



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



F-14s Prepare to launch from Midway, September 1982

From the Bridge...It was an Amazing Year for Midway

Terry Kraft, President and CEO

Editor's Note: The below article is from the Midway Museum Currents (Winter 2026). Reprinted with permission from the Midway Museum.

As I enter my fourth year as president and CEO of this iconic museum, I can't help but get a little nostalgic. I have enjoyed every minute of my time aboard my old ship – especially last year. Two amazing events come to mind.

The Operation Frequent Wind commemoration ceremony we held last April was incredible. To watch more than 3,000 Vietnamese-Americans man our flight deck and listen to former Midway commanding officer, retired Rear Adm. Larry Chambers, and Maj. Bung Lee, the former South Vietnamese Air Force pilot who miraculously landed his "Bird Dog" aircraft on Midway's flight deck in 1975, was a moment I will never forget.

In June, we opened the new Carrier Intelligence Center exhibit. It was particularly meaningful for me, as I spent hundreds of hours in that top secret space planning my combat missions during



Operation Desert Storm in 1991. We transformed this space into a state-of-the-art exhibit as a tribute to the incredible intelligence professionals that toiled there throughout Midway's history. At the same time, we created an engaging and interactive opportunity for all ages to understand the challenges inherent in combat carrier aviation.

I couldn't be more proud of Mark Berlin, Billy Coleman and the exhibits team, and all our volunteers who helped design and build the exhibit. We are also grateful to the Naval Intelligence Professionals (NIP) organization who generously donated their time and financial support for the project.

As I look back on my third Midway holiday season, I realized that such an important part of that usually hectic time is one we often take for granted. All the parties and events are really about fellowship and taking time to tell our friends and loved ones how important they are to us. There are so many ways that this happens over the holiday season, but the message remains the same – we value each other's friendship and support.

Aboard Midway, that message is amplified daily. If you are reading this edition of the magazine, you can play a part in our success. Whether a member, volunteer or staff, your efforts are important to our success as a museum. As we continue with the construction of Freedom Park at Burnham Navy Pier, there are even more opportunities to partner with Midway and establish a legacy in the most beautiful downtown park in San Diego. It is my dream to have as many people as possible, especially our veterans, formally remembered in the park. There will always be a place on Midway for everyone, whether working as a volunteer or putting your name on a bench in our park.

Ages ago, when I had the honor of commanding an aircraft carrier, my message was always the same as above – every single member of the crew is important and every person can be a key to our success as a warship. That remains my north star to this day. As a crewmember on Midway again, I couldn't be more proud of the team that ensured our success in 2025 and has formed the foundation for a bright future!

It's a great day on Midway!

Terry

September 2026 MVA Reunion

Steve DeCata
MVA VP Reunions

As we welcome the renewal of spring, shipmates and family members, the countdown to our Midway Veterans Association Reunion is just around the corner. We encourage all members, to SPRING into action and register now before time slips by. It's a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with shipmates, share stories, and honor the legacy we all hold dear.

Check out events and registration here:

<https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/USSMidway26>

Also, be sure to take a look at the official reunion merchandise—there's some great stuff available! The sooner the order the better as they do take a few weeks for delivery. You can browse and order here:

<https://teamtime.shop/collections/midway-veterans-association>

Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

USS Johnston (DD 557)

Marty Fitzgerald, 1957-60, AN, V-4 Division

In 1942 I met my cousin, Rodger Gougeon, MM2, at my grandmother's home. He had orders to proceed to Tacoma Wash for ship assignment.

The ship he was assigned to was the USS Johnston (DD 557). On October 25, 1944 the Johnston was assigned to task group Taffy 3 and



was involved in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, one of the largest naval battles in history.

Japanese Admiral Takeo Kurita, aboard the Japanese battleship Yamato, took his large force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers from the San Bernardino Strait and headed south toward Leyte, where they encountered Task Unit 77.4.3 ("Taffy 3").

Led by Commander Ernest Evans, Johnston was supporting the Leyte Campaign by providing support to the escort carrier task force. The crew of the Johnston, outgunned and outmanned, charged into a massive line of Japanese battleships, cruisers, and destroyers in order to protect the landing force attempting to liberate the Philippine Islands and part of the wider Battle of Leyte Gulf. Coming under an overwhelming strong attack by a Japanese battleship and cruiser force during the Battle off Samar, she was lost during this action. With the other US Navy ships, the destroyer's effort were instrumental in saving most of the carriers and preventing the Japanese fleet from reaching the Leyte invasion area. 186 Johnston crew members, including Evans and my cousin, were lost that day.

