



# 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**

**Midway veterans and family members interested in joining the MVA, see the application at the end of this newsletter**



**USS Midway (CVA-41) circa 1962. Carrier Air Wing 2 on board. Looks like the ship is entering Pearl Harbor.**

## State of The Ship

**Ray Tillery, MVA Treasurer, 10 February 2024**

On this date, the staff of the USS Midway Museum provided a presentation on the State of the Ship. A breakfast was served in the Hangar Bay for members of the USS Midway Museum. I, along with my wife Kandy, Oscar Granger, and Tim Miller of the Midway Veterans Association attended.

The purpose of the gathering was to bring the Museum membership up to date on the latest activities and events of the Museum. The CEO of

the Museum, Admiral Terry Kraft, provided a quick rundown, via Zoom, of the ongoing activities. He noted that more than one million visitors had been received this past year. He observed that most of the visitors to the ship were out-of-town tourists, while the attendees of events hosted by the Museum were of the local vicinity. He noted that the work on the planned Freedom Park will begin in April with the demolition of the large old Navy structure that is located on the Navy pier upon which the ship is tied. Freedom Park will cover the entire area that is currently used for visitor parking. Future visitor parking will be available in a parking structure to be located across the street from the



pier. The plans are complete, and the official groundbreaking is to be conducted on 25 April 2024. This new park should significantly enhance the experience of the visit to the USS Midway Museum!

Presentations were given by several Museum staff members who described various events and ongoing additions and improvements to the Museum. This year, the Museum will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. A plan exists to place a time capsule within the Museum that is to be opened twenty years hence. Suggestions are solicited with regard to what should be placed in the capsule.



Laura White, Midway Foundation President, addresses the audience at the event

A ceremony was conducted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March this past year to denote the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official ending of the Vietnam War. We were shown several photographs and a video presentation of this event. This past Veterans Day, the Museum sponsored the Veterans Day Parade in the city of San Diego, and is currently planning to sponsor the parade again this year's Veteran's Day, November 11, 2024.

We were shown the ongoing plans to build a new Shipboard Engineering Display. The exhibit will have interactive features and new graphics to enable greater understanding and appreciation for the contributions provided to ship's operation by the Engineering Department. Included in this is a new Damage Control Locker display. Work is also

being conducted to prepare an Intelligence Unit display.

We were provided a detailed description of the activities on the efforts of shipboard preservation by the Museum's Engineering Staff. ADM Kraft noted that significant areas of rust had been discovered at various locations on the ship that required attention. At several locations, the rust was so severe that rainfall leaks had become a problem. At the time of this meeting, the Island has been closed to the public in order that significant overhaul of this aspect of the ship could be conducted. Observance of the Island is confined to a shroud of temporary covering as this major work takes place. Clearly, it can be seen that ship's preservation is a constant and necessary priority now and into the future.

Our planned Three Sisters Reunion that we will hold this September was noted!

The Museum provided a detailed accounting of the recent efforts that have been taking place during the past year. The staff and membership are all looking forward to an active and productive coming year as the exciting new additions and attractions to the Museum and the Freedom Park proceed. We can expect a continued growth and improvement of a place we once called home as we share our pride in her heritage!

## VP-Reunions Report

Steve DeCata

I hope everyone is having a fine Navy Day!

The link for the reunion is up and running for our 3 Sisters Reunion in San Diego September 23-27, 2024! Please send this link out to any of your shipmates who may have served on USS Midway, USS FDR, or USS Coral Sea. The more we get this out the better.

So, look back into your old cruise books, track down old shipmates, and let's get the word out!

Hope to see you all there in September!

<https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/MidwaySisters2024>

## VP-Treasurer's Report

Ray Tillery

After the appeal for additional donations to the Midway Veteran's Association, we received over \$2400 from our membership! Thank you all for your generosity! The Association donated \$500 to the USS Midway Museum as part of our annual donation. We did not designate any particular program, since the Board couldn't decide which program to receive the donation. So, we left it up to the Museum to choose how our funds were to be used!

We have added several new life members to our roster; and some of those new members are family life members! I'm hoping we get more and more family members. They are key to the ongoing vitality of the MVA! Unfortunately, our annual membership dues have become quite anemic. So, if you are one of those, please send in your 2024 annual dues!

