



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



Staring down the “barrel” of an F-8 Crusader Jet on the flight deck of the USS Midway Museum

Important Message from the MVA President:

Under most circumstances, I would refrain from the use of political euphemisms. However, under the current circumstances our organization finds itself in, I want to take some recent words from Senator Tim Scott, running for another US Senate term from South Carolina. His words struck a concordant note with me and I want to use them to emphasize the importance of this message! Senator Scott said:

“Our nation is at a crossroads. We need leaders who will fight for the American Dream. I'm running for another term in the United States Senate to move (South Carolina) and America forward.”

Not unlike this great nation, the USS Midway Veterans Association is also at a crossroads. We are looking for leaders who will pick up the baton from the existing leadership team and keep the MVA moving forward. Several of us have been in our leadership positions since the

inception of the organization in the 1990s. It's time for change.

There have been two efforts launched in the past several months to locate volunteers with a strong interest and passion in seeing the MVA succeed and move forward under new leadership. Three of the four existing officers, including the President, the Vice President-Reunions, and the Secretary/Treasurer will not seek another term. The Vice-President-Administration will continue in his present term.

All officers and MVA board members serve without compensation. However, the success of the organization as it moves forward is more than adequate compensation for all. We are a strong supporter of the USS Midway Museum and have donated thousands of dollars to the Museum and its Foundation over the years.

The Midway Museum is philanthropic in its mission to become the symbol of freedom in the United States. Through its Foundation, the Museum supports educational



efforts for all ages in the greater San Diego area, both on-board and virtually across the country. Military organizations use the facilities on the ship for all manner of special ceremonies, including change of command, CPO pinning, and other special events such as Pearl Harbor Day. AND the MVA supports the Museum's efforts in making these events happen. The Midway Museum is unlike any other military or civilian museum in the country, and we're proud to have it happening on our ship!

Please give serious consideration to your service and the enjoyment you continue to receive by being part of the USS Midway Veterans Association. We're all busy with families and friends, especially during these holiday times. Think about 'giving' of yourself to your fellow veterans and becoming a leader of the living legacy of the Midway Museum and the Midway Veterans Association.

Just as a Navy ship needs a strong leadership team and crew to fulfill its mission, MVA cannot survive without a strong leadership team to guide this organization to continue providing fellowship and enrichment to our members. Are you ready to accept this challenge?

Happy New Year, Everyone!

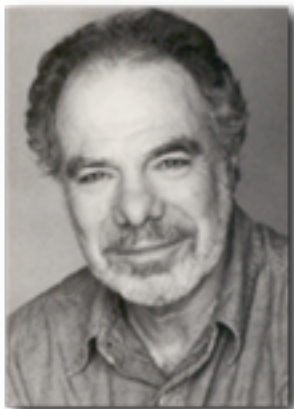
Oscar Granger, President

USS Midway Veterans Association

The Brink

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

In October of 2020—in the midst of a Corona contagion—I was invited to San Diego to be interviewed for "The Brink" episode of the USS Midway Museum: United Stories of America.



The 7-minute film documents the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958 that brought Midway and her crew to the brink of nuclear war.

Rick Setlowe

I am in my late eighties and one of the few surviving veterans of that historic event. Specifically, I had been the strike controller--the air controller who would point the nuclear bombers to their targets.

The producer of the documentary Sean O'Meara at first interviewed me via Zoom in my home in Los Angeles, and then a few weeks later Sean called and asked if I'd be

willing to be filmed aboard Midway at my general quarters station, a radar scope in CIC.

This was at the time of the pre-inoculation pandemic, and at my age with several underlying health conditions the prospect of being jammed in a very cramped space wearing no face mask with an unknown film crew loomed as dangerous as combat. A widower, I had so far survived hunkered down at home having my groceries delivered. I had not even had a haircut in over a year.

Perhaps one of the quirky attractions that has drawn over 100,000 views of "The Brink" on YouTube is this aged hippy with gray hair down to his shoulders in a battered leather flight jacket decorated with Midway insignias.

But I knew things, and I felt this strong duty to narrate them. This is what I knew.

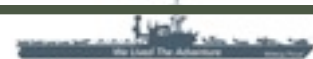
On August 23, 1958, the communist Chinese launched a massive artillery barrage of two small islands Quemoy and Matsu off the coast of China, where thousands of Chinese Nationalist troops were stationed. This was regarded as the opening salvo to a Red Chinese invasion of Taiwan, which the United States had a treaty to defend.

At the time Midway, after three years in the shipyards undergoing major upgrades then making it the largest ship in the world—and the only carrier then equipped with the new steam catapults—was at sea off Hawaii undergoing its operational readiness inspection. We were immediately ordered back to Pearl Harbor. Our pier was secured by Marines, Midway was loaded with weapons--nuclear weapons—and we took off at flank speed for the Taiwan Straits.

In August 1958 the ship was an historic technical milestone. We were the only carrier equipped with the powerful new steam catapults and therefore capable of reliably launching nuclear strikes. As late as 2016 the noted military historian Norman Friedman wrote in the Naval Institute Press about the strategic importance of our new catapults--Midway is the only ship mentioned--in giving Navy carriers a nuclear strike capability

Why? Nuclear bombs are complicated bombs within bombs, and very, very heavy. One of my classmates in Navy flight school was the later astronaut Gene Cernan. In "The Last Man on the Moon"—his autobiography published in 2000 by St. Martin's Press— even after three space flights his 1958 experience still weighted heavily on the astronaut/test pilot who at that time was a Lt. jg flying A-4's off the carrier Shangri-La—"The nukes were so heavy that they were the only bomb the A-4 could carry. Bearing a full load of fuel in addition to the bomb, I needed a maximum velocity shot to help me stagger off the deck...It would portably be a one-way trip."

