



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



Picture taken by Larry Burger, December 15, 1960, at NAS Alameda

Reporting Aboard Midway

Larry Burger, SA, OE Division, 1960-61

On December 15, 1960, I arrived at NAS Alameda to report to the Midway. They put me on the base shuttle which dropped me off at the pier that Midway was tied up to.

The size of the ship just blew me away, and the welcoming flight deck display for the Christmas holidays. I had two cousins ahead of me that were carrier sailors, the Ticonderoga and the FDR.

The following Monday was another huge memory from the early days. I reported into OE Division as I was basically marking time before to going to ETA School. The Division Officer apparently did not have a plan for me. So, I remember him telling me,



we are running out of requisitions and would I run down to supply and get a package of requisitions. Well, you can't get requisition forms without a requisition but maybe... I think I got to every supply room on the ship from bow, to stern, upper decks, to the lowest decks. I really got to learn how to read frame numbers and locations.

OE Division took good care of me. I think I got on every working party that went by for the next couple of months, then got to be a mess cook.

Some ORI, then headed to Westpac February 15th. The Midway was so good to me, they took me to Waikiki Beach for my 19th birthday, 2/22/61. That was also the year that Laos blew up while we were there on station in Westpac, so the seriousness of everything went way up.

Laos made the front page of every newspaper in the country, which had my mother in panic mode. She had been 7 months pregnant with me when Pearl Harbor happened and I did not understand how that impacted her, for many years.

Memorial for Oscar Granger

Marty Fitzgerald, MVA VP-Administration

I have been working on a memorial for Oscar Granger, our past President of the USS Midway Veterans Association. Oscar passed away in October 2024. The Granger family is planning a memorial to be held for him aboard the Midway April 13th – 15th, 2025. Currently there is a bench on the Midway Museum with a plaque to recognize Ron McPhail, founder of the MVA. A plaque to recognize Oscar will also be placed on this bench on April 15th. Oscar's ashes will be spread at sea.

MVA Changes Through the Years

Tim Miller, MVA Secretary

The MVA has undergone significant changes since the 2019 reunion. The start of Covid contributed significantly to these changes. The Executive Board felt that if the MVA was to survive it would have to think outside of the box. One of the changes that evolved over the next couple of reunions was to changeout members of the

executive board, who had been managing the MVA for over a decade.

During 2022 reunion the board was presented with the idea of opening the MVA membership to sons, daughters, and grandkids of Midway veterans. Which means now any family member can be a dues-paying member which allows them to vote and serve on the Executive Board if they choose. to do so. The members voted and approved these changes to the MVA by laws.

During the 2024 Three Sisters Reunion business meeting, the attendees voted from this point on that all MVA reunions will be held in San Diego, home of the Midway Museum. Plus, it voted to only hold reunions every other year in San Diego.

It is felt that these changes will help the MVA going forward.



Midway at Sea 1987

Down by the Sea

David Payson, 1963-64, RDSN, OI Division

I only made one cruise on the Midway, and that was back in the day when iron ships were just starting to catch on, 1963. That's an exaggeration, of course, but not by much. By now it seems like two lifetimes ago.

When I came onboard Midway in early 1963—the Navy flew me to the Philippines to pick her up—I was a young Seaman, not that long out of Boot Camp. Midway was just commencing her 1963-64

Westpac cruise when I joined her. I went on to serve 4-plus years in the Navy, but only 6 months on Midway. It was a short but very memorable time.

Just a young kid, what did I know about life? Not much. But I learned fast the ways of the Navy and I got some excellent life lessons during my time on Midway. Before Midway, the largest seagoing vessel I'd been on was my hometown's Sea Scout boat, which my dad was skipper of. I should count numerous ferryboat rides in there, too.

I trained as a radar operator on Midway, because I had orders to attend Class "A" Radar School on Treasure Island, CA, when the ship returned to the States. "On-the-Job Training (OJT)", the Navy called my time on Midway.

At radar school, after I left Midway, I learned the basics of Ohm's Law, and how it played into the concept of radar signals reflecting off solid "targets" such as ships at sea and returned a signal to a radarscope, on which we radarmen "saddled," nose to the screen, tracked surface and air contacts. ("Skunks" and "Bogies," we called them.)

