



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



M i l i t a r y P h o t o D e p o t

USS Midway (CV-41) underway during 1990-1991 Gulf War. Midway, with assigned Carrier Air Wing 5 (CVW-5), was deployed to the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean from 2 October 1990 to 17 April 1991. USS Ranger (CV-61) is visible in the background.

Happy Birthday 80 Years of Midway Magic

The USS Midway was the longest-serving aircraft carrier in the 20th century. Named after the climactic Battle of Midway of June 1942,

Midway was built in only 17 months but missed World War II by one week when commissioned on September 10, 1945. Midway was the first in a three-ship class of large carriers that featured an armored flight deck and a powerful air group of 120 planes.

From the beginning of its service, the Midway played key roles in the Cold War. In 1946, it became the first American carrier to operate in the midwinter sub-Arctic, developing new flight deck procedures. The following year, Midway became the only ship to launch a captured German V-2 rocket. The trial's success became the dawn of naval missile warfare. Just two years after that, Midway sent a large patrol plane aloft to demonstrate that a carrier could deliver atomic bombs.



Midway Commissioning Ceremony 1945

Midway served with the Atlantic Fleet for ten years, making seven deployments to European waters, patrolling “the soft underbelly” of NATO. A round-the-world cruise took Midway to the West Coast in 1955, where it was rebuilt with an angled deck to improve jet operations.

Midway's first combat deployment came in 1965 when it flew strikes against North Vietnam. Midway aircraft shot down three MiGs, including the first air kill of the war. However, 17 Midway aircraft were lost to enemy fire during this cruise. In 1966, Midway was decommissioned for a four-year overhaul.

Over a chaotic two-day period during the fall of Saigon in April 1975, Midway was a floating base for large Air Force helicopters that evacuated more than 3,000 desperate refugees during Operation Frequent Wind.

As potential threats to the Arabian oil supply grew, and to relieve strain on U.S.-based carriers, Midway transferred to Yokosuka, Japan, making it the first American carrier homeported in a foreign country.

In 1990, Midway deployed to the Persian Gulf in response to the Iraqi seizure of Kuwait. In the ensuing Operation Desert Storm, Midway served as the flagship for naval air forces in the Gulf and launched more than 3,000 combat missions with no losses. Its final mission was the evacuation of civilian personnel from Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines after the 20th century's largest volcano eruption of nearby Mount Pinatubo.

On April 11, 1992, the Midway was decommissioned in San Diego and remained in the inactive ship fleet in Bremerton, Washington, until 2003, when it was donated to the 501(c)3 nonprofit San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum organization. It opened as the USS Midway Museum in June 2004.



The Oxygen/Nitrogen Incident!

Bernard Ray Tillery, 1970-71, LTJG, A Division

During our 1971 deployment to WestPac, our ship, the USS Midway (CVA-41) had been assigned to operate off of Yankee Station just off the coast of Vietnam in order to support military operations during the Vietnam conflict.

My assignment aboard the Midway at that time was acting "A" Division Officer. I had recently been promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade, but I was still quite green for the job normally handled by a full Lieutenant. But I partnered with a highly qualified Warrant Officer, John Sides, in managing the Division, and we seemed to be getting by pretty well.

That all was tested one day during this tour. The main compressor for the generation of oxygen and nitrogen in the O2N2 plant suddenly failed. Unfortunately, the oxygen/nitrogen generation capability aboard the Midway was essentially limited to this one plant. We did have two other plants, but they were essentially obsolete WWII vintage units that could not provide the demands of the times.

Access to liquid oxygen and nitrogen aboard a modern aircraft carrier is essential. Air operations cannot be conducted without both. Oxygen is used by the pilots for life support, and nitrogen is required for aircraft tire inflation.

John and Chief McWhirter worked tirelessly to figure out what were wrong, but in short order, it had become clear that the heart of the unit, the compressor, was shot.

John let me know in detail what was going on. I quickly got in contact with the Chief Engineer, Commander Kurzenhauser regarding the situation. We could not provide sufficient oxygen nor nitrogen for air wing requirements.

That's when you find out what good leadership is about. It was good leadership on the Commander's part, and good divisional leadership on John Sides' and Chief McWhirter's part. The Commander responded calmly and quickly sorted out what we had to do. He immediately contacted the Captain who also responded calmly, but quickly directed all parties involved to make arrangements for oxygen and nitrogen to be shipped as required from Da Nang. This effort was a challenge and a burden for many people who were involved, but it had to be done.