Aboard Midway in the Taiwan Straits the tension crackled like an electric storm without lightning. Cdr. Halford Woodson, c.o. of Heavy Attack Squadron Eight, assem-



bled the pilots and air crews flying the twin-jet A3D, and ordered they were not to leave the ready room until they wrote their last letters home.

“Write the letters now, no excuses, give them to me,” he is quoted in “Midway Magic,” Scott McGaugh’s authoritative history of the ship. “Those who return will get their letters back.”

All the strike pilots were briefed on their targets. Years later, as a celebrated astronaut on a goodwill tour Cernan recalls, “In a much-altered world political climate, I flew into Shanghai for the first time, arriving at a military airfield aboard a commercial passenger jet. I looked out the window during the approach and recognized some landmarks. I’d seen this place before! I realized I was landing at Ground Zero of one of my targets back in those nasty, nuclear days.”

The one plane, one bomb, one pilot missions aboard Midway were assigned to Attack Squadron 63, the Fighting Red Cocks, flying FJ-4B Fury light attack jet aircraft. By a quirk several of the pilots were the youngest aboard, grads of a naval cadet program that had then required only a year or two of college for flight training. One ensign was, in fact, not yet old enough to legally drink but had the staggering responsibility to deliver a nuclear bomb. It scared the roughage out of him.

We discussed this over late-night drinks. Yeah, on occasion we had a drink. Officer country had its privileges--a drink or two to induce a restless sleep. We had to be ready for Armageddon. We were running patrols up and down the Straits 24/7. Blips on the Red Chinese radar day and night to let them know we were out there and loaded for bear.

The President Dwight Eisenhower declared, “I believe in taking the position in opposing aggression by force, I am taking the only position which is consistent with the vital interests of United States. And the peace of the world.”

I quote this not from any TV news, but the mimeographed headlines posted on the crew’s bulletin boards alongside the Plan of the Day. What it boiled down to me personally, hovered over my radar scope, subsisting on CIC’s thick black coffee and cheeseburgers from the “dirty wardroom,” buzzed awake by amphetamine tabs doled out by the flight surgeon, was that I awaited attack flight plans and vectors to our nuclear targets.

I was the strike controller at General Quarters if they “rang the bell” because, paradoxically, I was the least experienced. I simply had to aim the sharp point of the nonreturnable nuclear spears. The two controllers next to me, Lt. Don Holt and Lt. Emit Aillaud, were experienced jet fighter pilots with WestPac and Mediterranean deployments. They controlled the combat air patrols of F-8



In the foreground is Lt. Don Holt, then Lt. Emit Aillaud, then, barely seen, is Lt. jg Rick Setlowe, Air Strike Controller. Holt and Aillaud controlled the CAP (Combat Air Patrol) guarding the ship

Crusaders and F3H Demons to protect Midway from the swarms of MiGs from mainland China expected to attack us. We had been overflown by long-range Russian reconnaissance planes, and the Red Chinese knew exactly where we were.

John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State, declared, “If you are afraid to go to the brink, you are lost.” In the Cold War of the Fifties this strategy was labeled MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction.

But Eisenhower and Dulles’ brinkmanship worked. On October 6, after shelling the garrison on Quemoy for forty-four straight days, the cannons of Red China fell silent. Faced with the destruction of all that he had built since the Revolution, Chairman Mao ordered a cease fire and pledged to negotiate with the Nationalists on Taiwan and their leader Chiang Kai-shek.

Aboard Midway The Brink ended with a bang on November 14. The carriers Lexington and Ticonderoga—strategically separated beyond the horizon until that time—materialized about us. But Midway was the showboat. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the President of the Republic of Nationalist China, and his staff of generals flew out to the ship from Taiwan aboard a Midway helicopter to be greeted by a 21-gun salute and CincPacFleet Admiral H.G. Hopwood, resplendent in his formal white uniform, sword, and heroic chest of medals.



It was the only occasion in my Navy career when I donned my own white formal uniform.

The Generalissimo inspected our Marine Honor Guard, then watched from the bridge a fly-by of 75 planes from the Ticonderoga, Lexington, and Marine aircraft that had been deployed to Taiwan. And then there was an awesome fire power demonstration by the Midway air group—rockets, napalm, strafing by supersonic Crusaders, and, notably, our strike aircraft performing the awesome acrobatics of nuclear lofts.

In a caption the USS Midway Museum documentary “The Brink” notes, “On board the USS Midway was Richard Setlowe, a junior officer responsible for giving the nuclear bombers their targets should it be necessary. A reality that still haunts him today.”

Apparently, I was not the only one haunted. In “The Last Man on the Moon” my former classmate Cernan writes, “Such thoughts weighed heavily on me one day when I was on shore leave in Japan, visiting both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only two cities ever hit by atomic weapons. The serene parks were quiet, and monuments to the attack were draped by colorful chains of paper cranes, considered a sacred bird by the Japanese, folded by schoolchildren who clustered about me, chirping greetings, not knowing who I was, since I was in civilian clothes. Looking out over the rebuilt cities, over herds of happy kids, I considered the responsibility that I held, and of what my government was asking me to be ready to do.”

