



# Station Ship News



**DING DING . . . DING DING . . . SHIP'S CREW ARRIVING . . . ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS  
IN THE AIR, AT SEA AND IN PORT . . . DING DING . . . DING DING**

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



**USS Midway (CVA-41) at anchor during her 1954-1955 world cruise**

## **Letter to Midway Veterans Association**

**Fred C. Burr, 1972-75, ASM2/IM-4 Division**

I am a lifetime member of the Midway Veterans Association and am enclosing a donation to help out.

My experience of three years aboard Midway was one of the most influential in setting course in my adult life. My success as a GSE mechanic in IM-

2/IM-4 Division was the first accomplishment that I achieved on my own and gave me self-confidence in my endeavors following my service in the Navy.

I have had a great life and attribute much of it to the events that involved me while aboard. I frequently bring up stories of those experiences in conversations with friends because the lessons learned still are relevant in my life today, 50+ years later.



I thank you and all the officers of the Midway Veterans Association for doing all you do to administer the organization and support the USS Midway Museum. It's a wonderful attraction and I hope I can visit her again.

I'm sorry I won't be attending this year's Three Sisters Reunion in September, but maybe a portion of my donation could be used to buy all the guys a beer. Enjoy!!

## Now hear this, Now HEAR THIS!!

Steve DeCata, VP Reunions



All MVA members are to report to San Diego, California, Three Sisters Reunion (USS Midway, USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, and USS Coral Sea).

Muster at Wyndham Bayside, on 23 September for orders, be ready for a cold beer, great sea stories, and a lot of fun!! Click on the link below for all the information you'll need.

Registration Close Date: Aug-23-2024

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

If you have any questions, please drop me an email at [sdecata@gmail.com](mailto:sdecata@gmail.com), or call me at (410) 713-0647

Hope to see everyone there.

## Combat Flyer

Submitted by Doug Bohs, 1963-65, AQF2/VF-21

You're a combat flyer  
walkin' a tight wire.  
You always play it cool,  
but fate loves a fool.

You're better than other men,  
living on adrenaline.  
You're master of the sky,  
but fate too can fly.

You're the bandit's bane.  
You drive the women insane  
and when you check your six,  
you know fate's in the mix.

You took on a triple-A gun.  
Perhaps you could've won,  
but you made a second pass  
and fate got the last laugh.

**Editor's Note:** Poem used with permission from Don Purdy, author of "Where the High Winds Sing," published by OK-3 Publishing, Annapolis, MD.

## What is a Shipmate?

Steve DeCata, 1979-81, PH2/VAW-115  
VP Reunions

**What the Dictionary says it means.**

*noun*

**"A sailor's shipmate is another sailor who works on the same ship as they do.**

We all know what it really means. It means a friend, one you can count on, one that's there to watch your back. One to pull you out of trouble or get into trouble with. One that will kick your ass to motivate you, to keep working towards your goals. One that will be there when that letter from home comes with bad news. The one that will share their cookies from home. It means having their kids call you Uncle.

It means after years apart, picking up right where you left off. It means putting them down as a

reference on a job application, and then having them come to your retirement ceremony 29 years later. It means if you need help, they will be there to help, come hell or high water.

**I'm lucky to say I have two of the best SHIPMATES.**



AE3 Brad Cleveland, AE3 Alan Lang, AN Steve DeCata  
Indian Ocean 1980

**Current technology is wonderful but...**

**Ray Keating, QM3 1971-74, Navigation**

One of my responsibilities as a Quartermaster was to keep the USS Midway on course while at Yankee Station in the Tonkin Gulf. At the time (early 70's), our main navigational methods were Radio Waves (Loran-C), Satellites (called SINS) and in the worst scenario "Dead Reckoning" coordinated with "Set and Drift" calculations from nautical books. I liked the SINS method best because the ship's coordinates were automatically printed out on a typewriter (every hour?) and made my job very easy.

One night while I was the Quartermaster of the Watch, both Loran-C and the SINS system were down (not working) for a while. I had to rely on Dead Reckoning (ugh). My worst nightmare! I scrambled to find the books to get my calculations in order. I thought I did the best that I could. Anyway, the Officer of the Deck who was a LTJG asked me about the ship's position. I told him and he looked at me as if he was going to challenge me, like he did not trust me. My head was in a spin and I was cringing inside. At the time, I considered some officers to be a threat to my existence. This officer was one of them. He backed off though

when I assured him that we were on course. Thank God I did not have to do a tutorial to show him how the calculations were made. A little while later, SINS was back up and running and thankfully the ship was not that far off the course that I had plotted. What a relief.



**Midway Helm**

**The Forward Compartment Cleaner**

**David Payson, 1963-64, RDSN, OI Division**

My first experience of shipboard life in the navy came as a 19-year-old kid on Midway's 1963-64 Westpac cruise to the Orient. I came aboard about two months out of boot camp, after I'd been home on leave.

Initially, I spent more than my share of time wandering the ship, mostly lost. When your first navy ship is an aircraft carrier, it's easy to lose your bearings. Even as a civilian, I had never had much of a built-in gyroscope. One wrong turn on the road in my car and I'd be lost.

A couple months into the cruise, just when I felt I was starting to get the hang of things and my confidence was building, things went downhill in a hurry. My leading petty officer told me it was my turn to do a stint on the mess decks, working in the scullery or some other undesirable job.

To his credit, he did his best to soften the bad news. "Get over it, Payson. You're new onboard, and there's a lot of new guys like you working on the mess decks. So don't take it personally." He had a point, I suppose, but still, I did tend to take it personally.



The day I reported for scullery duty, I was determined to make a go of it. It was survival of the fittest, I reasoned, with firm resolve. But after a couple weeks in the scullery, I was so exhausted my resolve had all but melted away – too many pots and pans to scrub, too many spuds to peel. My very survival seemed in doubt at that point. But then, just when I thought there was no light at the end of the tunnel, I caught a break. Here's how it happened:

"Payson, get your butt over here," the scullery boss said. "I've got a new job for you." He was a big burly man with multiple tattoos and lots of hair on his body who reminded me of Popeye's "Bluto." Bluto didn't just talk loudly, he *bellowed*. "Go join the compartment cleaners," he said, pointing in the general direction of up. "They need another man up there."

Not only did I not know what a forward compartment was, I didn't know where to find one on the ship. Nor how to clean one. I would soon find out.

His nickname was "Beaver." For purposes of this article, I'll call him Sam Peronne from Boston, Mass, a machinist mate third-class. I'm sure he was much wiser in the ways of shipboard life on an aircraft carrier than me. Certainly, he knew more about compartments on Midway and the job of cleaning them than I did.

"This will be your compartment to clean for the next couple months," he said. "It goes way back in, like a cave. You need to crouch down, hunched over, and it's hard on the back to go too far in. Especially when you're carrying your cleaning gear.

"The guys who end up cleaning these compartments appreciate what they've got," he explained. "Nothing too strenuous like what you've been doing in the scullery. Don't get carried away, though. You get caught catching a nap up here I don't know you. *Comprende?*

"But just so you appreciate your job taking care of these compartments, keeping them clean and in tip-top shape, you should understand that they have an important purpose, which is to provide airtight integrity by trapping air and increasing the ship's buoyancy should she suffer a catastrophic

collision of any kind, say, with a submerged mountaintop or a lethal torpedo. The trapped air will keep her from sinking straight to the bottom, with all hands lost."

He went on to explain some of the finer points of the job. Don't work too hard, he said, or it would make some of the other guys up here look bad. Evidently, that was built into the compartment cleaners' code. We held jobs where the general crew would never go. And he repeated what he'd told me previously: that if I got caught doing something I shouldn't be doing, he'd disown me. In general, our jobs were to sweep, polish and apply red lead where rust is visible.

He also said that we have a damn good early warning system up here, if you hear it you need to hop tall and look busy. The early warning system, I soon learned, sounded like a cow bell clanging alarmingly loud across the compartments. I did hop tall and look busy, but only a couple of times. Most of the time I did keep busy pushing my broom without exerting too much effort. Compared to my scullery duty, it was a piece of cake.

I had almost come to like "Beaver," but at the same time, I didn't trust him any farther than I could throw him.

I finished out the last five weeks of my mess-cooking assignment as a compartment cleaner. Best damn gig I ever had!

## A Crafty Sailor

Tim Munderloh, 1988-91, IC2/E Division  
MVA President

I believe I was a very crafty sailor who was always one step ahead in terms of finding methods to skate and relax. Don't get me wrong... I worked extremely hard - often in 130+ degree temperatures in various Engineering compartments throughout the ship. It's just when it came to things that I deemed were "chicken\$hit" I always tried to find ways to be elsewhere. No one ever seemed to notice, which I think describes my success in this endeavor.

I was assigned to USS MIDWAY (CV-41)  
Engineering Department, Electrical Division in



1988. I was a young and inexperienced Interior Communications Electrician who had just taken the test for Petty Officer Third Class. I had just had my crow tacked on when I shipped overseas. I arrived at Narita airport in Tokyo and somehow managed to find my way to the bus to Yokosuka, where Midway was homeported. The bus trip was an eye-opening experience for me!! Never having been to Asia in my life I couldn't believe how closely all these people resembled each other and how closely they lived and worked together. My first night I was placed in the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (sort of a hotel) on base and went to sleep almost immediately. The next morning as I was getting ready to report to my new command I was in the restroom, sitting to do my business and was completely astounded when the Japanese maid came right in while I was in the middle of my business and began to clean the floor around my feet!!! I couldn't believe the level of culture difference! Needless to say, the language gap was evident but I somehow managed to hustle her out of there.

Upon reporting for duty on the ship I was assigned to the Forward Gyrocompass IC Workcenter, which primarily focuses on repairing and maintaining the sound-powered phones and various announcing systems. Being the new guy, the other men assigned to Fwd. Gyro ganged up on me with a ceremonial welcome pink-belly (slapping your stomach and making knots of any hair there) and made me go to the "roach coach" on the pier for various sandwiches and gee-dunk. I didn't particularly like being treated this way so I made sure to take a nap behind the roach coach and then mess everyone's order up and not have correct change when I finally returned so that they decided to never send me again... Victory!!

Another time I recall skating away was on a duty day in Hong Kong. Midway had anchored in the middle of the bay and liberty barges were coming and going all day. A working party was being organized out of the entire duty section to onload some stores. I decided to make myself scarce so a friend in my division, Rod and I took some sandwiches and cookies and climbed all the way to the top of the mast to conduct some "preventive maintenance" on the wind indicator. We must have sat up there for 3 hours taking in the views and just

kicking back. It pays to be proactive when it comes to maintenance!!!

The days of incredibly hard work and nights of extreme partying in port were some of the best of my life. I remember some very difficult times but tend to look back and remember mostly the good parts of being in the Navy. It was the best decision of my life and I will always be proud of my time serving our Country!

## "Extra Military Instruction"

David J. D'Arcy, 1982-83, YN3/ X Division

After taking three months to complete YN "A" School, I finally came to Midway's X Division, Judge Advocate's Office. It's fair to say that I wasn't a good student, and it would ultimately take several years to become a halfway decent YN. As a YNSN, I was about a good-enough clerk typist as I was as a student. Our leading petty officer, a Legalman 1<sup>st</sup> class, finally decided I needed extra military instruction to help me learn my rating. He made a deal with a fellow 1<sup>st</sup> class petty officer who managed the big cats that launched the aircraft off the ship to have me degrease one of the big catapult carriages that ran on a brass railroad.

I've had filthy, dirty jobs on Midway before, like the day I spent burning classified material while steaming in the middle of Gonzo Station, but nothing beats spending a couple hours degreasing one of the big catapult carriages. Most clerks are not noted for their mechanical prowess, and I was no exception. I was assigned to one of the air department's AN strikers, who gave me two large, clear plastic bags and several rags. My extra military instruction was to spend two hours degreasing one of the catapult carriages. Like most sailors who've spent time shining brass, when you find it, you polish it. Simple? No, not when it comes to degreasing mechanical things. No-one thought to tell me to leave some grease behind.

After two hours of performing my extra military instruction, the AN striker returned and saw how great a job I did by removing two large bags of grease, leaving behind several feet of gleaming brass rails. To my horror, the kid called me several foul names, including claiming I was being a "smartass." Most sailors are prone to do smartass

things, but this time I really wasn't. I remember rushing down to my leading petty officer who gave me this job, telling him what happened and claiming innocence. All I remember is that he immediately believed me and rushed to see his pal, who arranged to give me the job.

Such was life on the good ship Forty-First and Gray. It was rarely dull.

## How the MVA was born

Tim Miller, MVA Secretary

The Midway Veterans Association comes from a vision that was conceived by Ron McPhail, who was an LPO in OI Division in the early 1960's. After he retired from the Navy in the early 1990's, he had the idea of forming a reunion group of former OI Division members from Midway's OI Division. He wanted to reconnect with and find fellow shipmates who he had spent a good portion of his Navy career with. So, once he passed the baton of his sailor life to that of a civilian, his goal was to track down as many former Midway shipmates as he could find. He started by researching, mostly by telephone, because in those days technologies such as the Internet, email, and other forms of communication that would've made his mission much easier hadn't been fully developed yet. The best search engine readily available in those days was the home telephone. Remarkably, thanks to persistence, patience and hard work, Ron was able to track down many of his former Midway shipmates from around the country.

So, in pursuit of reconnecting with his fellow shipmates, a reunion association, initially called the USS Midway OI Division Reunion Group, was born in the mid-90's. It was made up of his peers from Midway's OI Division, mainly radarmen and electronic technicians, the men he oversaw back then. Led by Ron as President, the group became quite successful and held reunions around the country over a period of several years, in cities such as St. Louis, New Orleans and San Diego.

When Ron passed away from cancer in November of 2010 at his home in Winter Park, Florida, he left behind a legacy of a U.S. Navy reunion group made up of more than 400 members, all former Midway veterans. These veterans range from

officers (many of whom were pilots who flew off the Midway) to enlisted sailors who kept the Midway on an even keel in the best and worst of times, making sure she always returned home safely, in combat and in peace.

In summary, Ron was an inspirational leader during his active-duty days on Midway, as well as many years later as a civilian when he tracked down so many of his former Midway shipmates and welcomed them to join the then fledgling Midway reunion group, which eventually evolved into the USS Midway Veterans Association (MVA) that we know and are part of today.

A few months after his death, in 2011, as part of the Midway Museum's Bench Program, MVA members passed the hat and purchased a special commemorative bench and plaque in Ron's honor. To this day, "Ron's Bench" is a fixture on the Museum and can be seen in person (look for it when you are down there for the reunion) and "virtually" as well by following this link:

<https://ussmidway.net/index.php/ron-mcphail>.

## Midway Supporting the Marines

EIRoy Wiens, 1970-71, ATN2/AIMD

I am EIRoy Wiens, I was the supervisor of Avionics Shop 4 on USS Midway during the 1971 Vietnam Cruise.

My most memorable experience occurred while the Midway was cruising near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in mid-June 1971. The day started normally with dawn flight operations; we heard the Phantoms (F4s) launch first followed by the A6s.

Then activity shifted: we could hear crews on the flight deck above us moving planes out of the normal launch area and beginning preparations for landing aircraft. We knew not to ask questions, but we heard the F4s return before lunch and the A6s right behind. Lots of quizzical looks around the shop!

When it was my turn for lunch, I was super surprised to find no lines on the mess deck! Instead, a CPO told us to "follow those other men" double timing to the starboard side, down a stairwell, and into position on the ladder below the



mess deck level. We were told to wait for orders that arrived quickly: when a shell is passed up from below you, grab it and pass it up to the next person. It was my lucky chance to be a human conveyer for ammo.

The shells came from the weapons locker fast and we passed each along as fast as we could lift to the next set of hands. Not long after we started, the order came to “hold,” so we all cradled the shell we had in our hands and waited ... until the order came to recommence. Back to passing the shells as fast as possible. A second order to “hold” and my edited thoughts included “not again!” After a short wait, the order came to send the shells back down. Felt good to see that last shell go on down.

When we were released from the working party, it was back to work. No explanation – not that we thought we would get one – but nothing was ever said to me concerning the event.

Fast forward 10 years. I completed my Navy service, earned a BSEE degree, and was working at an instrument shop in Kansas. One afternoon, the chief engineer stopped to chat with Ron, a Marine veteran working near me. He asked Ron “what event in your time in Vietnam as a Marine scared you the most.” After considering what he wanted to share with a civilian, Ron told a story when his small team of Marines were on a miniature peninsula near the DMZ, with water on three sides and the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) closing in on the fourth. They had held off the NVA advance with equal numbers, but the NVA was placing temporary bridges which would allow heavy equipment to shield the NVA soldiers from US fire. His team called in for air cover but could see the planes were turning back to avoid SAMs (Surface to Air Missiles). Their radioman said that the only vessel nearby was an aircraft carrier which needed coordinates for them to SHELL the bridges. AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER? The radioman called in coordinates while the Marines tried to hold on. Then the shells came – boom, boom, boom - but landed in the wrong place. Coordinate correction was called in and soon the shells were landing on the bridges, dropping the equipment into the drink along with their crews. The Marines were able to slip out during the shelling and escape without significant injury.

Ron ended the story with a wish that he could have known which carrier had shown up with guns! He and I compared timelines and concluded that it had been the USS Midway. Made me proud to have been part of an ammo conveyer.

To this day, I’m still proud that I was member of that ammo conveyer team passing up shells, just as I’m still proud that I was a member of the USS Midway’s crew for the two years I was onboard.

**Author’s note:** If you’re a bit skeptical of this story like I am. To think that the Midway could be that close to shore and doing shore bombing with its deck guns to take out those NVA bridges when it had the planes to do that kind of dirty work is a bit of a stretch, I admit. But that’s the way I heard the story from my former Marine work colleague. Remember, this was the Vietnam War in 1971; those were crazy times, the war was winding down, and just about anything could happen, and usually did.

## Shipmates Meet in Grand Junction, Colorado

By Doug Kenyon, 1971-73, QM3/Navigation

Upon moving from California to Colorado last year I learned about the Veteran’s Coffee Club that meets every Wednesday morning at the Western Region One Source, Colorado Department of Military and Veteran’s Affairs facility.

On my first visit I was wearing a wind breaker with a USS Midway patch on the left breast. One of the “Donut Dollies” noticed and said, “USS Midway! My husband served on the Midway.” She pointed to a table where he sat and I went over and introduced myself and learned that we both sailed on the 1971 cruise, the first WestPac following the Midway’s recommissioning in 1970.

Steve Wolford, ABE2, was assigned to V2 Division. During the 1971 Cruise I was assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Division and following the return from WestPac was transferred to the Navigation Division.

While the Midway was a large ship, those who sailed on her are part of a small world and you never know when or where you’ll run into another “Shipmate.”







**ABE2 Wolford & QM3 Kenyon**

## The Five-Minute Rule

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

Remember, when, such as it is 3:00 am you are sound asleep and you suddenly hear, "General Quarters, General Quarters, all hands man your battle stations" and you had five minutes to get up from a sound sleep, literally throw on your uniform, and report to your general quarters station, and be ready to fight a fire? Remember when you sat down to eat, aboard ship, and you had about five minutes to eat your lunch, because there were others waiting to sit down and eat? Remember having about five minutes to take a shower, due to the value of water on the ship?

I remember it and it has carried on into my retired life. While it takes my wife two hours to get ready to go anywhere, I can go from sitting there, watching TV, to getting up and getting dressed, ready to go, in five minutes.

Yes, the Navy, and especially being aboard ship, definitely changed me. Before I joined the Navy, I was very picky about what I ate, did not eat that much, and when I did eat, it took me forever. Today, well, I literally shove it down my throat as quickly as I can, and hardly taste anything and, yes, literally put ANYTHING in front of me and I will eat it. In fact, it was in the Navy that learned that, if my mouth says it is hungry, I still eat, even if my stomach says it is full.

## In Memoriam

*Shipmate Clifford Mango, ADA3, passed away August 15, 2022. Clifford served on the Midway 1954-1955. May he rest in peace.*



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

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





*The Masthead  
USS Midway  
Veterans Association*

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

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Three Sisters Reunion – Flight Deck Banquet 2019

**Letters to the Editor**

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

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



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

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

I am a USS Midway Veteran and I wish to join the USS MIDWAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, which is open to all Navy and Marine Corps veterans, regardless of department or air wing affiliation, who served on Midway at any time she was in commission. Note: Immediate family members (21 & over) of MVA members are also welcomed to join the MVA at the same dues amounts as MVA members and have the right to vote on MVA issues (see sign-up below).

**MVA Veteran Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Spouse/Partner Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number Home:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Actual years served aboard:** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rank/Rate/Division while aboard (e.g., RM3/CR Div.):** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Check One

- [\\$20.00/yr for veteran + spouse/partner or immediate family member \(age 21 or over\)](#)
- [\\$25.00/yr for veteran and family](#)
- [\\$100.00 for Lifetime Membership including family \(one-time payment\)](#)

Follow link below to charge by credit card (**PayPal, Discover, VISA, MasterCard**); when PP site opens follow the easy instructions.

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

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

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

The USS Midway Museum supports the USS Midway Veterans Association in preserving the legacy of every Midway sailor, regardless of department or air wing affiliation. (NOTE: The USS Midway Veterans Association is a 501(c)(19) nonprofit organization; contributions (aka, dues) are tax-deductible as provided by law.

**Contact: Bernard (Ray) Tillery, MVA Treasurer, at [ray.tillery@yahoo.com](mailto:ray.tillery@yahoo.com);**  
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For more information on how to join the MVA as an Immediate Family Member of an MVA member contact MVA's VP of Admin. Marty FitzGerald at email: [marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net](mailto:marty.fitzgerald@earthlink.net). He will fill you in on the details.