

## Craig Grabeel describes 'Night Ops' Incident

Umm, you must be referring to the Great Dumpster Caper, as documented in my Redtail Certificate below. This occurred on 30 Jan 1976, after a relaxing day of sailing aboard the good sloop Avignon and entertaining some visiting VA-82 pilots and, of course, enjoying various adult beverages.

According to the incident report filed by a LT Britt, the NAVSTA OOD on duty, he had just made his rounds at the BOQ bar when he "...heard a loud POP and someone standing on the balcony yelled 'incoming!'", whereupon he then "...saw good-sized flames coming from the direction of the Bundy Apts...and thought one of the apartments was on fire...and went to my truck to report it."

While I told LT Britt that I took full responsibility for the fire, my good roomie Stu Ashton contributed an M-80 and some JP-5 to assist in reducing the trash overflow, and manned a garden hose to ensure no damage to adjacent property. I explained to LT Britt that this was all in the spirit of the base Public Works Officer's 'Self-Help' program resulting from apparent budgetary constraints. Nevertheless I was briefly detained and charged with "suspected arson of government trash", but was released pending recommended administrative action. Neil was an innocent bystander, but lent considerable moral support for the cause.

The rest of the story: After the following Monday morning's quarters and AOM, the XO asked me to see him in his office. Fully expecting a major ass-chewing, I humbly gave my excuses for causing such a stir and waited for the axe to fall. To my surprise, CDR Chandler smiled benignly, asked if I had noticed the overflowing dumpsters at both ends of our hangar, and requested that I take care of it. Greatly relieved, I immediately called the base PWO to request an expedited trash pickup and was informed that he was on leave but that his assistant would be happy to speak with me. Upon learning that the APWO was the very same LT Britt who was OOD the night of the fire, I felt that nothing I said would be well-received so I simply left a request with the receptionist to have the dumpsters serviced ASAP.



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