I have also thought heavily about that, and I have arrived at the realization that this experience later shaped my life, my career, and inspired me—no, drove is a more accurate word—to write my first novel “The Brink.”

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Holding Back the Years: Midway’s First Crew, a Breed Apart

David Payson, 1963-64/RDSN, OI Division

November 4, 2021, was a sad day for the MVA. For it was on that day I first learned that Blake Smith had passed away. The sad news came from his son, Jim Blake, in an email. Blake, who was 94, had arguably been MVA’s most dedicated member, one of a handful of Midway’s original crew that had taken the Midway to sea in 1945 for the first time. Son Jim, who never missed an MVA reunion with his dad from 2013 on, said this about his father’s passing in his email: “One of the last original Midway plankowners has set sail for eternity. Dad passed this morning. He lived a full and rich life. The Midway, and especially the MVA, were a big part of his legacy.” [Read Blake Smith’s “In Memoriam” on page 11 of this

newsletter.]

Blake Smith - A member of Midway’s 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA

Background. Blake’s passing and his son response to the MVA set me to thinking about Midway’s original crew – her 1945 plankowners – and other such details as how Midway’s commissioning date was determined, and who made up her first crew. That’s a lot to ponder when you consider MVA’s own experience with Midway’s first crewmen who’ve joined our association over the years. So I decided to pursue some of these questions further in this article.

Midway’s commissioning and what we think we know about her first crew.

Since its inception in 2010, the MVA has recognized the importance of its 1945 plankowners and honored them accordingly. We started with the three Midway veterans who joined the MVA at our first “all-ship” reunion in 2010, and we’ve added or subtracted from the number of first crew members ever since then. Not surprisingly, we’ve lost several of these honored men over the years from old age and its concurrent diseases and ailments. A majority the 1945 plankholders we started with in 2010 have passed away, including the three in the photo below.



MVA’s first 1945 commissioning crew plankowners at our first all-ship reunion in San Diego in 2010



L to R – Bob Butler, Gene Slingerland, and George Fowler



As the title of this article indicates, we characterize the members of Midway's original commissioning crew to be a "breed apart." Unfortunately, they are a vanishing breed apart, a category of Midway veterans that is fast "fading away," as old sailors are wont to do. Hence, I devote this article to all Midway veterans who served on Midway's first crew in 1945, with special attention to those who found their way into our organization. Several photos of these men are shown throughout this article, most of them taken from previous MVA newsletters, but a couple were provided by the men themselves or their family members.

While it's a sad reality that several of MVA's first crewmen have passed away, a surprising number (five) are still with us. We've honored all our first crewmen with a special deference, for they set the stage for all of us who followed; they got the Midway underway the first time and set her up for all that was to follow in her 47-year mission of protecting our country.

The questions of the total number of men in Midway's first crew and the "official" date of Midway's first cruise turned out to be more complicated than I thought, which led to my puzzlement.

So if you're puzzled about details concerning your old ship, who're you gonna call? Why, the Midway Museum Library, of course. I did just that, and in less than a day two ship's librarians responded to my questions: Bonnie Brown and Phil Eakin. My sources are impeccable.

Their answer, taken from the ship's log, came back in short order as **156 officers and 2,527 members of the crew**, a number, derived from Midway's first "operational cruise," on October 22, 1945. However, Midway's "official" commissioning date is September 10, 1945, eight days after the surrender of Japan.

As Phil explained it to me: "... The numbers we [the Museum library] provided you from the commissioning day deck log entry are a good place to start and may be all you need if "took Midway to sea" is just a euphemism for commissioning."

Phil's explanation reinforces my opinion that any sailor who was a member of Midway's first crew between September 10, 1945, and January 31, 1945, should be considered a bonafide 1945 Midway plankowner. This puts the focus on the crewmen themselves, not on any one specific commissioning day the Midway first put to sea.



Four members of MVA's 1945 Plankowners group (L to R): Charles Girolamo, Jack Lawler, Blake Smith, Bill Lovejoy

So who were these men of Midway's first crew? Well, they had to have been dedicated, brave and patriotic men, young or old. Many of them had probably already been in the war, seen plenty of action, and been reassigned to the Midway, the newest and most impressive warship in the US Navy, in any navy, for that matter.

Many others in Midway's first crew were probably young men not that long out of high school who challenged themselves to face war for the first time, to do their patriotic duty and serve their country.

What the original crewmen of this new aircraft carrier, the mightiest in the U.S. fleet at the time, had most in common was that they were exceedingly brave men, young or older. Many of them didn't have to be there. Many had volunteered to serve their country.

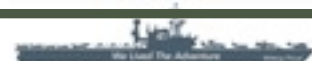
This in the face of the terrible war we were fighting against Japan in the Pacific then.

Eight days before the Midway was commissioned, Japan surrendered to the U.S. and the war was officially over, VJ Day!

Sid Friedlander - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA. Sid is on top.

So the Midway and her first crew didn't get into the war, and for many of them, it was probably a bittersweet experience, disappointment on one hand, but relief on the other.

There's a good reason these brave men are called the "Greatest Generation."





But the question remains. How many members of Midway's original commissioning crew are still with us? We don't know. But the number would have to be a small one.

Robert (Bob) Shedd - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA

If they joined Midway's first crew at, say, 18 or 19 years of age, and were still alive to-

day, they'd be in the 94 or 95 age range now. And the older men in the crew? Well, very few would still be alive by now.

