

THE LAST RIDERS – Where are they? –

Bob Lakin, LTjg, Supply Officer – Bob stayed aboard after the Greek Navy took over the ship but remained in San Diego to get familiar with their new purchase. The Greeks kept a “wet ship”, serving alcohol aboard. IN September 2020, Bob phoned me from the pier where his boat is moored. He and assembled a crew to move the boat from Marblehead Harbor to Manchester by the Sea Harbor in MA for storm avoidance. Bob shared the Greek “take over” of Frank Knox. Another officer, with Engineering officer, Frank Bryant, LT and three enlisted men that I would like to contact to hear their stories. Bryant and Lakin’s stories were printed two years ago in Knox Knews and are available on our website ussfrankknox.com.

The On-Board Salvage Crew – July 18 – August 27, 1965 – These volunteers were aboard during the four phases of the salvage of the USS Frank Knox from Pratas Reef. Stars and Stripes - called the salvage “the most dramatic salvage in the Pacific ever”, and it was successful! I’m collecting stories and pictures from these men for a new publication titled

STRANDED – Official Records and Survivor recollections of the Frank Knox salvage.

Helo Evacuation Pilot, LTjg George Arthun, recently sent in pictures of the helo he flew on the crew evacuation mission. First delivering evacuated crewmen to USS MIDWAY CV-41; **Arthun with helo Helo Arthun** next a photo of the inside of USS HORNET Museum and Arthun with the same helo. (note – the UH-2a/b helos went through a modification to add second engine and improved avionics. The UH-2a/b models flown to evacuate FRANK KNOX crewmen were single engine models. – ED) The same helo is now in the USS HORNET CV-12 Air and Space Museum. You can visit the museum and touch your history. Following Naval active duty George trained as a commercial airline pilot flying the Boeing 767 as his last aircraft. He lives in Spokane WA.

Rodger Mullinix recalls “riding the wire up about 20 feet to the helo”; later in the evacuation the helos were lower and the winds trickier according to those who rode the helos.

Revisiting the Last rider(s) Lakin – Supply Officer Bob Lakin and Engineering Officer Frank Bryant – What a way to go! Instead of picking up orders to their next duty station Bob Lakin LTjg Supply Officer chose to join a group of Greek Officers and sailors as they trained-up in their new ship onboard FRANK KNOX (now named HMS THEMISTOKLIS). There were parts galore to gather, training and on board excuses and several social events including a farewell trip to Las Vegas. Then East via the Panama Canal, to new duty with the Greek Navy. Lakin and EO, Frank Bryant, and three enlisted volunteers, one from Operations, Weapons and Engineering were the “last Rough Riders” on the ship. If you are one of the volunteers, enlisted or officer we need your story and any pictures so contact us – PLEASE.