



Station Ship News



Special Reunion Registration Edition!

(Copies of registration form and reunion program provided with this newsletter)

Operation Frequent Wind Anniversary Celebration on the USS Midway Museum!

Midway Veterans, the USS Midway Museum is celebrating the 40th anniversary of **Operation Frequent Wind** and will have a ceremony on the flight deck the day after our reunion, Sunday, April 26th. The museum's leadership team is encouraging a strong turnout of Midway Veterans. Here's an excellent chance for us to support our ship! Think of what a powerful presence we would make, wearing our reunion T-shirts and Midway caps and showing our Midway Pride, so that the Vietnamese – and all guests at the celebration – will recognize us and be given a chance to show their appreciation to former Midway crewmembers and their heroic rescue efforts 40 years ago in the Tonkin Gulf. We'll be center stage for this one, veterans! If you can possibly arrange it, be there.

If you have OFW pictures and/or stories you'd like to share with the USS Midway Museum for its OFW celebration, please send them to Joan Ring (joanring@cox.net) of the museum's library staff. (But sure to let her know you're an MVA member.) You can also send your photos and stories to our webmaster, Craig Harper, himself an OFW veteran, and he'll post them on our website (side link titled **OpFreq Wind**) that we've set up for the occasion. (Craig's email address is craig_harper@charter.net)



Air Transport Officer Ltjg Ken Prater (now an MVA member) escorts Nuy Gen Pau Ky, former Vice President of South Vietnam, across Midway's flight deck during OFW rescue operations.

How do I register for the San Diego Reunion?

Register for MVA's April 23-25, 2015, reunion by completing the registration form provided with this newsletter and mailing it to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) along with your check (mailing address is on form). Second option is to register online using AFR's dedicated, secure website and pay by credit card (3% service fee.) **AFR's online reunion registration form requiring credit card is here: www.afr-reg.com/midway2015].**

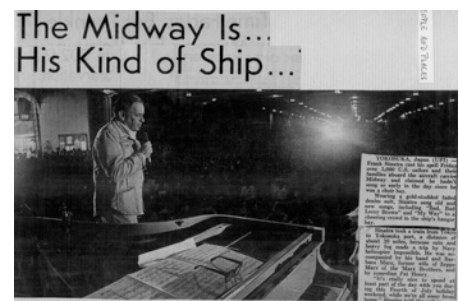
July 4, 1974: Old Blue Eyes, Arriving

Ken Prater, 1972-75/Ltjg/Air Department

The Fourth of July is supposed be a glorious, steamy summer day with all kinds of American festivities to celebrate. I think it's written in the Declaration of Independence, sandwiched somewhere in the Hot Dog and Fireworks section. But even though we were tied to the pier in Yokosuka, the USS Midway was at General Quarters.

Frank Sinatra – Old Blue Eyes himself – was scheduled to perform for the crew. But the weather was absolutely miserable: overcast and gloomy, locked in rain that was both cold and penetrating. It was a preemptive strike targeted at the throat of the sixty-year-old master of the standards. Staging the concert on the flight deck as originally planned was out of the question. Cancellation was a real concern.

Sinatra, however, was a strong man who lived a rough and tumble life and came out on top – his way. He was also patriotic to the core. There was no way a little rain was going to prevent him from serving some home-baked entertainment to four thousand sailors stationed far from home.



A backup plan was quickly created. The concert would take place in the hangar bay, an area that was both covered and large enough to seat all hands. The stage was set, complete with his fondly bestowed title emblazoned in huge letters across the backdrop. The band arrived, warmed up and was ready to go. The only thing missing was the man whose voice had mellowed just as much as he had with time. That's where this story becomes personal.

Just as the moon schedules the tides, so I was scheduled for duty as the in-port Officer of the Deck on the quarterdeck. As fate, luck or life would have it, I was destined to greet Frank Sinatra. At the appointed time, his limousine and entourage arrived and walked up the gangway. He was accompanied by Barbara Marx, a stunning blond recently divorced from Marx brother Zeppo. Two years later she became the fourth and final Mrs. Sinatra. Some things never change...

Sinatra was ready to perform, dressed in a pale blue jumpsuit-style jacket and pants adorned with what looked like upholstery tacks. It was an outfit only an entertainer could love, but to us he would have looked good in just about *anything* that day.