## My Adventures of Serving on the Midway Twice

Tim Miller, MVA Secretary

One day not long after high school in my hometown of Coeur d' Alene, ID, wondering what I was going to do with the rest of my life, I decided to pay a visit to our local Navy recruiter. Oh, he was good, all right, and the next thing I knew I had joined the Navy and was bound for San Diego and basic training, a.k.a. boot camp. I passed basic training with little difficulty and received orders to Lakehurst, NJ, to learn the ins and outs of my rating, which was Aviation Boatswain Mate.

After my training at Lakehurst, I received orders to the USS Midway, homeported at Yokosuka, Japan. I arrived in Yokosuka two days before Christmas and reported aboard. I was "blown" away by the sheer immensity of the ship. Learning the ropes of shipboard life on an aircraft carrier was difficult for me at first, but as time rolled on into years, the magic that is known as "Midway Magic" grew on me. For I truly enjoyed being stationed in Japan, although I must admit, it seemed like once we reached 29 days in port, it was time to sail away again. In other words, we spent a lot of time at sea.

In due time I would fall in love with my future Japanese wife. And when it was time to leave Midway the first time, my heart was broken, because during the short time I was there I had become a mature man. So, it was time to go back to San Diego. But somehow and in some way, I vowed I would return to Midway, and that finally did happen in 1982 when I was up for orders again. I found out that Midway was open for more crewmembers, so I raised my hand and said send me. Now, all these years later, as I live my life with my family in Chula Vista, CA, and reflect on all that has happened, I know and feel that Midway was the right choice for me.

Hope to see you in San Diego at the Three Sisters reunion in September, Shipmates!

## USS Midway – Operation Rolling Thunder

Doug Bohs AQF2 1963-64 and 1965 Cruise

The USS Midway left Alameda, California, on March 9, 1965, for her sixth WestPac Cruise and her first combat deployment. The exercise was called Operation Rolling Thunder and was intended to dissuade the North from taking over South Vietnam.

I was attached to Fighter Squadron VF-21 home based at Miramar Naval Air Station, California. As an Aviation Fire Control Technician, I worked on the radar and missile control systems of our F-4B Phantoms. On the "In Memoriam" page" of the 1965 cruise book there is a list of 17 pilots and air crewmen listed as Prisoners of War, Killed in Action or Missing in Action during the nine-month cruise.

Over the years I've looked at this page many times. I was particularly aware of the names of the pilot CAPT W.F. "Bill" Franke and his RIO LCDR Robert H. "Rob" Doremus, as they were from VF-21. CAPT Franke was our commanding officer. Their status was listed as Missing in Action. It was two years before the Department of Defense changed their status to Captured, although I was unaware of the change at the time. It was 1973 before I learned they were captured and released on February 12<sup>th</sup> of that year. If you have seen the "In Memoriam" page of the '65 cruise book it only lists





the name rank and status (MIA, etc.). Below is the list with all the information available at the time of this writing.

April 20 - LT Philip N. Butler, an A-4C Skyhawk pilot of VA-22 was on a night bombing mission over North Vietnam. He was forced to eject after one of the bombs he was carrying detonated immediately after being released. He managed to evade for four days before being captured. Listed as a Prisoner of War he was released on February 12, 1973.

May 5 - CDR James D. LaHaye, C.O. of VF-111 participated in an attack on Vinh airfield in North Vietnam when his F-8D Crusader was struck by 37 mm AAA. Streaming fuel he turned eastward heading for the Gulf of Tonkin. Other 'Sundowners' watched the CO descending wings level until he hit the water. It was speculated that his ejection his seat had suffered a malfunction. Listed as Killed in Action his remains were never recovered. CDR Doyle Lynn became the C.O. of VF-111.

May 27 - CDR Doyle W. Lynn was piloting his F-8D over Nghe An Province, North Vietnam near Vinh when his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed. Listed as Killed in Action his remains were never recovered.

June 2 - LT John B. McKamey VA-23 was flying a "routine" recon mission in his A-4E Skyhawk over North Vietnam. His plane was downed by AAA. With his plane engulfed in flames he ejected. Listed as Missing in Action he was captured immediately, taken prisoner and released on Feb. 12, 1973.

June 2 - LTJG David M. Christian of VA-23 was flying a shoreline reconnaissance mission over Than Hoa Province in North Vietnam when his aircraft crashed for unknown reasons. LTJG Christian did not survive and his body was not recovered at the time of loss. In 1986 his remains were repatriated and identified.

