

A Day in a Young Sailor's Life

President Truman's Visit Aboard USS Missouri (BB-63)

Richard Remington, FA MM1/M Div., 1948-53

Early on a Saturday morning (December 4, 1948), the Engineering Department aboard the Midway was awakened and ordered to light off the main engines (no easy task aboard an aircraft carrier) in preparations for getting under way. After lighting fires in the designated boilers, raising vacuum on the main condenser, and warming up the main turbines, we were ready to answer all bells. We were ready to go, but had nowhere to go. As it turned out, the harbor tugs moved the Midway 300 feet forward on pier #7 to allow the USS Williamsburg (the President's yacht) to get behind us. Once moved, we then had to go through the motions of shutting down the engineering plant. Again, shutting down an engineering plant isn't like parking your automobile and turning off the engine. Once the engineering plant was shut down and the in-port watch was set, we all thought that was it. Seems that was only the beginning. A good many of the sailors aboard Midway had no idea what was happening at the time; it didn't take too long to find out. One problem, every day (including weekends) there's a "Plan of the Day" posted letting everyone know what was happening on a particular day. There was nothing in the POD for 4 December 1948 that mentioned what was happening this morning. At about 0900 we were all told to get into our dress blue uniforms and go to assigned stations on the flight deck to man the rail. Keep in mind that this was the 4th of December; the weather was what you might expect in December – cold, drizzly and breezy. And, oh yes, we found out why we were up there; the USS Williamsburg pulled in behind Midway with the President and his party aboard. Seems that someone with an extra \$10,000.00 was giving a silver service set to the "Mighty Mo" and President Truman was doing the honors. Thus we were manning the rail to render honors to the President of the United States. And, sure enough, soon after the Williamsburg tied up, the President, typically waving his Stenson, was walking down the pier on his way to board the Missouri. What a day! To say the least, December 4, 1948, was a day to remember; getting to see the President, his yacht, and to listen to his speech (mostly about the Mighty Mo). As might be expected, the President didn't stay too long and by noontime we were back to our normal routine. For a young sailor, it was good getting to see the President up close.

Richard Remington (right), aboard Midway '48-'53, was a machinist mate first class.



My Memories of Frequent Wind

Steve Palka, 1974-77/CS1, S-2 Division

When Midway left Yokosuka in late March of 1975 for a routine underway period, with port calls

scheduled for both Subic Bay and Hong Kong, we had no idea of how that would change for all of us. On the way to Subic Bay, Midway picked up two squadrons of Marine helicopters off the coast of Okinawa. We carried these helos to the Subic Op area where they then flew off to other carriers.

Midway arrived in Subic Bay on 15 April 1975, for a 10-day upkeep and resupply port call. This time in port was cut short, because on 18 April 1975, Midway got underway about 1600. Prior to getting underway we offloaded about half of the air wing personnel and most of the aircraft that were on board. The only aircraft left on the ship were the ones that required maintenance or were "hard down" in the hangar bay. This left some of the air wing berthing spaces open for future use. No one knew where we

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were going, we only knew we were going someplace. We received 10 Air Force Jolly Green Giant helos and their crews on 20 April 1975, and then "rumor control" on the mess decks started to talk about what was going to occur, but no one knew for sure. The Air Force helo crews spent a few days practicing take-offs and landings on the flight deck for whatever operation they were supposed to embark on. We also got back a lot of personnel who were left on the beach when Midway had to get underway early. Some of the amphibious vessels brought these personnel back to us.

On 29 April 1975, we finally learned what Midway's mission was. Midway, along with the 10 Air Force Jolly Green Giants, was to assist in the evacuation of personnel from the Embassy in Saigon. This became known as "Operation Frequent Wind." Almost all of the action that occurred happened on the flight deck during this operation, with the Air Force helos bringing in the evacuees. The Air Force helos would bring the evacuees onboard and then they were taken down below where, I believe, a census, or record, of who came aboard was being maintained. After this was done the helos from HC-1 Det-2 would begin to shuttle the evacuees to the amphibious ships that were part of the task force. Below decks, on both the hangar deck and the second deck, we were kept busy. The Storekeepers were breaking out rolls of bubble wrap that served as mattresses for the evacuees, a little over 1,000, who were to remain onboard overnight and did not want to go to an empty berthing compartment but just sleep in the hangar deck. As we walked through the hangar we would give them a comforting smile and this seemed to put them at ease.



In both the forward and aft galleys we were open around the clock feeding Midway crew, Air Force personnel, as well as the evacuees who came through, especially the 1,000-plus evacuees who remained overnight on the first night. Our mess cooks on the mess decks went out of their way to ensure the evacuees were made to feel comfortable in an environment that they had never experienced before. You could tell by the evacuees' smiles that they appreciated everything we did for them. For the personnel on the flight deck who could not get down to the mess decks, we sent up over 25 cases of C-rations. While this was not as good as a hot meal, this is what they wanted so the Supply Officer said send them up.

On 30 April 1975, after the last of the evacuees were taken from the embassy, which included Air America personnel, we continued to bring evacuees on board. When the Air America personnel came onboard they had to check their weapons into the armory, which was just forward of the aft galley. A couple of hours after these they checked their weapons in, one of the mess cooks who was assigned to the armory came running into the galley with his eyes as big as silver dollars. He was yelling, "They got the big ones, they got the big ones in the armory!" What he meant was that the Air America personnel had checked in their 357s and no one in the armory had seen this type of weapon in real life before. The only time anyone had seen these was in the Clint Eastwood "Dirty Harry" movies, so that was all this mess cook could talk about. Around noon on April 30th we were breaking out potatoes and onions from the potato sponson, starboard side aft, when we looked up at what appeared to be a swarm or locust coming towards Midway and the rest of the ships in the task force. They turned out to be numerous Vietnamese Huey gun ships and CH-47 Chinook helicopters that were loaded with evacuees fleeing Saigon. The normal crew of a Huey gun ship is at most four but these had people hanging off the outside, and there must have been at 35-40 on each Huey. The Hueys were brought aboard as safely as possible and the evacuees were taken care of in the same manner as the those that came onboard the day before. The flight deck was beginning to get quite crowded as these helos had to be re-spotted. The HTs in the machine shop manufactured some dollies so the Hueys could be moved a little easier as they only had skids and no wheels. In the midst of all this activity on the flight deck, suddenly an O-1 Vietnamese "Bird Dog"

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spotter plane started to circle Midway. Captain Chambers made the decision to get rid of some of the aircraft on the flight deck to make room for the Bird Dog to land. As the pilot of the plane, Major Bung Ly and his wife and five children, emerged from the aircraft after landing safely they were greeted with applause and congratulations by everyone on the flight deck.

