



Station Ship News



DING DING . . . DING DING . . . ALL CREW ARRIVING . . . ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS
. . . IN THE AIR, AT SEA AND IN PORT . . . DING DING . . . DING DING

Mustang Man



It was the first day of April 1993 at the Naval Aviation Rework Facility in Pensacola, Florida, and **LCDR (LDO ret.) Rodric "Rod" Hammond** was retiring. After 30 years, Rod's career in the United States Navy was coming to an end.

Approximately one year earlier, in preparing for Rod's retirement ceremony, his commanding officer had

asked him if there was anything special they could give him for a retirement gift.

Rod didn't hesitate with his answer. "I told him I wanted a sword box, and the flag that I was to be presented I wanted flown from the USS Midway."

"He contacted the CO of Midway, and as the ship was in transit to retirement they hoisted the American flag above the ship and sent it to me with certificates and newspaper articles of the retirement."

Thus at his retirement ceremony, Rod's Navy comrades presented him his *piece de resistance* – the American flag flown over Midway. And just like that it was over – 30 years in the Navy elapsed in the blink of an eye.

When Rod reflects back on his Navy career today, it's with great pride, even though he's been retired for nearly 20 years now . . .

Rod and his wife Mayumi live in Pensacola, home of this country's first naval air station as well as many other things military, which suits Rod's military bearing well. Plus, Rod and Mayumi have six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren living in the area.

It began for him in 1958, at age 19, when he enlisted from his hometown of Syracuse, New York, one step ahead of the draft board. He explained: "If I'd waited one more month I would've had to go into the Army, as my draft notice came while I was in boot camp [Great Lakes]."

To make things more interesting, Rod split up his career into two separate tours of duty. During the first, 1958-1962, he served as a CTO (Communications Technician Operator) at the National Security Agency, Naval Security Group, Ft. Meade, Maryland, working as a teletype operator handling classified information.

In 1962, he was honorably discharged from the Navy as a CTO2. "I would've stayed in, but the orders I put in for [London, England] didn't come through. I was married by then with a baby, so I got out."

By 1967, after four and a half years of civilian duty, during which time he managed a bowling alley and tried his hand as a gas station owner, among other things, Rod decided to give the Navy another go, and he began his second tour of duty (1967 to 1993), reenlisting as an Aviation Avionics Technician (AT); the Navy let him keep the E-5 rating he earned during his first enlistment.

Less than five years later, in 1972, while an AV instructor at AV "A" school, he was promoted to ATC. His mercurial march through the ranks during his second hitch, indicates that Rod had found his true calling in the USN – Naval Air. He took to its many challenges like a carrier jet takes to a flight deck in calm seas.



USS Midway Veterans Association

(Design by Rose Zanders)

In 1975, Rod was ready to go to sea for the first time, and he couldn't have found a better ship to take him there, and on which to ply his trade – the USS Midway. For the better part of the next decade, Midway was his home. He served on her from 1975-1979 (twice) with VAW-115 (E2B twin turboprops), and 1984-1986 with VF-151 (F4J fighter aircraft), with shore duty in between. On Midway he held such jobs as Avionic CPO and Maintenance Chief, Aviation Maintenance Officer, and Maintenance Material Control Officer.

He didn't fly 'em, but his high level of skill in Naval Avionics, coupled with the leadership skills he brought to the job, went a long way toward keeping them in air and on target.

Duty on Midway soon paid off for Rod. Previously thwarted in his efforts to make Chief Warrant Officer on shore duty, he made it in under two years on Midway, and he was well on his way to becoming a Navy Mustang. When he received orders off Midway in 1979 (by then he was a CWO3), to NAF Atsugi, Japan, he was commissioned as a LTJG, then as a LT. Ultimately, after he'd left Midway for the last time in 1986 for duty at Barber's Point, HI, he was promoted to LCDR.

