



San Diego 2015



Special Reunion Edition of *Station Ship News*

Reunion Day 3, April 25th, 2015



CAPT Larry Ernst USN (Ret.) addresses an enthusiastic crowd of Midway veterans and guests at the Grand Banquet.

Editor's Note: Our guest speaker, CAPT Larry Ernst USN (Ret.), compiled an impressive record over the course of his 27-year career in the United States Navy—flying 136 combat missions in Vietnam, serving as a Top Gun pilot and instructor, serving as the XO of the USS Constellation—and, of course, serving as the commanding officer of the USS Midway.

“Pappy” Comes Home

There was nary a dry eye in the house as Captain Larry Ernst USN (Ret.), Midway’s 40th and last commanding officer, finished up his speech before an overflow crowd of Midway veterans and guests in the Pacific ballroom at the Wyndham San Diego Bayside Hotel. The occasion was the USS Midway Veterans Assn.’s Grand Banquet, on the last day of MVA’s annual reunion, Saturday, April 25, 2015.

When he was done, nearly 300 Midway banqueters rose as one and gave him a thundering ovation. They cheered for the man who had decommissioned the Midway, who had put her to rest so that she could one day come back to life, and they cheered for anything and everything Midway, the ship just up the street from the hotel. These people loved her.



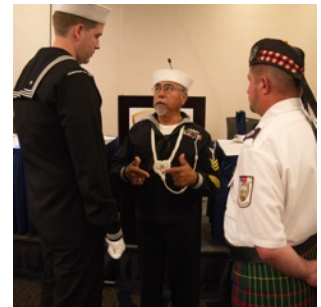
Two former Midway skippers talk over old times. Here with Larry Ernst is Larry Chambers, Midway’s skipper During Operation Frequent Wind.

The acclaim for the man they

call “Pappy” was well deserved. He had struck a resonant chord with the audience, which was Midway to the core, on this night, and his slides highlighting the key events and accomplishments of his Midway captaincy added still another dimension to his talk, invoking memories these veterans had about their own Midway days. Larry Ernst’s powerful words and pictures brought his message home.

But the culmination of this perfect moment in time for Larry didn’t happen without a lot of hard work and a certain amount of trepidation on his part.

The Honor Guard gets ready to roll. L to R - Chase Granger, Oscar Rocha, and Doug Kenyon



“As the last commanding officer I felt a lot of pressure to deliver a speech that was befitting this great warship and all who served on her,” he said. “I have done a lot of public speaking but this one was really hard. I must have put a good weeks work in writing, rewriting and then editing what I wanted to say.”

He wanted to deliver a speech that met all expectations of his audience on this night, an audience represented by the full complement of Midway’s crew, from her commissioning in 1945 to her decommissioning in 1992, and all years in between. This was an audience with high expectations.

MVA President Oscar Granger kicks off the banquet program



Two former Midway skippers were here – Larry Chambers (75-76) and Riley Mixson (85-87). Also present were Midway “MiG Killers,” Ronald McKeown and John Enschede, who, in 1972, famously “killed” two MiG-17s on the same patrol in their F4B Phantom Jet in the skies over North Vietnam. Also, close by, was a table full of USS Midway Museum staff and volunteers, including Admiral Mac McLaughlin, who introduced Larry.

But in addition to the VIPs in the audience, Larry understood that the Midway veterans at this reunion – all Mid-

way veterans, for that matter – were the ones who made USS Midway one of the premier warships of the 20th century, a steadfast guardian of our country, and a first responder for so many in peril; they drove the ship, flew the planes, and kept them flying – and conducted all the other operations so necessary to keep Midway on-line and vigil.

So, yes, Larry was under more than a little pressure to deliver on this night, and he responded with probably the best speech of his life – well worthy of these Midway veterans, the ship, and her legacy.

In short, he delivered, and he inspired us with his stirring words and captivating slides. It was a fitting ending for the reunion. Two-hundred Midway veterans and their families and guests went home happy.

And the aircraft carrier he commanded – USS Midway, aka USS Midway Museum – why, she lives right up the street, and she’s not going anywhere!

(Editor’s Note: The following is a recount of the banquet program up to and after Larry Ernst’s keynote address Saturday night in Wyndham’s Pacific Room, or Grand Ballroom, which sounds such much grander. The banquet got underway at approximately 1830.

Banquet Program

Once the approximately 300 banqueters found tables in the large banquet hall with family, shipmates and friends, MVA President Oscar Granger called the program to order, and MVA’s able-bodied Color Guard, all three Midway veterans, smartly dressed in their uniforms, presented the colors. Then Oscar led the banqueters in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by MVA’s Chaplain Ray Bettis delivered the invocation.

Next up, Oscar introduced the guests at the head table. Seated at the dais were – we don’t have a picture here – Chaplain Ray Bettis and his wife Barbara; Sec.-Treas. Dave Payson and his wife Mina Jo; MVA President Oscar Granger; guest speaker Larry Ernst and his wife Bobby; VP-Reunions Jim Hayter and his wife Pamm; and MVA Reunion Host Tim Miller.