The last U.S. Forces to come out of Vietnam was the Marine detachment from the USS Blue Ridge. They were brought aboard Midway by the last Air Force Jolly Green Giant leaving Saigon. One item that they brought with them was the Seal that was on the wall at the embassy. These Marines remained aboard Midway for 1 or 2 days and then they were shuttled back to the Blue Ridge. When the Marines left they took the Seal from the embassy with them.

When Midway left the coast of Vietnam we were directed to go to Sattahip, Thailand, to pick up aircraft that had been flown out of Saigon, and the U.S. did not want these aircraft to get into the wrong hands. On the way to Thailand, Midway came across a Vietnamese fishing boat carrying about 84 evacuees that were trying to get away from Vietnam. The boat was slowly sinking so Captain Chambers brought them aboard and they stayed with us until we arrived in Guam. When Midway arrived in the Gulf of Siam at Sattahip, we on-loaded 27 A-37 strike aircraft, and 25 F-5 Freedom Fighters that had been flown out of Saigon. These aircraft, along with the 3 Vietnamese Chinook helicopters, 40 Vietnamese and 5 Air America Huey gun ships as well as the 1 O-1 Bird Dog spotter plane brought the total to 101 aircraft on the flight deck. Midway's flight deck looked like a graveyard of forgotten aircraft.

During the transit time to Guam, the 84 evacuees onboard were berthed in one of the empty air wing berthing compartments. They would be escorted down to the forward galley where our food service personnel prepared 3 meals a day for them. Their meals consisted of mostly the items that they had eaten almost all the time, usually some type of seafood, grilled or steamed vegetables and rice. With the XO's and Chaplain's approval we set up some donation cans at the end of the chow lines and Midway personnel would put any loose change they had in their pockets as they came through the chow line. When Midway finally arrived in Guam on 11 May 1975, the Chaplain presented the evacuees with a nice check. All of the children that came on board left wearing Midway T-shirts and had good memories of their trip on board. Arriving in Guam we were met by news reporters who broadcast the ship's arrival and showed the aircraft being off loaded. The off-loading took about 1 full day, and we were back underway for Subic Bay to pick up the air wing the next day. We arrived at Subic Bay on 20 May and brought air wing back on board. One thing everyone noticed when we arrived at Subic was a large amount of Vietnamese watercraft tied to the piers in and around Subic Bay. These were the Vietnamese Swift Boats and PBRs that had come out of Saigon and the surrounding areas of Vietnam. Grande Island where we usually had some ship's picnic's was off limits to all personnel. This was being used as a staging point for all the Vietnamese evacuees.

During the entire operation, Capt. Chambers kept everyone informed as to what was happening, especially when the Bird Dog was getting ready to land, and what to expect next. His calm demeanor when speaking to the crew kept everyone at ease. The Air Boss, Cdr. Jumper, kept everything on the flight deck running smoothly and safely during the entire Operation Frequent Wind evolution.

Every crewmember on Midway during this time played an important part in the operation, and we all can look back at this with a sense of pride knowing we did one hell of a job.

Hurricane Alice Greet the USS Midway

Martin J. McCormick Jr., 1954-55/AEM3/VF-12

Once a VF-12 USS Midway Sailor

It is usually around this time of year, when reports of Hurricanes begin to surface in the media and on TV that the topic becomes fodder for social gatherings and the like. Also, if friends are getting ready to go on a cruise, the potential for storms along the way are always an attention getter. Such palaver would get me recalling one of my favorite sea stories, which over the years never had to be embellished, because the facts were enough to give my listeners a real sense of what happens when you encounter a major storm at sea.

Having said that, what I knew of this unique event in my young life, at the time I was 19, was my own experience as I went to sea for the first time on a trip around the world as a PO 3/C with VF-12 aboard the USS Midway.

The Midway had left Mayport, Florida, on December 28th bound for Cape Town, South Africa, as our first port of call on the way to join the 7th Fleet in the far East. As the new year was ringing in most sea legs were still kind of rubbery. In addition, it was New Years day, 1955 and the ship's cooks had prepared a special meal with all the trimmings to help us ring in the New Year away from home.

Before continuing my tale of this adventure of almost 60 years ago, I want to bring you back to modern times with tools like Google available to take a different look at various events. So, being the newly minted computer geek that I am, I used my new found skills to Google "Hurricanes 1955."

What a thrill, it worked and there it was in all its meteorological detail. It even had a name "Hurricane Alice," which I had never known. As an adjunct my sister's name is Alice and the Hurricane connection fitted perfectly providing a whole new range of ways to needle her.

After reading through the various accounts of "MY" Hurricane, I found the best reference to be from a Monthly Weather Review article entitled "Weather Note - Hurricane Alice 1954-1955" by Cdr. Thomas O'Neill and C. L. Jordan (April 11, 1962). Knowing most of you don't have the time nor energy to go researching, I do want to mention some of the features of this storm that are special to Midway lore from the O'Neill/Jordan manuscript.

Selected Details from the Cdr. O'Neill/C.L. Jordan Manuscript (4/11/1962)

1. This storm was probably the first winter storm in that area in 100 years.
2. It became a Hurricane early on New Year's Eve 1954 but was not recognized as such until January 3, 1955.
3. The Midway crossed the path the storm within 28 miles of its eye (see fig 1).
4. The first-ever photograph of a Hurricane's profile (see fig 2) was taken from the step 6 air search scan screen as the Midway plowed through the rolling sea into the path of the storm. (There were no satellite images in those days and no one had ever seen this image)
5. The first images of the storm's intensity began to appear on radar when the ship was within 80 miles of the storm, setting the stage for what we would battle through for the next 8 hours.

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6. The first swells from the Hurricane were being felt about 100 miles out, but only light rain with no middle or high clouds preceded it until moderate rains were encountered 40 miles from the center.

7. When conditions got bad, swells from 4 different directions hit the ship, maneuverability was most difficult and on one occasion there was a roll of 22 degrees with strong northeast winds creating swells and waves off the port bow.