His arrival was announced over the loudspeaker in traditional Navy fashion: "Sinatra, arriving" along with the number of clangs on the ship's bell used for dignitaries. He stopped and stood in front of me, face to face – blue eyes authenticated. In the brief time that he waited for permission to come aboard, my perception of the identity behind his persona changed.

What I expected was a quick smile and a slap on the shoulder – superficial showbiz showmanship. What I received was a connection with a man who was clearly much deeper, more spiritual than his reputation led me to believe. Staring intently, he firmly grasped my hand and shook it with respect. We participated in a war that no one respected, so that simple yet profound gesture meant a lot to me. It still does...

I'm not exactly sure how I responded – probably with something superficial like, "Welcome aboard the USS Midway, Mr. Sinatra." Without a word, he acknowledged my greeting and made his way to the stage. It was our first meeting, but not our last.

Without delay he launched into his performance, quickly captivating everyone with his special brand of magic. It was a solo concert that included only nine songs. Many of them came from the Sinatra hymn book – songs so identified with him that he practically owned them. Perhaps as a nod to the weather (or thumbing his nose at it), he opened with "You are the Sunshine of My Life," followed by familiar classics such as "I Get a Kick Out of You," "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "The Lady is a Tramp." Interspersed between numbers were jokes specially formulated for a naval crew and received with the

expected hilarity. Nobody remembered what they were, but they seemed funny at the time.

Then it was over. After the last bars of "My Way" – his signature showpiece – echoed through the hangar bay, thunderous, enthusiastic rounds of applause erupted from a most grateful audience. The man who sang for many of our fathers (including mine) was paid in full with heartfelt satisfaction. He did not linger on stage, but was in no particular rush to leave.

As he made his way to the quarterdeck preparing to depart, he paused in front of me once again. He shook my hand firmly with his eyes fixed on mine. His farewell was a simple blessing. "Godspeed!" he said as the universe paused for a moment. Then it was "Sinatra, departing," more bell clanging and he was gone. Gone, but never forgotten.

It was much later that I learned that this well-wisher's expression meant "(wishing you) a prosperous journey." Midway had travelled well over five thousand miles by the time we rendezvoused with Old Blue Eyes, but never did we prosper more than that Independence Day.



This picture needs no caption. We all know who she is.

Midway's #1 Wives

Dave, reading the latest issue of *Midway Currents* I had a memory recalled when I read the article saying that USS Ranger Lives Aboard Midway. The memory was not a pleasant one, I fear. My most vivid memory of that ship was in 1986 when I had just completed my fourth Indian Ocean cruise on Midway and we had returned home when Ranger collided with a freighter in the Straits of Malacca and we had to turn around and go back to sea while Ranger went to Yokosuka for repairs. The kicker was that Ranger's crew placed a banner across the stern when they finally left the repair facility at Yoko., that read "Midway Wives are #1, and the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper printed a picture of it. We were supposed to do a passex with Ranger as we were returning home, but it was cancelled after the picture was published. A little history!

LCDR (LDO) Rodric G. Hammond USN Ret.

USS Midway Captains

Follow this link for a complete list of Midway's commanding officers over her 40-year history. Which captain(s) did you server under?

<http://www.midwaysailor.com/midway/commandoff.html>

(Courtesy: MidwaySailor.com)

New Men

The following USS Midway Veterans have joined the proud ranks of the Midway Veterans Association since our last newsletter. *Welcome aboard, Men, for our own special brand of Midway Magic!*

Robert Coyner (69-71) - Slingerlands, NY
 John Wohlwend (73-77) - Dothan, AL
 Paul Lincoln (74-77) - Titusville, FL
 Milo Maines (45-46) - Spring Hill, FL
 Charles Bliss (77-78) - Cornville, AZ
 William Spaller (73-76) - Beaver Creek, OH
 Rodolfo Aguilera (73-75) - National City, CA
 Bill Tennison (69-70) - Watauga, TX
 Harley Colin (86-89) - National City, CA
 Nestor Leonor (73-75) - Bonita, CA
 Edmundo Torino (75-77) - National City, CA
 Peter Dunn (74-78) - Milford, OH
 Stephen DeCata (79-81) - Aldie, VA
 David Haase (64-66) - Whitehouse, OH
 Paul Brewer (88-90) - Ukiah, CA
 Kenneth Savage (1971) - Windham, NH
 Capt. Larry Ernst (91-92) - Verde, AZ
 Capt. John Schork (90-92) - Sammamish, WA
 Phillip Reindl (71-75) - Dallas, OR
 William Romer (90-92) - San Diego, CA
 James Kelley (50-51) - Lake Kiowa, TX
 James Mack () - Hot Springs Village, AR
 Kelly Baggs (82-84) - Scottsdale, AZ
 Martin Herzog (70-73) - Arnold, MD
 Jerry Ahrens (87-89) - Sutherland, VA
 Roger Thompson (71) - Lake Placid, FL
 Ron Musfeldt (72-74) - Arlington, TX
 William Mulholland (71-74) - Oakton, VA



