



# Anniversary marks adventurous career

## Resident attends 69th anniversary of the historic Battle of Midway

Richard Watson joined the Navy Reserve in 1939 and began a career that coincided with numerous world events.

In 1942, as the Battle of Midway approached, Dick made mechanic/gunner with the patrol squadron VP-44, based on Ford Island in the Pacific.

“We were told to get our bags ready for an advance base on Midway Island,” says Dick. “We started patrols near Wake Island, looking for the Japanese Fleet.”

In late May, two planes in Dick’s squadron spotted Japanese aircraft and took fire. During the next day’s patrol, a Japanese plane attacked Dick and his crew. The enemy plane dropped several 100-pound bombs. All missed.

“It was bad,” says Dick. “The port .50 caliber jammed, and it wasn’t firing.”

The crew managed to replace the gun and fire on the enemy, which withdrew, and the US plane escaped into the clouds. “To make a long story short, we had two wounded, and we went into a cloud, and then we came down and attacked another plane that was firing on another US plane.”

Like a lethal game of cat and mouse, the numerous US planes continued to search for the Japanese Fleet while encountering enemy aircrafts. At the beginning of June, a plane in Dick’s squadron spotted the Japanese Fleet, and the Battle of Midway began in full.

### Turning point

“The Navy feels that the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the war in the Pacific,” says Dick. “Every year they hold a memorial, and this year I was able to go.” Dick and six other Midway veterans attended the 69th anniversary of the Battle of Midway at the United



**Richard Watson sits at the controls of a PBY-5A, an amphibious patrol bomber that was widely used during World War II.**

States Navy Memorial in downtown Washington, D.C.

“I’ve never seen anything like it. A sea of white and gold. All wore their ceremony attire, including swords,” says Dick. “I felt very honored. It was a humbling experience.” (Watch a video from the ceremony here: <http://www.dvidshub.net/video/117066/69th-commemoration-battle-midway-part-1>).

Dick also helped dedicate a plaque in honor of his squadron. Of the approximately 400 squadron crew members, there are only 10 left.

### Returning to South Pacific in 1943

Dick returned to the frontlines and soon made chief aviation machinist’s mate. The squadron flew search missions, fought off enemy planes, picked up pilots after their planes went down, and did night bombings. Dick later received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service on the patrol bomber plane.

After 14 months, Dick returned home and (*cont.*)

(cont.) met his 1-year-old son for the first time. Dick continued to serve in the Navy in various positions. He helped refurbish and test planes and flew missions in the Pacific. When he was relieved from duty in December 1944, he attended flight school for a short time. But the Korean War started. Dick returned to the Navy and served as chief petty officer.

### Making history with rockets

Returning to the States in the '50s, Dick retired from the Navy as a lieutenant junior grade and started working as a lead technician for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), the predecessor to NASA.

“My wife was working as a mathematician at NACA, and I was able to get a job working on the supersonic wind tunnel project,” says Dick.

Dick later joined Lockheed Missiles & Space Company (now know as Lockheed Martin) and worked at the California base as a rocket test engineer and later on the Corona program.

“I was part of the group testing the rocket for the Gemini project,” says Dick, who adds that one of his next-door neighbors was on Gemini 13. “The rocket helped with the first docking in space.”

In 1988, Dick retired after years of world travel and adventure, contributing to war efforts and progress in scientific exploration. Dick’s wife passed shortly after he retired. In 1991, Dick married Nancy; they were high school classmates. The couple will celebrate their 20th anniversary this year.

**In 2007, the Patriots Point Navel & Maritime Museum in South Carolina inducted Dick (far right) into the Enlisted Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor. He is pictured with his family.**

In 2007, the Patriots Point Navel & Maritime Museum in South Carolina inducted Dick into the Enlisted Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor ... a fitting tribute to an American hero. ■



Dick is kneeling, second from left.



Dick is pictured in September 1945.

## Celebrate an enriched life



The Adams at 875 Hallenbeck Lane offers 1,595 square feet, two bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The home includes a wraparound gas fireplace, Corian® counters, double-car garage, great room, pullout kitchen shelving, pantry, and organizers in bedroom closet. There is also a convenient central vacuum and covered patio. Touchmark is offering this home on a summer special of \$231,000. Call today for your personal presentation.



## Recent events



Alma Wheeler shows off her patriotic craft project.



George Thomason and Cal Bowen (both are far left) played in a Big Band performance.

## Celebrating good citizens



**Marge Coalman, EdD**  
Vice President of Wellness & Programs,  
Touchmark

***“It is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen.” — Aristotle***

Do you remember learning the fundamentals of being a good citizen? Maybe not, since the values are introduced to children as early as kindergarten—and even before that at home. Five basic values have not changed over the last millennium. They are honesty, compassion, respect, responsibility, and courage. Being a person of good character, though, is not the same as being a good citizen. Being a good citizen translates character into action.

It is not hard to recognize when people have incorporated core values into their life practices. Think of the neighbor who watches out for the neighborhood; the volunteer who gives time, talent, and resources to causes that are in the best interest of the local—and global—community; the taxpayer and voter who carry out their responsibilities in a timely and honest way.

Valuing the opinions and actions of others—even those who may disagree with us—is another important attribute, along with demonstrating courtesy and respect.

As we celebrate patriotism on Canada Day and Independence Day, let's also rejoice in the good citizens who support their community and country with lives well-lived. Those people who do the good deeds, have caring hearts and are loyal and supportive to family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers. They may or may not wave flags or get involved in politics, but they “walk the talk” by genuinely supporting and contributing to the greater good of all.

The Full Life Wellness & Life Enrichment

Program™ at Touchmark invites every good citizen to be a contributor to the goal and mission of enriching people's lives. To participate in planning and activities that support this mission, contact a member of the Full Life™ team. ■

### Coming Events

Contact a Life Enrichment/Wellness team member for additional details, including registration and transportation information.

**Thursdays, July 21 and 28, 10 am**  
Walking group.

**Friday, July 22, 3 pm**  
Armchair Traveler: Portugal.

**Saturday, July 23, 11:30 am**  
Snake River Stampede Rodeo. Family Matinee. Cost: \$15 per person.

**Saturday, July 30, 10:30 am**  
Trip to Thunder Mountain Line, offering scenic Idaho train rides.

## Brain Builders



Generate some words! Think of and write down things that are red. Example: apple.

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 2. _____  |
| 3. _____  | 4. _____  |
| 5. _____  | 6. _____  |
| 7. _____  | 8. _____  |
| 9. _____  | 10. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 12. _____ |