



Station Ship News



DING DING . . . DING DING . . . SHIP'S CREW ARRIVING . . . ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS
IN THE AIR, AT SEA AND IN PORT . . . DING DING . . . DING DING



The USS Midway Veterans Association Promotes and Supports the USS Midway Museum

MVA's Spirit of Giving Continues

In line with our nonprofit status, the MVA continues to make charitable donations to the USS Midway Museum. Our most recent donation to the Museum, at the end of 2020, was our annual "20-percent Donation," which is based on 20 percent of the annual dues we collect from our members. This latest donation to the Museum, an amount of \$500.00, we designated to be split equally between the Museum's Education and Preservation programs.

In addition to our "20-percent Donation," in September of 2020 we donated \$6,300,00 to the Museum, a donation we called our "Stimulus Donation Program," earmarked to help the Museum reopen safely after being shut down for several months due to the coronavirus pandemic. The money for this donation was raised exclusively from selling MVA face covers/masks to our members and matching half of the total we brought in from mask sales with money from our Treasury.

We stand proud of our role as a nonprofit charitable military organization. Since the MVA was founded in 2010 as a 501(c)(19) nonprofit military organization, we've made charitable donations of nearly **\$35,000** to charitable organizations, the vast majority of these donations going to the USS Midway Museum.

Now, sadly, the Museum is closed again due to the latest COVID-19 surge sweeping the country, which has been especially bad and deadly in Southern California.

But the MVA continues to support the Museum in any way we can. Hopefully, sooner rather than later, the Museum will reopen as the world-class ship museum it is, attracting a million-plus visitors a year. There will be brighter days ahead,



Editor's Note: Part 2 of "Coffee With Nimitz," concludes Rick Setlowe's article on his rarer-than-rare 1964 interview with the legendary Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz at his mansion on Treasure Island, California. At the time of the interview, Rick was a staff writer for the S.F. Examiner and was several years out of the navy. The story resumes where it left off in our last newsletter, with Admiral Nimitz, somewhat apprehensively, inviting Rick into his home for an "Off the record" interview.

Coffee With Nimitz, Part 2

By Rick Setlowe, 1957-59, Lt.jg, Ops, CIC Air Controller

... The next morning I drove up to the gate at Treasure Island, presented my officer's ID, and was smartly saluted through by the Marine guard.

I drove straight to Nimitz's home and knocked on the door. A Filipino attendant in white livery opened it. I presented my press card and briefly explained that I was there at the request of my publisher who was an acquaintance of Admiral Nimitz.

The attendant took my card and closed the door. When it opened again after a few minutes, there was Nimitz.

In the recent Hollywood epic "Midway" Woody Harrelson plays Nimitz. In the 1976 blockbuster Henry Fonda portrayed him. Neither quite captured the gravitas of the man who had taken command of the

Pacific fleet the day after the flaming disaster of Pearl Harbor and orchestrated the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay four years later.

The man at the door, dressed in civilian clothes, was white-hair, tall, handsome—more striking than the movie stars that had created his imitations. "I sent word to your publisher I don't give personal interviews. How'd you get on base?"

"I used my officer I.D. I served aboard the Midway..." Then I added the magic password..."under Tom Blackburn."

That definitely caught Nimitz's interest. He looked me over, then in a friendly voice, "Come in. Have some coffee, but this is all off the record. No interview."

I was thrilled. "Yes sir!"

In memory, we were in a wide hallway/alcove, seated on an upholstered bench before a low coffee table, on which the attendant almost immediately served us coffee.

"So you served with Tom Blackburn?"

Blackburn had commanded the Navy's first Corsair fighter squadron, the legendary Jolly Rogers with the pirates' skull and crossbones insignia emblazoned on their planes. In the battle for the Solomon Islands, they shot down more enemy aircraft than any other squadron in the war. Blackburn was awarded the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with 2 gold stars. A multi-ace himself, he had trained and commanded a squadron of aces.

After the war he was one of the Navy's first jet pilots, the Midway's first air group commander, and the very first pilot to land aboard the newly launched carrier, then the largest ship in the world.

When I served under him in 1958-59, Captain Blackburn was the c.o. of Midway—the flagship during the brink-of-nuclear-war crisis in the Taiwan Straits.

"Yes sir. He's now growing wine grapes and breeding Golden Retrievers up in Napa Valley."

Nimitz seemed surprised. "Are you in touch with him?"

"I had lunch with his son Mark recently." Mark had not followed his father and grandfather to Annapolis, but had attended Yale and had writing ambitions, which had brought him to the Examiner, then the Monarch of the Dailies in a literary San Francisco.

Looking back, I had had perhaps more contact with Blackburn than most junior officers aboard. As an operations officer and air controller who worked around the clock when at sea, my collateral duty in port was Public Information Officer. On occasion I conferred directly with the c.o. And I had doubled-dated with his pretty daughter Pattie and been a guest for cocktails at his home.