Donate to the Battleship Texas Foundation. For more information contact MVA member Bill Southworth at wd.southworth@gmail.com



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Midway veteran **Rodney Ishimine** and his sons, from Ewa Beach, Hawaii, all wearing their Aloha shirts, enjoy the banquet scene.

Oscar also introduced some of the folks at the USS Midway Museum’s table close-by, including President & CEO Mac McLaughlin, who introduced Larry Ernst prior to his keynote address. The museum’s table, it might be added, was occupied by solid MVA supporters.

Then Dave Payson was honored to lead the portion of the program recognizing Midway’s plank owners from each of Midway’s three major eras – the 1945 commissioning crew, the 1957 recommissioning crew, and the 1970 recommissioning crew. The men stood with great pride and accepted the recognition and applause of their shipmates and guests. Dave also asked the WWII members present to stand and be recognized, as well as the 1992 decommissioning crew, including Larry Ernst himself. Also recognized were the Midway veterans who had been part of Midway’s crew during Operation Frequent Wind. This included commanding officer Larry Chambers. Finally, Dave announced one last category: Midway veterans who were age 95 or older. Two stood: Sid Friedlander and John Cantor, both WWII veterans. Sid was a “youthful” 96, and John turned 99 two days after the reunion. Not surprisingly, perhaps, these two men drew the loudest cheers of all from the crowd.

Jim Hayter was next up at the podium, and he presided over the MIA-POW Empty Table Ceremony, which pays tribute to those in the military missing in action or who are



prisoners of war. Pointing to a small table (shown at left) set with a white table cloth in the corner of the room, Jim read about the symbolic significance of each item on the

table – for example, a single red rose displayed in a vase on the table reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep the faith awaiting their return, the glasses on the table are inverted. They cannot

toast with us tonight – maybe tomorrow, if we remember . . . and so on goes the script. It is a solemn ceremony, and Jim conducted it well.

Then dinner was served, and as most of the banqueters will agree, it was delicious, whether you had the top sirloin, the chicken breast, the grilled salmon or the tofu. (Well, okay, maybe not the tofu.) And the banqueters are still buzzing about the so-called “flourless” chocolate cake for dessert. It was beyond delicious, most would agree, and made up for not having dessert at the Welcome Dinner at Anthony’s two days earlier (grumble, grumble, grumble).

Following dinner, MVA President Oscar called for the banquet program to resume. RADM Mac McLaughlin, head of the USS Midway Museum, came forward and introduced the keynote speaker, Larry Ernst. Larry’s speech and presentation, as chronicled above, was nothing short of spectacular. To listen to him and watch his presence is to understand why the Navy chose this man to command Midway.

Following Larry’s keynote address, he awarded two MVA members World War II Victory Medals. Robert Pitman and Sid Friedlander stepped forward with their families to receive their medals to the rousing applause of the banqueters.



Robert Pitman with his guest is awarded the World War II Victory Medal by Larry Ernst.



Sid Friedlander with his wife and son is awarded the World War II Victory Medal by Larry Ernst.

Continuing in the spirit of things, Larry drew the names from an ice bucket of the two lucky flag winners. The two

prized American flags had been flown over Midway and precisely folded in shadow boxes with certificates of authentication signed by Admiral Mac. The rules of the drawing are simply this: you have to be a Midway veteran, and you have to be present to win. The two lucky flag winners on this night, as called out loudly in the banquet room, were Peter Greenhalgh, onboard 62-65; 78-80, of Buffalo, NY, and Jim Perttula, onboard 72-75, of Munising, MI.

Next Jim Hayter spelled Larry at the podium and commenced the Door Prizes/Drawings portion of the program. Jim, our chief fundraiser, is generally reputed to be able to sell ice cubes to Eskimos, but all for a good cause. Proceeds usually donated to one of the Midway Museum’s charitable programs. At the banquet, there is one Grand Prize, that being the cherished Lone Sailor statue. The banqueters purchased raffle tickets in advance, and Jim read off the winning number, and the lucky winner was presented the statue by Larry Ernst. The winning number was held by Midway veteran David Wyant. Again, rousing applause from the tables.

Perhaps the most highly sought prize on banquet night was a special magnum of wine that had been autographed by many of the VIPs at the banquet – from Larry Ernst, to the other two former Midway skippers present, to the two MiG Killers present, to the president and CEO of the Midway Museum, to the members of MVA’s Board of Directors, etc. You get the picture. At this point, as the tradition goes, Jim becomes an auctioneer, and the banqueters become the bidders. Things can get a racous, with all the hooting and hollering that goes on as the bidding mounts for the bottle. The winning bid topped out at \$350, the highest ever, and the autographed bottle went to a gentleman named John Lohmann, who just happens to be a friend of Larry Ernst. Do you suppose this autographed bottle of wine will end up on Larry’s mantel? Maybe so, but the MVA ended up with the money, and we will donate it to the Midway Museum.

Thus concluded the last piece of the 2015 banquet program, and MVA’s 2015 reunion was officially over. President Oscar gained back the mic from Jim and announced as much to the banqueters mingling below – it was *finis*, history, see you in Pensacola. But did they even hear him? Who knows? But it sure looked like they were having fun.



