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

MVA Board Members 2026 Reunion

MVA Board elections were held during the Business Meeting at our 2026 San Diego reunion.

Front row left to right: Ray Tillery, Treasurer; Charlene Morgan, VP Reunions; Steve DeCata President. Back row left to right: Gene Casterlin, VP Administration; Tim Miller, Secretary; Jim Daugherty, Newsletter editor.

Hello Shipmates

For those who don't know me, I'm Steve DeCata new President of the MVA. A little background, I grew up in Schenectady NY, joined the Navy in 1978 as a non-designated airman, just wanted to be a photographer. After bootcamp went to FRAMP Training at NAS Miramar RVAW-110. Reported to the Midway in February 1979 VAW-115, CO-XO, said they needed, AK's and put me in maintenance control, on my own time, thanks to a great offer and senior chief, would do OJT in the Photo Lab. I eventually asked to be moved to the Line shack and worked on the flight deck as a brown shirt (more fun than I should have had). Took the PH 3 advancement test, made PH3, but stayed on with the squadron, till I transferred, to Naval School of Photography, NAS Pensacola.

Well, that's half of my Naval career.

The USS Midway was my first and only ship, and couldn't have asked for a better ship. In many ways it made me the person I am today.

I would like to thank everyone who elected me President, I will work hard to make this organization better, stronger and hope that I can proudly represent the 225,000, Sailors, Officers and Marines who served aboard our ship over her 47-year service to this great country.

That being said, the board and I have been working on getting Corporate Sponsorship, to help with this. So, if you know of any corporations, big or small who would like to sponsor us, please have them contact me or any member of the board, for more information.

Thanks again.

Steve DeCata
President of the Midway Veterans Association

Post Reunion Treasurer's Report

Midway Veteran's Association's 2026 Reunion was held September 13-17 in San Diego, CA

It's hard to believe we have already completed our 2026 Reunion. From my perspective, the reunion was a pleasant experience and a successful endeavor. I hope everyone found the reunion to be worth their while. During the past three reunions, the expenses related to the reunions exceeded the receipts. Being aware of these on-going deficits in past years, the MVA Board intent was to minimize the possibility of this 2026 Reunion being completed in the red. We planned potential income and expenses seeking a final surplus of about $1500.

However, after we counted all receipts from the membership, returns from the raffle, sale of shirts, and the sale of the silent auction, that we had taken in $26,096. After adding all our expenses, the total costs were $19,828. This rendered a total surplus of $6268! As of right now, our checking account holds a balance of $30,652, but we anticipate receipt of future donations offered by corporate sponsors.

Most of this surplus was the result of several members who paid registration and meal fees, but did not attend. Our expenses for the hotel were less than anticipated. In addition, the sale of shirts and the raffle rendered more income than we anticipated.

Because of the positive financial outcome from this reunion, we're hoping we can fine tune the expenses for our next reunion, combined with our on-going experience of gained knowledge, we can offer future reunions at the best bang for the buck as possible!

We at the Board offer our thanks to all participants in this year's reunion, and we hope we can serve you well in future endeavors!

Respectfully Submitted,
Bernard Ray Tillery, MVA Treasurer

MVA 2026 Review from my lens

It's hard to believe that our MVA 2026 reunion that we all waited for two years has come and gone in a flash. From my lens this one had a different feeling and vibe about it. The biggest vibe and difference from my perspective was the hospitality room. Usually, the hospitality room is the central hub of our reunions. I mean that's where people hang out before going on tours and when they come back. For some reason, that was not the case this time.

There were many times when the hospitality room was empty. Also, it seemed like the beer and wine flowed like a trickle, where in the past it was flowing like a great river. So, most of the left-over canned beer we donated to a couple that lives in Chula Vista.

We also held our semiannual business meeting. Where we elected a new President, VP of Reunions, and a new VP of Administration. So, we now have a full board again.

The dinner turned out to be better than most of us thought it would be. Our guest speaker had all of us laughing with his experiences with the Blue Angels and his sense of humor. Also, we were hustling the raffle tickets for some awesome prizes.

After dinner was over, the hospitality room was open for people to say their goodbyes. I hope that those who attended came away refreshed, with a feeling of pride. I want to personally thank each and every one of you that attended and hope to see you in two years from now.