But there were officers aboard whose careers had been terminated by run-ins with him, and others simply terrified of him.

Fleet Admiral Nimitz

Still, he treated me with a certain tolerance, even humor, perhaps because I was closer to his son's age, and did not plan to make the Navy my career, yet did my job with a certain diligence.



I briefly sketched this, then noted, “He retired when he was passed over for admiral... They didn’t trust him.” It was a phrase too much. But perhaps the brash young reporter was trying to stir Nimitz.

“And you would know that how?” There was a sharp edge to his voice that even a half century later I still hear.

“A friend of mine’s father was on the selection board.”

Now things really got tense. Nimitz might have ordered me to reveal who that was. And I would have respectfully declined. I was no longer in the Navy and now a reporter. And I didn’t want Nimitz calling the father to tell him to silence his son, an Annapolis grad and career officer.

But now, as noted, everyone has heard Taps, and for the record my source was George Anderson III. His father George Anderson Jr. was then the Chief of Naval Operations, and his son—my confidant—was a FJ-4 Fury pilot who had carrier qualified aboard Midway. His two closest friends had been buddies of mine in flight school, and they had both been killed in mishaps. In that tragedy, George III and I had bonded.

Blackburn’s being passed over for admiral at the time had been a matter of great curiosity. And George had discussed it with his own father. Not only was Blackburn awesomely decorated and experienced, both his father and brother were admirals. But his intemperate drinking and recklessness were not secret.

One time aboard Midway, Blackburn had insisted on flying an F8 Crusader—then the hottest plane in the fleet—in which he was not qualified. He essentially lost control, and almost consciousness, but landed, visibly beaten up, black-eyed, and face bloodied by the violent G-forces his heavy hand had unleashed.

And he had angrily and publicly berated another officer on the flight desk and ordered him off the ship for an entirely personal matter. Senior officers aboard felt compelled to intervene.

In the age of the Cuban Missile Crisis and nuclear MADness—Mutually Assured Destruction—the top gun of Guadalcanal was not trusted.

Years later it was all a matter of record. In his autobiographical “The Jolly Rogers,” published in 1989, Tom Blackburn admitted, “By mid-1962, the Navy sensibly decided that it didn’t need an Admiral who could not handle his booze.”

In his excellent and authoritative “Midway Magic,” published in 2004, military historian Scott McGaugh, a

founding director of the Midway Museum, described Blackburn as a “hard-charging, risk-taking invincible aviator who lived for today and spit on tomorrow, often with a drink in his hand at sunset.”



Nimitz practicing with his .45

But in 1964, my comment to Admiral Nimitz was, well, indiscreet. I attempted to change the subject. “What do you do to occupy yourself now?”

As a five star Fleet Admiral, Nimitz officially remained on active duty for the rest of his life, with full pay and benefits. “I have a shooting range out back, and I practice with a .45.”

The .45 had been my sidearm aboard Midway on foreign in-port officer-of-the-desk watches, security, and Shore Party training. But I had difficulty hitting a barn door. Historically, the pistol was designed for blunt, brutal stopping power against sword-wielding Moro tribesmen in 1900 in hand-to-hand Philippine jungle combat.

Nimitz was amused by my trivia about the .45, imparted to me by Marine 1st Lt. Jim Sheehan, my Midway small arms trainer.

“Yes, it takes some practice as a target pistol,” Nimitz agreed.

It struck me as curious that the admiral who had commanded the greatest flotilla of firepower the world had ever seen and no doubt had a direct hand in the atomic attacks on the Japanese ports of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was now practicing to master a .45.

“Here, I don’t want you to go away empty handed.”

He disappeared into another room for a few moments and came back with a large photo. It was the official photo of his signing the surrender of Japan aboard the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, September 2, 1945.

He inscribed it--

**“To Rick Setlowe
With whom I had coffee
Off the record.”**

“There! That’ll show your publisher you were at least here and did your job.”

I showed it to my editor Bill Hall. He took it down to show to the publisher.

“He said, ‘Congratulations. You’ve got a helluva collector’s item, even if you didn’t get the interview.’”

I mounted the photo above my desk with scotch tape. My fellow ink-stained wretches on the Examiner came by my office, admired the inscribed photo, and speculated what was “off the record.” It hinted of dark secrets of Pearl Harbor, the epic Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, the surrender of Japan.

But we hadn’t talked about any of that epic history. But about a hero who was reckless and drank too much and the kick and inaccuracy of the obsolete .45 pistol.

When I left the Examiner a year later, I cleared out most of my files on a Friday afternoon, and came back on Monday to pick up odds and ends and the inscribed photo. Someone had swiped it off the wall...and off the record.



Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, signs the Instrument of Surrender as United States Representative, on board USS Missouri (BB 63), Sep. 2, 1945.

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Author’s Note:

The air-to-air victory described in the following story is a tribute to the skill and courage of Midway Naval Aviators. It is also a tribute to the hard work and dedication of ship’s company of the USS Midway who made air operations possible.