Jim “Magic Man” Hayter stands at podium as Larry Ernst draws winning raffle ticket for the Lone Sailor Trophy.



David Wyant is awarded the Lone Sailor Statue by Larry Ernst for winning the Grand Banquet Raffle

Reunion Day 1, April 25th, 2015

Win One for the Gipper

It had been a long time coming, but finally, on the first day of the reunion, Thursday, April 23, 2015, the Midway veterans and their guests got their chance to go aboard a modern-day aircraft carrier, a CVN, a nukey, specifically, the USS Ronald Reagan, CVN-76, aka “The Gipper.”

In 2013, when we were in San Diego for that reunion, the Navy canceled canceled a similar tour for us a month or so before the reunion, but we made it aboard this time.

The Reagan presented a steep climb, but the 160 or so reunion attendees who made this tour were up to the challenge.



We may have been up for the challenge, but it was touch-and-go for many of us as we scaled Reagan’s steep ladders and frequently raked our shins across her hatch cones. Veteran carrier sailors ourselves, there was more than a little pride involved, and a tendency, perhaps, to show these young sailors how it was done back in the day. But the handrails seemed uncharacteristically “slippery,” and some of us may have been gasping for air as we climbed up and down the network of ladders. You would think one of these modern-day carriers would have elevators.

“The Gipper,” when viewed across her flight deck and hangar bay, was vast, but not that much vaster than Midway, for all that, and her bridge and pilot house contained many modern-day controls unfamiliar to us, especially her comparatively tiny helm, which seemed almost toy-like. Computer technology had introduced a certain level of intricacy to things, it appears.

Our young, tour-guide sailors, ship’s crewmen, were energetic, friendly and enthused, some of them even young

women, which was certainly different from our day. But whatever their gender, ship’s crew did a great job showing us around a surprising number of spaces above and below deck on the Reagan, including a museum/showroom space featuring pictures of the ship’s namesake, President Ronald Reagan.

As we were ushered off the ship in preparation for the next busload of Midway sailors and guests to arrive – there were three busloads of us – we were given a chance to view and even purchase Reagan memorabilia at a makeshift “ship’s store. All USS Reagan memorabilia. One of our members asked if they had any USS Midway stuff. That got a good laugh.

No doubt about it, we came away happy from this tour, if not a little banged up. But we had been given the chance, finally, to see how the modern carrier navy lived. All is well. But those new uniforms . . .

The Midway Service Project

While most of the reunion crew headed out to the Reagan to tour that great warship, many others stayed behind to participate in events aboard ship, particularly one called the Midway Service Project (MSP). The veterans who stayed behind would rather be on the ship than just about anywhere else on the planet. Museum staff had set up a table and sign (see sign on last page of this newsletter) for our veterans, and they engaged the visitors as they came through the hangar bay viewing the exhibits. Here was their chance to talk to real Midway veterans, and did our guys ever tell them some stories! They didn’t disappoint. Other reunion attendees walked the flight deck, or ended up in the Fan Tail Cafe enjoying a cool one, or in the Jet Shop checking out and buying the great memorabilia available there.

As part of the MSP, Midway veterans reunion attendees, also enjoyed tying yellow ribbons on a wire fence that surrounding a good portion of the museum’s flight deck. The ribbons – 58,300 of them – were in remembrance of the 58,300 men and women who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. There was also a one-third-size replica of the Vietnam Memorial on the flight deck that made for a solemn exhibit. The yellow ribbons and Vietnam War exhibit were part of the Operation Frequent Wind 40th anniversary celebration the museum was observing the day following our reunion. Many of our men participated in that celebration, too.

Welcome Dinner at Anthony’s Fish Grotto

En masse, in loose and ragged ranks, about 150 reunion attendees filed out of the Hospitality Suite. “marched” through the hotel lobby over to Anthony’s Fish Grotto

across the street from the hotel. Many of them were still trying to coax their semi-sprung hamstrings and sore muscles back into place from scaling Reagan's steep ladders, which seemed to go straight up to at least a 014 level. In other words, impossibly high. Maybe it's the new Navy's way of saving even more open room on these modern carriers – build the ladders straight up!

By the time we all found tables in Anthony's large dining facility and started in on our salads, we were already well on our way to becoming acquainted and living up to this event's billing – a "Welcome Dinner." The food was good, and the company was even better. Not a bad way to finish up the first day of the reunion!



Reunion folks enjoying the Welcome Dinner at Anthony's

Reunion Day 2, April 24th, 2015

Meet & Greet & the Battle of Midway Theater

The next morning, at about 0745, Friday, April 24th, the second full day of the reunion, came much too early for most of us as we headed over to the USS Midway Museum, most of us on foot, to what was billed as the Meet and Greet update with museum staff. There to greet us were Scott McGaugh and Jill Hammons of the museum team. Unfortunately, Admiral Mac couldn't make it due to another last-minute commitment. But we had fun, and we had plenty to eat – copious quantities of continental fare, pastries, fruit and black coffee.