June 2 - A VAW-13 EA1F Electronic Countermeasure (ECM) "Spad" piloted by LTJG M.D, McMican was launched from the Midway to assist in the Search and Rescue attempt of a downed A-4 from the Midway. The EA1F had a crew of four which included LTJG Gerald M. Romano navigation officer, ATR3 William H. Ampsacher ECM operator and ATN3 Thomas L.

Plants. The aircraft for which they are believed to have been providing rescue assistance was the A-4E of LTJG Christian mentioned above. While circling above the crash site of the A-4 their aircraft was hit by enemy fire and was seen to crash land and burn on the nearby coast. All four airmen were listed as Killed in Action. By 1991 the remains of all the crewmen involved were returned and identified as the crew of the VAW-13 Skyraider.

June 10 - LTJG Carl L. Doughtie VA-25 was flying his A-1H Skyraider on a strike mission on the Co Dinh power plant in the Thanh Hoa province of North Vietnam. While in the target area the aircraft went into a dive and crashed. LTJG Doughtie was killed in the incident. His body could not be recovered at the time. In 1997 a joint investigative team recovered remains from the crash site and a U.S. analysis identified LTJG Doughtie from these remains.

August 7 - LCDR Harold E. Gray Jr. was piloting his VA-25 A-1H Skyraider on a bombing mission over Dong Hoi Citadel in North Vietnam when his A/C crashed and exploded. Witnesses state that he made no attempt to bail out, and no parachute was sighted. He was listed as Killed in Action. His remains were never recovered.

August 12 - LTJG Donald H. Brown VA-23 was piloting his A-4E Skyhawk on a night road reconnaissance mission over Phat Diem, Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. During the mission his aircraft was shot down by a "SAM" missile and LTJG Brown was killed in the crash. His remains were not recovered at the time of this loss. In 1985 his remains were repatriated and identified.

August 13 - LT Gene R. Gollahan of VF-111 was piloting his F-8D Crusader over the site that brought down LTJG Brown (above). His aircraft was hit by AAA, crashed and exploded. He was listed as Killed in Action. His remains were recovered in 2000 and identified in 2002.

August 24 - LTJG Richard M. "Skip" Brunhaver of VA-22 was flying a road reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. Due to a hydraulic failure on a pull-out his plane struck and bounced off the top of a ridge. His aircraft was seen to be on fire and he was advised to eject. A chute was sighted but rescue attempts failed. He was listed as Missing in

Action. He was captured and was released on February 12, 1973.



LTJG Richard M. "Skip" Brunhaver of VA-22

August 24-An F-4B Phantom from VF-21 was hit by a "SAM" missile over North Vietnam. The pilot CAPT W.F. "Bill" Franke and his RIO LCDR Robert H. "Rob" Doremus ejected from their burning A/C and were captured immediately after landing in a rice paddy. As no parachutes were sighted, they were initially classified as Missing in Action. Two years later their status was changed to Prisoners of War. They were released on February 12, 1973.

October 28 - LTJG Thomas E. Murray VA-22 was killed during his landing approach to the Midway. At an altitude of about 200 feet his aircraft suddenly rolled and he was forced to eject. Rescue Air Crewman J. H. Hale of HC-1 was the first to get to LTJG Murray who died during his ejection into the water and was listed as Killed in Action.

These are more than just names of individuals listed in a cruise book. Lives were cut short, prisoners of war endured unspeakable living conditions as well as torture, and countless family members' lives were changed forever. Sadly, 1965 was not the beginning. It was another chapter in the suffering that followed.



Hanoi Hilton 1970 far left is Richard M. "Skip" Brunhaver

**Editor's Note:** I was onboard 1972-1973. Midway was inport Subic Bay 2/10/73-2/15/73. I remember that quite a few pilots went to Clark Air Force Base to meet the returning POWs on February 12, 1973. It was a very happy and sad day. It was great that multiple Midway POWs flew into Clark that day and were met by their fellow Midway shipmates.

## Burial at Sea

The ship turns downwind.  
The wind dies.  
Flags hang lifeless.  
Silence shrouds the deck.

Weary of war's recurrent theme, wary of cracks in fragile miens, the crew gathers, in ordered ranks.

A Service begins.

Words spoken over the 1MC carry over a sunlit sea.

Rifle shots crack.  
A bugle plays Taps.

After silent moments pass...a barely audible splash.