Taffy 3 was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and Captain Evans was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz wrote afterwards that the success of Taffy 3 was "nothing short of special dispensation from the Lord Almighty." The Battle off Samar has been cited by historians as one of greatest last stands in naval history.

In 2019, the destroyer was discovered by the late Paul Allen's vessel R/V Petrel but laid deeper than the depth limit of the vessel. In March 2021, a privately funded expedition by two former US Navy officers, CDR Victor Vescovo and LCDR Parks Stevenson, in the submersible DSV Limiting Factor relocated, surveyed and filmed Johnston where she lies at a depth of 21,180 feet. Her hull number and other armaments are still in place and are visible on the superstructure.



CDR Victor Vescovo & LCDR Parks Stevenson

To think the USS. Midway (CVA 41) has passed over her many times in the Philippine Sea heading to Subic Bay.

In the same area but much deeper was the Samuel B. Roberts a Destroyer Escort that went down the same day. It was found in 2002 at a depth of 22,621, making it the deepest known shipwreck.

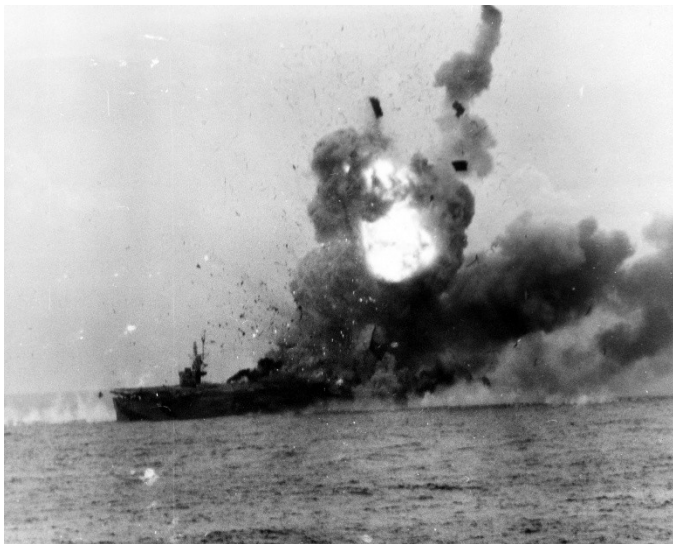
With that in mind that location is now a Sacred Place and is held in secret by the U.S. Navy



USS Johnston (DD 557) on the sea bottom

Editor's Note: During the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the USS St. Lo (CVE-63) was sunk by the Japanese. The St. Lo was originally commissioned as the USS Midway. The ship was renamed St. Lo on October 10, 1944, to free the name Midway for CVB-41, one of the "Large Carriers" then under construction. The new name commemorated an important victory of American troops in France, that captured the strongly defended town, Saint Lo, July 18, 1944.

The wreck of the St. Lo was discovered on May 14, 2019, by the research vessel Petrel. It lies upright at a depth of roughly 15,538 feet on the edge of the Philippine Trench; where it remains a war grave for 113 crew members. It sits upright on the seafloor with minimal marine growth, remaining in relatively good condition at extreme depths. The St. Lo was the first major US warship to be sunk by a kamikaze attack during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.



An explosion aboard USS St. Lo (CVE-63), immediately after being hit by a kamikaze, 10:51 a.m., 25 October 1944. Photograph taken from USS Kitkun Bay (CVE-71). National Archives and Records Administration 80-G-270513)

Our lives on Midway

Tim Miller, MVA Secretary

Our time on the Midway has three distinct stages which we can see in the lives that we lived while aboard her.

First, there is a gestation period. This is the development stage of our lives. It may involve

going from civilian life to that of basic training, then on to A school. Where we learn the basics of our rating. Then when our time at A school or basic training draws to an end, it's time to get our first set of orders.

Next is the crisis stage. Sooner or later, you are called into a relationship with other people from many different backgrounds, bringing up and of course from different states. Some people find it more difficult to adjust during this stage. It can be a time of harnesses of years of experience for new life purposes.

Last is the fruit-bearing stage. It's where we take all our experiences and use to be the best that we could be on the Midway. Whether down in the engineer spaces, on the bridge, serving food, launching aircraft or being the hook runner when a jet catches the wire. We all sit back and reflect on our lives on the Midway.

I hope that you will all consider attending the upcoming reunion in September so, you can step back in time and relive those memories that are locked up in our memory bank. Until then set a course due west to Midway's homeport, San Diego, CA.

My Midway History

Herb (Skip Thompson, 1962-66, AFB2, V-4 Division)

I am retired ABFC Herb (Skip) Thompson. My time stationed on the Midway seems kind of short, I only spent 3 years and 10+ months as an E-5 on her. Just short of 4 years.