Scott and Jill both gave short talks, catching us up on museum activities over the past year, including the continued growth in the annual number of visitors to the museum (now well over a million per year from all over the world and the country), the latest on the museum's education program, and, of course, the completion of the Battle of Midway Theater across the way from us in the hangar bay. This part of the program concluded, and we and headed over to the BOM Theater to take in a couple of early showings of the program that were set up especially for us close by in the hangar bay.

Billed as "A Cinema and Holographic Experience," the reunion attendees took it all in, as the presentation came

to life before their eyes, with its movie and exhibits capturing the magnitude and scale of the famous WWII sea



battle that is the name-sake of the USS Midway. **Battle of Midway Theater.**

MVA's \$10K investment in this theater was fortified by everything we experienced about the theater on this day; it was first class all the way!

After taking in the BOM Theater's movie and exhibits, we were free to move on about the ship on our own, and most stayed on board to do just that. Later in the day many of our visitors would be taking in the next event on the schedule – the Old Town Trolley Tour.

Old Town Trolley Tour

The Old Town Trolley Tour is one of the best city tours in the country, and the Midway veterans and their guests made the most of it on this day. Our trolley driver/guide, we'll call him "Bob," wheeled us around San Diego like it was nobody's business. We were in high spirits, or maybe it was a sugar high brought on by all the donuts we had eaten on the ship at the Meet and Greet.

Bob had apparently learned how to entertain and drive a trolley without spending too much time watching the road, and had perfected the technique of missing other vehicles and objects by micro-inches. As he wheeled his trolley bus around the city – we came over and back on the Coronado Bridge on two wheels, for example – he never stopped talking, providing us with an incredible amount of detail along the route in a most entertaining fashion. He was a man who obviously loved his job and the city of San Diego, from Coronado Island to Little Italy, and everything in between. All aboard the Old Town Trolley. A great time was had by all!

Take Me Out To The Ballgame

When he booked this event, Jim Hayter once again demonstrated why he's MVA's one and only VP of Reunions. What a unique event – to be able to attend a rivalry ballgame between the Padres and the Dodgers, which just

happened to be taking place on the very night the Midway veterans were in town for their reunion!

Many of our reunion folks enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of Petco Park, for only \$10 extra per person. There was a lot of interesting stuff to see on this tour, such as trophy rooms, restored portions of the ballpark, etc. But the locker rooms were not part of the deal; however, there was food that went with the deal, including hot dogs that were to die for.

Tommy Moore III enjoying the ballgame.



Petco Park is a beautiful baseball stadium, with comfortable

seating, a huge screen scoreboard and TV screen, along with a music system that got you rocking. On this night, some 48,000 fans packed the park, including your Midway veterans. Much to the chagrin of the home crowd, the Dodgers won the game 3-0, and toward the end of the game things got a little unruly with some of the fans.

After the game, the Midway veterans and guests made their way slowly out of the park amid a crush of fans. Local veteran Tim Miller, who stands about 6'-3", led the way holding his cap high in the air for us to guide on. We made it out of there alive and eventually found our way back to the hotel. It's a reunion memory we will long cherish.

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 rapsallions everything other than World War Two sea rations was fair game. Everyone – including rapsallions – 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.

The Hospitality Suite

It's been said that the success of a Navy reunion rides on its Hospitality Suite. If that's the case, then we had one helluva reunion, probably our best ever. For the four days of the reunion, the Hospitality Suite was the hub of activity and the nerve center of the reunion, full of folks, and a place where the food and beverages flowed freely, as did the sea stories – outstanding tales of bravery and adventure on the high seas.



Hospitality Suite in full swing



Craig William Harper - 1957-2015

The Passing of Our Webmaster

Craig Harper, MVA's Webmaster, passed away February 27, 2015, at the Veterans Hospital in Reno, Nevada, taken by a fast-acting cancer. An OS2 in Midway's OI Division from 1975 to 1977, he had been our Webmaster since 2005, ushering us into the 21st century with his advanced Web skills and innovative ideas. His tech support was invaluable at our reunions, as he kept the confounding machines running for us, and did the same at home in Reno for the customers he served in his IT job. Craig posted all the MVA news that was "fit to print" on our website. He also played a key roll in our reunion fund-raising efforts, cheerfully volunteering his time to help run the raffles, drawings and other various contests we play to raise money for the Midway Museum's charitable programs. Craig was a great shipmate and friend. Gone but not forgotten, he will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

Battle of Midway Theater Fundraising Campaign Meets Goal!

Thanks to the generosity of many of you Midway veterans, MVA's pledge to donate \$10,000 to the USS Midway Museum to support the Battle of Midway Theater has been met. Any donations still in the pipeline for this worthy cause will be forwarded to Norma Nicolls, the Midway Museum's Major Gifts Director. Make your check payable to the USS Midway Museum and mail to Norma at:

Norma Nicolls
910 North Harbor Drive
San Diego, CA 92101

This donation campaign was inspired in large part by the generous donation by our Australian lifetime member, WWII carrier pilot Allan "Tex" Alcock, whose \$2,400 donation to the Midway Theater in MVA's name last year made it much easier for us to reach this goal. If you attended the reunion in April, you saw our name displayed on the Major Donors Plaque as you enter the theater. It's something we are very proud of. Thank you, shipmates, for your generosity.