MiGs!

VA-25 MiG Kill June 20, 1965

By Doug Bohs, AQF2/VF-21, 1963-65

It was almost 1800 hours as LT Clinton (Clint) Johnson spread and locked the wings of his AD-1 Skyraider while preparing for launch on the starboard cat of the Midway. After three previous calls to suit up only to stand down each time, this mission was a go. The Midway was 30 days into its 3rd at-sea period since arriving on Yankee Station in March of 1965. VA-25 had flown several rescue cover and reconnaissance missions while on Yankee Station. This mission was a RESCAP. The four-plane flight was led by LCDR Ed Greathouse. LT Johnson was flying his starboard wing and LTJG Jim Lynne flying port wing. LT Charlie Hartman was flying LT Johnson’s starboard wing.

As the second element flight leader LT Johnson’s plane was set up as the “Middleman Aircraft” with two radios and a control box. The control box allows the “Middleman” to act as an antenna relay. The pilot covering the downed flier (low altitude) transmits through the “Middleman’s” aircraft (higher altitude) to the ship. The number-two radio picks up the signal from the covering aircraft and relays it to the number-one radio for transmission to the ship. Unknown to him the cat shot had killed LT Johnson’s number one radio.

At 12,000 feet and feet dry, they were passing north of Thanh Hoa. They were at least 80 miles short of their RESCAP point when Ed Greathouse suddenly rolled inverted and went into a near vertical dive. LT Johnson immediately followed. A quick radio check confirmed his radio was dead, killed by the catapult shot. Johnson had missed the MiG alert from the USS Strauss (DE-408). The MiGs were spotted on an intercept course of two Skyraiders which were south of Johnson’s group. The MiGs had apparently missed their intercept, and were coming around for another attempt. Before spotting their initial targets the MiGs saw the Midway flight.

The Strauss was keeping Greathouse updated and informed him his flight was now the target. Their split-S had increased their speed and reversed their course. Their hope was to get down low where the Skyraiders might have a turning advantage over the MiGs. After arming his guns and setting up his rockets Johnson saw

an unguided rocket pass near his plane going downward. He then saw a second rocket hit the ground near Greathouse and Lynne. There was no doubt they were under attack. A silver MiG-17 with red markings on the wing and tail streaked by Hartman and Johnson headed for Greathouse. Tracers coming from behind his plane and an intake growing larger in his mirror served as a signal for Johnson to start pulling and turning. He immediately saw two distinct sizes of tracers falling away. The MiG had two 23mm and one 37mm cannon in the nose. This second MiG stayed with Johnson and Hartman throughout the turn but was unable to get inside and overshoot. The MiG pilot made seven passes but each time was unable to get inside. As the MiG pulled up Hartman was able to get off a quick shot but with no apparent damage. The MiG climbed and stayed there.

Their evasive maneuvers had separated Johnson and Hartman from Greathouse and his wingman. No longer under attack their objective was to rejoin the flight leader and his wingman. Johnson soon caught a glimpse of them and flew to join. Since they had been flying at treetop level and in and out of small valleys they had to fly around a small hill to get to them. Coming around the hill they spotted Greathouse and Lynne with a MiG lined up behind them. A short burst from Johnson's 20mm missed but got the MiG pilot's attention. The MiG turned hard into Johnson and Hartman, making a head-on pass. They fired simultaneously. Hartman's rounds appeared to go down the intake and into the wing root. Johnson's rounds hit along the top of the fuselage and into the canopy. The MiG never returned fire, rolled inverted and hit a small hill. It then exploded and burned. While they circled the wreckage Johnson switched to his number two radio. Johnson and Hartman considered an attempt to cut off the other MiG but were persuaded to rejoin by the voice of Greathouse. The USS Strauss had reported numerous bogeys inbound to their position. They headed out at low level and joined Greathouse and his wingman and headed back to the Midway.

By now they were looking at a night landing, but the adrenaline from the MiG kill made it seem routine.

Saigon

Ngyuen Cao Key, the new Premier of South Vietnam (and Skyraider pilot) had indirectly heard of the Skyraider kill. He also recognized LCDR Ed Greathouse's name as a Skyraider instructor from the RAG (Replacement Air Group) and demanded an appearance by all four pilots for a Vietnamese award ceremony.

They were flown to Saigon the next day and were instant celebrities. They met with Premier Key at the palace and were awarded the Air Force Gallantry Medal and honorary commissions in the South Vietnamese Air Force. They also met with a bevy of reporters from U.S. newspapers during a press conference called by Premier Key. News of their MiG kill made headlines in almost every major U.S. newspaper. This briefing was given and the reports written before the U.S. newspapers were made aware of the MiG kills of VF-21 by the military.

