



THE SBD DAUNTLESS DIVE-BOMBER STORY

On June 4, 1942, 50 U.S. Navy SBD Dauntless Dive-bombers peeled off from their squadron formations and attacked the amassed Japanese armada that was poised to take the island of Midway. In a matter of five minutes the SBD force destroyed three of four Japanese aircraft carriers, making this the most important naval victory in U.S. History. The fourth aircraft carrier was attacked and sunk two days later.

Chicago's SBD symbolizes the courage and sacrifices of those who fought and gave their lives in the Battle of Midway and is a testimony to their role in preserving our freedom. On June 23, 1949, Chicago's City Council changed the name of its Municipal Airport to Midway Airport, "in honor of these heroes of the Battle of Midway."

THE CHICAGO CONNECTION

During WWII the City of Chicago played an important role in qualifying naval aviators – some 15,000 trained off the shores of Lake Michigan. During the training, approximately 150 planes were lost in Lake Michigan, fortunately with relatively few injuries to personnel. The SBD Dauntless on display at Midway Airport is one of those planes. It lay dormant at the bottom of Lake Michigan until A&T Recovery recovered it in 1991, under the direction of the National Museum of Naval Aviation (NMNA). It was restored by the NMNA. The markings now displayed, B3, represent the plane of an Illinois hero, Ensign Frederick Weber, who gave the ultimate sacrifice at the Battle of Midway.

The SBD Dauntless Dive Bomber Memorial recognizes the historic significance of the Battle of Midway and the sacrifice of many brave heroes to preserve freedom. We are honored to be joined today by the following veterans of the Battle of Midway, who have flown in from across the country for this historic dedication*:



Lieutenant Ron Arenth USN (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Lt. Arenth was assigned to Scouting Squadron Eight (VS-8), U.S.S. Hornet, as the Rear Gunner assigned to James Forbes. On June 6, 1942 he was serving as rear gunner on the attacks that destroyed the Japanese Destroyers Asashio and Arashio. He was serving as part of the flight deck handling crew aboard the U.S.S. Hornet on the day the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and other Japanese Cities was launched. He participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign and remained with the U.S.S. Hornet until she was lost during

action with the enemy at the Battle of Santa Cruz. After World War II, he remained in the Navy. After receiving an officer's commission in 1957, he retired as Lieutenant in 1967. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Air Medal (2), Presidential Unit Citation

Lieutenant Colonel William V. Brooks, USMC (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway Lt. Col. Brooks served as 2nd Lieutenant, Pilot F2A-3 Buffalo and attacked the invading Japanese as a member of the 3rd Division, Marine Fighting Squadron Two Twenty-One (VMF-221). After the Battle, although battling malaria, he supported the Marine campaign at Guadalcanal. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Unit Citation (2) Air Medal, Purple Heart



Colonel John F. Carey, USMC (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Captain Carey, Pilot F4F-3 Wildcat, was leader of the 5th Division, Marine Fighting Squadron Two Twenty-One (VMF-221). He gallantly returned from engaging the enemy where he suffered serious wounds to both of his legs. He went on to serve in both the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts, commanding helicopter units for which he is known for being a Marine Corps pioneer. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Navy Cross, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation



Commander Clayton E. Fisher, USN (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Fisher, SBD Pilot, was assigned to Bombing Squadron Eight (VB-8), U.S.S. Hornet. On June 6, 1942, the final day of the Battle of Midway, Ensign Fisher attacked and sank a Japanese destroyer. He was serving aboard the U.S.S. Hornet on the day the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and other Japanese Cities was launched. He remained with the U.S.S. Hornet until she was lost during action with the enemy at the Battle of Santa Cruz. Later during the War, he

was assigned as a Landing Signal Officer on board the U.S.S. Wolverine and U.S.S. Sable off of Chicago, in Lake Michigan, where he personally made eighteen carrier landings. During the Korean conflict, he led two Corsair assaults in the famous attack on the Bridges at Toko Ri. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart. For his actions during the Korean conflict he received the following citation: Distinguished Flying Cross

Captain James Forbes, USN (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Forbes, SBD Pilot, was assigned to Scouting Squadron Eight (VS-8), U.S.S. Hornet. He was serving aboard the U.S.S. Hornet on the day the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and other Japanese Cities was launched. After the Battle of Midway, now Lieutenant Junior Grade Forbes remained with the U.S.S. Hornet until she was lost during action with the enemy at the Battle of Santa Cruz. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Distinguished Flying Cross (2), Air Medal (5)