Tex, left, and his flight instructor go over the finer points of carrier landings and take-offs in preparation for the Battle of the Pacific against Japan. Tex flew off the USS Enterprise (CV-6) – "The Hero Ship" – for the "Yanks" in WWII.



President's Report



Shipmates: we keep coming back to "square 1" in planning these reunions. We start out thinking we're going to do things differently this time in order to avoid the pitfalls from the previous reunion. So what happens? We're like a magnet! We manage to attract anything that could send us into a tail-spin. As Lewis Carroll wrote, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there"!

While we made sure that any reunion-planning issues would be transparent to the members, nevertheless, they do tend to take their toll on the event planners – your

Board of Directors. Yes, we hired a professional reunion-planning group to help out with the event planning, and yes, they did the work we hired them to do. Where we got crosswise with the process was our own doing – not doing our upfront homework and putting together a schedule for the planners to work with and a set of expectations that we could measure their progress and successes with.

So we did a lot of ‘dancing’ with a whole cadre of folks that could or might adversely impact the success of the reunion. Based on the outcome on Sunday morning, April 26th, when it was over, we looked at each other across the table and gave a huge sigh of relief – we’d manage to overcome all the obstacles and turn the reunion into one of the best ever.

Regardless of the ‘pot holes’ in the reunion-planning road, we’ve always managed to get where we needed to be. This is no freeway we’re traveling on! Fact is, some of the farm roads I grew up with in South Dakota look pretty good compared to the roads we’ve traveled planning these reunions. A few repairs along the road, a shot of adrenalin when the right things happen, and a lot of smiling faces on Saturday night – these are the indicators that give us the sense of satisfaction, the satisfaction of a job well-done and a job done right!

And finally, to our shipmates, give yourselves the accolades you deserve for continuing to support the USS Midway Veterans Association. You are the only reason this organization exists and as long as there is continuing interest in getting together, we’ll continue to find the resources to ‘keep the roads open’!

Full speed ahead to 2016 and Pensacola!

Oscar Granger, President USS Midway Veterans Association

VP-Reunions’ Report

It is nice to look back at three wonderful days in San Diego after all the dust has settled and see that we really did have a great reunion. Let’s see—tour the USS Ronald Reagan (after coming oh so close in 2013)—**check**. I came away with a great deal of respect for today’s sailors and the capabilities of this great ship. A friend told me after the reunion that the Reagan has an 011 level; that probably explains why I was puffing so hard after climbing those narrow ladders to the bridge, they snuck two extra levels in on us. Spend quality time on the USS Midway—**check**.



We tied yellow ribbons, did the Midway service project in the Hangar Bay, enjoyed an informative “Meet and Greet” with the Museum’s leadership team, and sat spellbound at the Battle of Midway Experience Theater—**check**.

Thanks to those who stayed over on Sunday and became MVA’s part of the Operation Frequent Wind ceremony.

Attend a San Diego Padres baseball game—**check**. Only problem here was the home team didn’t score a run. The Los Angeles Dodgers went home happy with the shutout, though, and so did we. What a beautiful ballpark is Petco Park, and the hot dogs were delicious!

Wrapped things up with a great Grand Banquet—**check** and **check**. Captain Larry Ernst hit a homer (which the Padres couldn’t do the night before) with his keynote address about his Midway captaincy. It made you feel you were right there with him in 1992. All the events are a big part of any reunion, but I especially enjoyed seeing a full Hospitality Suite with former Midway crewmen from all years talking about the good old days. Congratulations are in order for all who bought raffle tickets or won silent auction prizes, because we set a record for donations back to the Midway Museum’s charitable programs this year, so our good work continues even after we are gone.

Now it is time to start thinking about our next MVA gathering in Pensacola, FL, in April/May 2016. Of course we will not have the ship there, but we will find ways to keep you entertained and engaged in this East Coast reunion. Watch your e-mail for breaking news about PSC16 and the exciting activities we are planning for our next three day happening in sunny Florida. Ideas and suggestions about what you would like to see at a reunion are always welcome, as are willing volunteers. Jim Hayter mva41vpr@comcast.net or 703-264-0542.

Jim Hayter, VP-Reunions USS Midway Veterans Association

Sec.-Treas./Newsletter Editor’s Report

It ain’t over till it’s over, Yogi said. Well, Yogi, it *is* over. Our 2015 reunion in San Diego was another grand gathering of “Midway Nation.” Some 200 of you showed up and brought with you a great assemblage of family and friends to add to the mix.



Yes, I would say the reunion was a huge success, with over 300 people in attendance!

Of all that happened at the reunion, I enjoyed the Grand Banquet and Larry Ernst’s keynote address the most. As

I say in the leadoff article in this newsletter, he was more than up to the challenge of standing before a hall full of Midway veterans and their “civilian” guests and telling us how it had been during his Midway captaincy. What a great job!