Of course the MVA takes great pride in their 1945 Midway plankowners who have joined the organization over the years. Following are the names of the first crewmen, those "age-defying" men who are still with us: **Sid Friedlander, Charles Girolamo, Bill Lovejoy, Robert Shedd, and Art Timson.** I'm not going to try to guess their specific ages, but the youngest of them would be about 95 and a couple, for a fact, are closer to 100.

We called each of these men and talked to them "up close and personal" to ensure that things were going okay with them. All of them said that, for the most part, they were doing well and managing their ailments brought on by old age as best they could.



Charles Girolamo - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA

None of the first crewmen we talked to planned to attend future MVA reunions.

Not surprising, since they would be in their mid-nineties or older by now. They all spoke fondly of their days aboard Midway and how much their service in the Navy meant to them. All are "Honorary Lifetime Members" of the MVA and have never had to pay dues. And in the days when they could still attend MVA reunions, we led the way in honoring them for their service to the ship and the country. All have been awarded with WWII Victory Medals at our reunions and all have fond memories of

their navy days that they will take with them to their graves.

In addition, to these proud original Midway crewmen, we have two surviving WWII veterans in our ranks: **John Cantor and Bob Pitman.** Neither of these men were on Midway's 1945 commissioning crew, but came onboard in the 1950s, after participating in the "Great War" before the Midway was commissioned.

Over the years we've been in existence, by my best count, thirteen members of Midway's first crew have joined the MVA. That number is now down to five. In some cases, we recruited these first crewmen in person at our reunions or by telephone and email; or they found us by word-of-mouth or at our website and Facebook page. However they became MVA members, we're grateful they have, for they've enriched our association in many ways. At our reunions, for example, their presence has given our members a kind of "guiding light," a central purpose to honor these men. We've honored and acknowledged them in several ways at reunions – from the special medal ceremonies on the flight deck at our reunion banquets to calling them out together for recognition by the other attendees.

So as I said at the beginning of this article, Midway's 1945 plankowners – her first crew – and MVA's own group of these honorable men are, indeed, a breed apart, but a rapidly diminishing breed, unfortunately, who gave a lot to this country.

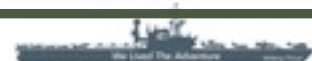
So let us honor them and their legacy however we can.

The following two photos feature our two surviving WWII Victory Medal holders. They were not on Midway's commissioning crew but were in the "Great War."

(On page 12, see more photos of Midway's 1945 commissioning crew who are or were [now deceased] MVA members.)



John Cantor. WWII Victory Medal recipients and a proud member of the MVA. We call him the "Oldest Living Midway Veteran," and it's probably true. At last count, very recently, John was 104 years old!





Robert Pitman (center), proud member of the MVA, is awarded the WWII Victory Medal by **Larry Ernst**, Midway's last commanding officer.

Editor's note: I conclude this article with his thought: the two-year pause in our reunions made necessary by the coronavirus pandemic, has not helped our cause to stay connected with MVA's five remaining 1945 plankowners. Nor has it helped us find and invite more of these honored first crewmen into our ranks. If any of you want to email or phone these five men, let me know, and, with their permission, I'll send you their contact information. I'm sure that they'd enjoy hearing from their Midway shipmates. My contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter, in the Masthead section on page 13.

Going Down?

By Doug Bohs, AQF2/VF-21, 63-64 & 65 cruises

As a still wet-behind-the-ears, almost 21-year-old member of Fighter Squadron 21, I was looking forward to my first at-sea period. In early November of 1963 we flew from Miramar to Alameda in an old R4D. It was the fourth time I had flown but the first time I flew facing backwards. Soon after boarding the largest ship I had ever seen we found our berthing compartments, loaded our Fire Control test equipment into our shop space and found the mess decks; a lot of culture shock in a short time.

Before leaving for Hawaii we sailed out on our Dependents' Day Cruise. The Army Band started playing on the Hangar Deck about the time we passed under the Golden



Pictured above are three members of the VF-21 Aviation Fire Control (AQF) Shop. L to R are TJ Dorey, Jerry Jepsen and Doug Bohs (author of this article). VF-21 was based at Miramar Naval Air Station, California, and made several deployments aboard the USS Midway. These AQ's were responsible for the maintenance of the search and missile control radar located in the nose of the F-4 Phantom aircraft. As some will remember from a previous MVA newsletter, VF-21 was credited with the first confirmed MiG kills (2) of the Vietnam conflict in June of 1965.

Gate Bridge. Shortly after we reached the Continental Shelf (Cabbage Patch) a few of the band members had left their instruments and hats where they had been playing and found their way to the sponson deck. A short time later it looked as if the entire band had disappeared and made their way to a suitable spot to lose their lunch. In all fairness there were a few sailors with the same problem.

We left Alameda on November 8, bound for Pearl Harbor. While underway the "Old Salts" advised the newbies among us on what to expect while on board our new home. This was not done in a sit-down lecture series but was woven into our daily activities. There were several safety issues we were advised of but were quickly learned on our own.

The hangar deck was always an obstacle course of tie-down chains, wings, propellers and horizontal stabilizers. If you made the journey at night it was even more of a challenge considering the dim, red-only lighting known as "brown ship." If you were carrying equipment that prevented you from seeing your feet and what was directly in front of you, another dimension of difficulty was added.