During Rod's time on Midway, she served as America's "Tip of the Sword," stationed in Yokosuka, Japan, our forward guard into the Middle East. "Midway was at sea frequently," he recalled. "It was very stressful, as the pressure never seemed to go away to work, work and more work. But I loved it and the country as well. My family was with me and it was an exhilarating experience."

When asked, Rod had no trouble coming up with highlights of his Navy career. "Five crossings of the Equator (Shellback), visiting ports I never imagined I'd see. Being promoted to LCDR was probably the highlight, especially when my commanding officer immediately made me his Maintenance Officer. Junior LCDR in the squadron as a Department Head – WOW! Moving to serve in Hawaii! My promotion to CWO was a breathtaking moment as well. My wife knew before I did as I was on my way up Rt. 16 from Yokosuka to Yokohama when the results came in and they called and told her. So she got to break the news!"

Throw in three Navy Commendation Medals, a likewise number of Navy Achievement Medals, as well as a host of other medals and commendations, and it's easy to understand why Rod is proud of his Navy career.

Rod accomplished much in a career that seemingly went by in the blink of an eye for him, and he cherishes the medals and commendations he earned in the Navy.

But he cherishes one thing over everything else from his Navy career: that American flag flown over Midway and presented to him at his retirement ceremony trumps all. Great job, Rod!



LCDR (LDO ret.) Rodric Hammond's sword box including the American flag flown over USS Midway, presented to Rod at his retirement ceremony April 1, 1993.

President's Report

June, 2012 – and we're moving fast toward the reunion in Washington, DC (WDC-12). Only about 100 more days! As fast as time goes by, it seems to drag in anticipation of getting the Midway Veterans Association together again. But, get together we will, and a great time we will have. Let all of your Midway veteran friends and shipmates know that we'll be expecting to see them on the East Coast this fall and in San Diego for the next reunion.

As we prepare for the reunion, one of the primary activities that we'll all participate in is the Association business meeting. As always, the agenda for the meeting will be overloaded with important items that you'll all have a say in. Among those items will be:

- Review of the Association's financial statement and Audit results;
- Review/discuss IRS Tax Status (Non-profit filing);
- Membership Committee successes, disappointments;
- Confirmation of San Diego as next reunion city;
- Selection of San Diego Reunion Hosts;
- Donations to the USS Midway Museum – Honor Wall
- Election of officers;
- Pertinent business from the floor;
- Adjourn.

Your Board of Directors encourages you all to give some thought to what we can do to strengthen the organization and make it the one Midway Veterans group that every Midway Veteran wants to be a part of. We're not so selfish to believe that we need to be the only veterans group representing sailors and marines from the Midway, but we certainly can work to make this the premiere organization for USS Midway Veterans – the one that does the most for its members in terms of how it represents their interests to the Museum and, most importantly, to the other members.

We know we can be better, so give us your thoughts on improvements to our organization. What areas of the organization would you like to help us improve – memberships, finances, reunion planning, Board of Directors, social media (website, facebook, etc.) – any suggestions are always welcomed for discussion and action.

Looking forward to seeing you in Washington, DC, in September. Bring our friends and shipmates, your families, and your thoughts for how to improve the USS Midway Veterans Association, and let's have some fun!

Full speed ahead to WDC-12!

Oscar Granger, President USS Midway Veterans Association

VP-Reunions' Report

The calendar tells me that our Washington, DC reunion is less than four months away, and the good news is that things are coming together nicely. As we speak, the Registration Form is being finalized and will be mailed and e-mailed to you by late May/early June. This is an important document because it will list all of our planned activities and the associated costs, as well as meal and T-shirt options and costs. Once you select what you want to do, add up all the costs, and send your check to Sec.-Treas. Dave Payson, you will be set to go for a wonderful three days in our nation's capital. From my standpoint, checks in hand are critical, because I can finally start seeing how many of our former shipmates and their guests will be participating in each activity. Up to this point, I have been estimating numbers with tour operators and the hotel, so now I can finally say exactly what we need to accommodate our group. The big events are already firmed-up, so now we can focus on the smaller details that will make WDC 12 an event for you to remember for a lifetime. As gas prices moderate, I am hopeful that everyone who has been undecided about attending will get out the checkbook and commit to joining us. Everyone out there can help us with this by telling your Midway buddies about the reunion and encouraging them to "chart their course to Washington, DC from September 20-22, 2012." I will be posting updates on the MVA website on a regular basis to keep our members informed and enthused about our upcoming reunion. Speaking of the website, you will find everything you need there to make your hotel reservations, if you have not already done so. See you in DC!