The high point of the reunion for me had to be during the banquet program when I had the honor of introducing the veterans of the three eras of plank owners and other categories of Midway veterans present, such as Midway vets onboard during Operation Frequent Wind; Midway vets onboard during decommissioning; any Midway vets in the house who are over 96 years old, etc.

You get the picture. It was a tremendously gratifying experience to see the men proudly standing and receiving the applause and cheers they so richly deserved from the rest of us, their shipmates.

As you know, we now issue membership cards to all members who pay their annual dues, as well as those who sign up for lifetime membership – we now have 98 – so all dues-paying members should have membership cards (blue card for annual, red card for lifetime). *If you have paid your dues but don't have a card, please contact me, and I'll verify your membership. If your card got “lost in the mail,” or is otherwise missing, please contact me, and I'll get another card made for you. Not a problem.*

I'd like to thank the Midway veterans who donated to our campaign to raise our last \$5,000.00 (\$5,125.00, actually) and meet our pledge to the USS Midway Museum to help them operate and maintain the Battle of Midway Theater. In all (and there may be more money coming from members who still want to donate), MVA donated \$10,125.00 to this very important cause. Your response has been tremendous, and gratifying. Thanks to all!

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

VP-Administration's Report



I was born in San Francisco but not raised here; I lived all over the state, as my parents were constantly moving. I have never had a regular home life like most children, and socializing was a real pain in the butt, so to speak – here one day gone the next. I lived in the

suburbs, in a city, and eventually on a grape ranch in Sonoma County. I attended two high schools, graduated and went to Alaska for school – a prep college – for one year. I spent two years drifting until I volunteered to go

to fight in Vietnam and spent a wonderful 12 years in the United States Navy on two man-of-war ships: the USS Oklahoma City, CLG-5 [1971 to 1974] and the USS Midway, CV-41 [1980 to 1983]. After my Honorable Discharge from the Navy, I returned to my roots, worked until my retirement, and then owned my jewelry business for seven years until I went to school to learn ceramics. I am currently a ceramic artist, and I work in my studio in San Francisco and teach as well.

Richard Wooster II, VP-Admin., USS Midway Veterans Association

New Men

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

- Jim Perttula (72-75) - Munising, MI
- Michael Brady (75-78) - Prescott, AZ
- Gregory Bambo (64-66) - Salt Lake City, UT
- Rick Dieckman (77-80) - Mapleton, IA
- Rocklyn Rusch (90-92) - Beulah, ND
- John Roth (89-92) - Spokane Valley, WA
- Val Jensen (89-92) - St Marys, GA
- Alan Nichols, Jr. (52-53) - Kailua, HI
- John McDowell (77-80) - Camano Island, WA
- Francis Boehm (54-55) - Eau Claire, WI
- Michael Parrish (82-85) - Westminster, CO
- Jerome Bishop (64-66) - Petaluma, CA
- Luther Riley (72-75) - New Bloomfield, MO
- John Brumfield (87-89) - Helena, AL
- David Wyant (80-82) - Newark, OH
- James Brown (70-74) - St. Petersburg, FL
- Stephen Martin (72-73) - Tucson, AZ
- Thomas Palmer (58-62) - San Rafael, CA
- Keith Bergman (73-76) - Vallejo, CA
- Charles Kilgore (90-91) - Yuma, AZ
- Albert Muniz (63-66) - Westminster, CO
- James Nicollet (71-75) - Hicksville, NY
- Craig Walsh (75-77) - Telluride, CO
- Ronald Hill (80-82) - Austin, TX
- Carlton Canaday (76-78) - Albuquerque, NM
- Anthony Martin (81-84) - Aurora, NC
- William Lobb (89-92) - Meridian, ID
- Jay Schimke (87-89) - Eagan, MN



Wendy Converse of San Diego donated a video showing flight ops taken by her uncle, Lt. Douglas Converse, to **Admiral Mac** of the USS Midway Museum. Lt. Converse, a Midway pilot, was killed in an aircraft accident at Pensacola NAS in 1960.



Ben Gaines, shown here with one of our most favorite people from the USS Midway Museum, Membership Director **Jill Hammons**, displays the 40mm saluting shell he retrieved on Midway November 26, 1963, following a memorial salute to President John Kennedy following his assassination.

Warning. Potential hearing loss from noise exposure from carrier duty

http://www.asse.org/assets/1/7/F1Morris_0615.pdf

Midway veterans, please take the time to read the article in the above link about potential hearing loss from duty on an aircraft carrier. (Fittingly, the data in this study came from tests conducted on the USS Ronald Reagan, the very carrier we toured during the reunion.) Extreme noise exposure and carrier duty often go hand-in-hand. Any hearing loss you suffer today could be the result of your carrier duty in the Navy years ago, and the Veterans Administration can help you. But first you must qualify for a service disability, in order to get financial and medical assistance from the VA. But gaining VA assistance is no walk in the park, for navigating your way through the VA system can be a bewildering experience if you don't get outside help from an expert.