The same was true of the flight deck, day or night. Flight Ops also added the threats of jet blasts, air intakes, whirling propellers and prop wash. Landing aircraft rarely snapped the arresting gear but if they did the lashing cable could remove legs. If you were lucky enough to be working aft of the island you were also able to enjoy the choking sensation of stack gas. I must admit, apart from the smell of baking bread, the smell of high-octane avgas exhausted from VA-25's Spads was one smell the Midway offered I actually liked.

If you safely navigated your way across the hangar deck your next obstacle would either be a ladder or a hatch. Ladders were usually only a safety issue if again, you were carrying equipment. Hatches had their own set of issues due to the coamings that surrounded them. Ah yes, the hatch coamings, those steel ridges that would bark your shins if you failed to lift your legs or catch you somewhere from your forehead to the top of your skull if you failed to duck your head as you passed thru them.

We arrived at Pearl Harbor on the 13th of November and moored at Ford Island. Later that day we left Ford Island to begin Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) exercises. On November 16th we docked at Pearl Harbor. We left Pearl on the 18th, to continue Operational Readiness Inspections.

General Quarters was a common drill during an ORI. One particular day we had at least three GQ drills. I had just finished my 1800 to 0600 shift and had settled into my bunk for the second time when we had another GQ call. I was still half-asleep and racing forward to our AQ shop. This was when I was first introduced to the damage a hatch coaming could do to your head. I was doing pretty well picking up my feet and lowering my head until I forgot the second part. The next thing I remember was a ship's doctor was telling a corpsman "you can't numb his scalp." I wished he would have spoken sooner. So besides the numerous jabs he had made in a futile effort to spare me further pain he put 12 stitches across the top of my head. I can still feel the scar.

We docked again on the 21st of November. As everyone on that cruise remembers, President Kennedy was assassinated on the 22nd. Anyone who was ashore when the news was received was under orders to return to the ship. We pulled anchor that day and stood out to sea. It was reported after we left port that submarine nets were deployed at the base, I do not remember how long we stayed out to sea. After it was discovered we were not at war we returned to port.

We left Pearl Harbor bound for Subic Bay on the 25th of November. Before leaving Midway fired a 21 gun salute in honor of the late President. A Special Salute was also conducted by members of the crew.

I cannot speak to the exact route we took to Subic from Pearl on the 63-64 cruise. On the 1965 cruise I do remember Captain O'Brien making an announcement over the IMC saying we would be traveling through the San Bernardino Strait on our way to Subic Bay. If memory serves he mentioned we were following the same route the Japanese Task Force followed before the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which is thought to be the largest naval engagement ever fought. Just as a point of information, if not for a name change the Midway would have been sunk during that engagement. The CVE St. Lo was originally named USS Midway, but was later changed to St. Lo. The St. Lo was the first major warship to be sunk by a kamikaze.

We made port at Subic on Pearl Harbor Day and left for Hong Kong on the 13th. My memories of Subic Bay centered around kids diving for coins in the "river" under the bridge to Olongapo, Jeepneys, baluts, and no scarcity of places to spend your money. On a return trip to Subic I did take a Chaplain's Tour to Manila which was excellent. (No, I never ate a balut.)

We anchored outside Hong Kong on December 21st. I remember being warned about going into the Wan Chai District. We were told if you took a rickshaw ride in that area you ran the risk of being taken down an alley, dumped out of the rickshaw and robbed. I also vividly remember seeing what appeared to be a family of four sleeping on the sidewalk on newspapers. More culture shock. Bill Murphy and I took the tram to the top of Victoria Peak. I believe we had lunch at the Hotel Victoria. Two British businessmen sitting at a nearby table asked us if we had heard of the Beatles. We answered we had not. They told us we would. One of them asked Bill why he had the cuffs of his jumper sleeves turned back stating "you've been out of boot camp longer than that haven't you?" Bill still smarts from that remark. I believe I had duty on Christmas Day. We left Hong Kong on December 27th.

By this time you're probably wondering why this article is entitled "Going Down?" Apart from my encounter with the hatch, the title also refers to the ship's elevators, another potential safety hazard.



The Midway had three main elevators which moved planes, support equipment and stores between the flight deck and the hangar deck. Number 1 elevator was all the way forward, number 2 was located on the forward end of the angle deck and number 3 was just aft of the island.

When an elevator went down from the flight deck there were stanchions about 3 feet high with a steel cable running through them that rose out of the flight deck. There were also red warning lights that surrounded the opening where the elevator used to be. Working on an elevator during underway replenishment (UNREP) was a very risky task. The sea between the Midway and the supply ship could get very turbulent, to the point where the seas would wash over the elevator. Personnel have been swept overboard during UNREP operations. I also know it wasn't smart to try to jump the steel cable that came up around an elevator when it was on the way down. On the '65 cruise I saw a reporter attempt that very thing on number 3 elevator. I went to the edge of the flight deck, looked down and saw the result. He was not standing.

On the morning of Saturday, January 4th, 1964, Midway lost number 3 elevator. I was asleep in my bunk when it happened. Around 0200 the following morning I was asked to spot one of our F4's for a maintenance check. Not knowing where it was I left the bright lights of our shop, made my way down the ladders to the hangar deck and started my search, still somewhat night blind. After sidestepping tie downs and avoiding everything else that could hurt you, my search of the hangar deck failed to find our aircraft. I then climbed another set of ladders and found my way to the flight deck. It was a very dark morning, either moonless or very cloudy. Anyone who has worked on the flight deck at night during "brown ship" (no white lights) knows what a dark work environment really is. I started my search all the way forward and slowly worked my way aft, again avoiding all the traps that were set for me. As I recall there was virtually no activity on the flight deck; no fueling of aircraft, no tractors "respotting" planes, or other activity. I felt as though I was the only person up there although I probably wasn't.

