

USS Midway

Scope Dope News

DING DING . . . DING DING . . . SCHOOLBOY'S OI DIVISION, CIC OFFICERS, RADARMEN, OPERATIONS SPECIALISTS AND OTHERS ARRIVING



Reunion Group San Diego Bound

Eventually those who attended the Orlando reunion found their way home, safe and sound and satisfied they'd gotten their money's worth, all things considered.

Many of them didn't get to see Ron in Orlando, but he was there in spirit. *He was all over the place in spirit.* So with our mission accomplished, we have struck a course for San Diego, site of the 2010 reunion and home to *our* ship.

But warm vibes don't last forever, and some of us found it difficult to adjust to "civilian life" again after having so much fun at the reunion. Everyday life can sometimes be mundane, if not boring. This malady is known as post-reunion syndrome.

In early summer, the reunion group planning committee held a phone debriefing that sought to get the ball rolling toward San Diego reunion planning. It soon became apparent to all involved, however, that the San Diego reunion was too far in the future to do any serious planning. Someone voiced the opinion "the ship is there, get over it." A good accomplishment, however, was the indoctrination of the 2010 reunion

hosts, Mike Walker and R.C. Morton, two early 60s veterans of the Midway's radar gang who live in the So. Cal. area, and who welcome the challenge and opportunity to be our the next reunion hosts.

During this period, the editor struggled to get the Orlando newsletter out. Afflicted with the aforementioned post-reunion syndrome and a corrupted newsletter template, he looked to his wife for help. "How can I possibly capture the essence of it?" he be-moaned. She cast him a pitying look, thinking *is this man ever going to get a life?* Finally, his funk lifted when he received a package from Ron McPhail containing prints of visits made by the men to his home during the reunion. (See article on next page.) He had a story! The *Scope Dope News* would go on!



OI Division Comes Calling

When the men and women of the reunion group learned that Ron couldn't attend the reunion dinner, they decided to do something about it. So the following day they took dinner—and a whole lot of other stuff—to Ron and his wife Mary at their home in Winter Park.

Among other things, they presented Ron with a U.S. flag flown over the Midway, a monogrammed, custom-made jacket with ship's emblem, a Certificate of Appreciation from the Midway, a reunion T-shirt and a Midway cap, an official reunion poster featuring the "three Midways" that was dedicated to Ron by the men, and a laminated version of his Chief's picture—all that and enough reunion dinners to feed his entire family.

The reunion attendees who visited Ron and his family at his home over the three-day reunion were Oscar Granger, Bill Kruper, Andy Perez, Dennis Willis, Ben Gaines, Gil Wooden, Craig Harper, Dave Payson (and his son Adam), Gary Burk, Sandy Burk, and Mary Seekamp.

Pictured below (L to R) are Ron, seated in his overstuffed chair, receiving a Midway cup, Sandy Burk, Dennis Willis, and Andy Perez.



(Editor's Note: This is one of the many photos Ron mailed to the *Scope Dope News*, taken at his home, of the visitors he had during the reunion. These photos are posted on our website for all to enjoy! Follow our website link on the last page of this newsletter.)

Midway Docent — Our Man On Deck

by Dick Hallowell
OSC 76-78

Biosketch. Dick joined the restoration crew prior to the ship opening in 2004. Later that year, he joined the Docent Corps where he served for three years. In 2007, he decided to change his routine and started working all of his volunteer time in restoration. He plans to return to being a docent when CIC is opened to the public. Dick retired from the Navy in 1981 after 24 years of service as an OSC (RDC). USS Midway was his last ship. He then combined a total of contractor and Civil Service time for another 22 years of government service, retiring completely in 2002.

I began volunteering on Midway in April 2004 with cleaning up the first areas to be opened. I had planned to be a docent but was informed that we would be leading tours around the ship all day. I knew my legs wouldn't allow it.

After the ship was opened to the public I found out that the docents were not being required to take tour groups, as it was impractical with the low number of docents and large numbers of guests. I signed up for the docent training and became a docent in September of 2004.