John, the Chief, and the O2N2 crew worked feverishly to get the compressor removed and ready for shipment to a repair center in Da Nang. The daily mail plane captain didn't want to carry the compressor aboard his aircraft, because the unit was heavy, and he was concerned that the aircraft's available tie downs were not sufficient to hold the compressor during a catapult launch. Such an event would destroy the aircraft and kill the crew. One of the A-3 (a twin-engine tanker aircraft) pilots suggested the possibility of mounting the compressor on a rocket holding pod on his aircraft. We proceeded to prepare a mounting system to do so. Instead of carrying a bomb or a rocket on the wing rack, the compressor would be carried. Before we got the system ready, the pilot changed his mind; just too risky. I more or less agreed with the pilot. The unit went on a boat to Da Nang. We got the unit back after a week or so, and John and Chief saw to it that was immediately re-installed.

Of course, all of us in Engineering were relieved, as well as the crews who were burdened to carry oxygen and nitrogen back and forth to the mainland.

Most of us recall the terrible tragedy that struck in this very space, the O2N2 Plant, several years later when the Cactus collision incident occurred. This was the space where two "A"

Division sailor's lives were taken. The O2N2 Plant can be seen from the Hangar Deck of the Midway Museum in perfect repair today, but the memory of those lost sailors will remain.

September 2026 MVA Reunion

Steve DeCata
MVA VP Reunions

Hello shipmates and family members, hope everyone had a great summer! Starting to look like fall here in Northern Virginia so it's time to start planning and looking forward to next year's Midway Veterans Association reunion in San Diego.

Next year's reunion hotel will be the Doubletree at Point Loma. The Reservation link is below:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/sannydt-umr-0e112fb2-69f4-4865-af0f-2f7a3a44d36b/> 619-224-3621 (hotel phone number)

This is our tentative itinerary for the reunion subject to change. We are now working out the pricing and timing for the tours

September 14-16 2026
Early registration on 13th Sunday

Registration 14th
Tour in the morning
<https://sdzsafaripark.org/safaris>
Evening
Welcome cocktails/light Hor d'oeuvres
(Not a Dinner)

Tours on the 15th, 0800 Meet and Greet on the USS Midway

Afternoon <https://www.sealtours.com/>

Tour in morning 16th (North Island Midway Aircraft repair facility? Still working out details)
Afternoon MVA group meeting, at the Hotel we will be having elections for open positions

Evening Banquet dinner

Check out 17th

So, start saving up your pennies for the reunion. Remember, San Diego is always expensive and next year won't be any different.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the reunion in San Diego 2026.

And as always be safe, have a great fall and remember, Go Navy! Beat Army!

USS Midway, the Best at What She Does

David Payson, 1963-64, RDSN, OI Division

When I was on the USS Midway in the early-1960's, our country was at peace, no immediate foreign enemies in sight. I made one WestPac cruise on her, enjoying the attractions in the Far East. But shortly after we returned to the States, I left Midway to attend radar school on Treasure Island in San Francisco.

Even though I was no longer a member of Midway's crew, I kept close tabs her. Then, on my next ship, the USS Wilhoite, a DE radar picket ship that served valiantly in WWII and then again in Vietnam when I was on her. Fast forward another year. By now I was a seasoned member of Wilhoite's crew, I was thrilled to cross paths with Midway again. So, there they were, both "my" ships in Vietnam, serving at the same time in the Tonkin Gulf. Pity I could only be on one at a time. On second thought, no, not a pity.

Vietnam developed into an all-out shooting war, and Midway finally got a chance to "show her stuff." And show it she did, sending her planes into war from "Yankee Station," a location that was frequently shifted by varying distances and locations off the coast of South Vietnam. There was plenty of action to be had for Midway in Vietnam.

Midway's pilots and planes were far superior to the enemy's. Whoa be it to the enemy pilots who came up against them. As if she were making up for lost time—not commissioned until after WWII, not used in Korea—Midway's pilots saw plenty of action in Vietnam, dodging Russian SAMs (surface to air missiles) and Russian MIG-31s. Nor should I overlook Midway's crew who kept the ship running and ready for action. In their day they were the best in the carrier fleet, honed to perfection by skill, pride and lots of practice.