8. The storm had sustained winds of 80 mph and the barometer dropped to 29.15 in Hg at its lowest. Peak winds were about 55 mph when the Midway crossed its path within 28 miles of its center.

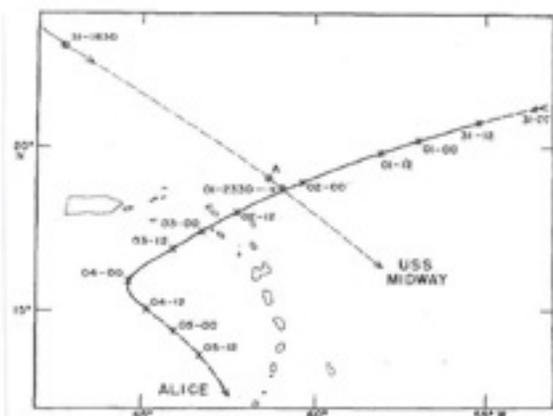


FIGURE 1.—The track of hurricane Alice of December 1954-January 1955 (from [3]) and the track of the USS Midway. During the portion of the track shown by the dashed line, Alice was not considered of hurricane intensity. In the date-time data, Greenwich Meridian Time has been used.

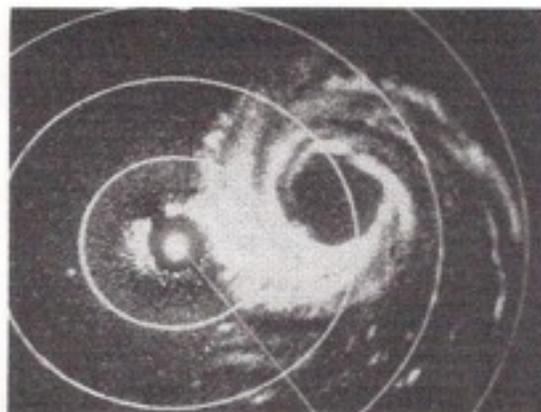


FIGURE 2.—A photograph of the PPI scope of a SP5-6 radar taken from the USS Midway at approximately 2330 GMT, January 1, 1955. Range markers are at 20-n. mi. intervals. The ship heading, as shown by the line originating at the center of the scope, was toward 140°. (Official photograph, U.S. Navy.)

The preceding details were fascinating to me, finding them almost 60 years after the event was special. Being the fearless, albeit clueless airdale sailor I was at the time, my one goal throughout was to not get seasick. What could go wrong otherwise, we were on this huge carrier that would surely defeat and get through any storm. Although my naïveté was never challenged, as the ship began to really rock and roll my stomach followed suit from time to time. But we both made it through. The Midway was always skittish in "weather" and in those days she was a straight deck with 2 starboard side 5" gun mounts missing due to damage sustained on the previous Med Cruise from a collision with a refueling ship. This weight loss sure didn't help her stability in that rolling sea.

We had a Destroyer escort until we hit the weather. During the time they were tracking with us there were occasions when I was sure we would lose them as it seemed waves were breaking over the stacks. I could hardly imagine how their crews were faring given the banging around we were taking. They made it through OK although there was a report of a crewmember being washed overboard although I cannot verify its accuracy. Eventually as conditions worsened they had to leave us and fend for themselves. In fact I do not remember sighting them again until after we reached Cape Town.

Also, we were unable to get all of our aircraft on the hangar deck so there were a number, (8-10 as I remember it), left on the flight deck up forward with double tie downs where possible. Those planes got a real dousing, including waves breaking over the flight deck. It really happened, I was there. Below decks was a total mess, the special New Years Day meal was mostly undigested for those that tried to eat, if you get my drift. I had to get some air and went up to the Island and wedged myself into a hatchway to the flight deck aft of the gas shack and watched in awe of Mother Nature on a rampage. I can remember looking up at the Radar Dome as the ship rolled and seeing its arc across the sky as we rolled and righted. The scene remains vivid in my mind's eye.

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I thought about the aircraft hanging on their tie-downs, what would happen if they began to break loose? Thank God none did. The sea was seemingly trying to flip us end to end at times and the screws were coming partially out of the water sending a shudder through the hull similar to flank speed runs. There was a driving rain, not in volumes but mixed with sea spray and a driving wind that created a kind of howl through the folded wings of the planes on deck. It was truly an awesome spectacle.

Our Squadron's quarters were hangar deck level all the way forward, below the anchor locker. I tried to get to my bunk a couple of times but the decks were all messed up and the booming of the waves against the bow was too worrisome to put up with so I rode it out at various locations between the hangar deck and above until the situation calmed down.

Once things settled down we were no worse for the wear. I did hear some Bridge sailors saying we came close to rolling over a couple of times. Probably just sea stories to scare the airdales like me who didn't know any better. However, the sweep of that radar dome across the sky and the vision of all sea and a shuddering ship switching the vision to all sky would not cause me to challenge their version. It was quite an experience to say the least and an awesome start to the 1955 New Year.

Well, bringing things back to today and our 8 children with our 24 grandchildren it is great to have a sea story or two to talk about when the opportunity presents itself. Best of all. Now this sea story had a name, "Hurricane Alice"!

Martin J. McCormick Jr., Once a VF-12 USS Midway Sailor

What I did in Air Group Coffee Lockers

Martin FitzGerald, 1957-60/AN, V-4 Division

Sometime after Midway received the air group and when I was off duty with nothing to do I would check on the first-class petty officers squadron coffee locker to see what was happening. I was granted permission to enter and meet the guys that were there at the time. Keeping in mind that I am just an E-3 (airman) with brass balls and not too bashful, I became friends with this group of men and started to clean and organize the compartment to make it more comfortable for off-duty time. I would only be there for about an hour. I could talk with these guys and learn what they did on the Midway with their aircraft. I did this for about two weeks and then had to work at flight deck control during air ops.

Before flight ops started I also visited VAH-8's coffee locker and did much the same thing I did at VF-21's locker. This activity was a benefit to all hands involved. There was one time I was mess cooking and had finished work, so I went up to the flight deck. Air ops was finished for the day and I went over to one of the A3Ds on the flight deck with some of the flight crew around it. I was invited to climb into the aircraft and look around, which I did. WOW! What a lesson in how to fly a Whale, the guys treated me like one of their own and even asked if I would like to go up with them on the next flight. Not knowing what or where I might be I declined. But what an opportunity! Shortly after that I was released from mess cooking and returned to V-4 division and resumed working at flight deck control. For the rest of the cruise I was not able to make it back to those coffee lockers again. Good times and for me a lot of fun.