The ship resumes course and speed.  
Engines thrum.  
The deck shudders.  
The wind rises.  
Flags flutter and snap.  
The day's work begins.

As a shipmate plunges, tumbles, circles down through darkening depths until a silent swirl of sand marks his mortal repose.

**Editor's Note:** Published with permission from Doug Purdy, author of "Where the High Winds Sing."

## Boot 3: Mission to Hainan

David Payson, 1963-64/RDSN, OI Division

In the mid-1990's, Ron McPhail founded the USS Midway OI Division Reunion Group. He was our LPO (leading petty officer) when I was on Midway in the early 1960's. Many years later, with some volunteer help, he located and recruited potential reunion members from across the country, many by phone. (Pardon the fractured simile here, but by the time he'd tracked us all down, we were like dinosaurs, long extinct from the navy.) Which made his mission to find and contact us, so many years later, all the more remarkable.

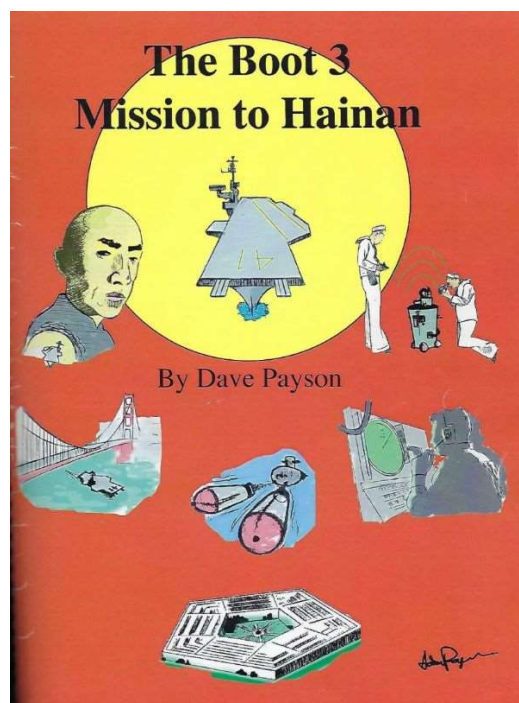
Take me for example. When I got my call from Ron at my home in Washington State, I'd been out of the navy for over 30 years. Once he found us, though, I don't think he had to work too hard to get former OI Division sailors to join his new reunion group. Most of us were probably excited about joining the reunion group. I know I was. It felt almost like I'd received orders to a new duty station. Yippee, finally, at long last, a new navy assignment!

Our fledgling reunion group, was made up of RDs, ETs, and other electronic types who worked well as a team in Midway's OI Division back in the day. And with an abundance of patience, Ron molded us into a reunion team that worked well together again. Within a year we were holding reunions around the country – Branson, St. Louis, New Orleans. Ironically, Ron became our boss for the second time in our lives – the first time in Midway's OI Division as our LPO, and then again, many years later, when we were civilians and members of his reunion group. But he was a "benevolent dictator," so we didn't mind.

At some point during the evolution of our reunion group, we dropped "OI Division" from our name. By then, I was working with Ron, helping him prepare the newsletter and doing other ad hoc writing assignments. After we'd been in existence for a few years, I took over as newsletter editor and began working on a book-length sea story titled, *Boot 3: Mission to Hainan* – an adventure-fantasy "thriller" about a band of Midway radarmen and their daring-do adventures in taking on seemingly impossible missions for the navy. Boot 3 (short for

the full title) was primarily a product of my overactive imagination, a condition I've lived with all my life.

To his credit and my admiration, Ron took an interest in Boot 3 and pitched in and helped me with the story, editing, proofreading and suggesting some of the storyline. As I finished a chapter I would email it to him, and he'd post it on what passed for our website in those days. Members who had computers then (probably just over half of us) could follow the story online, in serial fashion.



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290 pages long. What I characterized as “The Mother of All Sea Stories.”

The following paragraph from the book’s back cover does a pretty good job of capturing the essence of the Fighting Scope Dopes’ main mission, as I wrote about it:

“. . . the seemingly impossible mission is to recover the EP-3 spy plane from China and steal back the secret plans for the neutron bomb. To accomplish this, they [“The Fighting Scope Dopes”] set off on one of the most daring missions in the annals of sea adventures. Over their long history, the Chinese have faced many bold adversaries, but they had never faced the likes of the Fighting Scope Dopes. With the release of *Boot 3: Mission to Hainan*, fans can finally catch up on the latest adventures of their heroes, and they won’t be disappointed with this page-turner. The U.S. Navy will never be the same!”