The only light you were permitted to use at night on the flight deck was a flashlight with a red lens. Those flashlights were not very bright to begin with. Couple that with a red lens and you had to be right on top of something to see it. My search had still not yielded the aircraft I was looking for and I was just aft of the Island. My thought was "it might be on number 3 elevator."

When the elevator was lost less than 24 hours earlier the mechanism that held the stanchions, cables and lights in the "up" position was evidently disabled. There were no stanchions, cables or red lights visible. I started walking toward the (missing) elevator, not getting a reflection of anything; not unusual in that environment. After a few more steps I stopped dead in my tracks. No one said anything to me, there was no indication I was in danger; I just stopped. I held my flashlight out in front of me and slowly brought it down until I saw the toes of my "flight-decker" boots. There was nothing in front of them; no flight deck, no elevator, nothing but pitch black. I was standing on the very edge of the opening where the elevator used to be.

After all of these years I do not remember what was surrounding the area where the elevator would have been. Evidently I walked between whatever pieces equipment had been placed around the opening of the flight deck, thinking everything was normal. One more step and I would have been a mysterious disappearance. Elevators could present their share of danger on an aircraft carrier, *especially when they weren't there.*

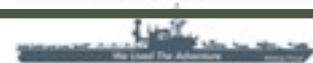
The older I get the more I think about that experience. What stopped me? I have no idea except to say it was divine intervention. An aircraft carrier is a very dangerous place to work.

Living in Olongapo

By Jim Daugherty, YN3, X-Division, 1971-73

Near the end of 1971, I reported aboard the USS Midway. I was 19-years-old when we left for WestPac and Vietnam. I enjoyed my tour on the Midway, especially all our port visits to the Philippines. I met an Aviation Fuels 2nd class who was on the Midway at the same time that had just transferred to shore duty at NAS Cubi Point. His girlfriend and mine were good friends. He told me all the great benefits of being stationed at Subic Bay. So, after pondering the possibilities, I decided to reenlist after I had three years in the Navy. I couldn't ship over until September 1973 and ended up riding the Midway all the way to Yokosuka. Then I transferred the next day to Naval Investigative Service Philippines, Subic Bay, as a YN2.

I arrived at Clark AFB in the middle of a typhoon. A Navy van was there to meet us and gave me and five other sailors a ride to Subic Bay. I gave the driver a handsome tip to let me out in Olongapo, because had I gone on base I probably wouldn't have been allowed to go on liberty with the typhoon still raging. So I found my



girlfriend's place and stayed off-base until the typhoon moved on. Once I checked in, I requested to live off-base. First, I had to have a place to live and then the Navy had to inspect it. My girlfriend's landlord said the apartment she had probably wouldn't be approved by the Navy, so they had us switch apartments and after the Navy inspection, a few things had to be fixed before the apartment was approved. Then I was eligible to receive an off-base ration card, which allowed me to purchase items in the commissary/exchange and take them off-base.

Next, I needed transportation, so I bought the first of three motorcycles I had during my tour. It always made for an interesting trip to the commissary, riding on my cycle. Everything I bought had to fit in three grocery bags, I had a denim saddle bag for two bags and the third went in a backpack.

Living in Olongapo was very different, to say the least. Most of our windows had no glass, just a screen and bars, which made for interesting times during a typhoon. Nothing could be left outside, because it would be stolen during the night, so my motorcycle "slept" in the living room! Power outages were the worst and usually occurred during typhoons, but not always. One time some people stole three miles of the power line to melt into copper to sell. It took 2 to 3 days before we had power back. Another time the power company threatened to shut the power off to the city of Olongapo, as City Hall wasn't paying the electric bill. My landlord gave me a bill every month and I paid him, then he paid City Hall. But we found out that City Hall was just keeping the money. The bar owners got together and paid the bill, because if there was no power the Navy would curtail liberty. No power, no liberty, no sailors, no money. You get the picture. About six months later the same thing happened and the power was shut off for a couple of days.

The apartment had no air-conditioning and it seemed like it was always hot! Also, we had no hot water, cold showers all the time. If it got really cold, say high 60s, my girlfriend would boil some water and put it in a five-gallon bucket and took a shower Filipino style. I was stationed there for 18 months and in all that time, I probably had less than 25 hot showers, 16 of those were during a 16-day stay at the Navy Hospital with hepatitis.

Despite all this, being stationed in the Philippines was great. The base had plenty to offer and gave me the chance to see some of the Islands. My girlfriend and I traveled all over on my motorcycle, to places such as Manila, Baguio and Pagsanjan Falls. Plus, we made many one-day trips to other points of interest.

In April of 1973 I transferred to VAW-110 (E-2 training squadron). I ended up proposing to my girlfriend and she received a fiancé visa. We were married in San Diego in January of 1976 and later had a daughter and son. After a great 42 years together, she passed away. Our time in the Philippines was a great adventure for both of us.

San Diego's floating U.S.S. Midway Museum earned an award in late Aug. 2021 from the Naval History and Heritage Command, an organization responsible for preserving, analyzing and disseminating U.S. naval history and heritage.

The historical naval aircraft carrier museum, located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier, earned the large category Maintenance Excellence Award in the annual Museum Excellence Awards presented by the NHHC, which is based at the Washington Navy Yard.

The awards recognize public, nonprofit organizations that display excellence in presenting the history and heritage of the U.S. Navy with their establishments and messaging.