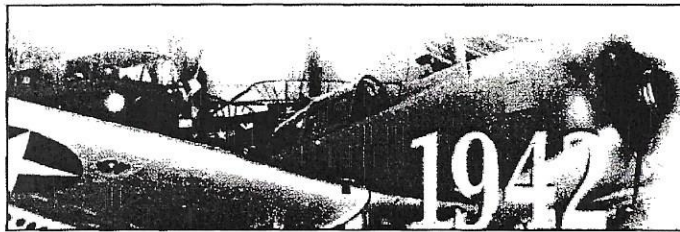


Master Sergeant Walter C. Grist, USMC (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Sergeant Grist was attached to Marine Air Group Twenty Two (MAG-22), Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron Two Forty-One (VMSB-241). His primary duty was as a hydraulic mechanic assigned to the engineering crew. During the battle he assisted in the fueling, launching and recovery of aircraft and the aiding of wounded aircrew. After the battle he was sent to the Marine air base at Ewa, Hawaii, where he was transferred to another squadron for preparation for the Battle of Guadalcanal. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Presidential Unit Citation (2), 3 battle stars on the Asiatic/Pacific Ribbon, Combat Action Ribbon



*Biographical information and photographs compiled by Taras Lysenko



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MIDWAY MEMORIAL



**Rear Admiral Lewis A Hopkins,
USN (Ret.)**

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Hopkins was assigned to Bombing Squadron Six (VB-6), U.S.S. Enterprise. After the Battle of Midway, Lewis Hopkins participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign and remained with the U.S.S. Hornet until she was lost during action with the enemy at the Battle of Santa Cruz. For the remainder of the War he served as an instructor for dive-bombing technique. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Navy Cross, Legion of Merit (2), Navy Commendation Medal

**Captain Norman J. "Dusty" Kleiss,
USN (Ret.)**

At the Battle of Midway, Lt. Junior Grade Kleiss was assigned to Scouting Squadron Six (VS-6), U.S.S. Enterprise, he participated in dive-bombing attacks on the Japanese aircraft carriers Kaga, Hiryu, and the large cruiser Mikuma. Before the War Kleiss spent two years as a private in the 114th Cavalry of the Kansas National Guard before entering the U.S. Naval Academy in 1934. After the Battle of Midway he became an instructor for dive-bombing technique. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations:

Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Medals in Expert marksmanship from .45 automatic pistols to 12-inch battleship guns



**Commander Austin "Bud" Merrill,
USN (Ret.)**

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Merrill, Pilot SBD, was assigned to Bombing Squadron Three (VB-3) on temporary assignment to the U.S.S. Yorktown (CV-5) while the U.S.S. Saratoga (CV-3) underwent repairs. On the day the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and other Japanese Cities was launched Ensign Merrill provided air protection for the U.S.S. Hornet. Prior to the Battle of Midway he participated in counter attacks against Japanese positions on Wake and Marcus Islands. Later in the War Bud

Merrill and Air Group Three supported the Marines at the Battle of Guadalcanal. For his actions during World War II he received the following citation: Navy Cross

Captain Vernon L. Micheel, USN (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Micheel, Pilot SBD was assigned to Scouting Squadron Six (VS-6), U.S.S. Enterprise. After the Battle of Midway, Vernon Micheel remained with the U.S.S. Enterprise and he participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign. He later was assigned to Bombing Squadron Two (VB-2) flying SB2C Heli Divers. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations:

Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star, Air Medal with Six Stars, Legion of Merit with Gold Star, Joint Services Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal



**Major Jesse "Doug" Rollow, Jr.,
USMCR (Ret.)**

At the Battle of Midway Rollow served as 2nd Lieutenant, Pilot SBD Dauntless, 2nd Division, 3rd Box, Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron Two Forty-One (VMSB-241). Later in the war he was assigned to a PBJ squadron. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Navy Cross, Presidential Unit Citation

Captain Ivan L. Swope, USNR (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Ensign Swope, SBD pilot, was assigned to Scouting Squadron Eight (VS-8), U.S.S. Hornet. He was serving aboard the U.S.S. Hornet on the day the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and other Japanese Cities was launched. After the Battle of Midway, by then Lieutenant Junior Grade Swope, participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign and remained with the U.S.S. Hornet until she was lost during action with the enemy at the Battle of Santa Cruz. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (2), Purple Heart



Thomas P. Tobin

At the Battle of Midway Thomas Tobin was assigned to 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, 5th Division, 28th Marines, in defensive position to defend the Islands from the Japanese invasion force. After the battle he participated in the marine campaigns at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Iwo Jima. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Commendation Ribbon with 7 Stars, Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon Bar, Marine Corps Marksman Rifle Badge

Colonel Leon M. Williamson, USMC (Ret.)

At the Battle of Midway, Captain Williamson, Pilot SB2U Vindicator, participated in three separate attacks against the Japanese Armada. Capt. Williamson was attached to 3rd Box, Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron Two Forty-One (VMSB-241). At the Battle of Guadalcanal he participated in attacks against Japanese supply ships. He also served during the Korean conflict. For his actions during World War II he received the following citations: Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (3), Presidential Unit Citation



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