It started off on the flight line at NAS Atlanta, GA. Coming back in off the flight line after refueling about 5 aircraft. I get a call from personnel. Empty your locker and come over to the admin building. When I got there the personnel officer handed me a check out sheet Note: all filled in. To report to the USS Midway Then he told me that the packing company was at my house.

I got home and my wife said they just left. They even packed dirty dishes. I left Atlanta for New Jersey to drop off my wife and Son with her family. It snowed all the way there, and the week I stayed. I had to report to the Midway Pre-com team in

San Diego by December 28, 1969. I drove in snow all the way across the states till 20 miles past Flagstaff AZ. when the snow stopped. I heard "Wolf Man Jack" on the radio. for the first time. I thought he was just part of that movie.

After taking a refresher in 3M, & welding in San Diego, reported to the ship in dry dock at Hunter's point. My first job getting aboard was being assigned to do the Co-Sal for the division, accounting for all the pumps, valves, fueling stations, hoses, nozzles and equipment needed etc. for the division. In doing the Co-Sal I noted we didn't have a fuel testing lab.

So, with the little 3M knowledge I had, I procured a compartment (space) installed water, drainage, power. and lighting. "Location is at the aft 02 level expansion joint Port side. "Open the door and walk right in, It's empty now".

After what it feels like we lived a life time off of Viet Nam for a long time. I was the QC PO, a flight deck PO and other jobs. Then I was transferred to the EX's division before being transferred to Atsugi Japan, the very day the Midway was pulling out for Japan. My Family and I were flying out of San Francisco and I looked down at the Golden gate as the Midway past under it. I thought "it's following me."

I supervised and ran the Atsugi fuel Department for 3 years. Assisting the Midway's aircraft needs.

My 2nd Son was born while stationed in Japan

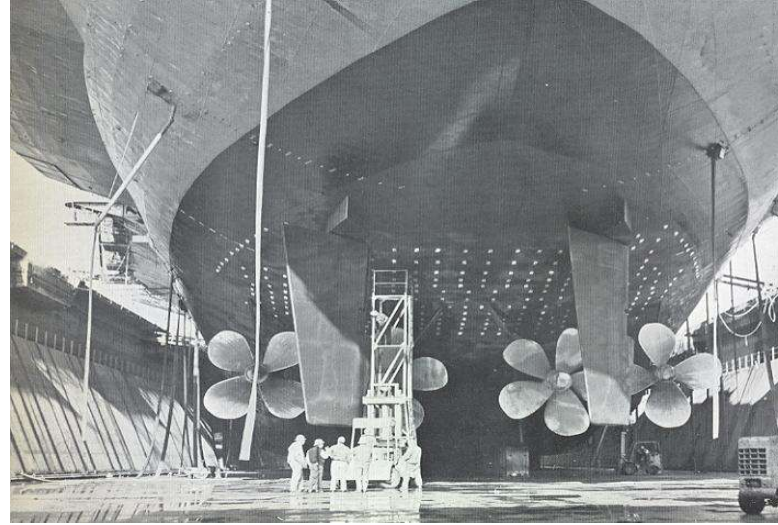
I have been a Docent on the Midway for about 18 years. If added I have been with the Midway for 24 to 25 years. **THATS 1/3 OF MY LIFE**

Steering Midway

Douglas Kenyon, 1971-73, QM3, Navigation

I was prompted to write this based upon a previous contact by a Midway docent who made an inquiry as to the "watch standers" in After Steering. Disclaimer: information concerning the staffing on Midway's After Steering are taken from the 1971-73 cruise periods which I sailed.

Midway Rudder System: Rudder System on the USS Midway consisted of a Port & Starboard Rudder. With propulsion of four screws it took massive rudders to maneuver the ship during various conditions and speeds.



Hunters Point Naval Shipyard circa 1962

Each Rudder was controlled by an Electro-Hydraulic Steering Motor. There were two Motors, e.g. Port & Starboard Steering Motor for each rudder. Daily the Steering Motors would change. Normally during the 4am to 8am watch the Engineering Officer would request the Bridge transfer control of the steering from the Bridge to After Steering so that the change of steering motors could take place.

After Steering: Each Rudder Steering Room had an Engineman (normally 3rd Class) from the A Division and an unrated Quartermaster from the Navigation Division. The Bridge would relinquish control to After Steering by means of an ALARM. The Quartermasters on each Rudder would then engaged the steering from After Steering. After a short period of time and warming of the relief steering motor both Port & Starboard Rudders would align and the motors would be shifted manually by throwing a control lever. Once the steering motor was operating effectively the steering would be shifted back to the Bridge.



