



USS Midway History

- First of all, every Navy ship in the United States has a name beginning with USS, which stands for United States Ship. Midway was the name of an important battle in World War II. That's why the Navy chose Midway for the name of this ship.
- Midway is also called "CV-41". You will see it painted on the side of the ship. What does that mean? Well, the Navy numbers its ships in order, as they are approved by Congress to be built. The very first aircraft carrier ever built in the United States was the USS Langley, built in 1922. It was number 1. The Midway, built in 1945, was number 41.
- The USS Midway was commissioned (put into active service) on September 10, 1945.
- Let's talk about the size of the ship. She is HUGE! She is 1,001 feet long, which is about the length of 3 football fields. She is as high as a 20-story building. And, she weighs almost 70,000 tons! That means she weighs about as much as 14,000 elephants or about the same as 6,000 school buses.
- Midway could carry up to 80 aircraft when she was active.
- Midway had 4,500 sailors (all men) who served on her. Those sailors ate over 13,000 meals each and every day!
- Why do we refer to Midway "she" or "her"? That is common for ALL ships. It goes back to ancient times when sailors named their ships after the women they loved and left behind when they went out to sea.
- Midway served in two wars: the Vietnam War and the first Persian Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm).
- She also helped people. One such event was Operation Frequent Wind in 1975 where Midway sailors helped evacuate over 3,000 men, women and children from Vietnam. Midway sailors also rescued American military families from the Philippines in 1991 when Mount Pinatubo, a volcano, erupted.
- In 1992, the Midway was decommissioned (retired) after serving for 47 years on active duty. She was getting old and newer ships used nuclear power where Midway used diesel fuel.
- The USS Midway Museum was opened to the public in June 2004. Every year, more than 1.5 million guests (including thousands of school students!) visit the museum.