My time as a docent has been rewarding and enjoyable. We get to meet people from all over the world and tell them about our ship. When the guests learn that you were a former crew member they get very interested in what we have to say. We also get bombarded with a lot of questions in the short time we have to spend with them. This usually consists of a waiting period to go into the island, or at one of the stops that might have a docent on station. Questions can be taken after the normal spiel, if time permits. On busy days we are limited to four minutes per station. In the island this would be four minutes or less in each of PriFly, Chart House, and Bridge, which includes Auxiliary Conn.

When the ship first opened we were lucky to get four to five docents per watch period. Now it is not unusual to have as many as 25 per watch. Of course, as

more areas of the ship get opened it requires more docents to cover them.

Some of the funnier questions I have been asked: Can they land planes on the front of the ship? What are the seats on the side of the ship for? (Life-raft pod brackets). When on the bridge invariably somebody will ask how the helmsman can see where he is going if he is so far inside away from the windows.

I also like to have fun with the guests, especially children. When asked about the bomb jettison ramps I usually tell the kids that that is where the sailors have to walk the plank. About the bridle retrieval ramps on the front of the flight deck, I tell them that is where they store their surf boards, or that they are diving boards for swim call. Of course, I always tell them the true info after everyone has a good chuckle.

Recently I have been working in ship restoration to change my routine. I don't want to get bored with what I am doing, it wouldn't be fair to the guests.

Radarmen Reunite in Orlando

1959 was the year. Ike was President, gas was 20 cents a gallon, and Herb Choy and Bill English were radarmen aboard the USS Midway, members of ship's radar gang. Flash forward 50 years to late April 2009, Altamonte Springs, Orlando, Florida, the sixth reunion of the Midway's OI Division Reunion Group, where Herb and Jim meet again for the first time in 50 years. This is good stuff, so let's let Herb tell us the story in his own words.



When it's been 50 years since you've shared a drink together, you deserve to double them up to celebrate the occasion — Herb Choy and Bill English, shown here at the reunion dinner making up for lost time!

After Fifty Years!

by Herb Choy

Bill English and I have not seen each other in 50 years. A great big thank you for the USS Midway OI Division Reunion Group for bringing us together again.

The last time I saw Bill was in 1959 when he was discharged from the USS Midway in Alameda. I had gotten out a few months earlier. We spent the days playing tourist in San Francisco, going to touristy spots which I, a native San Franciscan had never been to. In a few days he was off to home, Pittsburgh, PA.

We kept in touch by mail (before email) for quite a few years... marriage, children, etc. After a few moves, changes of addresses for the both of us, we lost contact. Through the years I would wonder what ever happened to Bill and some of the other ship-mates.

Sometime in 2004, I did an internet search; white pages, people search, etc... entered Bill's name with his middle name and Pittsburgh, PA, back came about four people with the same name in that area. Looked for one about my age, had an address with no phone. I snail-mailed him, lo & behold, a few days later he emailed me. He also told me that there was an OI reunion group and that it was being held in San Diego in 2005. We've been in contact via email and phone since then. He has not been able to attend the reunions in San Diego, but he made it to the 2009 in Orlando, FL. Fifty Years!

In Memoriam

Admiral Ralph Cousins



The Captain of the USS Midway in the early 60s, Admiral Ralph Wynne Cousins, USN, (Ret.), died August 5, 2009, at age 94, in Newport News, Virginia. A naval aviator and a war hero who won the Navy Cross in the Battle of the Coral Sea in World War II, he commanded the Midway in 1961 and 1962. Among his many accomplishments over a long

and distinguished career that spanned nearly four decades, he commanded NATO forces and led Naval Air Operation in Vietnam. He was one of our own, a Midway skipper and a true American hero!

The Ladies Corner

Elaine Sensenig responded to the *Scope Dope News* with several excellent ideas for women's activities during next year's reunion in San Diego. She also contacted several other wives in the reunion group and asked them for their ideas. Some of Elaine's ideas are listed below.

"In response to your request for activities during the next San Diego Reunion I have the following:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the City Tour and lunch at Dexter's at the Florida reunion. It might be nice to have a similar tour in San Diego with the Old Town Trolley or a bus.

"Another idea would be to take a tour of Coronado for the women or men if they are interested. Lunch and tour of the Coronado Hotel would be nice. We took the Ferry over to Coronado and found it enjoyable and affordable.

These are just some ideas I had. Hopefully somebody else has others."