Eventually I heard that those men at those coffee lockers had asked around as to what happened to me.

That was a nice touch.

Going in Harm's Way, USS Midway

Martin J. McCormick Jr., 1954-55/AEM3/VF-12

The year was coming up on 1955, the USS Midway had turned nine years old six months earlier on September 12, 1954, and on December, 1954, she embarked from Mayport, Florida, on a World Cruise under the Command of Captain Reynold D. Hagle, USN. This cruise would take her and her air group, to ports from Cape town, South Africa throughout the Far East and back to the West Coast of the United States where she would be decommissioned, undergo an extensive overhaul and major modifications including getting a canted deck for the first time. Along the way she and her Air Group (CAG 1) had orders to undertake extensive operations with the 7th fleet in the Far East, and as it turned out, unforeseen operations that would place the Midway and her crew in "Harms Way," facing the first real combat conditions since her commissioning. Her previous seven cruises out of Norfolk, Virginia, had been to the Mediterranean, where she was renowned as a diplomatic ship and a major contributor to the defensive posture of NATO [source: USS Midway World Cruise Book, Christmas Story]. Maneuvers such as Operation Frostbite and others were now behind her; this time it was to be more than flag-waving, it was to be as the Flagship of the battle ready Task Force 77.

They say never volunteer, but living and learning was in progress for me and it was that process that had brought me to VF-12, a "Banshee" squadron that was readying for sea duty out of Cecil Field in Florida, the home base of Carrier Air Group 1. To get here I had twisted my mother's arm in 1953 to sign for me to get into a Naval Air Reserve squadron (VF-935 - Corsairs) at Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Pennsylvania. I had then volunteered for Basic Training followed by Aviation Electrician School, all as a reservist and then had my draft pushed up in order to go on active duty, choosing sea duty as my billet.

On December 28, 1954, as we put to sea I was a 19-year-old Aviation Electrician Petty Officer, 3rd Class, and it was my first time at sea other than during the shakedown cruise to qualify the air group on carrier operations. I had volunteered for and was accepted as one of our squadron's flight deck troubleshooters, and as a kid that grew up during World war II and had spent the active fighting years of the Korean conflict in high school, it was finally my turn and I was eager and ready to experience the action I thought I had missed.

I'll pick up my recollections from when we were in the town of Colombo, a creepy place, on the Island of Ceylon off the coast of India. It was our second port of call since leaving the States. The date was January 27, 1955, we had our sea legs by then, but we had not gone to flight quarters once since we left Mayport. The salt and heavy seas that we had encountered along the way were of moderate concern to Plane Captains, but we had no indication that we wouldn't have time to prepare the aircraft for operations, removing greases and cosmoline from exposed parts before launching aircraft. I remember being on liberty in the town after just going ashore by motor launch when the word was passed that all liberty was cancelled and all hands were ordered back to the ship.....what was going on? It was like a war movie, no one seemed to know why, except for the citizens of the town (naturally). The word was passed from them to us, "we were going to fight the Chinese," they said. "Maybe war"!

I can remember the situation changing for everyone aboard as we put to sea from Ceylon. All aircraft were to be readied for combat, live ammunition, no more training equipment, this was to be for real. We were going in "Harm's Way" as they say, and, if necessary, were expected to be ready to do something when we got there. I had seen the movies growing up, read the stories of heroism and death of brave men

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on aircraft carriers in war. If it came to it, would I be able to do my duty, would I be up to it? I think everyone from the ship's Captain on down had similar thoughts as we steamed to join the 7th Fleet's Carrier Division 3 as the Flagship of Task Force 77 and the unknown.

On February 6, 1955, our first call to flight quarters in over a month sounded early on a gray, gusty morning. With a thudding heart I raced from our squadron's forward compartment to the flight deck, and as I climbed out on the starboard catwalk I stood stunned at the sight of the United States Navy ready for war. It was like a "Victory at Sea" film. As far as I could see there were ships of every size across the horizon.

The Midway, as it turned out, was in the middle of a flotilla of over 40 ships that included 4 other storied World War II carriers, the USS Boxer (CV-21), the USS Essex (CV-9), the USS Wasp (CV-19), and the USS Yorktown (CV-10), along with cruisers, destroyers, amphibious ships, transports and at least one submarine that I saw surface briefly. I can remember being awed, proud and scared at the same time. I thought whoever would mess with the United States, would think again if they saw this array of might. And that is the way it turned out.

On February 7, Rear Admiral Richard W Ruble USN and his Staff were transferred aboard by highline from the destroyer USS Stoddard and the Midway officially became the Flagship of Carrier Division Three. The mission, ordered by President Eisenhower, was to protect the evacuation of over 40,000 civilians and Nationalist Chinese military from the Islands of Quemoy and Matsu off the Coast of Formosa [source: Historical Center, Quemoy-Matsu Crisis Veterans, Dr. William S Dudley, Director, Naval Historical Center].

The fleet performed its assignment as ordered and flew over 400 sorties in defense of the evacuation. The dangers, close calls and courage of flight operations were many and varied, too numerous to mention but well known by those that have been there before me and since. I was proud to have been a part of it and did my duty.

In conclusion, the Plan of the Day on February 14, 1955, included congratulations to the ships company and air group from the Naval Chain of Command and including these words from: "COMMANDER IN CHIEF..... OFFICERS AND MEN WHO HAVE ASSISTED IN CMM AND PROTECTED THE EVACUATION OF THE TACHEN ISLANDS, YOURS WAS A DIFFICULT AND DELICATE ASSIGNMENT. ON BEHALF OF A GRATEFUL AMERICAN PEOPLE, WELL DONE."

Signed: DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Enough said.

Martin J. McCormick Jr., Once a VF-12 USS Midway Sailor

My Special Time Aboard MIDWAY CVA-41

Martin Fitzgerald V-4, Division, 57-60

After I was discharged from the Midway in 1960, I went about life like anyone would, getting a job to provide for my family.

Many years later I was driving truck for Safeway Stores and delivering groceries to their stores all over the state of Washington. Then, in 1992, I learned that Midway was in Seattle. I drove over to see her (I live nearby, in Renton, Wa.) To my delight, she was open for visitors, and I got to go onboard. There, I heard that she was going to San Diego to be decommissioned and put into the mothball fleet in Bremerton Washington Navy Yard. I found this news depressing, for she still was a fine fighting ship and in great shape.