Photo # USN 1113736-A Pilots describe air-to-air combat over Vietnam, aboard USS Midway, June 1965



From left to right: unknown officer, LTJG Charlie Hartman (Johnson wingman #4), LCDR Ed Greathouse (#1 Flight leader), unknown officer, LT Clint Johnson (2nd section leader #3), LTJG Jim Lynne (#2 Greathouse wingman), CDR Harry Ettinger CO VA-25. RADM Bill Bringle CARDIV Commander is seated.

Awards Ceremony VF-21 and VA-25

Back aboard the USS Midway the awards ceremony for VF-21 and VA-25 was held jointly. VF-21 pilots Lou Page and Dave Batson and RIOs (radar intercept officers) J.C. Smith and Rob Doremus were each awarded the Silver Star. VA-25 pilots Clint Johnson and Charles Hartman received the Silver Star and pilots Ed Greathouse and Jim Lynne received the Distinguished Flying Cross.



Left to Right: CDR Page, LT Batson, LCDR Doremus, LT Smith, LCDR Greathouse, LT Johnson, LTJG Hartman, LTJG Lynne

Till Death Do Us Apart

David Payson, 1963-64/RDSN, OI Division

Over the years, as the editor of this newsletter, I've worked with many widows of deceased Midway veterans to collect basic information for the "In Memoriam" section of this newsletter. For most of these deceased veterans, I already have their "ship's information." — that is, years on board, division served in, rate or rank, job, etc.—in my database. But I also need other information on them, such as age, years married, surviving children, grandchildren, etc.



CAPT Gordon King (USN, Ret.) and his wife Beatrice King, shown here on Veterans Day 2016, in Austin, Texas

Working with widows or adult children of deceased Midway veterans to gather information for the "In Memoriam" section can be a poignant but meaningful experience for me. I feel that not only is the MVA contributing to the family legacy of a deceased Midway veteran, adding a measure of comfort to his family, but we are also contributing to his military legacy, by documenting Midway information and his time in the Navy. From an editor's standpoint, then, I consider "In Memoriam" an important part of this newsletter.

Thus, when I received a phone call from Beatrice Ann King ("Bea") of Houston, Texas, this fall, I wasn't quite prepared for her proposal, it was such a novel idea. Bea, now 90, explained that her husband of 58 years, retired CAPT Gordon E. King, had passed away in March of 2020. Would it be possible, she asked, for her to join our organization in his memory?

Aboard Midway from January 1964 to February 1966, then LCDR King was in charge of Midway's Dental De-

partment. The 1965 Midway cruise book describes the sounds emanating from the Dental Department space below deck in this way: "... the day-long whine of the modern air turbine drills makes the space sound like a miniature flight deck full of jet aircraft." No doubt, LCDR King's efforts contributed to this audio illusion.

After her request to join our organization sunk in, I granted it to Bea on the spot. What a meaningful and original idea she had. Why would I even consider telling her no? She was the widow of a Midway veteran, after all, and after talking to her for a few minutes, it became very clear to me how serious she was. *In his memory*, was the thought that ran through my mind.

Moreover, I was impressed with how knowledgeable she was about her late husband's career in the Navy. Her enthusiasm and pride were infectious. So yes, it was an easy decision for me, once I'd figured out how to put it all together for her.

Bea went on to explain how much she had loved being a Navy wife and the close bond she had formed with the other Navy wives over the course of her husband's career. "But wasn't it a lonely life," I asked, "with the ship at sea so often." No, she said, Midway wives always had each other for support, and they had their children to raise. Plenty to do, was her answer.

"Of all his duty stations," she said, "Gordon and I loved the USS Midway the best."



Then LCDR King at work in Midway's dental office, 1965

The more she talked about her late husband and her experiences as a Navy wife, the more

I realized I wanted to share her story.

So at this point, perhaps overly enthused about her idea, I simply said,

"Okay, Bea, you had me with 'Midway.' Permission granted to join the MVA."

I had an MVA application in the mail to her the next day.

Two weeks later back in the mail came a legal-size envelope from her with a completed MVA application form, a personal check for a lifetime membership, and more in-

formation on Gordon's years on Midway.

LCDR Gordon King, at the time he was on Midway, 1965. Previously he had been Fleet Admiral Nimitz's Personal Dentist.



Included with Bea's information on her husband's career in the Navy, with

an emphasis on his Midway duty, was a note that before beginning his Midway duty in 1964, then Lcdr Gordon King had been the personal dentist to Fleet Admiral Chester F. Nimitz, WWII naval hero, visiting him regularly at his mansion on Treasure Island, California, to take care of the retired Fleet Admiral's dental needs.

Coincidentally, this was not the first time, it turns out, that a Midway veteran had crossed paths with the legendary Fleet Admiral of the Pacific War with Japan. Recently, I worked with MVA's Rick Setlowe on his story, "Coffee With Nimitz." (Part 2 of which is continued in this newsletter.)

So in honor of Bea's request, as described above, her late husband, CAPT Gordon King (USN, Ret.), became an honorary lifetime member of the MVA. In addition, I had an honorary MVA lifetime membership card made for him, which I mailed to Bea. I also added his name to MVA's official roster, which we post on our website.