The advent of radar had a major impact on both military and civilian life, revolutionized a number of things. That's why I was proud to call myself a radarman when I was in the Navy. People figured I knew about a lot more things than they did. I didn't try to correct them. Don't tell anyone but I'm still trying to figure out Ohm's Law. Is it $I = E/R$? Something to do with voltage vs. resistance?

My entire time on Midway, except for the few days it took to return to Midway's homeport of Alameda, CA, was spent overseas, either steaming to and from Westpac ports or playing war games at sea with other Navy ships. I picked her up the first time in Subic Bay, straight from Boot leave. The Navy flew me out from San Francisco to Subic Bay, Philippines, where the Midway was in port, having just begun her 1963-64 Westpac cruise. So, I did that entire 6-month Westpac cruise on her and got off the day we returned to Alameda. Didn't see her again until she was a museum ship in San Diego, many years later. Seems strange, I know.

My time on Midway was "illuminating," to say the least. She was more than a ship; she was a

legend, somehow indestructible. And continues to be so now as a museum ship in San Diego.

Steve DeCata, VP Reunions

I had an opportunity to meet with Senator Mark Kelly at his Capitol Hill office. Kelly flew combat missions during the Gulf War with VA-115, before being selected as a NASA Space Shuttle pilot in 1996. He flew his first space mission in 2001 as pilot of STS-108, then piloted STS-121 in 2006, and commanded STS-124 in 2008 and STS-134 (the final mission of Space Shuttle *Endeavour*).



Steve DeCata with Senator Mark Kelly

Message from the MVA Treasurer

Ray Tillery, MVA Treasurer

I hope all of you had a great holiday and new year! My family and I are looking forward to an exciting new year. We added one great grandchild to the two we already had this past year, and have been truly blessed! We now live in the area around Los Angeles, and offer our thoughts and prayers to those who have lost loved ones and homes. My family is fortunate and have not been touched at this point in time.

As we begin the new year, annual MVA memberships dues are due. I've had very little response from annual members, so if you're one of them, please update your dues. You can save yourselves the worry by simply becoming a Lifetime Member, by a one-time \$100.00 dues!

We will soon start planning our 2026 MVA Re-Union, which we will probably hold in September of that year in San Diego. So put that time on your calendar!

This is a Memory of Heroes

Martin J. McCormick Jr., AE3, VF 12, 54-55

This article is intended to honor two men whose names I'll never know but in reflection I know they probably saved my life, and countless others and maybe even the Midway itself by their never recognized courage. If in the reading of these events someone would remember them or this event it would be my honor to thank them for their service and recommend them both for belated Navy medal for their courage.

It is to be noted to begin I recently attended the Three Sisters reunion in September of this year. It had been 7 years since my last visit to the Midway and, as expected it brought back numerous memories of my time aboard Midway during the world cruise in 1954-1955.

I have written before about the Midway's Flag Ship duties with Task Force 77 in 1955 and, in particular, events during the Seventh fleet's standoff with Communist China's forces during the evacuation of the Islands of Quemoy and Matsu off the coast of

Taiwan. Sadly, after almost 70 years the problems of that time and location still exist.

The run-up to the events as Flag Ship of Task Force 77 involved a sudden call to duty to join the Seventh Fleet from our second port of call, Ceylon, now known as the main Island of Sri Lanka, in the Indian Ocean.

Things happened with all the drama of World War II events when all liberty was cancelled and an immediate return to the ship was ordered for all troops ashore and preparations were made to put to sea immediately if not sooner.

CAG 1 and its squadron's, including VF 12, my squadron, were informed by various forms of scuttlebutt (naturally) that we were to prepare for potential live ammunition engagements in the days ahead. My responsibilities at the time were as one of three flight Deck trouble-shooters. I would add it was my first time in that capacity. Little did I know what the experiences to come would have on my life. As you can well imagine it was with wide eyed wonder that I thought of what the days ahead might hold for our Squadron, the Ship and would I be able to do the right thing if and when called upon.

In setting the stage for the heroic event that follows it should be noted that the air groups had zero flight time since loading aboard ship in December in Jacksonville, Florida. Now, almost a month later, having sailed thru Hurricane Alice on our way to Cape Town, South Africa, and then around Cape Hope, VF 12's F2H2 Banshee's still had their various forms of weather protection in place as we are being called to be combat ready.

It goes without saying that initial flight operations were quite challenging. Wings that wouldn't lock in place, Landing gear that would not cycle, and barrier crashes that were not where anyone wanted to be in preparation for the "whatever".