Time had passed and I had not been to the Bremerton area for several years. Then one day I was dispatched to Bremerton to make a delivery to a Safeway store there, and coming into town I saw Midway in the distance and found a safe place to park for a few minutes, just to look at her one more time. I wanted to go aboard her and walk her sturdy decks again, but there was no way to do that. I did not know at the time there was a group of people that were trying to save her from the scrap heap. It was sometime in 2004 that I heard that she had been moved to San Diego and made into a museum, and anyone could go see her. This was the best news I had ever heard except, perhaps, for the birth of my son. Now I could visit the ship I became a man on and stand on her sturdy decks again. All I can say to the group of people who saved her is THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

Since that time I have joined the USS Midway Veterans Association Membership Committee and enjoy meeting and seeing old shipmates of mine and many new crew mates who served before and after me.

LIFE IS WONDERFUL if you let it be.

FREQUENT WIND...39 years later

Fred Lydic, 1972-75/Ltjg B Division

Memories fade as time passes but memories of refugee faces during the evacuation of Saigon will last forever. The anxiety of the unknown, relief of being safe, promise of things to come...all were in their eyes.

Midway got underway in mid-January 75. The fall of South Vietnam was just a matter of time. We cut circles in the water waiting for the evacuation of Phnom Penh. Our role did not materialize and we finally managed a short liberty in Subic. The evacuations out of South Vietnam began via airlifts out of Tan Son Nhut in March...the end was visible. We had about 2 days in port and got underway again. The Air Wing departed for Cubi Point and, I believe for the first time, Midway sailed into harm's way without its offensive capability...although we did have three five-inch guns!

I had finished watch as EOOW and was having dinner in the Dirty Shirt Locker when the USAF CH-53 Jolly Green drivers arrived from their base in Thailand. Leading the cadre through the door was a hometown friend (then Capt. Ron Vickroy)...10,000 miles from home...his father and mine were partners on the local police department.

It all began on April 29th. We were off the coast of Vung Tau, close enough to see the beach through the bridge wing big eyes. When the Viet Cong rolled in, we moved out to sea.

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When the evac began, the parade of Jolly Greens, Huey's, Chinooks and the famous RVN Scout Plane followed ... one after another after another. Not every aircraft that left RVN made it. Some flew blindly out to sea hoping to find us and never did. Not knowing who they were, their radio chatter would not be answered lest our position be revealed. I remember seeing at least 15 helos waiting to land and disembark their loads. Many, stripped of all "unnecessary gear," were packed with people like sardines in a can. Some famous, most not, they came aboard, stood in line, ate, slept and waited.



Most of the ship's officers had some collateral function. Mine was to serve as a liaison to about fifteen US Embassy staffers. The Wardroom Lounge became their bunkroom. That evening, I spent more than two hours trying to answer questions. They knew where they were relocating to and who their sponsors were but not much else. "What's it like in Ft. Leavenworth, KS?"... "Tell me about Virginia Beach" ... "Will I like Minneapolis?" How do you describe snow to someone who has spent their entire life in tropical heat? The next morning I went to the lounge and found them all huddled in a mass. I learned that none of them had ever spent a night in air-conditioned comfort. They had shivered through the night...not wanting to disturb me or be a problem.

The photos of Chinooks being pushed over the side are real. I saw the splash. I guy I knew in V-1 exclaimed that he had wanted to do something like that ever since he joined the Navy. When Nguyen Cao Ky came aboard, the first task was to relieve him of his two pearl-handled pistols.

When the evac parade finally stopped, we got underway for Sattahip, Thailand, where the Jolly Green helos became sky cranes and on-loaded a bunch of RVN F-105 aircraft that had been flown out of RVN. (The above photo shows one of the USAF Jolly Greens on-loading an F-105 just off the coast of Sattahip.) When they finished, they headed back to their base and we set sail for Guam. We spent about 2 days in Guam off-loading all of the planes and helos and then went back to Subic to regain the Air Wing. It was early June before we saw Yokosuka again.

The Day Midway Made Japan Our Home

Ken Prater, 1972-75/Ltjg/Air Department

October 5, 1973, was an historic day for the USS Midway. Even though it was not Midway's first visit to Yokosuka, Japan, that was the day we made it our new home port. We traveled over 5,000 miles across the Pacific, pausing all-too-briefly in Hawaii to swap bays – San Francisco for Tokyo. For the crew the terms were questionable, but that was not up to us.

Our move was strategically and boldly planned. The Vietnam War was in full swing with no indication that it would be over in just two more years. A reliable carrier was needed in a port where it could and come and go without requiring a stateside crossing. Reliability was replete in Midway's resume – practically a middle name. And since Japan was not in a position to say no, the decision was made. But that didn't mean that the Japanese liked it.

The Japanese media forewarned the nation of our impending arrival, heating public opinion to a rolling boil. The possibility that nuclear weapons might be onboard was ground zero for the press. Anything with

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the word "nuclear" in it set off a chain reaction of nerves in Japan, and understandably so. Just as Pearl Harbor was branded into U.S. history, so Hiroshima and Nagasaki were into Japan's.

In retrospect, coming into a foreign port for the first time I doubt that we had any nuclear weapons aboard. But that was not the point – the Japanese believed that we did and wanted no part of it. We anticipated that our welcome wouldn't include a cordial *konichiwa* and a cup of tea. We weren't disappointed.

The day was gray and overcast as Midway made her turn into Tokyo Bay. We were first greeted by a fleet of small boats that served as a floating Welcome Wagon. These ambassadors of public sentiment were armed with signs that collectively urged, "I'd turn back if I were you...". While these words broke no bones, close attention was paid to the armada's proximity to the ship. If any of them attempted to cross our path and came too close, they would be squashed like a Japanese beetle playing chicken with a Mack truck. Luckily this minefield of bad press kept their distance, but the helicopters were much more bothersome.



Swarming like bees, these tiny, brightly colored civilian helicopters carrying TV film crews brazenly buzzed the ship in the finest *kamikaze* tradition. Coming just short of crashing, they strafed the flight deck with their cameras, searching for radioactive bulges. All they found were alien sailors snapping pictures of them with Japanese-made cameras. Still, it was material for the six o'clock news. No U.S. warship this size had ever come this close to home with the intent of staying.

