



# 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

## President's Report

We're down to the wire – the WDC12 reunion is only a month away and we're still busily trying to complete all the logistics to ensure the best possible reunion we've ever had. Special thanks goes to our VP – Reunions, **Jim Hayter** – for his unrelenting drive to ensure a successful reunion. Just so you all can appreciate Jim's commitment, Jim negotiated for the hotel, rates, hospitality room and meals; set up the tours and transportation; all in addition to his full time job.

Jim also had a little help from the other Board members, **Dave Payson**, Secretary-Treasurer, and me, **Oscar**. I noted that since the 2010 reunion in San Diego in September of 2012, we've spent 34 Sunday afternoons and evenings on conference calls averaging more than 80 minutes each and have contributed almost 175 hours to the planning effort to put WDC12 on the books. The time spent on the conference calls is our time together. Now, add in all the individual time it takes to generate the newsletters (thanks to Dave Payson), keep the web-site up and running (thanks to Craig Harper), and generally take care of the business of the Midway Veterans Association – and every minute spent is volunteer time!

There are also the members of the Membership committee that need to be acknowledged – **Turner Mann** and **Mike Levin**. **Tim Miller** has also joined Mike Levin as our 'eyes (or boots) on the ship', checking periodically to make sure she's still afloat and sporting the Veterans Association information.

We also need to thank our friends and partners at the USS Midway Museum in San Diego. President & CEO **Admiral 'Mac' McLaughlin** has been working with us to locate a reunion speaker. Marketing Director **Scott McLaugh** has been instrumental in getting our veterans information displayed in the Visitor Information Center at the Museum exit. But, most of all, we want to acknowledge the help we get from **Jill Hammons**, Membership Director, and her staff for working with us to get information to all Midway Veterans.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as can make it in Washington, DC.

As Admiral 'Mac' would say, "Onward and Upward."

**Oscar Granger, President USS Midway Veterans Association**

## VP-Reunions' Report

Shipmates, mates and family members, know that this MVA Reunion in Washington, D.C. is a happening thing! Twenty-three months ago in San Diego our members voted to bring the group to the nation's capital. Then, it seemed like I had forever to get this event organized and planned, now with about 30 days to go, I see that we are now addressing every last detail in order to make WDC 12 special. Through a variety of mailings and e-mails, you've already seen the action-packed schedule we've prepared for your three days here. Based on the large number of you who have already registered, we seem to have scheduled some good activities for this reunion. Check this out, Military Memorials on Thursday (including a wreath-laying ceremony at the Navy Memorial); the United States Naval Academy on Friday; and Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday, topped off with a Grand Banquet to wrap things up that evening. SPECIAL NOTE—the two American flags flown over the USS Midway Museum arrived at my home this week; two lucky sailors will win these treasured mementos, and a flag display case, for just attending the Grand Banquet.



(Design by Rose Zanders)

Yes, indeed, we'll be keeping you busy, but we have left plenty of time for you to meet old friends and new in the "we doze but never close" Hospitality Suite (HS).

Come to think about it, it could be just like standing the mid-watch when we were back on Midway Magic, except we'll have something stronger than coffee to keep us awake. Speaking of that, our approach to alcohol in the HS is that we provide beer and wine as part of your registration fee. If you prefer hard liquor, you can BYOB or purchase drinks from the hotel bars. While we're getting down to the wire for accepting new registrations, there's still room for last-minute Midway Veterans to jump aboard before we take in the brow and cast off the lines for this three-day cruise. If you show up on Thursday saying, "Sorry I waited until the last minute!" we're still welcoming you aboard. By the way, our extended registration deadline of 20 August 2012 has come and gone, so if you're still procrastinating,

make your move now. Yes, we will accept shipmates after that date, but you run the risk of some increased costs that are the result of expanding the numbers we've already agreed to with our suppliers. YES, MATEYS, THERE IS STILL ROOM AT THE INN.

More reunion information will be coming your way between now and 20 September, but for those of you arriving early, we will be opening the Hospitality Suite and the Registration Desk on Wednesday evening (19 September), so that you can get your temporary duty orders processed and get all the chits you will need to take the tours and other events you signed-up for. The faster we can deal with these pesky details, the sooner we can start enjoying the real reason we shipped-on for this cruise

A note of thanks to MVA plankowner **Charles Girolamo**, who has been my boots on the ground guy helping with the tours and the lunch at the Dockside Restaurant, Annapolis; and Board members **Oscar Granger** and **Dave Payson**, for the many hours of conference calls where we hammered-out the details of the reunion, and also to our wives for the time we've spent with this—"yes, dear, there is another conference call tonight." SEE YOU AT THE CROWNE PLAZA TYSONS CORNER HOTEL IN JUST ABOUT 30 DAYS!!!! Call me at 703-624-7956 (m) for any last-minute questions about WDC 12.

**Jim Hayter, VP-Reunions, USS Midway Veterans Association**

**MIDWAY NATION REUNION "FACTOIDS"**

- To date, 88 Midway Veterans, mates and family members have signed up for the reunion.
- The Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, is the most popular tour.
- The majority of attendees live east of the Mississippi River.
- Sliced sirloin beef leads the dinner choices, with salmon a close second.
- To date, 212 room nights have been booked at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.
- The majority of Midway Veterans attending served on Midway in the 50's.
- Blue and gray are neck-in-neck in T-shirt orders (no pun intended).
- The officer corps is well represented.

**MVA Donation Program**

**For a Worthy Cause**

If you're a member of the USS Midway Museum and receive its quarterly newsletter, *Midway Currents*, you know how successful the museum's education program has become, helping children all across California and beyond.