The Maintenance Excellence Award is presented to the two organizations that demonstrate the greatest improvement in conditions over the past year of an artifact.

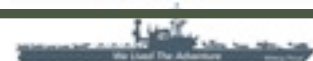
"These are non-federal museums, and each had a unique approach in telling the Navy's story," said Ret. Rear Adm. Samuel Cox, NHHC director. "Their ability to reach out to the public deserves to be recognized, and I truly feel that these winners are living up to naval excellence. They are honoring those that have served and are continuing to inspire and educate our next generation."

The applicants were judged on their exhibits, published material or lectures and abilities in artifact preservation. Those criteria set the benchmark for all applicants.

Each winner will be presented with a plaque and pennant at the Historic Naval Ships Association's annual meeting on Sept. 25 in Mobile, Alabama.

"Bravo Zulu, to all the professionals and volunteers alike," Cox said. "Your continued efforts are crucial in informing the public about our nation's Navy, its proud heritage, and the importance of sea-power in the national security environment."

—City News Service San Diego Union Tribune



It's a Wrap!

This will be my last newsletter for the MVA, as I am stepping down from my board positions of Secretary and Treasurer (sec.-treas.), but will stay on as an MVA lifetime member, assuming the MVA has a lifetime, that is.



I've been preparing the MVA's newsletters and doing my other secretarial and financial duties as MVA's sec.-treas. for a dozen years, and I've thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Producing and writing a professional looking and reading product, the best newsletter in the retired fleet, I like to say, has always been my primary goal, and I hope I've come close.

But it's not just preparing this newsletter that has kept me going all these years, it's been many other things, too. Much of the work on the treasurer's side of the job has been shouldered by my wife Mina Jo who has been my world-class wife for nearly 50 years, as well as a world-class number cruncher; she's been relentless in her pursuit of numbers and balancing them accurately.

Whoever follows me as MVA's Secretary/Treasurer (sec.-treas.) won't have to do both jobs simultaneously as I've done for so long. In the future the job will be divided into two separate board positions, two separate officers. Makes sense. I wish we'd thought of it sooner.

Over the years, performing my duties and responsibilities as MVA's sec.-treas. has given me the opportunity to meet many of you, both virtually and in person at reunions, and I've thoroughly enjoyed the connections I've made with so many MVA members.

But it's time to say, "It's a Wrap," which is an old newspaper term meaning the newspaper is done and ready to go to press.

My time as an MVA board member of this great organization is irreplaceable, and I will never forget it for all the challenges it has offered me; it has kept me going in the right direction, working with a lot of great people.

There's only one way to sum this thing up: **It's a Wrap!**

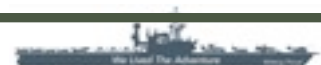
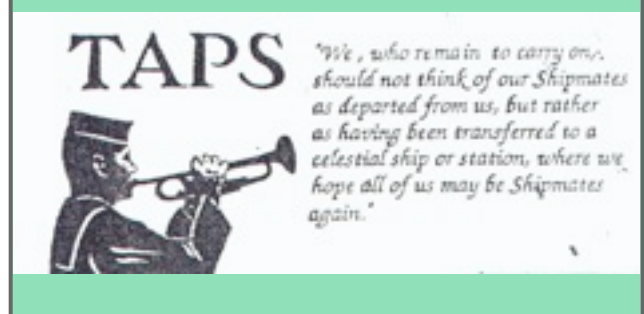
Dave Payson, Sec.-Treas., USS Midway Veterans Association

In Memoriam

Shipmate Blake Smith, 94, of Fullerton, California, passed away on November 4, 2021. A proud plankowner of Midway's 1945 commissioning crew, he was arguably the most active and most generous of all our members, a true inspiration to us all. Starting in 2013, he never missed an MVA reunion with his son Jim. As Jim so elegantly put it when he notified us of his dad's passing: "One of the last Midway plankowners has set sail for eternity. Dad passed this morning. He lived a full and rich life. The Midway and especially the MVA were a big part of his legacy. He and I loved all the experiences and fellowship the Association provided. I want to thank all of his Midway shipmates who added immensely to my dad's long and fruitful life." Blake was also recognized several times by the Midway Museum for his involvement and generosity with our association and the Museum. He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Irene, 3 children, 4 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. May he rest in peace.

Shipmate Herbert Robb, 89, of New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, passed away on November 21, 2021. A Lt.jg in OI Division, Herb served on Midway between 1953-55, and following, in the Korean Conflict, eventually retiring from the Naval reserves as a commanding officer. He was the mayor of New Bloomfield for 23 years, and is survived by his wife Margaret, numerous children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. May he rest in peace.

Shipmate Kenneth Broers, 88, of Auburn, New England, passed away on August 15, 2021. He served on Midway between 1953-55 and was an MM3 in M-Division. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Dorothy, 3 children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May he rest in peace.



<https://www.ussmidway.net/pdfs/MV-Benefits-Sheet-and-Form-LIFETIME-02232021-Library.pdf>

The above link takes you to the latest membership benefits the USS Midway Museum offers Midway veterans, including free lifetime membership to the museum and additional benefits. Karen Garst, who is a great supporter and friend of the MVA and all Midway veterans, sent us this link. Thank you, Karen, on behalf of all Midway veterans!

MVA Makes \$1,000 Donation to Midway Museum

In December of 2021, the USS Midway Veterans Association once again pooled their resources and made a generous donation of \$1,000 to the USS Midway Museum's Education Scholarship Fund and the Midway Preservation Endowment Restoration Fund.