The shipyard at Yokosuka was a former Imperial Japanese naval base left largely intact and graying since the end of the Second World War. It offered a spectacular view of Mount Fujiyama, some vacated bomb shelters and several giant cranes, each large enough to lift an entire destroyer out of the water. While there was plenty of pier space to park an aircraft carrier, parking it was another matter.

The last few miles of our journey were commanded by a Japanese Harbor Master who arrived by helicopter. While under his control even the Captain could only watch as he skillfully maneuvered the ship through the harbor's tricky and congested corridor. An aircraft carrier is not designed to start, stop or turn on a dime, but the Harbor Master seemed to be able to do just that. As we closed in on the pier, two tugboats waited nearby and pushed Midway sideways the last few feet until we were tucked into our berth. After the mooring lines were secured – all squared away – we were almost home.

Almost, I say, because just outside the base thousands of protesters were restrained by squads of no-nonsense riot police armed with crowd-flushing water cannons that resembled tanks. Eventually they were dismissed in an orderly fashion, but that didn't feel like home. And for those of us not living on base home consisted of a bunk, a locker and a thousand foot floating hunk of steel whose amenities included freezing cold showers in winter and steaming hot bunkrooms in summer. It was habitable but definitely not the Love Boat.

After the gangway was put in place, the sun seemed to break through the barrier of discontent. The wives and families of married crewmembers came aboard smiling, hugging and kissing – happy to be reunited with their husband, their daddy. Those who had no one to greet us felt a little left out, but were warmed to see friendly faces that were actually *glad* to see us. We were five thousand miles from our home country, but we were home at last.

The Call of Nature

Ken Prater, 1972-75/Ltjg/Air Department

The USS Midway could never be confused with a luxury liner. Underway, the floating airbase with a postage stamp sized runway and no-frills amenities was a no-nonsense, business-as-usual workplace – not a shuffleboard court or margarita in sight.

Topside, all eyes were focused solely on the flames and the roar of the steady stream of winged and wingless machines taking off and landing on a non-skid dance floor that did all the swaying and bobbing. Inside the fortress and its seventeen decks below a sunless week would pass unnoticed – with no weekend in sight. The continuous loop of work-eat-sleep merged into one never ending day; it was more like an ant colony. The outside world seemed to be a fantasy; it just didn't exist.

Mother Nature, however, had her own agenda and occasionally entertained us with troupes of seafaring company. The cast of characters showed up unannounced but right on schedule – their own – and declared that we were not alone. More importantly, they reminded us that there was life beyond the duties of war.

Sorties of seagulls were our most frequent visitors. They flew many miles from who-knows-where just looking for chow anytime and anywhere they could find it. Consummate opportunists, they appeared with precision timing and dive-bombed everything dumped over the stern. What they found worth eating was unclear because the better part of it had already been eaten by an equally consummate crew. For these squawking rascalions everything other than World War Two sea rations was fair game. Everyone – including rascalions – knew not to touch that stuff.

Flying fish also checked in from time to time. As intriguing as their oxymoronic name, the ship's wake was their playground; they glided just inches above the water. Despite their lack of feathers, they mastered aerodynamic lift long before Orville & Wilbur tinkered with the notion. These low-riders of the air kept pace with the ship for miles as if pulled by an invisible tow line. It was fishy business watching them as they catapulted in and out of the water, but that's how they stayed alive and had fun doing it. They toyed with the laws of physics as if they were guidelines – not unlike Midway pilots.

But the rarest of sights was also the most glorious. Hundreds of blunt-headed blue-green mahi-mahi would suddenly surface from the deep and join us for a romp. Just at sunrise or sunset, they waited for their sixty-thousand-ton playmate to arrive or depart from port. The school appeared in chorus, leaping in unison, mirroring the precision of a highly disciplined military unit. They assumed station alongside the ship and imprinted an unforgettable memory for all those privileged to witness the show. Even if it wasn't ordered by the Captain, this performance was just for us – our luxury liner moment.

July 4, 1974: Old Blue Eyes, Arriving

Ken Prater, 1972-75/Ltjg/Air Department

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

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

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

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



Just as the moon schedules the tides, so I was scheduled for duty as the in-port Officer of the Deck on the quarterdeck.

As fate, luck or life would have it, I was destined to greet Frank Sinatra. At the appointed time, his limousine and entourage arrived and walked up the gangway. He was accompanied by Barbara Marx, a stunning blond recently divorced from Marx brother Zeppo. Two years later she became the fourth and final Mrs. Sinatra. Some things never change...

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

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

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

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

Without delay he launched into his performance, quickly captivating everyone with his special brand of magic. It was a solo concert that included only nine songs. Many of them came from the Sinatra hymn book – songs so identified with him that he practically owned them. Perhaps as a nod to the weather (or thumbing his nose at it), he opened with "You are the Sunshine of My Life," followed by familiar classics such as "I Get a Kick Out of You," "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "The Lady is a Tramp." Interspersed between numbers were jokes specially formulated for a naval crew and received with the expected hilarity. Nobody remembered what they were, but they seemed funny at the time.

Then it was over. After the last bars of "My Way" – his signature showpiece – echoed through the hangar bay, thunderous, enthusiastic rounds of applause erupted from a most grateful audience. The man who

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sang for many of our fathers (including mine) was paid in full with heartfelt satisfaction. He did not linger on stage, but was in no particular rush to leave.

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

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

The Story of George H. Gay Jr., Ensign U.S. Navy

Martin FitzGerald, 1957-60/AN V-4 Div.; Dave Payson, 1963-64/RDSN OI Div.

"What makes men go down to the sea in ships? Whatever the reason, be thankful for they become heroes . . ."

