

Station Ship News

The quarterly newsletter of the *USS Midway Reunion Group*

DING DING . . . DING DING . . . ALL CREW ARRIVING . . . ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS . . . IN THE AIR, AT SEA AND IN PORT . . . DING DING . . . DING DING . . .



The USS Midway arrives on station in San Diego Harbor, June 2004

Stand by to Get Underway . . .

Dear Mr. Granger,

On behalf of the staff and employees of the USS Midway Museum, I applaud your emerging efforts to create an organization where former USS Midway crew of all ranks and eras can gather, share their stories, and help support their legacy through the USS Midway Museum. As you well know, the essence of this historic carrier's legacy lies in the footsteps of the men who walked her decks and who repeatedly answered the call of their nation.

We wish you success in making the most of this opportunity to create an extended USS Midway community that will stand the test of passing time, and we look forward to working with your organization as it grows in the years to come.

*Respectfully,
RADM Mac McLaughlin, USN (ret.)
President & CEO
USS Midway Museum*

With those words from Admiral “Mac” McLaughlin, USN (ret.), President and CEO of the USS Midway Museum, to Oscar Granger, President of the former OI/OC Division Reunion Group, a new era was ushered in, the formation of a new shipwide reunion group, the USS Midway Reunion Group.

Less than a month after RADM “Mac” McLaughlin’s message to Oscar Granger, the USS Midway Museum sent out a broadcast e-mail to its thousands of members, which read, in part: “A group of former USS Midway sailors, mostly OI personnel, is working to establish a broader USS Midway Reunion Group and is planning the inaugural reunion aboard the USS Midway Museum this September . . . Museum officials have met with Oscar Granger and his group and applaud their efforts to build a reunion organization that supports the vision and mission of the USS Midway Museum. We need a strong and viable reunion organization to help preserve the legacy of the USS Midway . . .” **Scott McGaugh, Marketing Director, USS Midway Museum.**

From the President....

Shipmates!

We're well underway and making maximum progress toward the 2010 Ship's Reunion in San Diego, scheduled for September 23–26. Anyone missing this reunion is going to miss out on a great opportunity to get together with friends and shipmates, many that you may not have seen for years or even decades. Check out the Reunion Group's website at

<http://ussmidway.net/home.html> and get yourself on-board for the Reunion. If you don't have access to the website, send us a postcard asking for the Reunion registration information and get it back to us as quickly as possible.

As those of you who are Midway Museum members already know or have read for the first time in this newsletter, our USS Midway Reunion Group has been recognized and sanctioned by the Midway Museum. We received an e-mail message from RADM Mac McLaughlin, USN (ret.), CEO and Chairman of the Midway Museum, in February, acknowledging our efforts over the past 12 years to get to this juncture.

We actually started the process of cultivating a relationship with the Midway Museum prior to the last reunion which was held in Orlando, 2009. During the formal business meeting there, we discussed the pro's and con's of such an organizational change. We finally came to agreement, albeit not unanimously, that we should seek members from every Midway departmental or airwing, in order to sustain the membership and to provide a regular venue for all Midway Veterans to come together to socialize and to help preserve the History of the USS Midway and to *Live the Adventure* and *Honor the Legend* that we were instrumental in creating while serving aboard. It was a natural jump from that decision to seeking recognition from the Midway Museum, and it paid off!

We're now at the point in our reorganization where we need to support the organization that we've created. We haven't asked for any fiscal support from the Midway, and it's not anticipated that we ever will have to. We have been able to sustain the organization between reunions with the dues that we collect from our members. I'm proud to say that every penny we receive from the membership goes into the organization in the form of newsletters and reunion planning and everyone one of us that proudly works to put these events together is working in a volunteer capac-

ity. It's a Labor of Love and the camaraderie we see every two years when these plans come together provides us all the compensation we could ever ask for.

There's always more work to be done than there are bodies to do it and our organization is no different in that respect. As the organization grows, we'll have a need for new Board members and for volunteers to help out during the reunions. We don't pay much, but you'll receive the undying gratitude of every member for your service, both aboard Midway and as part of the USS Midway Reunion Group organization.

See you in San Diego in September.