Perhaps the best way to get started with your VA disability claim is to look for an expert-advocate close to home. Contact your local VFW or American Legion Post, for example, or research websites like the ones described

below. It takes a little digging and patience, but such assistance can be found.

MVA Board members Oscar Granger, Jim Hayter, and Dave Payson sought and found expert-advocates who helped them win disability claims from the VA for hearing loss. In Washington state, Oscar and Dave found help through the VFW from a group of veterans who assist other veterans file VA applications, **at no cost**. Jim found help on the Internet, through Virginia's Agency for Veterans Affairs (AVA). Your state may have a similar agency that can hook you up with an expert to help you prepare and file your disability application with the VA.

A couple of other websites are excellent sources to find help and gain VA coverage for your service-connected disability, including hearing problems. These are your states'/counties' veterans service centers, found at: https://www.longtermcarelink.net/ref_list_state_county_veterans_service_officers.htm and <http://nacvso.org/>. Experts at these service centers will help you complete your VA application for a service disability claim due to hearing loss (or any other service-related disability, for that matter).

If you win your claim (an important part of the process is taking a hearing test from a VA audiologist), the VA will pay you a monthly stipend, based on the extent of your hearing loss, pay for top-quality hearing aids valued in the thousands of dollars, and take care of your hearing problems for the rest of your life.

It's well worth checking into, men, especially if you're struggling with hearing loss. And consider this, in relation to carrier duty: Oscar, Jim and Dave were Radarmen on Midway, and they were only partially exposed to the noise level that many of you were who worked on the flight deck, in the hangar, or who flew the planes.

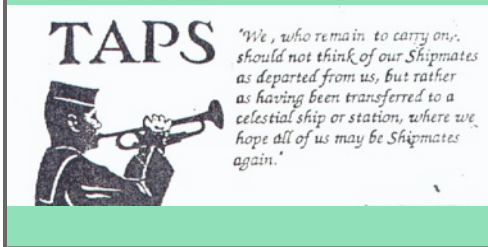
Midway veterans are making a difference everywhere. Here, MVA veteran **Vince Vicarro** (V-2, 62-65) is shown being installed as President of the Fleet Reserve Association, Branch 77, Green Valley, AZ. Branch 77 was designated as a NJROTC (Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps) Distinguished Unit for the 2014-2015 school year, signifying they are in the top 1/3 of all NJROTC units nationwide.



In Memoriam

Don Barrett, 84, passed away April 4, 2015. He was born July 19, 1930 in Wyandotte, MI. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Lois. He served as a member of the USS Midway crew from 1948 to 1955, and later in life, from 2005 to 2014, as a volunteer when the Midway became a museum ship in San Diego. May he rest in peace.

Vernon R. "Buddy" Bardwell, Sr., 90, passed away March 30, 2015. He was born in Belchertown, Mass., on July 4, 1922, and is survived by 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren. His wife of 37 years, Anita, died in March 1986. A machinist mate, he was a member of the original crew -- a Plank Owner -- of the USS Midway, serving on her from 1945-1946, and he was well proud of it. May he rest in peace.



MVA Website Up and Running!

At long last, after several months of downtime, we have regained control of our website. Our new Webmaster is BJ Denihan. Dave Payson and BJ teamed to free up the website from the web-hosting company, after Craig Harper, our previous webmaster, died. To access MVA's website go to <http://ussmidway.net/home.html>. You can contact BJ via his email address at denib@comcast.net. If you've got content to post on our website, by all means let him know. See tribute to Craig Harper, this newsletter.

**USS MIDWAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
APRIL 25, 2015**

President Oscar Granger called the meeting to order at 0930. Members were welcomed to the reunion, and the meeting commenced. The Board of Directors was introduced and the President gave an overview of the agenda.

First up, Dave Payson, Secretary-Treasurer, and his wife Mina Jo, gave an overview of the fiscal year 2014-2015 Treasurer's Report, reporting that MVA had maintained its nonprofit status as a 501(c)(19) organization, making donations to the USS Midway Museum's charitable programs of \$1,750 in 2014. Additionally, MVA donated \$5,000 to the Battle of Midway Theater in 2014 and pledged to pay another \$5,000 by June of 2015. At present, a fundraising is underway with members to raise this installment, and it will be met by the end of June as pledged. Dave, who is also newsletter editor, asked members to consider taking the newsletter electronically to save printing and mailing costs.

President Oscar Granger talked about the presentation he and Dave are working on about foreign pilots who flew for the U.S. during World War II, especially Australian MVA member Allan "Tex" Alcock. Oscar and Dave hope to get it into a polished format and present it to the Museum for its use.

Vice President for Reunions Jim Hayter discussed the planning process for this reunion. Survey forms were handed out. Members were asked to fill out and turn in the forms before they leave for home. Tim Miller was recognized for his work as "boots on the ground" before the reunion and his role as reunion host. BJ Denihan and Marty FitzGerald were recognized for their help in organizing the Hospitality Suite.

Members voted to hold the 2016 reunion in Pensacola, Florida, in the April/May time-frame. Members interested in helping plan the next reunion were asked to see Jim Hayter.