MVA's Emanuel "Manny" Voeltz, of Madison, Wisconsin, pictured here with Jennifer Sluga at a Veteran's Day celebration at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison. Sluga received the Wisconsin Woman Veteran of the Year award at the event. She helped Manny, an MVA member, and his son, Chan, with the VA paperwork for their service-connected disabilities. Much to his credit, Manny managed to insert himself into the picture and show off his USS Midway ball cap. *Way to go, Manny!*

Make Your SD15 Hotel Reservations Now!

If you haven't done so already, book your room using either the Wyndham's "passkey" website or special phone number below. If you phone, be sure to ask for the USS Midway block of rooms. The negotiated room rate is \$139/night. Bay View rooms are also available at a good price.

◆ **Web:** <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/2015USSMidway>

◆ **Phone:** (877) 999-3223

◆ **Book** early to secure your room at the \$139/n price 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion!

◆ **Reunion** events/activities will take place April 23, 24, 25, 2015. So get there a day early if you can.

◆ **Remember:** Operation Frequent Wind 40th anniversary ceremony is happening on the ship the day following the reunion (Sunday, April 26th).

Important: Book your room(s) now, for we cannot guarantee that the \$139/night rate will hold up to reunion time and the heart of tourist season. So, act fast, if you don't already have your hotel reservation.

MVA Makes Annual Donation To USS Midway Museum

The USS Midway Veterans Association made its annual donation to the USS Midway Museum before the end of December 2014 deadline, thereby qualifying for matching funds from the museum. The donation represents 20% of MVA's annual membership fees for the year 2014 (for a total of \$3,440 with the museum's match). The MVA is a 501(c)19 nonprofit organization. We make this donation with great pride every year.

See, in part, the letter the Midway Museum returned to us, below.

“Dear USS Midway Veterans Association, thank you for your gifts of \$1,100.00 to the USS Midway Museum’s Education Fund & \$620.00 to the Endowment Fund, received on 12/30/2014. Annual gifts play a vital role in our success, and this year your annual gift will be matched to double your impact.

Sincerely,

Norma Nicolls

Director of Major Gifts, USS Midway Museum”

In Memoriam

Shipmate Mark Cruickshank, 56, passed away January 12, 2015. He was born May 19, 1958, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is survived by his wife Cynthia. A lifetime member of the MVA, he served aboard the USS Midway from 1980-1988 as an ABF2 in V-4 Division. May he rest in peace.

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.”

NOW SHOWING!



**voices of
MIDWAY**

A cinema and holographic experience.

In the new Battle of Midway Theater!

Experience the journey into the battle that turned the tide of World War II!

We suggest you experience the Battle of Midway Theater & Exhibit early in your visit due to theater capacity limitations.

In the spring edition of this newsletter, read all about the grand opening of the Battle of Midway Theater that took place on the ship in mid-January. The MVA team of Oscar Granger and Dave Payson attended the opening, and it was something to behold, very well done. As part of our “Meet & Greet” event at the reunion, we will be given our own exclusive showing of this holographic experience, thanks to the USS Midway Museum’s leadership team.

The Masthead USS Midway Veterans Association

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

President

Oscar Granger - (425) 831-6891
North Bend, Washington
orange@comcast.net

Vice President-Reunions

Jim Hayter - (703) 264-0542
Reston, Virginia
mva41vpr@comcast.net

Secretary-Treasurer Newsletter Editor

Dave Payson - (509) 946-0810
Richland, Washington
minandave@charter.net

Webmaster

Craig Harper - (775)-544-3700
Reno, Nevada
craig_harper@charter.net

Membership Committee Chair

Turner Mann - (405) 732-2890
Midwest City, Oklahoma
tmann1@cox.net

Membership Committee Vice Chair/ Facebook Admin.

Ron Pope - (972) 735-7850
Plano, Texas
ronaldpope79@yahoo.com