Oscar Granger, President



The emblem/logo of the USS Midway Reunion Group for the 2010 reunion

San Diego Reunion Takes Focus

Now the latest news on the 2010 reunion. The dates have been set for **September 22-26, 2010**, with the 22nd and the 26th designated as travel days.

The **San Diego Crowne Plaza Hotel** (where we also held our reunions in 2005 and 2007) is the site of this year's reunion. Attendees should make their own hotel reservations using the information provided on the registration form included with this newsletter. You can also register on our website via a special electronic portal provided by the hotel. Whether by phone or by website, make your hotel reservations now! Our special rate of \$99/day is better than reasonable and is good for 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion.

The reunion planning committee has come up with an interesting variety of activities for us during the 3 full

days of the reunion. Planning is still in the works, but so far the three days shape up like this.

- **THURSDAY (Sept. 23)**—San Diego Trolley Tour. The trolley (or trollies, depending on the size of the group) will pick us up at the hotel and take us on a guided tour of San Diego with eight stops along the way. At Seaport San Diego we will take an hour lunch at one or more of the eight restaurants in this location. So for a very reasonable price per person (see the registration form for prices) we will get passage to and from the hotel, the regular trolley tour of one of the most beautiful and nautical cities on the West Coast, and lunch with our shipmates and mates. A good deal? You bet!

- **FRIDAY (Sept. 24)**—This day will be reserved for individual touring of the USS Midway. Plus there is a possibility, since we are now aligned with the Midway Museum, that some of us can serve as volunteer docents for an hour or two. Also on this day, the women may plan an activity together to escape from the men (and who can blame them?).

- **SATURDAY (Sept. 25)**—Our biannual business meeting will be held in the morning, and the Reunion dinner in the evening. The program for the dinner is in the planning stage. We hope to have a guest speaker from the Midway Museum, in addition to a special award presentation to be announced later.

Reunion co-hosts Mike Walker and R.C. Morton are busy scouring the city looking for other entertainment options for us, such as unique restaurants and dancing palaces. We may party all night or, conversely, we may hit the rack early so that we can live to play another day.

Farewell to the *Scope Dope News*

For years around here this newsletter was affectionately called the *Scope Dope News*, named by the founder of our reunion group, Ron McPhail, who retired as our leader and newsletter editor a few years back due to health reasons.

Ron was—and still is—an inspiration to all of us. When I took over the duties of newsletter editor, I had a great role model to follow—him! For example, in the very first edition of the *Scope Dope News*, published in July 1998, these were his opening words:

To all landlubbers, sea lawyers, old salts, old swabs, and other scavengers of the seven seas, greetings from Central Florida.

With lines like that, he has been a tough act to follow!

We honored Ron at our 2009 reunion in Orlando. He still lives there. But his sea-faring days are over. The nickname *Scope Dope* was derived from the fact that for all of the years we were in existence as the USS Midway OI Division Reunion Group, we were made up mostly of Radarmen, CIC officers, Electronic Technicians, and other electronic types who plied their trade in CIC—Combat Information Center.

You know the joke: “Hey, boot, hand me that bucket of range and bearings rings.” We thought it was funny then. Still do.

So for well over a decade, the members of the OI Division Reunion Group kept in touch through the *Scope Dope News*. They lived to meet up with each other every couple of years in different cities around the country. At these reunions, they would swap their sea stories one more time. They told some good ones. Still do.

But now the *Scope Dope News* has given way to the *Station Ship News* which is *communicating* to a broader band of USS Midway brothers who sailed the seas together on her, or flew in the air above her in incredibly awesome planes. Or did any one of the hundreds of other equally important jobs on the ship.

So here’s to smooth sailing for all of us. We have much in common, namely the U.S. Navy and the USS Midway. Kept her going, we did. We all had our jobs on board, they were all important, and we did them well. She ruled the seas for over four decades, and we ruled them with her. Working together.

So join me, shipmates, old and new, in saying goodbye to the *Scope Dope News*, which after 41 issues and a dozen years is being decommissioned, replaced by this the first edition of the the *Station Ship News*. It was a helluva ride while it lasted, and we had some good times!

