

Scuttlebutt



MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



July/Aug 2022

A message from the President



John Cecil

Welcome to summer. School is out, and it is the time for family vacations, summer camp, and get togethers, reunions and cook outs. Let's not forget the birth of OUR great nation, the USA. We sincerely hope that everyone enjoyed the fireworks that celebrate our freedom of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Know that all men are created equal, and why we can live free. Thank you all for the support and generous donations that keep the Military Sea Services Museum moving forward educating all who pass through our doors. Additional artifacts and displays, building improvements and the building of our new parade model of the USCG *Eagle* are in the works. We have had over 800 guests so far this year. Bring your family, friends, neighbors when you visit.

God's grace, peace and love to you all.

Museum Happenings

Check out the new MSSM Video @

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGehKclhcVM>

It is with heavy hearts that the MSSM bids adieu to former Navy LTJG Delbert M. Smith, who passed on 05/05/2022, 4 months short of his 101st birthday. Del was part of "The Greatest Generation", as he flew his SB2C Helldivers and F4U Corsairs from the decks of aircraft carriers in the Pacific. Del was the recipient of numerous accolades and awards for his combat flying prowess, to include the Distinguished Flying Cross. When queried about the awards, Del would *always* respond with, "Just doing my job". Aviators will attest that Del has not passed; he has simply climbed to a higher altitude.

A fitting tribute to Del from Fred Carino, CDR, USN Ret., MSSM Curator.

Flying with Del at Midway

His hands gripped the chair arms as if he had throttle in one and the joystick in the other. The windshield of his cockpit was filled with the length and breadth of the enemy ship as he bore in at a dizzying angle his bomb sight filled with the center of the Japanese carrier. As he pressed the release button and the heavy bomb came away from its rack he pulled back hard on the stick as the pent-up G-forces pressed down into his seat, his sweat-soaked cloth helmet gushing its contents down his face and neck. As the stick went forward and the weight of the pull-out bled away, he banked left and could see the blossoming explosion and fire leaping skyward from the carrier's deck. As Del Smith,

former U.S. Navy dive bomber pilot, sat watching the new "**Midway**" motion picture in the darkened theater, but he was back in his SB2C Helldiver in the South Pacific. It was 1944 and he was yet again a young, determined man at the point of his nation's spear, locked and loaded to smite the enemies of America. On either side, my brother Chris and I monitored our friend Del as his hands and arms tensed and his chest heaved - the only person in the theater who knew the fear, excitement and satisfaction of a combat pilot flying through flak, enemy fighters and surviving to fight another day. Chris and I had seen "Midway" the previous week and floated the idea to Del, uncertain of his reaction. After all, Delbert Smith, was the REAL DEAL, for real dive bomber pilot flying from the carrier Hornet in the Pacific in World War II. In addition to bombing runs at Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima Del had destroyed cargo ships in Manila Bay and later sank a Japanese destroyer off Davao in the southern Philippines. He once had to ditch his plane in the Philippine Sea running out of gas on the return of a long-range strike on the retreating Japanese carrier fleet. No matter. He and his crew were picked up by a destroyer's whaleboat and high-lined back aboard Hornet the next morning and back flying that afternoon. We were beginning to think the excitement might be too much for Del but his decades of vigorous golfing and miles per week on his treadmill had kept his ticker in great shape. As the lights were coming up at the end of the show and we began our slow shuffle out to the corridor I asked Del what he thought of the movie. He responded strongly, "It was realistic. In fact, it was too realistic."

Del was one of "The Greatest Generation" author Tom Brokaw wrote about in his book a few years back. Millions of ordinary Americans put their personal lives on standby as they donned the uniforms of all the Armed Services or marched into the factories which produced all the tanks, planes, ships, and bullets to defeat Germany, Japan, and Italy in World War II. I spent many hours listening to Del these past few years. Learned a lot about his family, growing up in and near Kenosha, WI. Taking to the air at a small local airport under the tutelage of a woman pilot acquaintance of Amelia Earhart in a scratch-built Navy training program. Learning to land on the wooden flight deck of a converted coal-fired side paddle-wheel passenger ferry on Lake Michigan. Learning to dive bomb with unerring accuracy. Preparing for the final push into Japan awaiting the carrier Wasp while flying the powerful F4U Corsair on the Big Island of Hawaii and then getting the news about an atomic bomb that ended the war. Sticking with the Navy through the great demobilization and marrying Agnes and the start of a great family. The tragedy of her death by a hit and run driver while training up for the Korean War. Leaving the Navy and making a new life and later a new wife and new babies. Fulfilling the wartime pledges to God and comrades that if he were blessed with surviving war, he would make a good life in the new America.