Boot 3’s plot revolves around the adventures of the Fighting Scope Dopes, who, with the help of a Navy Seal Team and lots of SCUBA gear, sneak onto Hainan Island in the dark of night on a mission to steal back an EP-3 spy plane that Chinese agents had hijacked from the U.S. The mission, as depicted in the book, is extremely important because the spy plane contains the US’s secret plan to build a neutron bomb. The story’s two main characters – Ron McPhail and Oscar Granger [both former presidents of our reunion association in “real life”] – employ a secret weapon developed in the basement of the Pentagon, called a P&T machine, to hold off and neutralize the enemy. I can’t describe the weapon here in any kind of detail for fear of giving away its secret powers. Suffice it to say, it has a stunning (and mesmerizing) effect on the Chinese villains. Our orders on a mission like this was to take no prisoners.

There was talk (all of it by me) that the book might be made into a blockbuster movie, but that never panned out. Nor did it become a New York Times bestseller, as I thought it might. And I’d still be waiting for a call from my agent if I had one.

In 2009, in Ron’s honor, the USS Midway Reunion Group held its reunion in Winter Park, FL, near Ron’s home. Ron couldn’t attend in person because of deteriorating health, so we took the reunion to him. Over the next few days, we loaded into cars and visited him at his home Winter Park

home. More of a personal touch, you might say, and it went off very well. You see, we knew Ron was dying. So, yes, it was a bitter-sweet occasion.

Sadly, Ron passed away from cancer in 2011, and he never got a chance to see or read the final version of *Boot 3*, which, a few years later, I self-published and passed out to a select few at MVA’s 2015 reunion in San Diego, as I mentioned above.

Ron could no longer be part of the organization he had been so instrumental in making happen – the USS Midway Reunion Group and everything that has evolved from it since. So, yes, his passing was very sad. You can find a tribute to Ron on our website in the Tributes section (<https://www.ussmidway.net>), linked from the Midway Museum’s website. Ron’s commemorative bench and plaque, which was purchased by the MVA from the Museum’s bench program several years ago, will be on display on the ship for as long as the Midway Museum is there.

Ron lived long enough to see the original reunion group he founded grow into a ship-wide organization, called the USS Midway Veterans Association (MVA), a concept pioneered by Oscar Granger who served as acting president for some 3 years prior to Ron’s passing. We made Oscar’s presidency official at the 2009 reunion when we voted him in. Today, the MVA is over 400 members strong – all Midway veterans, except for some family members. The largest reunion association connected with the Midway Museum, its members range from airdales to line officers to pilots to machinist mates to cooks to yeomans to quartermasters, and so on . . . the list goes on.

I’ll always be grateful to Ron McPhail for his leadership and the role he played in founding and running the OI Division reunion group for over a decade, as well as for the contributions he made to *Boot 3*, and how he was willing to roll up his sleeves and work on it right along with me. I owe him a debt of gratitude for his help. Ron, if you’re up there . . .

Oscar Granger, took over the presidency from Ron and carried on the job with great success. After serving nearly 14 years as MVA’s president, Oscar stepped down from the position this past year. But

he remains active in the MVA and a lifetime member.

Time moves on, and a lot of things move on with it.

So it goes.

## Long Hair and Beards

**Leonard Viccaro, 1962-64, AN/V-2 Division**

Toward the end of the Midway's 1963 WestPac cruise, the ship departed Japan on her way back to her homeport of, NAS Alameda, CA. A deal was struck with the Air Boss that the crew of the Port Cat, which included 12 ABE's, would be allowed to let their hair and beards grow (neatly trimmed) until arrival at Alameda, providing that Port Cat would stay operational with no downtime for repairs.

After a week, we were a motley looking crew, as you can well imagine. The rest of the sailors and marines aboard looked at us in disbelief. Some of us could really grow hair and fast. After we left Hawaii and were headed home, we looked like the dirty dozen, all right. Our hair was over our ears and combed into a ducktail. We enjoyed every minute of it. We figured we'd fit in with the long-haired hippy freaks we'd been hearing about.

As luck would have it, two days out of port the inevitable happened. The Port Cat went down, but only for 15 minutes. But that was enough to break the agreement with the Air Boss.

