



RADM William E. Lemos

Captain USS Ranger 1963-1964



Obituary: William E. Lemos

29 Feb 08 - William E. Lemos, 90, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret), of Newcastle, ME, passed away Feb. 22 2008 at Miles Memorial Hospital, Damariscotta, after a brief illness. Loved and admired by his family and friends, Admiral Lemos lived a long and tremendous life, encompassing a distinguished Naval career and over 30 years of active "retirement" in Maine. He was born in Rhode Island to Albert and Bernarda Lemos, Portuguese immigrants from the Azores. The fifth of six children, he grew up at his father's shipyard on Narragansett Bay, developing a knowledge and love of boats and sailing that would last his entire life; in his words, he learned to sail before he could walk.

Admiral Lemos graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1941, launching a 40-year career in the Navy. Among several medals he was awarded, were the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement in aerial flights during combat operations in WWII and the Air Medal for his rescue of a downed flyer from a heavily fortified island. He was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral in 1965 at age 48, one of the youngest ever to receive this honor.

After WWII, Admiral Lemos earned an M.S. in aeronautical engineering at MIT. He flew fighter planes from aircraft carriers and as part of research and development task forces; served as special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; commissioned and served as commanding officer of USS Okinawa, which, under his command, won the highest score of any Amphibious Force ship ever tested by the Atlantic Fleet; was commanding officer of USS Ranger on a secret mission; served as Chief of Staff to the head of the Atlantic Fleet and commanded a carrier group in the Mediterranean.

He served in the Pentagon, directing two divisions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, earning a Legion of Merit award in 1968. Admiral Lemos was responsible for all U.S. military forces based in Spain during his last posting, for which he was honored with another Legion of Merit award in 1976.

He and his family then moved to Bremen, where he finished a wooden sailboat begun by his father 10 years earlier, and designed and built a 34-foot sailboat, Pegasus. The family moved to Newcastle in 1982.

Admiral Lemos was a Trustee of CHIP, the Weymouth House, the Maine Maritime Museum and the Artisans College, and Executive Director of the Maine Composites Alliance. He designed and reached the final stages of constructing, by hand, his third sailboat, a 22-foot very fast vessel, according to the designer.

Admiral Lemos is survived by his wife, Susan; daughters, Kate Lemos and Maggie Lemos of New York City, Betsy Gattis of Falmouth and Laurie Brasfield of King, N.C.; sons, Peter Lemos of New York City and Stephen Lemos of Brunswick; seven grandchildren; and sister, Dorothy Farnell. He was predeceased by his son, William E. Lemos Jr.