The other women in the group who responded to Elaine with their ideas on some social activities (sans men) in San Diego were Claire Fowler, Sue Walker, Cyndy Perez, Judy Smiley, and Mina Jo Payson.

A representative response from this group of Midway women was: "The Seaport Village sounds very good for the ladies with a quick lunch or coffee break before meeting with the guys again . . ."

Note from the editor: Ladies, please send your ideas to Elaine now that she's got the ball rolling on this subject, and I'll publish them in this column in future issues of *Scope Dope News*. She would welcome your input.

Elaine's e-mail is: epsensenig@hotmail.com

Reunion Planning Kicks Off

The members of the special task force and the San Diego Reunion Planning Committee met via teleconference October 17, 2009. Participating were President Oscar Granger, Vice President Bill Kruper, Secretary Dave Payson, Orlando co-host Jim Hayter, and San Diego co-hosts R.C. Morton and Mike Walker.

Regarding the special task force business, it was decided to draft a letter to SDACM (San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum) proposing that we work with SDACM representatives to pursue areas of mutual interests. Oscar Granger volunteered to draft the letter; the other members agreed to review it. The letter is targeted to go in October.

The dates for the reunion were set at **September 22-25, 2010**, with Sunday the 26th being the travel day.

The **San Diego Crowne Plaza Hotel** (also the reunion hotel for the 2005 and 2007 reunions) was chosen to be the 2010 reunion hotel, based on the decision that it has the best prices in town, is set up for military reunions, and we have history and experience with this hotel.

Reunion co-hosts Mike Walker and R.C. Morton are researching entertainment options in San Diego, with an emphasis on tours that may be a bit different from what we've already seen during the past two reunions. Even Tijuana, Mexico, hasn't been ruled out at this point. But remember, passports are required to travel to Mexico and back.

Mike and R.C. also agreed to contact the Midway Museum and check into the possibility of holding the business meeting on board, as well as find out what the reunion group would have to do to hold a ceremony of our fallen on the ship.

Other items discussed were women's activities (see article this newsletter), transportation to and from the ship, preparation of reunion registration forms and plans of the day (PODs), and looking into a guest speaker for the reunion dinner.

Oscar said he'd like to do something a little fancier than reunion T-shirts this reunion, and Bill wanted us to know that his wife wouldn't be bringing her custom made quilts this time around.



Call for 2010 Dues-Payers

In accordance with the bylaws approved in Orlando, dues for 2010 are due by January 31, 2010. Dues are \$20/member/year and entitle you to membership and all its privileges for one full year, in this case until February 1, 2011. We urge all members to pay their dues promptly as the group's treasury coffers are low. Extra contributions will be accepted and greatly appreciated. So, please, shipmates, consider this newsletter your first notice to pay your 2010 dues.

Make your checks payable to Oscar Granger and mail them to Oscar at 44434 S.E. 142nd Pl, North Bend, WA, 98045.

Sincerely;

Oscar Granger, President

Bill Kruper, Vice President

Dave Payson, Secretary

The U.S. Midway OI Division Reunion Group thanks you in advance!

From the President's Desk

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We're drawing to the end of another successful year in terms of our accomplishments and our planning efforts. For me, I measure the success of the organization in what we do that makes the world a little better for all of us. Two matters of great importance mark 2009. First, we moved the reunion to Orlando, FL in order to honor our founder, Ron McPhail.

We've received his heartfelt thanks for our reaching out to him and for the many in the group that journeyed to the McPhail residence to spend some quality time with him. Second, we honored George Fowler for his service to the country, which began during WWII, and for his service to the education of our nation's young people. Congratulations and our sincere Thanks to both Ron and George for their contributions to the reunion group, to the Navy, and to the nation.

We're now in the throes of planning the 2010 reunion in San Diego – scheduled September 22nd through September 26th. We're relying on the able assistance of Mike Walker and RC Morton to be our **'boots on the ground'** in the So. Cal. area. We learned the value of having our group representatives close in to

the reunion site to help us with the multitude of logistical issues that surface throughout the planning processes. We also got considerable feedback after Orlando that the ladies would like to have some planned activities that are memorable for them. We have those marching orders in place!

