primary phone number: