



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Honoring World War II Veterans at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial

A twelve year history of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) led and coordinated events, that continue to honor the World War II veterans at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and Battle of Midway National Memorial (Memorial).

U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corp, Military Historical Tours and the International Midway Memorial Foundation (IMMF) contributed by providing transportation and ceremonial support.



A next generation Korean War veteran honors Battle of Midway veteran, Col. John Minicler at the 70th Anniversary Ceremony held at the Kelly Ensign International Midway Memorial Foundation monument.

June 4, 2002 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

The International Midway Memorial Foundation hosted a week long series of events in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Midway. Dr. D'Angelo accepted an invitation by the Department of Interior and addressed the attendees at the ceremony on Midway Atoll hosted by the Service.



June 4, 2007 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

Princess Cruise ship arrived with 700 visitors to partake in the all day events. The most distinguished dignitaries were three World War II veterans from the Battle of Midway. Among the attendees and ceremony speakers were Secretary of Interior, Dirk Kempthorne; Assistant Secretary of the Navy, BJ Penn; Governor of Hawai'i, Linda Lingle; and Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Admiral Robert F. Willard; and IMMF President, Dr. James M. D'Angelo.



June 4, 2008
66th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

A formal ceremony was co-sponsored by Military Historical Tours who transported participants to Midway that included former residents, veterans and historians. Distinguished guests included Lieutenant General H.C. "Hank" Stackpole (U.S. Marine Corps. (Ret.)), Lieutenant Commander Stroud and Guest of Honor Colonel Warren Wiedhahn.

June 3, 2009
67th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

Refuge/Memorial residents and guests gathered on Midway to commemorate the Anniversary of the Battle of Midway and participate in a wreath laying ceremony and moment of silence at the IMMf's Ensign Kelly Memorial, at what was believed to be the exact time the battle started 67 years earlier.

June 4, 2010
68th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

Co-sponsored by Military Historical Tours, the ceremonial event at the IMMf/Kelly Ensign Memorial honored two American Battle of Midway veterans. This event was unique because of the ceremonial remarks provided by two surviving Japanese Zero pilots, both from World War II, one who flew during the Battle of Midway.

Distinguished guests offering remarks included Colonel Warren Wiedhahn, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) representing the Pacific Aviation Museum, Admiral Ron Hays, U.S. Navy (Ret.), and Lieutenant General H.C. "Hank" Stackpole, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.). Shawn Osborne was the Navy Chaplain.



June 7, 2012

70th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

The Service hosted an unique event to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway on Midway Atoll in close coordination with the Commander of the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet.

Sergeant Edgar Fox and Colonel John Minicler returned to Midway for the first time in 70 years to the exact location of their duty station. The Service and Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge sponsored their full expense paid trip to Honolulu then on to Midway as honorary guests at the Pacific Aviation Museum events in Honolulu and four days on Midway Atoll. Their stories and experiences are recorded and preserved in perpetuity.

The helmet Colonel Minicler wore on June 4, 1942, while in a watch tower the day the Japanese attacked Sand Island, was donated to the Refuge's new history exhibit display on island.

A ceremonial event and beach dinner included plenty of time to mingle with the Admiral of the Pacific Fleet, Cecil D. Haney, and his command who flew into Midway followed by another Navy aircraft with band, color guard and 40 other veterans, residents, and family members of Midway that were predetermined to meet specific criteria as distinguished guests of the day long event. Among distinguished guests is a retired Vice-admiral of the Japanese Navy participates in an emotional lei ceremony via boat in the lagoon honoring both Japanese and American losses.

Vaughn Ruppert and Jorie Clark completed the installation of the Battle of Midway new interpretive exhibits in the new museum room just in time for the ribbon cutting and unveiling of the exhibits showcasing the men who fought at the Battle of Midway.

Sergeant Edgar Fox and former Vice-Admiral of the Japanese Navy experience an emotional embrace during the ceremony at the IMMF/ Ensign Kelly Memorial during the 70th Anniversary Ceremony on Midway Atoll.



Colonel John Minicler shared his memories as he stood at his "command" post located along the historical tour route during the 70th commemorative events on Midway.





Sergeant Edgar Fox on June 4, 2014, located and spent time with a friend in the same concrete pill box where he was stationed when the Japanese bombed Midway June 4, 1942.

Memorial Day Ceremonies May 2011 - 2013

Memorial Day ceremonies were held at the Midway Navy Memorial. Island residents attended to remember and honor those military veterans that made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

June 4, 2014

Flat and declining budgets continue to result in minimizing operational capacity on Midway Atoll; however, commemorative events to honor all veterans continue to be hosted by Service personnel for all island residents at a Memorial Day ceremony at the Navy Memorial and a Battle of Midway Commemoration Ceremony at the IMMF/Kelly Ensign Memorial on June 4, 2014.



USCG Reservist and Refuge Manager, Dan Clark, island physician and veteran, honor all veterans during the 2014 Memorial Day ceremony on Midway. On-island flowers decorated by FWS contractor, DBSI, adorns the Monument as Clark reads the President's Memorial Day remarks.

During the past decade every Memorial and Veteran's Day has been commemorated by the Service. On each Veteran's Day, the Refuge/Memorial staff flies the large U.S. Holiday Flag on the flag pole near the 1950s hangar, in addition to the U.S. Flag that is flown daily at the Navy Memorial. In 2011, the Service

staff on Midway created a "Thank You Veterans" poster for the Clipper House where island residents have their meals. All ceremonies are attended by most island residents. The Service is committed to flying the American and U.S. Navy flags daily, as well as for holidays and special ceremonies.