And the USS Midway Veterans Association is doing its part to help the cause! Last year, our members made major charitable donations to the museum, to its bench program in honor of our founder, as well as to its Annual Fund.

These donations have placed us on the museum's Honor Wing Wall, and we plan to keep our name there for years to come through our charitable donations to the museum.

To back up this commitment, we've pledged 20 percent of our annual membership fees (dues) to the museum's DJO Global "No Child Left Ashore" scholarship program.

In the last quarter of 2011, we applied to become a tax-exempt organization (501(c)(3)) with the IRS, and when we achieve this status, our members' donations to the museum's scholarship program will be tax deductible.

"I believe strongly in our donation program," MVA President Oscar Granger said. "And I think our members feel the same way. In D.C., we plan to hold several raffles to raise money for the museum's scholarship program, and all profits will be donated to that program."

**Gunner's Mate Third Class**

**Gene Slingerland** was just a kid, age 17, when he joined the Navy in 1943 with his parents' permission. The world was at war, and within a year Gene found himself on the crew of the *USS Phelps* (DD-360) in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic fighting German U-boats determined to send allied cargo ships to the bottom of the sea. Gene's job was to man the guns, for he was a gunner's mate.



"It was a wet and wild ride," he recalled of his time on the *Phelps* on convoy duty. He didn't know it then, but it was the tail end of the war.

When World War II came to an abrupt end, Gene found himself without a ship, for the *Phelps* was headed for decommissioning.

He requested submarine duty, a curious choice, given that he had spent the last half year on a tin can hell-bent on sinking same.

**Young Seaman Slingerland joins the Navy – still wet behind the ears, but ready for duty.**

Fortunately, the Navy rescued Gene from himself, and instead of a sub out of Pearl, he received orders to a brand-new aircraft carrier out of Norfolk – the *USS Midway* (CB-41)

Thus, GMSN Gene Slingerland joined the commissioning crew of the mightiest warship ever built by the U.S. Navy to that point. The state-of-the-art aircraft carrier was beginning her long and illustrious career, and Gene would ride her for her first 2 years.

“In seeing the ship for the first time it was indeed an eye-opener,” he said. “Because of my gunnery-school experience, I was included in the early on-board gun-mount checks and receiving and storing of ammunitions. It was quite a feat to get everything in order.”

He was there for the new carrier’s early missions. “After her commissioning on 10 September 1945 [Newport News, VA], the next thing to come was the shakedown cruise in the Caribbean and then joining the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and named as the flagship for CAR DIV.1.”

Gene, very familiar with the famously frigid seas of the North Atlantic from his Phelps duty, was out there again, this time on Midway’s Operation Frostbite cruise.

“In March [1946] she tested equipment for cold weather operations in the North Atlantic,” he remembered. “They were able to find some pretty bad weather and found a few of her weak spots. Test firing of guns went quite well, even in freezing conditions.”

A member of the upper gun-mount crew, the young gunner’s mate was kept plenty busy during his 2 years on the ship. “It took great teamwork and precise movements in there [speaking of the gun-mount], but we got it done,” he recalled. He made GM3 about 1 year into his Midway tour of duty, and was discharged in late ’47.

There were nearly 160 guns on Midway during her early years, he said. “. . . nine 5” 54-caliber single-mounts on each side of the ship – and around eighty 40mm guns, spread around, some on the bow, some on the fantail and elsewhere. There also were 60 or so 20mm cannons. All in all, she was pretty well protected.”

As a crewman who worked closely with the ship’s armament, Gene wonders what happened to all those guns as museum pieces. “It’s too bad that the visitors to the ship now have no idea how well-armed the ship was at one time,” he said, “and that no samples of the weapons are on display, he concluded.”

Gene and three other Midway plankowners were presented WWII Victory Medals at our 2010 reunion in San Diego. RADM Mac McLaughlin, President and CEO of the USS Midway Museum, and Oscar Granger, President of the MVA, made the presentation. “I thoroughly enjoyed the 2010 reunion in San Diego,” Gene said. “Not sure I’ll make Washington, DC, maybe the next one will be back here.”

Gene lives in Hemet, California (approximately 80 miles north of San Diego). He moved there with his late wife Ann-Marie in 1950 from his hometown of Olean, New York.

“We raised three great kids who gave us four grandkids. I worked in various sales positions, and we enjoyed our life together. As you will see by the pictures [below], I enjoy building remote-control boats and playing the organ.” A licensed pilot for many years, he also enjoyed flying his own plane.

*Gene, thank you for your dedicated service to your country. You answered your country’s call to action and are truly a member of America’s “Greatest Generation.”*



**Midway Plankowner Gene Slingerland at his home in Hemet, CA, with one of his handmade remote-control boats and his Hammond organ**



USS Midway Veterans Association

### **One is the Loneliest Number**

The “Lone Sailor” won’t be lonely much longer, for in about a month, a large number of Midway Veterans and their mates and family members (“Midway Nation”) are coming to visit him at his home at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. In addition, a statuette of his likeness will be raffled off at the reunion banquet as part of a fundraiser to raise money for the USS Midway’s scholarship program.

**Lone Sailor, be lonely no more!**

**Find us on Facebook at:**

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



Order Midway/USN memorabilia at:  
**USS Midway Museum online store:**  
<http://enssc.com/?store=502>

**USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Website**  
<http://ussmidway.net/home.html>



**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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**Wanted:** “Ship’s photographer,” to serve as official photographer at the reunion banquet, taking the “couples” pictures (posed formal photos before the MVA banner). *If you’re attending the reunion and are interested in helping in this role, apply within, to the Editor’s address email* [\(minandave@charter.net\)](mailto:minandave@charter.net).  
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