Author in After Steering circa 1972



Author on Midway "Helm" circa 1971

It is common to associate the steering or "piloting" of a vessel from the Bridge or "Wheel House" which is where visitors on Midway get to experience where the control of the ship takes place while underway.

Midway visitors don't get to see After Steering. However, during Midway reunions docents would "at request" take Navigation team members "down below" to reacquaint ourselves with our old watch stations.

Secondary Conn: The Third location where the steering of Midway could take place was known as "Secondary Conn." If you ever wondered why there's a group of portholes right under the flight deck on the bow of Midway it's because there is a Secondary Bridge. Secondary Conn was designed so that if during combat the "primary bridge" was taken out a backup Bridge was available. Manning of the Secondary Conn was only done as part of General Quarters and was not used as part of general piloting or special sea & anchor detail. Similar to After Steering, Secondary Conn is normally "secured" and not open to the general visiting public. However, at "special request" a Docent may take you up one level on the starboard side forward of the Forecastle just passed the overnight visitor berthing area to Secondary Conn.

So now you know that there are THREE distinct and separate locations where Midway can be "Steered."

Editor's Note: During the first half of 1972 Secondary Conn was my QG Station. They actually let us steer the ship once! I don't think they trusted us.





QM Gang in Secondary Conn 2017

Best Damn Carrier in the Retired Fleet

David Payson, 1963-64, RDSN, OI Division

I haven't been back to Midway for a couple of years now, and I miss her. I was a young sailor when I served on her, fresh out of Class A radar school in 1964, a radarman, aka "Scope Dope." I won't say I loved Midway, but she was a good ship. Today, she thrives as a museum ship in San Diego, as we all know.

Good for her, I say. She deserves a good life—the best carrier in the retired fleet, not the old "Rust bucket" I sometimes call her.

When I was on her she was a fighting ship, as well. She fought mostly with her jets. And she knew how to fly them—did she ever. With some help from her pilots, of course. I was a radarman then, trained at

Class A radar school on Treasure Island, Ca., and worked in Midway's Combat Information Center (CIC).

Oh yes, lest I forget, Midway did some good work shore bombing, too, with her deck guns. I watched plenty of that action from my lookout post, abovedeck. I didn't spend all my time in CIC manning a radarscope. Just most of it.



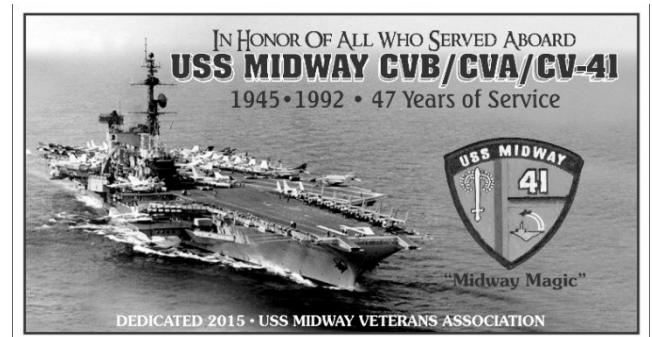
USS Midway Veterans Assoc. Website
<http://ussmidway.net>

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

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



*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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MVA Member Application

As a USS Midway veteran, I want to join the ranks of the USS Midway Veterans Association that is shared by both Navy and Marine veterans, no matter the department or air wing part who served on the Midway from 1945-1992. We now include family members (21 years and older) of USS Midway veterans. Please complete the form below to become a member of the MVA.

MVA Name: _____ Date: _____

Division/Rank/Rate while onboard: _____

Years served in the Military: From: _____ to: _____

How did you learn about the MVA? _____

Your mailing address: _____ (City) _____

(State) _____ (Zip Code) _____ (Phone number) _____

Email address: _____

Emergency Contact/Next of Kin _____ MVA member's name: _____

Mailing address: _____ (City) _____

(State) _____ (Zip Code) _____ (Phone number) _____

Family member section (21 years s older)

Family membership provides full membership privileges, voting, office holding, newsletter/email access.

Family member _____ Relationship to Veteran _____ Time Veteran served aboard
USS Midway Rank _____ Division _____ Is Veteran a current of past member of the MVA? _____

Name: _____ Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Email address: _____ Tel: _____

Please check one of following dues that applies to you to complete the application:

\$ 20 yearly for members only: _____

\$ 25 yearly for (21 and over) _____ member and spouse

\$ 100 Lifetime membership for the member and spouse _____

\$ 100 Lifetime member for the (21 and over) member and spouse _____

To pay by credit card (PayPal, Discovery, Mastercard, Visa). Just visit

<https://ussmidway.net/> (go to bottom right of the webpage). If paying by check, make the check payable to: Midway Veterans Association and mail your completed application to the address below. You will also receive MVA electronic emails on any MVA related items.

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