As we readied for the potential for combat, the bugs were worked out and to our knowledge the stage was being set for battle fleet action. CAG1, in coordination with 3 other carrier air groups trained with live ammunition in this assembled fleet of 4 Carriers, Cruisers, support ships, Destroyers, even Submarines.

The Seventh Fleet's Task Force 77 was expected to be prepared to follow the orders of President Eisenhower to protect the people and military units evacuating from the Quemoy and Matsu Islands to the mainland of Taiwan.



Martin J. McCormick Jr.

This brings me to the memory that I have often talked about with Squadron mates at reunions and with others that would share sea stories of their own. I remember like it was yesterday, even though it was some 69 years ago. I had come up from the hanger deck and was exiting the Island to the flight deck in preparation for addressing any issues with VF 12 recovered aircraft. On the way to the Island, I heard an announcement from the Bridge that "The plane in the Groove has hung rockets". As I stepped onto the flight deck, I looked aft to the approaching aircraft to see it was a Banshee. As the aircraft caught the wire and snapped down on the nose wheel a piece of metal flashed into the air above the port wing. I thought "ugh- oh" what was that? Thinking something will be a problem for that Plane-captain when the next announcement from the bridge was "Heads Up for the Rocket."

I had initially focused on the metal piece above the plane but with the heads up warning I saw the Rocket skidding erratically toward me. At first, I thought the barrier would stop it but it skipped through. To be clear Banshee's land at about 170 mph so that missile was still traveling at a very high rate of speed as it neared me at the mid Island position, maybe 50 feet from where it came off the wing.

I did actually flash think, could I stop it by tackling it or jumping on it grenade style? Fortunately, it was passed me before I could do anything stupid so I went prone on the flight deck and prepared for the explosion and fire to come. On a previous cruise there was an over the barrier crash into parked aircraft and I had seen pictures of the resultant fire storm. I thought this was our turn as the rocket skidded and slammed into a wheel of a parked jet. VF 174 Cougars had just landed and Squadron crews and pilots were all in the area with refueling being started. A fatal combination.

There was no explosion at that point and I watched that rocket ricochet into the tailpipe of a recently shut down Cougar at an awkward angle. To be honest I hunkered down and awaited my fate, thinking if it goes off as I stand up to run for the Island, I'll surely get hit by shrapnel, better to let it blow over me then run for cover.

As I lay there hugging the deck watching that rocket hanging nose-in and stuck in what had to be a screaming hot tailpipe of a just powered down Cougar, two men in red jerseys leaped out of the catwalk on the port side and ran to the stuck missile that was located about amidships. At this point I could see pilots, refuelers and others scrambling to get away from the scene, probably alerted by the running redshirted ordinance men. Those two men pulled the missile from its stuck position and ran with it to the Starboard catwalk and heaved it over the side.

In hindsight I am still amazed about the reactions of all of us that followed. Maybe there was a follow up lessons learned review in officer's country. I don't know and never heard of one. To my knowledge those men should have received medals for bravery but flight recovery continued and preparations for the mission kicked back in.

Everyone went about their business as if nothing happened. Seemingly, it didn't blow up, so move on!

To those two men who I'll never know, thank you, and in the Naval tradition of rendering the ultimate compliment say to each of you "Well Done" and I hope you have or have had a wonderful life.



Picture of pilot above that appeared with the below poem

The Last Full Measure

By Don Purdy

We launched day and night
from a seaborne lair,
Soaring to fight
In the war-torn air.

Our courage a lever
In a political game,
Still we gave the last full measure
And filled a Wall with our brothers' names.

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



In Memoriam

Shipmate Charles Soules, Captain, USN(Ret), passed away December 6, 2024 at 88 years old. He served as Midway's Chief Engineer from 1975-77. He is survived by his wife Beatrice, his daughters Lynnae Lyons and Heather Soules, and grandson Gavin Lyon. 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.

President

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

Vice President-Reunions

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

Vice President-Administration

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

Treasurer

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

Secretary

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

Newsletter Editor

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

Membership Committee Chair

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

Facebook Admin

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

Webmaster

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

Letters to the Editor

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

Send to: mvanewseditor@gmail.com



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? _____

Immediate Family Member Name: _____		Associated with MVA Member _____	
Mailing Address _____		Email _____	
City _____	State _____	Telephone _____	

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;
Telephone 806-678-0742.
18940 Priceless Road
Perris, CA 92570

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