Tim Miller, MVA Secretary

Newly Elected Vice President - Administration

I served with VAW-115 1979-1982, Retired Senior Chief (ADCS) 1979-2006. I had the privilege to end my Navy career in 2006 making the very last F-14 cruise with the Tomcatters of VF-31 aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71. Also retired from NAVAIR Pax River in December 2018 and currently work as a contractor for the Navy. Been married for 43 years to my wife Nancy, we have two kids and 6 granddaughters. I have served in and for Navy for 47 years, and I am honored to be the Vice President (Admin) and serve for you all and the Midway Veterans Association.

MIDWAY MAGIC FOREVER

Gene Casterlin

Newly Elected Vice President - Reunions

I'm from North Carolina, daughter of Charles (Chuck) Homchosky, VAW-115 79-82. I am excited and looking forward to organizing our next MVA reunion as your VP of reunions.

Charlene Morgan

Hawkey NF603

Ken Borchik

Crew:
Pilots
Left seat: Lt(jg) Kevin Kughnig
RR seat: LT Thomas Miller
CIC Crew
LCDR Roger Duguid (CICO)
Ens Christopher Mims (ACO)
AT2 Christopher Andrews (RO/IFT)

August 17th started out like any other deployed day in the northern Indian Ocean… hot, humid and one could feel the palpable temperature of the Indian Ocean. I was assigned as the AE troubleshooter for the recovery of NF603 and headed to 'the roof' along with AT2 Jim McCounaghy and one of the mechanics was with us, I believe it was AD3 Bill Coble.

So normally, we would stand in the aft hummer hole… which is an area just aft of the island and it had an overhead and they park an E-2 in there. Just aft of this was where the Tilly was parked and ostensibly it was one of the safer places to hang out waiting on recoveries. This night however, we were on the port side of the island by the aft SINS Cable junction box… we were leaning against the superstructure and I remember the conversation we had about how dark it was getting, even for only being @ 2000 hrs. One of the other odd things I remember is normally there would be at least one, if not two SH-3 Sea King helicopters folded and parked next to the island, but it was wide open… a perfect view across the landing area. I think the original recovery time was scheduled for @ 1945 hrs.

We sat there shooting the breeze, just passing time as Sailors do… memories of the last port visit, anticipation of the next… the Hawkeye came around and boltered three more times for a total of four bolters. We began thinking about the possible fuel load on the aircraft, whether or not they were just going to swap out pilots and have the more seasoned LT Miller jump in the left seat and we waited.

We heard the plane coming before we saw it… it was pitch black by this time. We were positioned in the northern Indian Ocean, not too far off the coast of Yemen and Oman. We remained leaning against the island as 603 came in to view… it appeared to slow down and I remember thinking 'Thank God not another bolter' but as it slowed, so did time itself… it felt like everything happening took a long time to occur but in reality, it was mere moments in time… the aircraft kept rolling and then we realized something was horribly wrong as the plane departed the angle deck and the next thing I saw was the right wing tip coming up and a giant splash of water! We ran to the foul line to try and get a look… the overhead flood lights on the island came on as the ship steered away and slowed down from the now floating aircraft. I could see the top of the vertical tails, and I counted at least three helmets in the water… I remember turning around and it seemed the entire Liberty Bell wardroom was suddenly standing behind us on the flight deck… I remember LT Detloff was the SDO… I remember LT Beam standing there and his normally jovial self was purely stoic and if I had to bet money, I would lay even cash that he was crying.

We stood there and watched as the helicopter came over the wreckage and we noted the plane guard (destroyer behind the carrier) was nearing the area.

About this time, I could only see the top of the rotodome and the very top of the vertical stabilizers above the water line.

The helicopter and plane guard searched the area for hours and hours, we all prayed… I remember hearing the plane guard had recovered LCDR Duguid and AT2 Andrews and they were being picked up by the helicopter. Then we heard they picked up LT Miller and we waited… and waited for news on LT(jg) Kughnig and Ens Mims. Rumors of Ens Mims going back in the aircraft for the crypto equipment and some folks believing they saw four helmets in the water were all discussed…

The next day, the ship had removed itself from the immediate area of the mishap and we were told the aircraft was still floating. What actually had happened was the rotodome had separated from the aircraft and the aircraft had sunk and it was just the rotodome floating on the surface… this was confirmed by a helicopter crew that was sent out to attempt entry to remove any classified material. I remember the ship launching an A-7 Corsair to sink the rotodome with 20mm cannon fire rounds.