As we reported in the last newsletter, we've set a Task Force in motion to develop a plan that will ultimately help the organization survive for many years into the future. That plan will consider establishing, in concert with other groups, including the Midway Museum, an organization of all Midway veterans that would work with the museum staff to ensure the continuation of the Midway legacy. Do we want to organize ourselves into one large reunion organization? Do we want a large parent organization with many smaller department / division units? How about developing a confederation of reunion groups in concert with the Museum? We're looking at any and all options – all within a framework that will preserve the identity of our existing reunion group!

We have a lot to do over the next ten months to get ourselves ready for September. Feel free to send us your suggestions and recommendations for making the 2010 reunion the best one ever.

Oz Granger

From the VP....

Hello shipmates. It seems like it was only a week or two ago when I wrote the last note for this column, time goes by quickly and planning for the San Diego reunion next September is well underway. Your elected officers are working closely with Mike Walker and R.C. Morton to give you another unforgettable event. I hope you're as excited as I am about seeing everyone and visiting the ship again! Look for information on San Diego sign-up sheets, area tours, sights, shopping, dining, etc., in forthcoming mailers and newsletters.

Have you visited the Reunion Group website lately? Check it out and see the pictures from Orlando.

I'm still handling the memorabilia supplies but because of the large amount we sold at Orlando, I've decided not to advertise in this newsletter. If there is a particular item of interest, contact me by email at; <<mailto:uncabil@msn.com>>and I'll let you know if I have it on hand. I've let the supplies dwindle in

anticipation of a fresh restock next summer for the San Diego reunion.

Are you a retired Navy person living close to a Navy base? If so, please contact me as the memorabilia supply could use some pins, etc., that aren't available anywhere else.

Helen wishes to thank everyone who bought a quilt from her at Orlando, and if anyone wants one made special, you can email me and I'll give the request to her and she'll contact you. Computer problems and changing her email address has shut her down temporarily. It's also doubtful if she will bring any quilts to San Diego because of the airline extra baggage charges. More on that later.

As a reminder, your elected officers are providing memorabilia for sale to the reunion group as a break-even service with all proceeds going back into the group treasury. Helen also sells her quilts to the group for what it costs her to make them.

Remember, September of 2010 in San Diego for the next reunion. Don't miss it, plan on being there. I'm looking forward to seeing you all again!

Sail on, shipmates.....**Bill Kruper**

R.C.'s "Retro" Pictures

R.C Morton, co-host of the San Diego reunion and an integral part of the early sixties radar gang, converted a bunch of his prints from his Midway days to electronic files, and he shares a few of them with us in this newsletter.



R.C. chugga-lugging a bottle of saki below decks. (Not shown in the picture: Chief Fowler fast approaching around the next corner.)



Oscar logging Z's in OI Division Forward Berthing. Some things never change



Clay Sponseller prepares to activate his bat wings and fly free of the Midway's flight deck



The Walkers and the Grangers—San Diego, 2007 (photo courtesy Mike Walker)

Reunions East and the West

These photos encompass the last two reunions, Orlando in 2009 and San Diego in 2007. Wherever we gather, the men and the women of the OI Division reunion group know how to have fun, and to get things done as well. These pictures show it!



Orlando 2009 - The Gator Tour. Now if they only had someone to drive the boat



San Diego 2007 - Oz and Kroop display Ron's T-shirt, autographed by the crew



Orlando 2009 - The webmaster and the quiltmaster wiling away the time in Camp CIC



San Diego 2007 - OI Division guys firmly anchored on the flight deck of the Midway



Orlando 2009 - Ron McPhail sitting and Ben Gaines and Gil Wooden standing - at Ron's home in Winter Park, FL



San Diego 2007 - Bill "Top Gun" Kruper and the Phantom Jet he rode in on

The Masthead
USS Midway OI Division
Reunion Group

A newsletter covering former OI Division (and other) veterans who served on the USS Midway, and who are friends eternal.

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<http://ussmidway.net/home.html>



See you in San Diego September 2010!

Scope Dope News—Electronic Edition

Want to receive future issues of this newsletter electronically? You can download it from the reunion group's website (at URL above). Contact the newsletter editor for further instructions.

Save Mailing Expenses!



The USS Midway doing what she did best
(photo courtesy R.C. Morton)