The penalty was all hair to be removed. That meant facial and head. We lined up and shaved our beards and had our heads shaved brig style. All the hair was collected in a large box and sent up to Primary to the Air Boss. We entered port the next day looking like a bunch fresh out of Boot Camp. Sorry, no pictures were taken.

Lenny Viccaro bridle runner and hold down connecter.

## Shellback Initiation

**Steve Martin, 1972-73/PN3, VF-151**

Whoever said it couldn't happen to you just wasn't right. Because, on December 30, 1972, the

Midway crossed the equator and the longtime tradition of the Shellback initiation was underway.

We had just left Singapore after a very enjoyable Christmas, plus enjoying the Bob Hope Show at anchor in Singapore harbor. All that seemed like a long ago dream once the word began circulating around ship that we were about to experience the highly traditional Naval practice of "Shellback Initiation." I hate to sound naïve about this but at the time, I simply had not heard much about this tradition. However, once I understood what was about to happen, I wanted to be elsewhere. Just kidding, because I know that I couldn't present the necessary Shellback card to keep me from this "wonderful" treatment. As a "Pollywog," I was about to be one of their victims.

I'll never forget the morning of December 30, 1972. It was not too cold for our location, but was misty, cloudy, and very foggy. We sat in our workspaces waiting to be called to the Hangar Deck. We had no idea what was coming next. Once escorted there by previous Shellbacks, we were asked to strip down to our underwear and t-shirts, placing the rest of our dungarees in a bag. The line was long leading to a hangar deck elevator, but still we were told nothing. We were soon told to break off into groups of about twenty men and once we got to the elevator, we were told to get on our hands and knees, keep our heads down, and our eyes closed. Once the elevator began to go up, we were told to "Quack like a duck to the tune of Jingle Bells" until told to stop.

As the elevator rose to the flight deck level, everyone was sufficiently doused with sea water by firehoses.

Wow, what a degrading experience! I remember feeling like I was in Hell but then like others around me, we unexplainably began to laugh. That was 52 years ago but I remember it as if it was yesterday. Once the elevator reached the flight deck level we were told to stay on our "all fours" and to get into single file, following the group ahead of us. We were still told to "Quack Jingle Bells) as we were sent through several fun experiences. These included being whipped by the many Shellbacks lined up on each side of us, having garbage thrown at us, some being selected to be chained and



locked onto the Blocks for additional personal treatment.



**Ducks on the Elevator**

Then, we could gradually see the end of the line, but waiting there for all of us was the final touch. It was the "Royal Baby's Belly." This was portrayed by some older, fat Chief Petty Officer, who was having a great time rubbing garbage over his bare belly while grabbing each unwilling victim by the back of the head as he rubbed our faces into his "delightful mix" of yesterday's meal. We were then washed off with the hoses and told to return to the hangar deck. The only visible marks from the "initiation" were our scratched and sore knees, resulting from crawling over the rough steel deck. However, our psyches had been shaken and our pride diminished.

Since that day, and as I sit here looking back at it, I will always remember the day I was initiated and have been a proud card-carrying Shellback for 52 years!

## Midway Selection Board

**Mark Nojiri, 1974-81, AT1, IM3**

It was probably about 1975, when the USS Midway was homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, and the ship was having its competition for the Sailor of the Month, or whatever, the Sailor of something! My division picked this Airman in my shop as its candidate. So, he stood before the board and they

asked, "What do you think of Japan?" He said, "It sucks!" Wrong answer. "What is your favorite liberty port?" He said, "The Philippines!" Wrong answer. He lost.

At a later "Sailor of something" board, this time we had a Marine, I think he was a Corporal, competing. He stood in front of the board and they asked him, "What do you think of Japan?" He answered "I love it here." His squadron was homebased in Japan. Good answer. "What is your favorite liberty port?" Again, "Japan." He won the contest."

## Mis-Appropriations

**Larry Burger, 1960-61, OE Division**

I Went aboard Midway in Alameda, December 15, 1960, fresh out of Boot camp, while waiting for ET A school at Treasure Island. OE Div brought me up right with great indoctrination and respect for all the dirt and working parties while heading to Westpac.

Lucky me, I was chosen for a working party for an unrep from a reefer ship in the Tonkin Gulf. There were pallet loads of ice cream from the reefer that had to get down 2 decks and all the way forward to the freezer. I loaded 2 barrels and headed down. Passing our department berthing area, our coop cleaner caught me and said hay, bring me a strawberry. I thought, oh crap, I can get in big trouble here.