At our request, the Museum will divide the donation amount equally between the two funds. This recent donation is in addition to the \$500 donation we made to the Museum earlier in 2021. We strongly support the Museum's philanthropic programs on the education of young people and the preservation of the ship.

Even in these unprecedented times of COVID and a pause in reunions, our members generosity makes these donations in support of the ship possible, and we thank our members. They always come through in support of the "Midway Magic" that is in the air, it seems.

When we get the official acknowledgement letter back from the Museum for this donation we'll be sure to share it with all our members.

This year's donation to the Museum again puts the MVA on the plaque on Museum's Donor Wall in Hangar Bay 3. We are proud to keep our organization's name on that plaque year after year.

MVA's 1945 Midway plankowners (cont'd from page 6)



William Garrett - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA

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!*

Robert Figular (81-83) - Lambertville, New Jersey



John Stahlnecker - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA

Ronald D. 'Arcangelo (far right) - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA



Art Weiss (center) - A member of Midway's 1945 Commissioning Crew and a proud member of the MVA



Hometown Hero

Timothy “Curly” Miller, better known these days as Tim Miller, MVA’s Membership Committee Chairman and “our man in San Diego,” received local attention years ago (1984) in his hometown newspaper. Tim, who grew up in Couer d’Alene, Idaho, recently came across the article tucked away somewhere in his home in Chula Vista, California, not far from the USS Midway Museum, which back in the day was his home during his two tours of duty on the ship. (Tim served on Midway from 1978-80 and again in 1982-84 as an aviation boatswain’s mate, spending most of his time on the flight deck manning the arresting gear and dodging aircraft, working in the Midway’s “fast lane,” as the article put it.)

And it was with fond memories that Tim decided to see if he could get the article published in this newsletter.

Well, of course he could! In the article on the next page read all about Tim’s Midway adventures. The article appeared in the *Couer d’Alene Press* on March 12, 1984.



Tim “Curly” Miller, a.k.a. “Yokohama Kid,” pictured here at MVA’s 2017 reunion in San Diego. Looks like he was having some fun!

USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Website

<https://www.ussmidway.net/index.php>

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.

President

**Oscar Granger - (425) 831-6891
North Bend, Washington
orgranger@gmail.com**

Vice President-Reunions

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

Vice President-Administration

**Marty FitzGerald - (425) 255-2998
MapleValley, Washington
marty.fitzgerald41@gmail.com**

Secretary-Treasurer/ Newsletter Editor

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

Membership Committee Chair

**Tim Miller - (619) 476-9410
Chula Vista, California
yokohamakid01@gmail.com**

Membership Committee V Chair

**Phil Zuniga - (480) 272-7404
Gilbert, Arizona
Angelson17@aol.com**

Facebook Admin.

**Ron Pope - (469) 353-8676
Frisco, Texas
ronpope2@yahoo.com**

Webmaster

**Steve Gergens - (682) 558-5822
Bedford, Texas
steve.cdsweb@gmail.com**

Station Ship News is published quarterly by the USS Midway Veterans Association (MVA). We look forward to your feedback. Send to: minandave@charter.net



2 The Coeur d'Alene Press Mon., March 12, 1984

Manning the flight deck

Cd'A man works in aircraft carrier's fast lane

Editor's note: The following article was prepared by Jol Glenn Jochum of the U.S. Navy

It has been called the most dangerous place on earth to work; a four-acre steel runway crowded with screaming aircraft and the 200 men who service and fly them.

One of those men is Timothy "Curly" Miller, a 25-year-old Coeur d'Alene native. Miller works on the flight deck of the Seventh Fleet aircraft carrier USS Midway as an aviation boatswain's mate.

Miller's main responsibility is to ensure the arresting engines are set to the proper weights for all aircraft "trapped" on the flight deck.

From his station on the Midway's starboard catwalk, which borders the flight deck, Miller relays information on incoming planes to the ship's three engine rooms and primary control tower. Night flight operations pose particular problems for Miller.

"It's a lot harder at night," he said. "During the day, the planes do a 180 degree turn, but at night they come straight in. You have to know the difference between different aircraft's landing lights.

"The F-4's lights form a triangle, while you can tell an A-6 by its amber lights beneath the fuel tanks."

Miller must be on constant guard; he must dodge jet intakes and exhausts, and always be alert to the possibility of crashes, fires and arresting cables which can snap with a deadly force.

"Sometimes I feel safe, sometimes not," he said. "I'm so close to the (aft portion of the flight deck) where there are only two or



Photos by JOL Glenn Jochum of the U.S. Navy

Miller (center) watches an E-2 Hawkeye aircraft land

three escape routes."

A series of safeguards against bad landings help reduce the danger. Pilots whose planes are not on course will be waved off to try again.

Arresting cables must be changed every 100 landing hits, and Miller, the son of Earl and Phyliss Miller of Post Falls, is responsible for keeping accurate records.

The Midway is currently on an extended deployment in the North Arabian Sea, south of Pakistan and Iran. The 65,000-ton aircraft carrier is permanently deployed to the Seventh Fleet and operates out of Yokosuka, Japan.

Approximately 80 aircraft including fighter, electronic warfare, early warning and attack



Petty Officer Timothy Miller

aircraft operate from the 1,001-foot long aircraft carrier.

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.

<https://www.ussmidway.net/index.php>

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 Lived The Adventure