These days, as a museum ship in San Diego, Midway still sees plenty of action, but it's mostly in the tourist industry, drawing tourists from across the country (and from across the world, for that matter). That's the Midway for you. I'd wager that she's the most popular museum ship in the retired U.S. Navy fleet (and maybe in the world's retired fleet). She never liked being No. 2 in anything. Which is why she seldom was.

I've been out of the Navy now for several years, but I'll never forget watching Midway's heroics on television, as she led the way during Operation Frequent Wind, helping save thousands of lives. She was the star attraction in that historic event. We (her veterans) were all so proud of her then.

We still are.

John James Cantor

April 26, 1917 – July 21, 2025

John J. Cantor, born April 26, 1917, in St. Paul, Minnesota passed away peacefully in his home in Ladera Ranch, Ca. surrounded by loved ones on July 21, 2025. He "Crossed the Bar" into the waiting arms of Jesus Christ into eternal rest.

John was one of four children born to Romanian immigrant parents, John and Mary Cantor. He is preceded in death by his sisters,

Helen Costew and Mary Zachary and his brother, Nick Cantor.

John and Lois Cantor were married in 1942 and spent 80 wonderful years side by side, until her passing in 2022. John is survived by his daughters, Patricia Craig and Kathleen Tucker, as well as many beloved grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. He also leaves behind numerous relatives whom he loved dearly — many of whom affectionately called him "Uncle Johnny."

John graduated from Pershing High School in Detroit, Michigan, in 1934 and joined the United States Navy later that year, during the Great Depression.

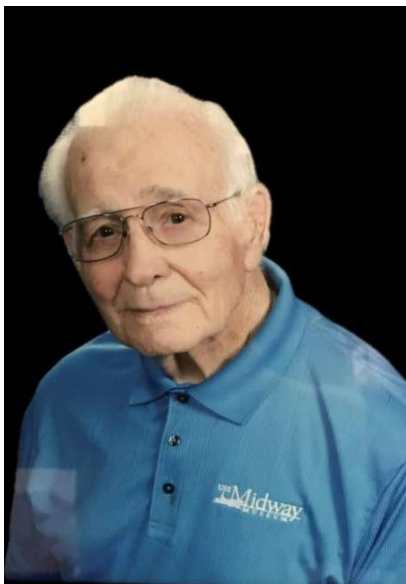
John loved the Navy (he likely had salt water in his veins). He served proudly on the USS Altair AD11 and the USS Moffett DD362, but his favorite ship was the USS Midway. While John was honorably discharged on December 2, 1941, with plans to join the Detroit Police Department, he quickly, and without hesitation, returned to military service following the attack on Pearl Harbor 5 days later. John wore his Navy uniform with pride and honor until his retirement on April 1, 1965, as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CWO4). Over a distinguished career spanning more than 30 years—including World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the Cold War, and peacetime—he was stationed around the globe, serving his country with unwavering dedication and honor.

John and his wife Lois made San Diego their hometown in 1958. John worked for the California Division of Highways for several years and then for San Diego County as Custodian of Superior Court exhibits. He was an active member of various retired military organizations including FRA Branch 80, Ocean Beach (Secretary /Treasurer), FRA Br. 70Poway, MOWW (Chaplain), VFW Post 7766, MOAA, American Legion, Post 149, NAUS,

Navy League, NNWA, USS Hector Assn, USS Lenawee. USS Midway Assn. Crew member, Squadron and Shipmates Midway/FDR, USS Midway Veterans Assn. He was also a longtime member of PBS and the San Diego Zoological Society.

John's reunion with his daughter Patti later in life brought him immense joy. Being reunited and witnessing the legacy he left behind—in his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren—was a special gift he deeply attributed to his faith. John was profoundly grateful for his exceptional caregiving team at the end of his life, including Daryl, Pam, and the staff at Vitas Healthcare (hospice).

John and his wife Lois were members of the Life Bridge church in San Diego for many years. As a devoted Christian, John loved the Lord and faithfully served Him throughout his life. He now joins the many friends and family who have gone before him in heaven. Until we meet again.