There were no suggested changes to the bylaws, copies of which had been provided at the beginning of the meeting. The membership accepted the bylaws as written.

Turner Mann, Membership Committee Chairman, introduced committee members. In attendance were Vice Chairman Ron Pope, who is also MVA's Facebook Administrator, Marty FitzGerald, Manny Voeltz, Tim Miller and Chase Granger. Turner asked for members who served in later years to volunteer to join the committee. Members suggested places to advertise the organization.

Vice President of Reunions and the currently vacant office of Vice President of Administration were up for election at this reunion. Nominations were taken from the floor. Turner Mann and Richard Wooster II were nominated. It was moved, seconded and passed to close nominations. Each candidate gave a short summary of his background and qualifications. A vote was taken by a show of hands. Richard Wooster II was elected Vice President of Administration, and Jim Hayter was nominated for Vice President of Reunions and was re-elected by acclamation.

Mick Hersey had a request from the USS Midway Museum to have members submit their stories and information about the ship during their times aboard for use by the museum.

Oscar announced that Scott McGaugh of the Midway Museum asked for volunteers from the organization to help with the Operation Frequent Wind ceremonies aboard the ship on Sunday. Marty FitzGerald, Oscar Granger, ElRoy Weins, Dave Payson and Tim Miller volunteered.

It was moved, seconded and passed that the meeting be adjourned at 1108.

**Respectfully submitted,
David Payson, Secretary-Treasurer MVA**

Credits

We would like to thank the following individuals, organizations, and general groups for their help in making SD15 a very successful reunion --

(listed first name/last name but ordered alphabetically by last name)

- Dan Beintema - Bonnie Brown - RADM Larry Chambers USN (Ret.) - Stephen DeCata - BJ Deniham - CAPT John Enschede USN (Ret.) - CAPT Larry Ernst USN (Ret.) - Marty FitzGerald - Karen Garst - Chase Granger - Oscar Granger - Jill Hammons - Jim and Pamm Hayter - Doug Kenyon - Turner Mann - Scott McGaugh - CAPT Ronald "Mugs" McKeown USN (Ret.) - RADM Mac McLaughlin USN (Ret.) - Tim Miller - RADM Riley Mixson USN (Ret.) - CDR Paul Murphey USN (Ret.) - Janae Nuspi - Dave and Mina Jo Payson - CAPT Andrew Perez USN (Ret.) - Ron Pope - Oscar Rocha - Steve Suslik - Wes Westney - Richard Wooster II

In addition:

- ◆ Staff and volunteers of the USS Midway Museum
- ◆ Staff and management of the Wyndham San Diego Bayside Hotel.
- ◆ The U.S. Navy and the crew of the USS Ronald Reagan, CVN-76.
- ◆ Our Lifetime members who have made a lifetime commitment to our organization.
- ◆ Employees and manager of Hazelwoods Deli who helped feed us.
- ◆ Employees of AFR, our reunion planning company.
- ◆ All reunion attendees who stuffed packets and otherwise helped in the hospitality suite.
- ◆ Our plank owners and their families.
- ◆ Finally, the Midway veterans, spouses and guests who attended this reunion and made it the huge success it was; you were all great!

Special thank to Tommy Moore III

Once again, he showed us the way

We miss our late Webmaster, Craig Harper.

And last but not least, we thank everyone who wanted to be here but couldn't make it. We'll see you next time around, Shipmates.

2015 Reunion Fundraising

Silent Auction - \$1,530.00

Raffle - \$851.00

Wine Auction - \$350.00

MVA donates the money raised at its reunions to the USS Midway Museum's Education Scholarship Fund and Midway Preservation Endowment.

Battle of Midway Theater Donation

Total (2014 & 2015) - \$10,125.00

This money, raised entirely from donations by MVA members, goes to the upkeep and operation of the Battle of Midway Theater onboard the USS Midway Museum.



CAPT Larry Ernst in hangar bay near the Captain's ladder



John Cantor and family being honored at banquet dinner. John turned 99 two days after this picture was taken



Midway veterans and guests watch presentation in Battle of Midway Theater in hangar bay



Wow! Midway Veterans and guests on flight deck photographed from above on the Island. Can you find yourself?



Midway Veterans – Proud to have served on one of the mightiest warships of the 20th century!

**The Masthead
USS Midway
Veterans Association**

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

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Notice: We post our organization's roster on our website only with the permission of our members. If you don't want your contact information published, let us know and we'll remove it.

Order electronic edition of this newsletter from Dave Payson (e-mail: minandave@charter.net - Save printing and mailing costs -

USS Midway Veterans Association Web Site
<http://ussmidway.net/home.html>

USS Midway Veterans Association Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/USSMidwayVeteransAssociation>



Sign in hangar bay made by the Midway Museum for the Midway Service Project: "Speak with a USS Midway Veteran"



Huge carved bear and sailor brought to the reunion by MVA's Danny Garcia as silent auction prizes. MVA's Gene Coulter posted the winning bid for the bear, and MVA's 1945 plank owner Blake Smith took home the sailor.