Sometime near the end of the second day, the ship declared both LT(jg) Kughnig and ENS Mims as 'lost at sea'.

Much debate regarding the cause of this mishap took place, the PLAT LENS Video, released now, was actually classified for many years and ultimately it was determined it was pilot error not properly using the throttle locks during the recovery allowing the throttles to fall back during recovery and not allowing the aircraft's to sustain enough forward airspeed for flight. The video shows the hook grabbing the wire but coming off… a very rare 'hook skip' occurrence.

These two Naval Officer's lives were celebrated on Elevator Number One a few days after the mishap. CDR Ron Weber had just assumed command about a month before this incident, he took this squadron from what arguably was the lowest point of our tours (Ens Mims had only been in the squadron about six weeks and was my AE Branch Officer, an extremely good guy), and Skipper Weber guided us and showed us how to take a tragedy and motivate us to becoming the next year's Battle E, Safety S and AEW Excellence winners. While the loss of our shipmates continues to hurt, I stand by my tour with the Liberty Bells of VAW-115 as being the standard bearer of how professional Naval Aviation warriors conduct themselves both in tragedy and success.

Freedom Park Donor Legacy Program

Freedom Park Legacy Brick Program
Paving the Future, Honoring Our Heroes

The USS Midway is proud to partner with the Port of San Diego in the creation of Freedom Park at Burnham Navy Pier – a unique, historic park dedicated to honoring veterans and their families. This stunning park will transform the landscape of San Diego Bay, and now, you have the chance to be a part of its legacy through the Freedom Park Brick Legacy Program.

Your commemorative brick will secure your place in history by being placed in the Parade Ground area, surrounding the iconic John Finn monument. This is a special opportunity honor the heroes who have served and those who continue to serve.

For more information on the Legacy Brick Program, use the following link:

https://freedomparkbricks.com/#/about

MVA Scam Emails

With the election of new MVA President, there seems to be a new round of scam emails that appear to be from Steve DeCata.

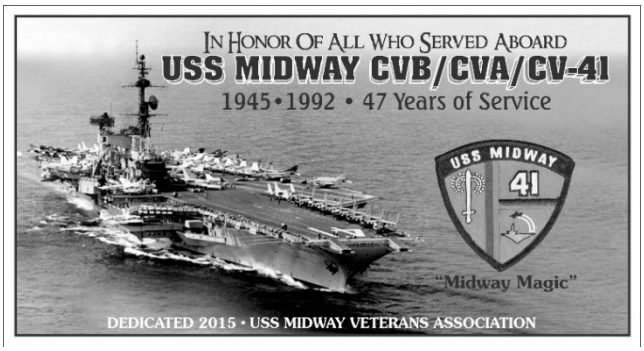
The email is asking for you to purchase gift cards that will be given to MVA members at a later date.

Any email that you receive asking for gift cards or donations is more than likely a scam.

Our Board Member's email addresses are listed on our MVA Website, https://ussmidway.net/. If the from address doesn't match the email address listed on the website, it is a scam.

Please don't purchase any gift cards. The MVA will never ask members for gift cards.

Jim Daugherty, MVA Newsletter Editor



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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Reunion Pictures

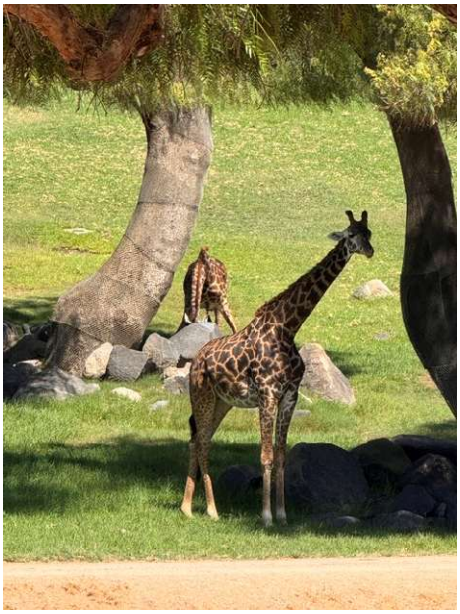
A few pictures from our San Diego Reunion. For more pictures go to the MVA website, Photos/Videos