This story begins in 1943 when the keel was laid for a new battleship but was changed to become a new class of aircraft carrier that was needed more than a battleship. Let's go back in time to May 1942 during the Battle of Midway. Torpedo Squadron 8, operating from the U.S. aircraft carrier Hornet, engaged the Japanese Imperial Navy that was about to attack Midway Island. A young naval officer by the name of George H. Gay, a new Ensign, was to make his first combat flight against an enemy he had just learned about in his pre-flight briefing. His squadron was to have fighter cover, which didn't show, so the pilots of Torpedo Squadron 8 attacked the enemy fleet anyway, and were annihilated by Japanese Zeros and anti-aircraft fire. Wounded, Ensign Gay was the only survivor out of twenty some pilots and radiomen in Torpedo Squadron 8. After his TVB Devastator dive bomber was shot down, he clung to life for 30 hours floating on his destroyed plane's seat cushion, the "best seat in the house," albeit a wet one, that unfolded before his eyes. From this amazing vantage point, he witnessed the Japanese fleet decimated – three Japanese carriers sent to the bottom of the ocean – by U.S. carrier planes, in the battle that turned the tide of the War in the Pacific in the U.S.'s favor. Somehow, miraculously, Ensign Gay survived and was rescued by a U.S. destroyer and returned to the Hornet. Now go forward in time to 1945 – the war had just ended – to the commissioning of the brand-new aircraft carrier built on a battleship hull, the USS Midway. LT George H. Gay was at this event by invitation of the Navy to honor him and the legacy of the Battle of Midway, the new carrier's namesake. The greatest thing demonstrated by this story is that the Navy never forgets its heroes. For 47 years later, at Midway's decommissioning ceremony, there he was again to be honored, an aging George Gay, the Navy's guest. That was in 1992. This story ends in 1994 when LCDR George H. Gay (Ret.), age 77, passed away. His ashes were scattered over the waters near Midway Island, the site of the famous WWII battle that turned



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the tide of the War in the Pacific in the U.S.'s favor. Midway veterans will always remember LCDR George H. Gay (Ret.) for his role in that battle, for his fighting spirit and for his ability to survive. He was there at the beginning for the USS Midway, and he was there at the end. In between, he was a great American hero.

My Experience Aboard the USS Midway, CVA-41

Martin FitzGerald, 1957-60/AN, V-4 Division

I woke up one morning in the month of August. The year was 1957. I was on a troopship bound for the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, a short distance from Seattle, Washington, coming from San Diego, California. It was a cool day when the World War II troopship cruised through Puget Sound on its way to Bremerton, Washington. We finally tied up at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and across the dock was the biggest ship I had ever seen in my life.

We were ordered to board this big ship. I got down to the dock and I looked at this big gray ship from stem to stern, from waterline to the top of its mast. I thought, "What in the world am I getting into?" I said a little prayer to the ship, *"If you take care of me, I will take care of you."*

I then went aboard the aircraft carrier USS Midway for the first time, and was taken to a compartment somewhere on this ship. Somehow I learned I was to work in the SPUD LOCKER. This is where the vegetables and salad fixings are cleaned and prepared for cooking in the galley. I worked there in the early mornings from 0400 till 1200. When I got off work and got cleaned up, I could go and explore the ship and learn where everything was that I might need to know. Or I could go on liberty. All during this time the YARD WORKERS were still finishing the refit of the ship so it could be recommissioned. There were hoses and wires hanging from the overhead and on the deck, so you had to watch where you stepped.

Sometime in early September I was assigned to the Air Dept. and into V-4 Division. I moved to a new compartment on the O-2 level and my bunk was on top. The bunks were staked three high and my top bunk was next to a steam catapult. The first time the catapult was fired it scared the hell out of me. It was so loud and the vibration could be felt everywhere on the ship. The Midway went to sea for sea trials to find out what she could do, to test her sea worthiness. Finally the Navy Dept. accepted the ship and it was commissioned. I remember all the cars being loaded on to the ship, both on the flight deck and the hangar deck, so that you could not walk a straight line. We were headed for Alameda, California. This was going to be our homeport for the next several years. One of the guys in the division smuggled aboard a girl and hid her in an empty compartment and took her food. When the ship docked, this man took the girl to the afterbrow and the girl thanked the officer for the ride. Then all hell broke out.

When Midway arrived in Alameda, the ship's crane loaded on to the flight deck some AD-5s, WWII- type aircraft. I think it was the next day or so that we set sail for open sea to land aircraft onboard the ship. A lot of the crew knew what to do and the new guys learned from them (on the job training).

This is when I learned how to fuel a plane at sea with more planes landing. We were refueling planes that had already been spotted on the bow of the flight deck. I developed eyes in the back of my head to be aware of what was going on behind and all about me. It was wild and crazy, but we did our jobs without getting hurt. That may have been my first awareness of MIDWAY MAGIC. It seemed that everything we had to accomplish was done and done quickly.

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After about a month, the division first-class petty officer called me to the flight deck and informed me that I would be working in flight deck control. I had no idea of what my job was to be. I was told to report here for all general quarters drills and all flight quarters immediately and to stay and work there until relieved. I found out what I was to do very quickly from the two other men working beside me. The three of us worked very well together with no disagreements that I can recall. There were suggestions but no fights.

The job called for me to inform V-4 Division people to refuel which plane and where to find it. When it was fueled they let me know it was done so I could make the proper notations. In flight deck control there was a stainless-steel, two-level table. The top level had the flight deck and on the lower level was the hangar deck. Both were etched to scale of both decks. On the bulkhead boards hung different aircraft silhouettes that we marked with grease pencil with the proper aircraft number. I would move them to the location that they would be on the flight deck or hanger deck. Behind me on the bulkhead was a clear plastic board that had rectangles marked on it. On this board, I would mark squadron number and plane number for fuel status and armament. The officers would check this board to be sure those aircraft were ready to fly safely without having to ask anybody about their status.

The three of us worked so well together the officers in charge of us hardly came in to see how everything was going. This I am sure was my introduction to my first MIDWAY MAGIC experience.

Before we were sent out to sea while at Alameda, my division would have duty on the quarterdeck and I would have a four-hour watch as ship's messenger. Rarely would I have a message to deliver. The occasional visitor would come aboard and I would show them around and take them where they wanted to go. One of my duties was to keep an eye out for the captain and admiral that might be making a visit to Midway. If this happened, I had to tell the O.D. and he would tell the Boatswain and he would announce over the 1-MC Midway Arriving! Or whoever it might be. The Officer of the Deck could be a Lt. Jg to a Lt. Commander. I did not care because then I could speak to these officers one on one and learn a thing or two. I really liked these watches.

There were times I had my turn mess cooking as most sailors did at one time or another. I remember working in the scullery. That is where the trays and flatware were washed and put back on the line. There was another sailor in the scullery with me and the two of us would sing the Winston cigarette commercials while working to help make the job more fun. And it worked ... good times.