CAPT Gordon King (USN, Ret.) may be gone in body but not in spirit; I'm sure that is the way Bea thinks of him.

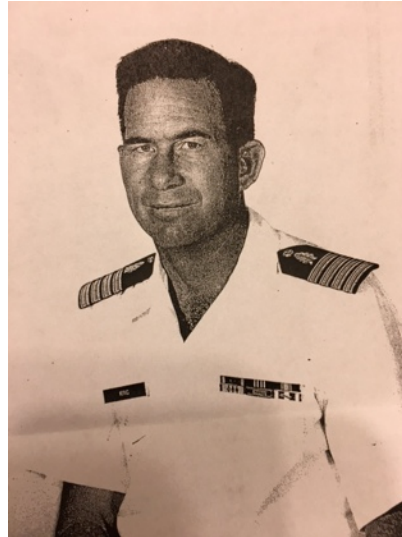
In closing, Beatrice Ann King of Houston, Texas, had a beautiful idea, which she shared with me, which in turn allowed me to share it with all of you.

I dedicate this article to all Midway wives and widows of deceased Midway veterans. They did (and are still doing) so much to keep our ship, and our lives, running straight and true.

On the next page is the note that Bea included with the package of material that she provided me about her late husband's Midway duty and his following Navy career as well as some of his "civilian duty" following the Navy. Included with her note were several photos and narrative about him, taken from either the '64 or '65 Midway cruise book, I think.

Captain Gordon King was promoted to captain in 1972, at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

He retired from the Navy in 1979, at Bethesda, Maryland.



Bea describes this photo of her late husband as: "Retirement photo - U.S.N. officer without 'cover' - To see if you are gray or Bald!"

After Lcdr King left Midway following the '65 Vietnam cruise, he returned to Vietnam, working 14 months as an expert in facial reconstruction at the Combat Field Hospital in Da Nang.



LCDR King, Combat Field Hospital Da Nang, 1967

Dear Dave (Mr. Payson)

Thank you so much for your response. I'm enclosing a few things of interest and I hope they will be shared by others.

As we discussed, Gordon, as a LCDR at Naval Station Treasure Island, Calif., was the personal dental officer to Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. When change of duty came, he wanted sea duty, so he had orders to U.S.S. Midway -- replacing a Captain!

We "potty trained" our son, Ted, at the ship in Alameda N.S., California. Ted loved to flush the toilet, as it made a huge noise going down many decks. So we told him he could not flush the toilet unless he put "something" in it. He learned very quickly, so when Midway left for the Pacific, we had a trained son!

Due to COVID, we were unable to have a military funeral with honors for Gordon. We had planned to dress him in formal, Dress Blues, but COVID prevented that. He rests in peace in his favorite U.S. Navy "spirit wear" -- socks, T-shirt, sweatpants, and heavy wind-breaker. His baseball cap is USS Midway with "scrambled eggs" on the bill.

So Gordon went to be with his Heavenly Father in His Way of uniform! I'm sure he asked the Lord, "Permission to Come Aboard, Sir." I know the Lord said, "Permission Granted, Welcome Aboard" -- (Slow Salute).

I look forward to an MVA newsletter.

President's Report

Can Midway Vietnam Veterans qualify for VA benefits determined to be caused from exposure to Agent Orange (A.O.) and other herbicides and defoliant chemicals used in Vietnam?



Complicating the answer to this question is the research that would have to be done to establish if the ship was anywhere within the 12-mile limit of the coastline of South Vietnam (SVN). As we currently understand it, the ship was within

the designated area during Operation Frequent Wind, so anyone onboard then would meet at least that one condition. Beyond that, there were nine additional at-sea periods/cruises when Midway was on station in the area -- Yankee Station, Gulf of Tonkin, etc. As was pointed out

to us when doing the research for this piece, the Navy has chronicled more than 22 million pages of deck logs for the more than 700 Navy vessels that saw service during the Vietnam war. Between them, Karl Zingheim (Midway Museum's historian) and Phillip Eakin (senior researcher for the Museum library), have spent many hours with hand navigation tools to establish the 'line of demarcation' -- the 12-mile limit, and the Midway's positions from a number of deck logs from the ship during its Yankee Station deployments.

It would take a cadre of folks familiar with navigation charts and tools to determine the ship's positions at any given time/date off the coast of SVN. In all, my research shows, there were 10 periods that Midway was actually on station in the waters off SVN.

So, let's get down to cases here!

All indications that I've read or come across are that the exfoliation that was done in Vietnam during the prescribed period was accomplished by the Air Force under the guise of its program, 'Operation Farm Hand.' The defoliants and herbicides were deployed by the Air Force using C-123 aircraft, based primarily out of Tak Li, Thailand. To the best of my knowledge there were never defoliants or herbicides (such as A.O.) aboard Midway at any time.