Jim Hayter, VP-Reunions, USS Midway Veterans Association



USS Midway Veterans Association
 2012 MVA Reunion Logo – “The Lone Sailor”

In Memoriam

Shipmate Al Tschaeche, age 83, Encinitas, California, passed away April 24, 2012. He served on Midway from 1954–55 (radar/radio technician, OE Division). He was a Vice Chair on MVA's Membership Committee. He will be missed by his family, friends and shipmates.

Shipmate Dennis Gallagher, age 63, Lewiston, Idaho. Dennis served aboard the USS Midway during the Vietnam War.

TAPS



"We, who remain to carry on, should not think of our Shipmates as departed from us, but rather as having been transferred to a celestial ship or station, where we hope all of us may be Shipmates again."

Plankowner Joins MVA

USS Midway Plankowner **William Barrett**, 88, a radio technician on Midway's 1945 commissioning crew in V-3a Division, has joined the Midway Veterans Association – and, health permitting, he plans to attend the DC



reunion with his son Robert Barrett. William, pictured on the left, enlisted in the Navy in 1942 from Ogden, Utah, and saw action in World War II on the escort carrier USS Altamaha (CVE-18).

During the perilous years, he found himself in harms way on more than one occasion before joining Midway's commissioning crew in 1945. In 1944, Altamaha lost most of her planes in Halsey's Typhoon (an epic storm that sank three destroyers in her fleet group). In 1945, Altamaha was nearly torpedoed in a suicide attack by a German sub. The torpedo missed Altamaha, but hit a tanker moored nearby.

William is truly one of "The Greatest Generation," and we welcome him into our organization and look forward to meeting him in DC. Shown on the next page is his Midway Plank Certificate.



Order Midway/USN memorabilia at:

Midway Museum online store:

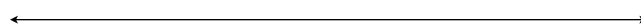
<http://enssc.com/?store=502>

Website Helps Provide Meals to Veterans in Need

How does The Veterans Site work? The Veterans Site is part of the GreaterGood Network, a family of click-to-give sites. When you click on the blue "Click Here to Give - it's FREE!" button, you are shown advertisements from our sponsors. Sponsors pay an advertising fee, and 100% of that fee goes to our charity partners to provide meals for veterans in need.

<https://theveteransite.gretergood.com/store/vet/site>

You can click once per day, every single day, 365 days of the year. — the more people who click every day, the more meals we can fund together. You can also shop to help at <https://theveteransite.gretergood.com/store/site.do?siteid=345&origin=ctg_vet_HOME> The Veterans Site store.



Find us on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/USSMidwayVeteransAssociation>.

Notice: We post our organization's roster on our website only with the permission of our members. If you don't want your contact information published, let us know and we'll remove it.

Order this newsletter electronically from Dave Payson
(e-mail address at right)

Reunion Registration Form Headed Your Way!

The US Mail will soon be delivering to your home mailbox the DC reunion registration form with tours and prices set. Additionally, we will post a downloadable version of the form on our website. It won't be much longer, shipmates, that Midway Veterans from the East, West, and Middle of the country will gather in the nation's capital to recount tales of endless sea journeys and all of their harrowing adventures along the way. And most of this stuff really happened!

**The Masthead
USS Midway
Veterans Association**

A newsletter serving USN veterans who served aboard USS Midway, and who are friends eternal.

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