In 1959 I was discharged from the Naval Reserve with an Honorable Discharge and went home to my wife and five children to make a life for them. But that only lasted for nine years. I remarried to my second wife and that one went for four years. Then I met my present wife and we have been together for forty years. We had one child.

Many years passed and in 1992 the Midway came to Seattle for SEAFAIR. I took the opportunity to take my son aboard and show him where I worked and what I did when I was on Midway. We got up to the flight deck and into flight deck control, and the V-4 division officer was there. I introduced myself to him and he said, "Wait just a moment. I think there is something you might like to see." He showed me a letter written to me from the Navy Department. It was a Letter of Commendation for suggesting the color change of V-4 shirts from red to purple. He went on to explain that this was in use throughout the fleet. At this my eyes teared up. I was filled with emotion over this and very very proud of this letter. I saw it and I failed to get a copy of it, but I'm still trying. It's something I will never forget.

Five Days in Yokosuka

Jim Wheeler, 1959-63 / MM1

It was during the Midway's 1962 WESTPAC cruise that Mr. Brocken called me up to the M Division office and asked me if I'd like to fly into Yokosuka with engineering work orders for the shipyard. I would be flying in 5 days early before the ship docked in Yokosuka. I could see that he was being very serious about this so I didn't ask anything about bears being out in the woods nor did I inquire about the Pope and his religious beliefs. I looked at him and answered just as serious "that I would be more than happy to undertake this mission." Heck I thought Christmas was coming twice that year.

I was in charge of # 1 engine room so I arranged for my watches to be split and made ready to take flight. The day they called and told me to report to the flight deck did not give me warm fuzzy feelings about flying that day. As most of you are aware it takes 32 knots of wind to get an aircraft off the deck and up in the air. That's the speed of the ship plus the speed of the wind you're taking off into. When they called me and I left # 1 engine room to head up to the flight deck we were pounding along at 28 knots, seemed to me we were heading off into a puppy's breath of a breeze. To make a long story short the Air Boss said "send em off."

If memory serves they staged us as far aft on the flight deck as possible, since this was going to be a deck launch, to give us as much of a run as possible. We've all seen gooney birds taking off, flapping their wings and pumping their legs, that's kinda what this take off felt like to me. The COD aircraft, the one used for the delivery of mail and spare parts, did not instill in me a huge amount of confidence as to its air worthiness, but I was willing to give it a try just for 5 free days in Yokosuka. As an addendum to this sea story I can honestly say I have a great deal of respect for the pilots who man those aircraft and fly off and back onto a ship at sea.

We peddled our way down the flight deck and as most of us are aware an aircraft will sink slightly as it leaves the flight deck. Not to get too technical but the ground effects changes on the wings which causes the wing load to change. Well, we made it past the end of the flight deck and we started to sink, and we kept sinking, and that's when I started praying!! I told the Lord that if he would get me out of this tight spot that I currently found myself in that I would never do some of those sinful things that I had done on rare occasions. As we sank I was getting very specific as to what I was willing to give up until I noticed we were finally gaining air speed and altitude then I thought there was really no reason to go overboard with these promises. And as it turned out I had to rescind some of the promises I made that day. Oh well!! I wish I had gotten the name of our pilot that day as I know he would like to thank me for all the help I afforded him and his feeble attempts to get us airborne.

We made it into Atsugi air base and I taxied down to Yokosuka and reported to the Honcho at the shipyard. Spent some time with him and his planning committee going over the work orders especially for M Division and # 1 engine room. Then had 5 days basket leave waiting for Midway to steam into port.

When I told my wife of my adventure flying off an aircraft carrier, she asked me what I did for those 5 days in port alone. I looked her right in the eye and said "I went to all the churches and museums in the area". Unfortunately I can't repeat her response, as there are still some things that will make a sailor blush.

The Engine Room

Jim Wheeler, 1959-63 / MM1

My name is Jim Wheeler and I spent almost 8 years on active duty with the US Navy, leaving in 1963 as a First Class Machinist Mate. After boot camp and A school I served 3 years aboard the light cruiser USS Worcester (CL-144) and 4 years aboard the USS Midway. Being a Machinist Mate I worked in the engine rooms aboard both ships. For the past decade or so I've had a recurring dream that comes on me three or four times a year. It's a very pleasant dream, no stress or anything unpleasant about it, but I am down in the engine room aboard one of those ships lighting off the engine room and making ready to get underway.

In naval engineering terminology you don't start a piece of machinery, you light it off. This comes from actually lighting off the boilers with a torch soaked in oil. You light off the first burner with the torch and the other burners from that one. So you light off a boiler, you light off a main generator or you light off a main engine, whatever you start you light it off.

Midway has four main engines, Westinghouse high pressure steam turbines, and twelve boilers, three for each engine. They are M type express boilers capable of putting out steam at 600 pounds pressure at 850 degrees super heat. Work is accomplished with steam by making it expand and drive either a piston or a turbine. The boilers and main engines are in what they called GROUPS. One group in B division had 1 Able, Baker & Charlie boilers while one group in M division had two Westinghouse 1250 KW main generators, a main pump room, and a main engine room. Aboard Midway I was in one group, in one engine room.

In February of this year my wife and myself plus my daughter and son-in-law were in San Diego and went aboard Midway. At first I was told that # 1 engine room was not open to the general public, but a very kind docent by the name of Mr. Len Gray, when finding out I was a Midway veteran and that I had left the ship 50 years ago made things happen. He contacted the head of the safety team, a Mr. Joe V. and a safety team member Mr. John S. and away we went down to # 1 engine room. I was quite pleased to be able to show my family MY engine room and just how an engine room worked. The high pressure and low pressure steam turbines which comprise the main engine, the pumps and reduction gear and the myriad of steam lines. Yet all the while I was explaining to my family how the engine room worked I was ticking off in the back of my mind the steps I would take to light it off again and make it ready to get underway. I also have to mention that the engine room wasn't as clean as it was when I left it 50 years ago.

In closing, I'd like to say to Admiral McLaughlin that if BUSHIPS ever contacts him stating that Midway must be made ready to put to sea and go in harms way, the first move he should make is to call me, I'll get One Group and # 1 engine room ready. And I firmly believe that with all the former crewmembers out there, officer and enlisted, we could man this ship, make it ready and take that Lady back to sea and let her Rock & Roll one more time.

Raise your hand.