It is understood that you don't have to have actual physical contact with the defoliants, but you do need to establish that we were within a particular 'line of demarcation' (aka 12-mile limit from coastal SVN), be it 12 or 50 miles, depending on where the ship was along the coastline. The 12-mile line is a reference point only, and the actual presence of the ship in the area may be enough to satisfy the '12-mile' rule, even though it may be well beyond that navigation point.

The VA links 14 'presumptive diseases' to exposure from herbicides and defoliant chemicals such as A.O., and you have to have one or more of the diseases to be eligible to qualify for a disability compensation award from the VA. Game over, if you don't. The list of the VA's 'presumptive diseases' caused by A.O. can be found at: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/agent-orange/agent-orange-2020/presumptive.asp>

My best advice is to encourage Midway Vietnam veterans to apply, based on their personal medical histories, and see what kind of response they get from the VA. I know that is sort of where I started this whole 'soiree', but after much reading and research on the subject, I'm of a mind that the VA has complicated this consideration for a good reason -- they don't want to have to do the work needed to

establish any medical justification for any of our veterans meeting the VA's presumptive diseases.

Let's talk some more!

Okay, Oscar, right back at you. Dave Payson here, MVA's newsletter editor. I asked you to take on this issue in your report because of its importance to Midway veterans who served on Midway during the Vietnam War, i.e., those 10 separate periods that the ship operated in Vietnam waters. In total, those missions would have included many thousands of Midway sailors.

I totally agree with you that to effectively use all the deck logs, charts, navigational tools, etc., required to determine Midway's position at any given time/date during her various Vietnam missions would be a daunting task. That said, I'm skeptically optimistic that this confounding jigsaw puzzle the VA has placed before Blue Water Navy sailors can be navigated successfully with the help of the right people to prove the veterans ships' locations along the SVN coastline some 55 years ago.

The right people, in my book, are the dedicated, experienced VA-accredited service officers (most of whom are military veterans themselves). They work independent of the VA and are specially trained to help veterans file and win VA disability compensation awards. I've used these service officers since 2014, when one of them filed and won a hearing disability settlement for me with the VA. As you can tell, I have a very high opinion of these veterans' advocates and their commitment to helping military veterans.

I interviewed several of these service officers for this piece, asking them what they thought the chances would be for a Midway Vietnam veteran to win a Blue Water A.O. service-related compensation award from the VA, if the veteran had one or more of the VA's presumptive diseases.

One of these service officers answered in this way: **“Any sailor on board during the times that Midway shows it was within the 12-mile radius AND has one of the presumptive A.O. diseases should file for it to be service connected.”** That answer, to me, accurately reflects the attitude of these VA-accredited but independent service officers – to never-give-up. They are in it with the veterans to win. Nothing surprising about that, really – to win a service-related disability award from the VA, the Midway veteran would have to follow VA's rules closely to even have a chance to win. Which is why a Midway Vietnam veteran would be smart to find and use one of these service officers. See the link to the VFW's website below.

The service officer also shared a link with me to an interactive map tool used by service officers to help Blue Wa-

ter sailors determine if their ships operated inside the 12-mile coastline of SVN during Vietnam. A novice user, I tried the tool, and Midway came up in its pulldown menu as a Blue Water ship. This tool showed Midway to be inside the 12-mile zone several times, most of them, I think, during Operation Frequent Wind operation.

Midway being showing up in the map tool's database as a VA-recognized Blue Water Ship is good news, because, as near as I can tell, the VA hasn't published an updated Blue Water Ship's list since the Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 became effective at the beginning of 2020. Why not, I wonder? One more missing piece of the VA's Blue Water Navy jigsaw puzzle. One more question to ponder.

Oscar sent the interactive map tool to one of the Museum's experts, Phillip Eakin, that he referred to earlier in this report, to test. As shown in the immediately below, Phil responded positively on the map tool's accuracy to pinpoint Midway's movements off the coast of SVN during Vietnam. Here's his analysis:

“ . . . At this point [the interactive map tool], lists more qualifying points than any other site at the moment . . . It shows that Midway veterans who made the entire 1965, 1971 or 1972/73 cruises, or who participated in Operation Frequent Wind in 1975, are in the qualifying category as far as being in the zone is concerned.”

In conclusion, Oscar and I would like to hear from Midway Vietnam veterans who have filed with the VA for service-related disability awards for exposure to A.O. Win or lose, we'd like to hear your stories and pass the information on to our members, keeping your names anonymous, if you so choose. (Find our contact information in the “Contacts” side-link on MVA's home page from which this article is linked.

Important: Midway veterans, if you're looking to file a service-related disability compensation claim with the VA (A.O.-related or otherwise), we recommend that you use the services of a VFW VA-accredited service officer in your area. To find one of these service officers, go to VFW's national website and follow this link:

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>.