A little later back up in the hangar bay getting re-loaded, I had 2 barrels loaded and somebody said here's a third one and set a strawberry on the top. I realized several guys had left with 3, but no one ever got to the other end with 3 and my guy was waiting for me. On the way back, I found a party going on. They had bowls and spoons and I took a moment to enjoy.

Several months later I graduated ETA school with orders to a reefer ship that had just left Alameda for WestPac. I finally reached my ship in Okinawa, and we went back into the Tonkin Gulf to replenish the fleet, we unreped 32 ships in 3 days, a pretty good workout. That's what we do. A 1st class storekeeper taught me, in the presence of the XO, when we unrep to a carrier, their officers mess will request 80 cases of Filet Minon in the order, they

will get 40 cases and 40 cases of hamburger. Then we keep 40 cases of Filet Minon for us.

We did have a 55-gallon BBQ aft, so it worked out really well, having had 3 carriers in that group.

We were nearly empty. Off to Hong Kong, then to Subic Bay, where we reloaded frozen food and did it all again.

That ship's crew had absolutely great morale.

Lesson learned: The Navy probably couldn't function as well without a little Mis-Appropriation. "Like lubricating the skids," I'm sure.

## Our Ship

**Dave Sommers Jr, 1978-80, AKA/S6 Division**  
**David Sommers Sr, 1954-55, SKSN, S-1 Division**

When I was a kid, I spent many hours browsing my dad's 1955 World Cruise book, fantasizing about the exotic places he visited and wondering why men would dress up in crazy outfits and have axle grease applied to their faces using some guy's FAT BELLY.

Little did I know, that someday, I too would visit many of those same places and have lard applied to my face using some guy's FAT BELLY.

...and little did I know, it would also be onboard "Our Ship," the USS Midway...just like my dad.

I enlisted in 1978, went to boot camp in San Diego and then attended AK "A" School in Meridian, Mississippi. When I filled out my "dream sheet," I put down anywhere in Hawaii or Japan. As luck would have it, I got Japan, onboard the USS Midway, forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan.

I'll never forget calling my Dad to tell him "I'M GOING TO THE MIDWAY"... I think he was more excited than I was.

So, in June, 1978, I boarded a train and headed off to catch a flight to Japan and what would turn out to be the single best decision I ever made...joining the Navy. Because I would eventually end up in San Diego and meet my bride, who I've been married to for over 40 years.

There's a strange thing about sailors and the ships they served on. Most say (right after they get off the boat) *"the two best days were the day I got there and the day I left."* But 20 years later almost all say *"it was the greatest adventure of my life."*

After I left the Midway, I ended up at NAS North Island and served at HC-11 and then COMNAVAIRPAC, before leaving active duty to become a civilian. I continued to work at North Island, in Naval Aviation (Supply) until my retirement in 2021. My bride, Karen, would also retire at North Island, after 38 years in civil service, supporting the Navy's F/A-18 program at the Fleet Readiness Center.

When they brought Our Ship to North Island for decommissioning in 1992, I asked the SUPPO to see if he could get the Skipper to send my dad an invitation to the ceremony. This time it would be my dad that called me, to say "Guess what? I got an invitation to the Midway's Decommissioning Ceremony and it's from the Commanding Officer!" He never figured how they found him after 37 years. Hmmm?

A decade later, the Midway was donated and towed back to San Diego, to become a museum ship at the foot of Broadway. Are you kidding me? The Midway...a museum...in my home town? Somehow the stars have always seemed to align for me and Our Ship.

About a year after the museum opened, I asked my dad down to San Diego, for Father's Day...and a covert trip to Our Ship, via ferry boat from Coronado. He didn't yet know what was up, until he turned around and saw "41" sitting across the bay. The look on his face was priceless when he figured it out. What an awesome experience that first visit was. We felt like celebrities, as people would ask us for "Father & Son" autographs. To see my Pops onboard Our Ship again, cannot be expressed in words. I'll never forget it.

Since then, I've "hosted" many visits with family and friends, proudly telling my sea stories (all true) about my 24 months onboard Our Ship. Over my 43-year association with Naval Aviation, I've met countless military and civilians who also served onboard Our Ship. The last, was still on active duty...VADM Miller, then the "Air Boss" of Naval Air Forces.

