November 2, 2026

Greetings shipmates,

True to our plans and promises, the Association gathered for its annual membership meeting on October 22, 2026, at the Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown in Vero Beach. The meeting was lively and productive, with all six board members joining us, whether in person or beaming in via FaceTime. Eleven members filled the room with good spirits. I owe an apology to CAPT Corapi for jotting down the wrong contact number for our FaceTime link, which meant he missed the opening twenty-five minutes or so of our gathering.

Enclosed are the unapproved minutes to avoid repetition. All attendees, please let us know if anything is missing or if the minutes need corrections.

I am extremely grateful to our Board of Directors for volunteering to remain on the board for another year and to Roger for filling the seventh vacant seat. Our reunions and gatherings over the years have been successful because of a core group of regular attendees, and this meeting was no exception. Many thanks to John and Jo-Ann Hunt, Bob Carlson and grandson Andrew, Dean Schaaf, and wives Linda Sherman and Bobbie Emerick for their staunch support and contributions to our time together.

We mostly stuck to our schedule over the two-plus days, but the real highlight was the camaraderie we shared. Many familiar faces from our last reunion in Mobile, AL, returned, forming the steadfast core that keeps our gatherings strong. These shipmates, along with our generous donors, are the glue that holds us together and ensures we can continue supporting the squadron. To all our fellow members, I encourage you to join us or lend your support whenever you can.

On Wednesday, we checked into the hotel and gathered for a lively dinner at the Riverside Café. For country music fans, Vero Beach is where Jake Owen grew up, and the Riverside Café is where he got his start, pickin' for the locals. Thursday at 9:00 AM, we gathered for the General Membership Annual Meeting and the Board of Directors' organizational meeting; details are in the enclosures. That afternoon, we piled into the van for a quick fifteen-minute trip to Piper Aircraft. While not as sprawling as the Airbus plant in Mobile, the tour gave us a fascinating look at aircraft components being crafted and assembled. The highlight was peeking inside the impressive new Piper M700 Fury.

Keeping with tradition, we dined together at the historic Ocean Grill, where good food and conversation became the heart of our camaraderie. Without a dedicated gathering room at

the hotel, our shared meals took on even greater meaning. After dinner, we bid a fond farewell to our first-time attendee, Dean Scaff, as he headed home—for now.

Before dawn on Friday, Bob Goecker slipped away for an early appointment, heading west across the state. The rest of us regrouped at 9:00 AM for a scenic twenty-minute drive down A1A to the US Navy SEAL museum in Ft. Pierce. The museum's fascinating collection of military artifacts and displays spans from today's drones to WWI, and it stands on the very ground where the Navy Frogmen, the SEAL forerunners, trained during WWII. At the museum, we said goodbye to Roger Gulbransen as he set off on his four-hour journey home.

Friday afternoon, our steadfast attendees John and Jo-Ann set off for Orlando, planning to spend the night before catching an early Saturday flight back to the Philadelphia area.

Naturally, you can guess what came next—it was time to eat again! With the 15-passenger van returned, we carpooled and made the short but not-quite-walkable five-minute trip to Wilke's 14 Bones BBQ.

Saturday morning found us gathered around the hotel breakfast table, reminiscing about our time together and already dreaming up ideas for the next gathering. The visits to Piper and the SEAL museum were highlights for everyone, and the restaurant choices were unanimously approved.

Over the past two-plus days, we accomplished the Association's business and enjoyed our time together. I am sorry more of you couldn't attend and share in the enjoyment with us.

Staying true to our commitment to the squadron, I reached out to Skipper Ross to ask about possible November meeting dates in Jacksonville. The current proposed date is November 18th. Jim, Roger, Dean, and I will be attending. Our main focus will be finding the best ways to support our War Eagles and, if needed, further update our Benefits and Support agreement with the squadron. I'll do my best to keep everyone informed through email blasts and website updates.

Finally, as noted in the minutes, we've locked in Overland Park, Kansas City, Kansas, as the site for our 2027 Annual Meeting. The exact date and hotel are still to be determined, but you can count on it taking place in October 2027. Mark your calendars in pencil while we await the final date and keep an eye on the website and your inbox for updates.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Kansas City!

Very respectfully,

Bill