VP-Reunions' Report

I've been attempting to write this over the last few days, but I am always looking for good news, and good reunion news has been scarce in the COVID-19 dominated year of 2020 (and now it's 2021, and I'm still looking for good reunion news). Here are some examples:



◆ Early in the year we signed contracts to hold our 2020 MVA reunion in Norfolk, VA, in September. Then came March, when COVID-19 hit with a vengeance and we all became familiar with new terms—social distancing, hot spots, virus surges, always wear a mask (how about those attractive, functional, MVA face coverings that many of you are now wearing!), wash your hands, and local restriction on retail establishments. To be honest, canceling NF20 was an easy decision because the health and safety of our members was always our number one priority. What took some time was finding someone to talk to about canceling because most of my contacts at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside had been furloughed.

◆ The USS Midway Museum has certainly had an up-and-down year. They started 2020 as the top attraction in the San Diego area, and then came California Shutdown number 1. After being closed for 100 days, the MM management team had the foresight to open as an outdoor museum (allowing visitors on the flight deck and hangar deck) so they avoided one shutdown order in the Fall, but California Shutdown number 2 on December 7 closed all outdoor museums, so she is closed again to the general public—at least for now. It makes me feel good to know how MVA members supported the ship through our stimulus donation program when we donated over \$6,000 to help out during the bad times.

◆ Vaccine—from nothing to Operation Warp Speed, and now Operation Molasses, as they try to get shots to all of us who need them. It was amazing they could develop a vaccine so quickly, but now the waiting is a new, and unpleasant, fact of life.

So what's going on with an MVA reunion? The Board of Directors has **PENCILED-IN** a reunion in San Diego in September of 2021 (which means no serious planning yet). What a 2021 reunion will look like is anybody's guess—could be smaller, could be shorter, but I know that it will be different as we all adapt to the new normal of post-COVID-19. **ONE THING FOR SURE, THE PRIMARY CONCERN REMAINS THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF**

YOU. IF THAT MEANS NO REUNION IN 2021, SO BE IT—THERE IS ALWAYS 2022. As my local TV station says, stay tuned to this channel for late-breaking news. In the meantime, stay safe, and wear an (MVA) mask. Here's a parting thought as I close—wishing you fair winds, calm seas, gentle tides, and smooth sailing for the year ahead.

Jim Hayter, VP-Reunions, USS Midway Veterans Association

Secretary-Treasurer Report

Life has been a bit of a turmoil in the throes of this pandemic, with very few dull moments since our last newsletter came out. I've been spending too much time working on this newsletter and other MVA projects, my wife points out.

She's right, of course. But what can one do with all the craziness going on in the world and in our country?

Well, one can go on with focus and intent to live a normal life. Much of this focus in my case has been on completing my "ship's work," that is, my MVA work. This work includes collecting dues, preparing this newsletter, having 2021 membership cards made for dues payers, helping sell MVA masks, doing my best to sign up new members, et cetera, et cetera.

The beat goes on.

Back in the day, onboard, we had a mission, an important job to do, showing the flag or defending our country. We were young and impervious to much of what was going on at home, and we were probably better off for it.

Back then, we had oceans to roam and a strong sense of duty to country. Stay safe and be happy, friends. There will come a better day.

Dave Payson, Sec.-Treas., USS Midway Veterans Association



VP-Administration's Report

Because the vendor who supplies our vests made a substantial increase their price, I found a new vendor to make and supply our MVA vests. I also made a design



change to the vests that the Board will weigh in on at the next meeting. I mailed six of the new vests to a member in New Jersey, and he liked the design.

Also during this period, I helped MVA Secretary-Treasurer Dave Payson mail membership cards and newsletters to the

members who do not have computers to receive them online. It's a big job, but I can handle it. I'm retired and find doing ship's work very gratifying.

As Chairman of Operations (COO), much like a Master-At-Arms, I have a whole lot of items that I monitor to make sure the MVA stays on track.

I've been working with the production company that produces "United Stories of America" for the USS Midway Museum. These stories are presented in short videos that will be shown on the Museum's website in the near future. But with all that has happened recently with the COVID, this work has been put on hold by the Museum. When the Museum reopens, hopefully in the not-too-distant future, I imagine they will post the stories.

That's all I have for now, folks. Please stay safe, wear a mask when you go out, and wash your hands often.

Marty FitzGerald, VP-Admin., USS Midway Veterans Association

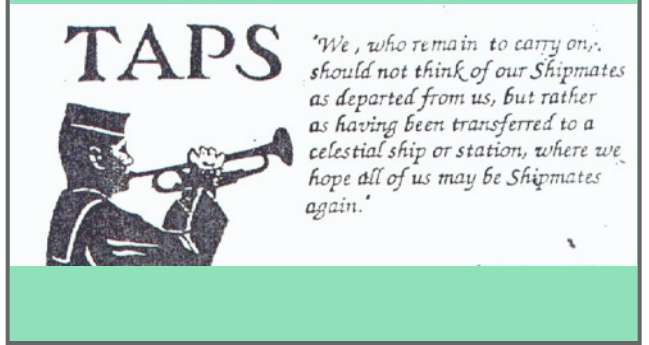
ATTN Midway Veterans: MVA still has plenty of MVA face masks (face coverings) available at the bargain price of \$8 apiece, including free shipping! Make check payable to "MVA" and mail to Dave Payson, 410 Cottonwood Dr., Richland, WA 99352.