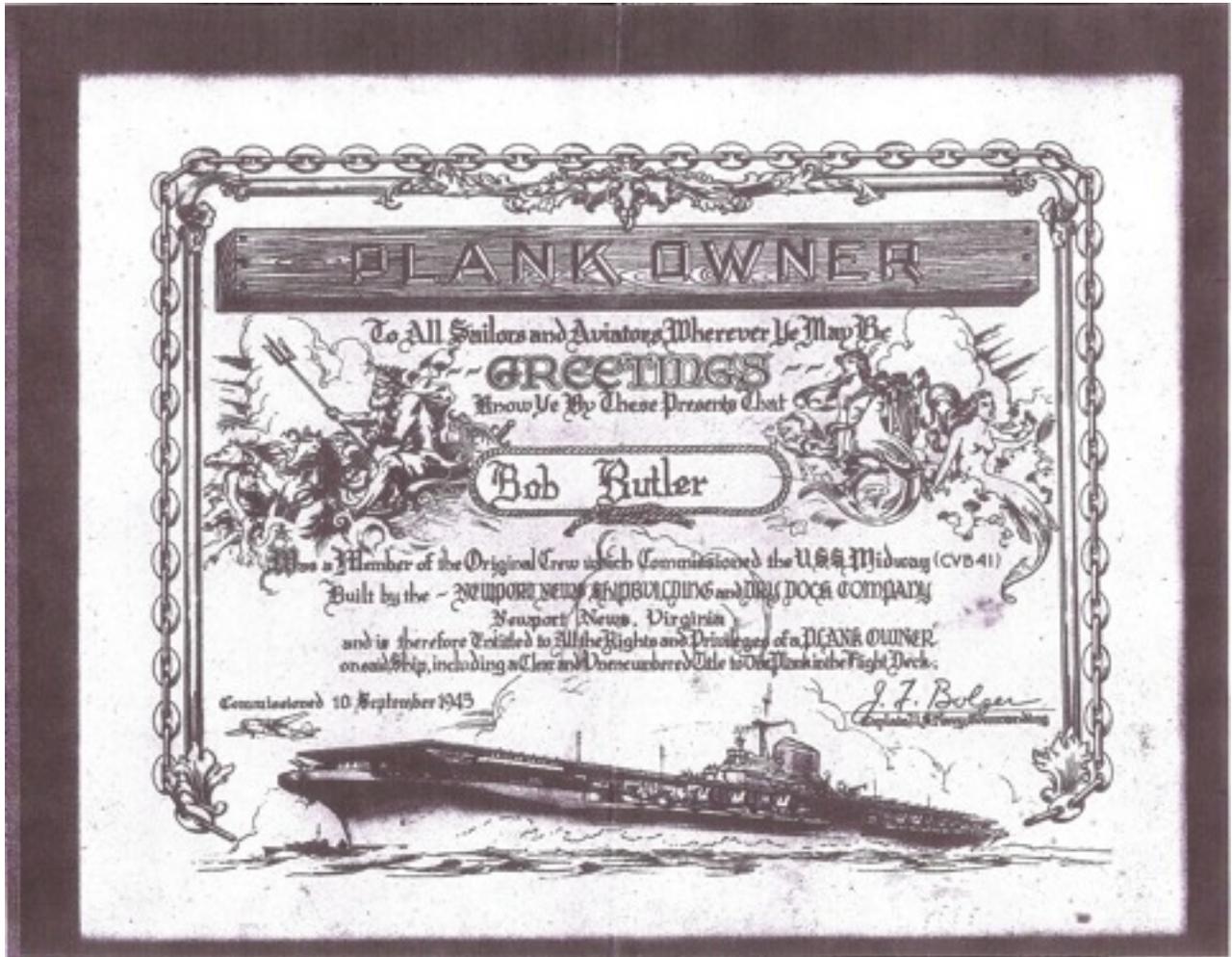
Still do.

Dave Payson, Secretary

Trivia question sent in by Bob Srabian - former LTJG aboard (63-66)

Question: What movie starring Steve McQueen and Jacqueline Bissette shows a cameo silhouette of the USS Midway CVA/CV 41?