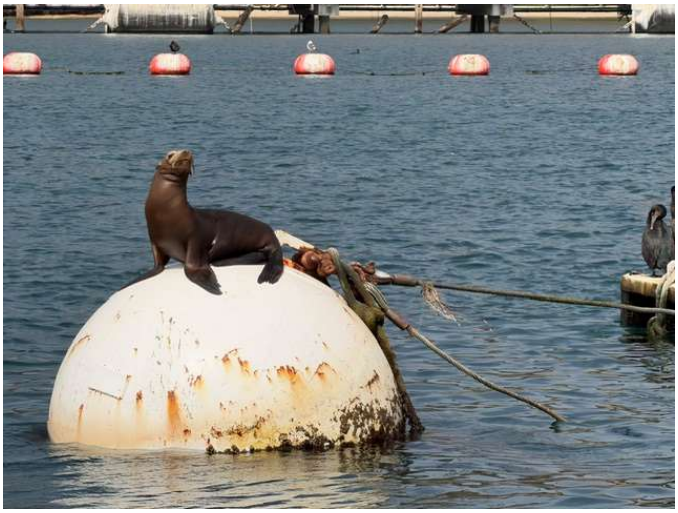
https://ussmidway.net

BEWARE OF JET BLAST PROPS AND ROTORS

NAVY

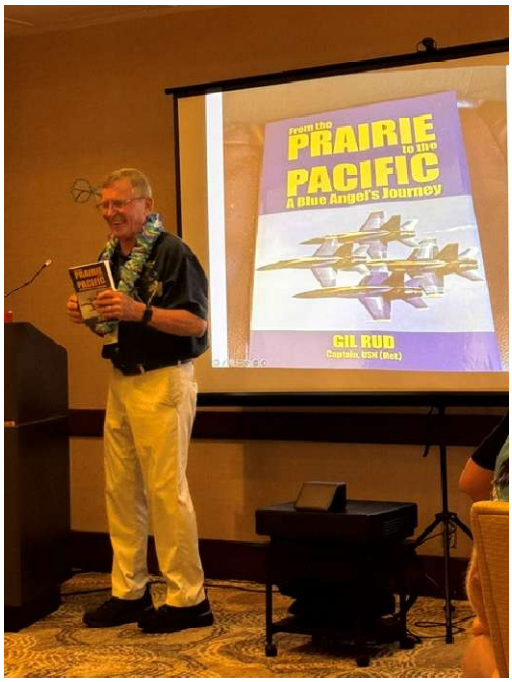
Make a SPLASH on the
Boarding at SEAPORT VILLAGE
SEA & LAND
ADVENTURES
RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED





EXIT

ALOHA


From the
PRAIRIE
to the
PACIFIC
A Blue Angel's Journey
GIL RUD
Captain, USN (Ret.)

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MVA Member Application

As a USS Midway veteran, I wish to join the USS Midway Veterans Association that is shared by both Navy and Marine veterans, regardless of department or air wing affiliation, who served on the Midway at any time she was in commission (1945-1992). Immediate family members (21 & over) of MVA members are also welcome to join the MVA. Family membership provides full membership privileges, voting, office holding, newsletter/email access. As a member you will be added to our email distribution and receive emails on reunion/MVA related information.

MVA Veterans Name: _____ Date: _____

Spouse/Partner Name: _____

Rank/Rate/Division while onboard: _____

Years served aboard Midway: From: _____ to: _____

How did you learn about the MVA: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

Immediate Family Membership (21 & over)

Family member name: _____ Relationship to Veteran: _____

Name of Midway Veteran: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____State: _____Zip code: _____

Email address: _____Tel: _____

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

☐ $20.00 yearly for member and spouse/partner. **Note:** The spouse/partner does not have membership privileges, i.e. can't vote or hold office. If a spouse/partner wants to vote or hold office they would have to join as an immediate family member and pay dues.

☐ $20.00 yearly for immediate family member

☐ $100.00 Lifetime membership (same for member or immediate family member)

You can pay dues on the MVA website using PayPal. Just visit https://ussmidway.net/ (go to bottom right of the webpage). If using PayPal, email or mail the form to the MVA Treasurer (contact info is listed below).

If paying by check, make the check payable to: Midway Veterans Association and mail your completed application and check to the MVA Treasurer (contact info is listed below).

USS Midway Veterans Association, 18940 Priceless Rd, Perris, CA 92570

Contact: Bernard (Ray) Tillery, MVA Treasurer at ray.tillery@yahoo.com Tel: 806-678-0742