In Memoriam

Shipmate CAPT Gordon E. King (Ret.), 88, passed away on March 15, 2020, in Houston, Texas. A LCDR on Midway from 1964 to 1966, he headed up the ship's Dental Department, which was responsible for the dental health of the ship's company, Air Wing, and emergency service for personnel from escorting destroyers. Before his Midway assignment, he served as the personal dentist to Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (Ret.), who lived on Treasure Island, Calif. CAPT King is survived by his wife of 58 years, Beatrice V. King, his son, Theodore King, and a grandson. CAPT King's Navy career spanned from 1956 to 1979. May he rest in peace.

Shipmate William (Bill) English, 82, passed away October 20, 2020, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He served on Midway from 1957 to 1959 and was an RD2 in OI Division, an original member of the "radar gang," from which the MVA evolved. Bill is survived by his special friend of 12 years, Mary Ann Straight, two children and four grandchildren. May he rest in peace.



New Men

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

- Gordon E. King (64-66) - Houston, TX*
- Robert Sberbert (85-88) - Greenville, SC*
- David Hale (71-74) - Wheat Ridge, CO*
- William Auchincloss (85-87) - Sierra Vista, AZ*
- Richard Murphy (70-73) - Mesa, AZ*
- Robert Butterworth (58-60) - Sedona, AZ*

IMPORTANT DUES NOTICE!

Attention Shipmates! Time is running out to pay your 2021 dues. Deadline is Jan 31, 2021. Pay on time and get a membership card! (Lifetime Members, 1945 plank owners, or those who have already paid their 2021 dues, kindly disregard this message).

Pay By Credit Card –
(\$20, \$25, \$100 levels)

Follow this link:

<http://ussmidway.net/paypal.html>

(VISA, MasterCard, American Express,
Discover, PayPal)

Or pay by check: Make payable to MVA and
mail to Dave Payson, 410 Cottonwood Dr.,
Richland, WA 99352

Call or email if you have questions

(509) 946-0810

minandave@charter.net



This newspaper clipping was sent to us by Velvet Yusko, proud daughter of MVA member John Yusko, shown in photo receiving “sailor of the month” award from Midway commanding officer Sylvester R. Foley in May of 1973. Good work Velvet, good work John!

USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Website

<http://ussmidway.net/home.html>

USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Facebook

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

**The Masthead
USS Midway
Veterans Association**

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

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Share this application with your Midway shipmates who are not MVA members. To use, type requested information in fields. Save file to your computer with different file name. Reattach completed file and email to me at the email address on form below. Or print, complete and mail form with your check to postal address below.

USS MIDWAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION Application for Membership

I wish to join the USS MIDWAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, which is open to all Navy and Marine Corps veterans, regardless of department or air wing affiliation, who served on Midway at any time she was in commission. I hereby submit the following information:

Full Name: _____ Date _____

Spouse/Partner Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number Home: _____

Email: _____

Actual years served aboard: _____ to _____

Rank/Rate/Division while aboard (e.g., RM3/CR Div.): _____

Rank/Rate when Discharged/Retired (e.g., RMC): _____

Years served in military _____ to _____

How Did You Hear About Our Reunion Association? _____

Complete this form, either online or manually, selecting one of the three dues amounts:

- ♦ [\\$20.00/yr for veteran + spouse/partner](#)
- ♦ [\\$25.00/yr for veteran and family](#)
- ♦ [\\$100.00 for Lifetime Membership including family \(one-time payment\)](#)

Follow link below to charge by credit card ([PayPal](#), [Discover](#), [VISA](#), [MasterCard](#)); when site opens follow the easy instructions.

ussmidway.net/paypal.html

OR pay by check. Make check payable to Midway Veterans Association and mail completed form and check to address below. Whether you pay by credit card or by check, you'll receive your membership package within 14 days, including MVA's last two newsletters and other MVA/USS Midway information. You'll also receive a wallet-size personalized MVA membership card a week or so after you receive the membership package.

USS Midway Veterans Association

410 Cottonwood Dr.
Richland, WA 99352

The USS Midway Museum supports the USS Midway Veterans Association in preserving the legacy of every Midway sailor, regardless of department or air wing affiliation.

(NOTE: The USS Midway Veterans Association is a 501(c)(19) nonprofit organization; contributions (aka, dues) are tax-deductible as provided by law. MVA donates 20 percent of its annual contributions to the USS Midway Museum's Education Scholarship Fund and Midway Preservation Endowment.)

Contact: David Payson, MVA Secretary-Treasurer, at minandave@charter.net;
Telephone (509) 946-0810

We Live The Adventure