Answer: *Bullet*. Filmed in 1968. There is a scene where Steve McQueen pulls over in a car with Jacqueline Bissette on US Highway 101. In the background you will see the Midway in dry dock at Hunters' Point Naval Shipyard undergoing its conversion from a CVA to a CV.



The First Radarman

Plank Owner Bob Butler member of USS Midway's first Radar Gang

Today, Bob Butler enjoys building model tall ships and three-masters, a natural progression, perhaps, from the days long bygone when he served as a Radarman on the Midway's commissioning crew. Bob joined the Navy in 1942 as an aviation cadet, but his dream to become a carrier fighter pilot wasn't to be because he developed chronic dizziness from violent maneuvers. Other than the dizziness, he was in perfect condition. Nonetheless, he received a medical discharge. A day after his discharge he re-enlisted in the Navy and went to boot camp in Great Lakes.

"My first choice for a service school was radar, and I got it," he says. Subsequently, the Navy sent Bob to five radar schools starting at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to learn the basics of air and surface radar.



With a practiced eye . . . Bob Butler, shown here building a three-master, was the first among us to work in the eerie green glow of CIC aboard the USS Midway

From Ft. Lauderdale, he went to St. Simons Island off the coast of Georgia. There he studied the principles of physical and electronic jamming. Following that,

there was more radar training at Ocracoke Island off the coast of North Carolina.

Obviously, the Navy was wasting no time in training Bob in the new science of radar detection, which was proving to be a vital weapon against the Axis countries as World War II raged on. Radar gave the allies a decided advantage. We knew where the enemy was before he knew where we were.

And while Bob was learning about radar, the Navy was busy laying the hull of a giant new aircraft carrier, soon to be the mightiest ship in the fleet, the USS Midway, CVB-41, at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in Newport News, Virginia.

After his radar schooling, Bob went to Boston where the Midway crew was being assembled. "I was in Boston on VJ day—what a party," he said.

"Finally we went to Naval Station Norfolk to meet the Midway. I was surprised to find her in dry dock. If you think the ship looked big in the water you should have seen her out of the water. She was, at the time, the largest ship afloat."

Bob lived aboard the Midway for a month in dry dock before the commissioning ceremony took place, on September 10, 1945, one week after World War II officially ended. "We left on her shakedown cruise to the Caribbean shortly thereafter."

Bob was on the Midway from August 21, 1945, until December 1, 1945, as a member of the ship's first radar gang, and he has many fond memories of those months following the war. Not surprisingly, since he wanted to be a fighter pilot, many of those memories center around the Midway's planes.

Those were propeller days, no jets," he recalled. The aircraft complement consisted of F2F Wildcats, F4U Corsairs, SBD Dauntless, and SB2C dive bombers and TBF torpedo bombers."

They lost two planes on the shakedown cruise, Bob said. "One was an SBD which got the wave-off from the LSO. The pilot went full throttle to go around again, but he was a bit too low and his tail hook caught a cable which slammed him down on the deck, shaking the hook loose. He roared down the deck at full throttle and went over the side, landing upside down in the sea. Both crewmen survived, and were picked up by the trailing destroyer. The pilots were returned for a double ransom of ice cream."

He may have been a pilot at heart, but he was a Radarman by trade. "I am sure operations in my CIC were a good bit simpler than in your day.

Recently, I had the pleasure of a VIP tour of the Harry S. Truman, at the time the newest of the atomic carriers. I spent some time in her CIC. Many things were different but some things were the same. We had the same plexiglass plotting board where I learned to print backwards, but the Truman had more and different radar receivers."

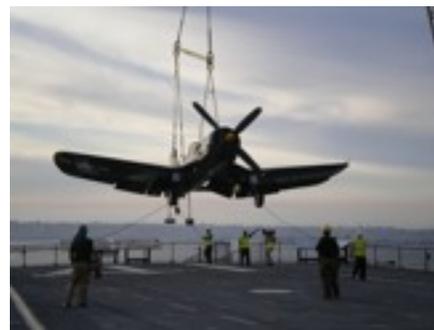
So Bob and the Midway missed out on World War II, which wasn't a bad thing. The Midway would go on to fight in other wars, of course, as part of her long and glorious career.