To be able to say, "I was on the Midway...and so was my dad," gives me a great deal of pride and personal satisfaction as she was and will always be...Our Ship.

**MIDWAY MAJUTSU FOREVER!**

### In Memoriam

**Shipmate Robert (Bob) Shedd, S1C**, passed away January 26, 2024. Bob enlisted in the Navy in 1945 and was a Midway plankowner, a member of Midway's original commissioning crew. On April 5, 2014 Bob was presented a WWII Victory Medal by his son Steve at a family celebration in Boynton Beach, Florida. The medal presentation was made possible by then MVA President, Oscar Granger and MVA Treasurer/Secretary, Dave Payson.

May Bob rest in peace.



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

USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/USSMidwayVeteransAssociation>

### *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*

Tim Munderloh – (972) 365-9977  
Irving, Texas  
[tmunderloh@yahoo.com](mailto:tmunderloh@yahoo.com)

#### *Vice President-Reunions*

Stephen DeCata – (410) 713-0647  
Aldie, Virginia  
[sdecata@gmail.com](mailto:sdecata@gmail.com)

#### *Vice President-Administration*

Martin FitzGerald - (425) 255-2998  
Maple Valley, Washington  
[marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net](mailto:marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net)

#### *Treasurer*

Bernard (Ray) Tillery - (806) 678-0742  
Perris, California  
[ray.tillery@yahoo.com](mailto:ray.tillery@yahoo.com)

#### *Secretary*

Tim Miller - (619) 476-9410  
Chula Vista, California  
[yokohamakid01@gmail.com](mailto:yokohamakid01@gmail.com)

#### *Newsletter Editor*

Jim Daugherty (509) 438-8917  
West Richland, WA  
[Subman581@gmail.com](mailto:Subman581@gmail.com)

#### *Membership Committee Chair*

Phil Zuniga – (480) 272-7404  
Gilbert, Arizona  
[angelson17@aol.com](mailto:angelson17@aol.com)

#### *Facebook Admin*

Ron Pope – (469) 353-8676  
Frisco, Texas  
[r.cb022usnr@yahoo.com](mailto:r.cb022usnr@yahoo.com)

#### *Webmaster*

Steve Gergens - (682) 558-5822  
Bedford, Texas  
[steve.cdsweb@gmail.com](mailto:steve.cdsweb@gmail.com)

## Letters to the Editor

E-mail me your comments/questions about articles that appear in this newsletter, and I will answer them. If I don't have the answer, I'll put you in touch with the author of the article/story. As editor of this newsletter, I'm all for open communication between Midway shipmates and MVA members.

Send to: [mvanewseditor@gmail.com](mailto:mvanewseditor@gmail.com)





This document is "fillable." Type directly in the fields. Immediate Family Members need only to complete section of this form that applies to them.

**MIDWAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION**  
**Application for Membership**

I am a USS Midway Veteran and 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. Note: Immediate family members (21 & over) of MVA members are also welcomed to join the MVA at the same dues amounts as MVA members and have the right to vote on MVA issues (see sign-up below).

**MVA Veteran 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.):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Years served in military** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_

**How Did You Hear About Our Reunion Association?** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Immediate Family Member Name:</b> _____		<b>Associated with MVA Member</b> _____	
<b>Mailing Address</b> _____		<b>Email</b> _____	
<b>City</b> _____	<b>State</b> _____	<b>Telephone</b> _____	

Complete this form, either online or manually, selecting one of the 3 dues amounts (pay by check or with credit card):

Check One

- [\\$20.00/yr for veteran + spouse/partner or immediate family member \(age 21 or over\)](#)
- [\\$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 PP site opens follow the easy instructions.

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

**OR** pay by check. Make check payable to Midway Veterans Association and mail completed form and check to address below. Completing this form will also get you added to MVA's electronic mailing list to receive your MVA newsletter online.

**USS Midway Veterans Association**  
18940 Priceless Road  
Perris, CA 92570

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.

**Contact: Bernard (Ray) Tillery, MVA Treasurer, at [ray.tillery@yahoo.com](mailto:ray.tillery@yahoo.com);**  
Telephone 806-678-0742.  
18940 Priceless Road  
Perris, CA 92570

For more information on how to join the MVA as an Immediate Family Member of an MVA member contact MVA's VP of Admin. Marty FitzGerald at email: [marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net](mailto:marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net). He will fill you in on the details.