Midway Rescues a Helicopter

Mark Nojiri, 1974-81, AT1, IM3

On 10 March 1981, as the USS Midway was steaming towards a port visit to the nation of Singapore, a helicopter owned by the Gulf Oil Company was flying a group of workers to an oil rig off the coast of Singapore. Suddenly they heard a loud bang and the helicopter spun out of control and landed in the ocean. When they hit the water, they were able to deploy a life boat and the pilot told them they would probably spend some time, stranded out in the middle of the ocean. They saw a Russian destroyer but it steamed by them, ignoring them. Then, a little later a jet pilot from the Midway spotted them and reported their position to the Midway and soon, the Midway pulled up near them and rescued all of them and the helicopter. The Midway fed them and they claimed they just received the best meal they had ever had.

When the Midway arrived in Singapore, we were literally hometown heroes.

Yes, I was aboard the Midway when it happened!

Never Clean the Coffee Pot

Randy Stone, ABH3, V-3 Div 1975-77

I arrived aboard the Midway right in the middle of Operation Frequent Wind. I can never forget the experiences that I had during the next few years. One story I have is when I was assigned to Night Check in Hangar Deck Control. I was the only person in Hangar Deck Control in between Flight Quarters. I had multiple duties to do and one of them was making sure there was a fresh pot of coffee when everyone arrived for Flight Quarters. I would spend the night moving tractors and equipment around to assist the squadrons in maintenance. Checking on the watch standers in Conflag Stations. These guys were posted to

activate the sprinkler system if there was a fire. I can say that I never saw them used, thankfully.

I had been doing this for weeks, and one night I decided I would clean the coffee pot. When I say coffee pot, I mean a 30-cup stainless steel coffee pot. So, I went to scrubbing away and cleaned that pot up so nice, it was shiny. I filled it full of water and put the coffee in and pushed the switch as soon as Flight Quarters was announced. I was so proud of my work.

Then everyone started arriving for the next day of operations. Not too long after that that I got the look from my CPO when he started drinking the coffee. I will never forget his expression and everyone else's when they took a drink. It seems that they experienced a metal taste in their mouths. I quietly gave them my report and left for crew quarters. Needless to say, when I came back that night, there was a brand-new coffee pot sitting there.

It wasn't too long after that I started drinking coffee and still do today. Black coffee so I would know if there was a metal taste.

Another story I have is when we were moving aircraft onto Elevator 3, a huge wave came along and hit the elevator. That elevator rose 10 feet in the air with two F4 Phantoms and our entire crew with tractors. We all got very wet, luckily no one went overboard, and the elevator slowly came back down due to the hydraulics. There was a frantic call all the way to the Aircraft Handler, Air Boss and the Captain. The ship turned onto a different course, and they refrained from using the elevator for a while.



I went on to another ship, the Eisenhower, after my time on the Midway. Later I became an Avionics Technician (Aviation Fire Control) and had tours of duty in VQ-1 on Guam and NAS Pt. Mugu, in California. Five years ago, I had the chance to visit the Midway again and I was very happy to see her again. I can never forget the Midway and I look forward to seeing her again.

I think I am going to have a cup of coffee.



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

USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/858100554307618>

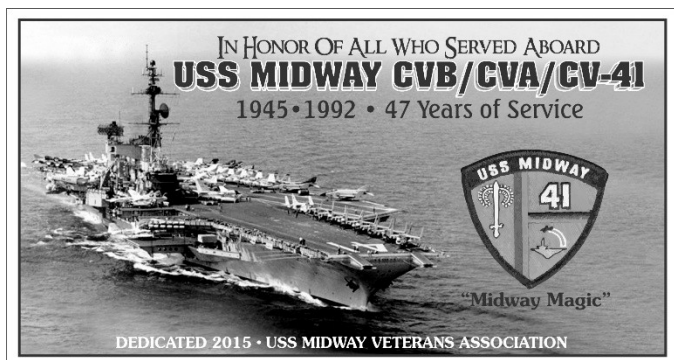


In Memoriam

Shipmate John Cantor, CWO4, USN(Ret), passed away July 21, 2025 at 108 years old. He served in S1 Division, 1951-53. May he rest in peace. (See his obituary in this issue)

Shipmate Gary Dunmire, passed away August 9, 2025, He served in V1 Division, Fly2, 1957-60. May he rest in peace.

Shipmate Floyd Heckler passed away September 18, 2025 in Eureka, CA. He served in M-Division, 1963-66. May he rest in peace.



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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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
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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. He will fill you in on the details.