"I felt no disappointment that I had no war to fight after all that training," he said. "My feelings were that I had served my country when it needed me and I was ready to complete my education and get on with my life. Yes, I could have stayed on the Midway longer. There were inducements to re-enlist, but I chose not to."

Bob was discharged from the Navy December 16, 1945. He went on to earn a degree in civil engineering from the University of Southern California, and enjoyed a long career in everything from heavy construction to shopping center developer.

Bob is going to try to make it to the reunion this year. For among us, he is the First Radarman.

Veterans Day on the Flight Deck



Our USS Midway man on the ground, docent Dick Hollowell, sent the *Station Ship News* this picture of an F4U Corsair being loaded onto the flight deck of the

Midway during a ceremony last Veterans Day. The Corsair was restored in the Midway's hangar on North Island. Among other speakers and dignitaries on the Midway that day, the ceremony featured a former WWII Corsair pilot (USMC) who told of his

experiences flying the Corsair in the Pacific and making the first raid on Tokyo after the Doolittle raid.

Attention 2010 Dues-Payers

If you haven't paid your 2010 dues, please do so. By the time you read this, they will be several months overdue. Dues (\$20/yr) were due at the end of January. We appreciate your prompt response. The reunion group needs these funds to pay its way and finance the San Diego reunion.

You men are always member in good standing, but to make yourselves in even better standing, make your dues checks payable to Oscar Granger and mail to:

**Oscar Granger
44434 S.E. 142nd Pl,
North Bend, WA, 98045.**

*The USS Midway Reunion Group thanks you in advance!
Donations are welcome!*

From the Desk of the VP....

With less than six months remaining until the next exciting reunion in San Diego, activity by your officers and reunion committee continues at a busy pace putting everything together for you and your guests. Don't miss this reunion, it's going to be a wonderful time for all who attend.

Have you thought about inviting a family member, relative, friend or neighbor to attend the reunion with you? If not, now's the time to talk to them and share the exciting adventure of coming to our reunion as your guests. Tell them about the ship you served on and how they can actually go aboard and tour one of the greatest fighting ships of the United States Navy. Doesn't sound exciting? Well, think about this; how many of your acquaintances have ever been aboard an aircraft carrier? Now's their chance, and yours, to stay at a great hotel, fellowship with with the reunion group, tour the Midway and see the sights in and around San Diego. Don't wait, get them interested now because the registration forms will soon be in your mailbox. Do you know of any former USS Midway veterans? If so, get in touch with them and invite them to the reunion.

Have you ever thought about becoming a member of the USS Midway Museum? I encourage you to look at the Museum web site, and ours, for information about joining. For as little as \$35 a year you can be part of the "Midway Magic" and proudly support our ship.

Once again I'll have the usual memorabilia for sale to all who attend the reunion in San Diego. Sorry, none of Helen's quilts will be available in San Diego, but you can talk to her about ordering them.

I'm excited about this reunion and looking forward to seeing each and every one of you again. Don't forget to bring a few guests with you, it's always an adventure to get acquainted with new people.

Bill Kruper, Vice President

San Diego Memories . . .

This is not just deja vu all over again, this happened in 2005 and again in 2007. For some of us it may have happened long before those years as well—those of us who went to boot camp there, for example (try 1963!)

Below and on the next page are pictures from the 2007 San Diego reunion. Sweet memories captured by digital transformation!





Below, from R.C. Morton's classic collection of Midway photos. That's Mike Walker on the right with Clay Sponseller, ca 1963-64



The Masthead

USS Midway Reunion Group

A newsletter covering former USN veterans who served aboard the USS Midway, and who are friends eternal.

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USS Midway Reunion Group Web Site
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Save Mailing Expenses!

Hospitality Room volunteers sought

Lots of perks and fun come with the job. Volunteers would mostly hang around, smile at people, tell/listen to sea stories and keep the supply's replenished. Any combination of shipmate/mate, shipmate/shipmate, mate/mate would work. Don't believe that old adage that you should never volunteer for anything. Few things in life are as fun as serving as a host/hostess in a hospitality room at a Midway reunion. Phone or e-mail Bill Kruper if you are interested.