Del lived a good and full life. Filled with the joys of family love, community respect and the admiration of people who knew him. Despite his Distinguished Flying Cross, he declined to tell his story on film. No flamboyance. "I was just doing my job," he said. Let us be thankful that Del did his job, kept his faith in America just as so many others have and will. God bless and keep you in eternal life my friend.



At the Military Ball, held on 04/30/2022, MSSM President John Cecil accepts the award for Veteran Unit of the Year, from the Veterans Council of Highlands County, Inc.

The reason for the Memorial Day Celebration
5/30/2022



**Invocation by
Father S. Walker**



**Guest Speaker
Capt. J. McTigue**



**Ceremonial
Cake Cutting**

Additional attendees



**Benediction by
R. Degenaro**



**1st Sergeant C. West
Performs taps**



**Sheriff P. Blackmon
Commissioner K. Rapp
MSSM Curator F. Carino**



Sebring 1st Responders



MSSM Secretary Mary Anne La Morte ensures everyone is well fed.

Independence Day, also called **Fourth of July** or **July 4th**, in the United States, is the annual celebration of nationhood. It commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.



The Congress had voted in favor of independence from Great Britain on July 2 but did not actually complete the process of revising the Declaration of Independence, originally drafted by Thomas Jefferson in consultation with fellow committee members John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and William Livingston, until two days later. The celebration was initially modeled on that of the king's birthday, which had been marked annually by bell ringing, bonfires, solemn processions, and oratory. Such festivals had long played a significant role in the Anglo-American political tradition. Especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, when dynastic and religious controversies racked the British Empire (and much of the rest of Europe), the choice of which anniversaries of historic events were celebrated and which were lamented had clear political meanings. The ritual of toasting the king and other patriot-heroes—or of criticizing them—became an informal kind of political speech, further formalized in mid-18th century when the toasts given at taverns and banquets began to be reprinted in newspapers. *Britannica*

Three presidents have died on July 4: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Monroe.

In 1778, George Washington gave his soldiers a double ration of rum to celebrate the July 4 holiday.

The first July 4 celebration took place at the White House on 1801.

The famed Macy's fireworks show in New York City fireworks and costs in excess of six million dollars.

This Month in History

August

- 1st Star-Spangled Banner author Francis Scott Key (1779-1842) was born in Frederick County, Maryland. After witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry on the night of September 13-14, 1814, he was enthralled to see the American flag still flying over the fort at daybreak. He then wrote the poem originally entitled Defense of Fort McHenry which became the U.S. National Anthem in 1931.
- 7th Following an attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam, the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, granting President Lyndon B. Johnson authority “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.”
- 13th The Berlin Wall came into existence after the East German government closed the border between east and west sectors of Berlin with barbed wire to discourage emigration to the West. The barbed wire was replaced by a 12’ high concrete wall eventually extending around the perimeter of West Berlin. The wall included electrified fences, fortifications, and guard posts. It became a notorious symbol of the Cold War. Presidents Kennedy and Regan made notable appearances at the wall accompanied by speeches denouncing Communism. The wall was finally opened by East German governmental decree in November 1989 and torn down at the end of 1990.
- 18th The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting women the right to vote.
- 21st Filipino opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., was assassinated at the Manila airport while leaving his plane. Public outcry over the killing ultimately led to the collapse of the government of Ferdinand E. Marcos and the inauguration of Corazon C. Aquino, widow of the slain man, as president
- 24th Vesuvius, an active volcano in southern Italy, erupted and destroyed the cities of Pompeii, Stabiae and Herculaneum.
- 27th Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973) the 36th U.S. President was born near Stonewall, Texas. He ascended to the presidency upon the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Johnson served until January 20, 1969.
- 30th In 1918, Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin is shot twice by Fanya Kaplan, a 28-year-old Jewish member of the Social Revolutionary party. Lenin was seriously wounded but survived the attack. The assassination attempt set off a wave of reprisals by the Bolsheviks against the Social Revolutionaries and other political opponents. Thousands were executed as Russia fell deeper into civil war.

July 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	Vietnam Veterans Assn Meeting Next Monday 1800				1 	2
3	4 	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 MSSM BOD MTG 1630	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 	22	23
24 MSSM Dinner 1400	25	26	27 	28	29	30
31 	<p>Established by an Act of Congress on 27 July 1798, the United States Marine Band is America's oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Its mission is unique—to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.</p>					

Aug 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 Vietnam Veterans Assn Meeting 1800	2	3	4 	5	6
7 	8	9	10 MSSM BOD MTG 1630	11	12	13 FRIDAY THE 13TH
14	15	16	17	18 	19	20
21 	22	23	24	25	26 	27
28 MSSM Dinner 1400	29	30	31			
	 <p>The Navajo code talkers were a group of Native American soldiers that participated in both World Wars. The Native American soldiers used their own native languages in radio transmission. Their role during transmission of vital information about the situation on the battlefield was crucial, as they used a code the enemy could not break. They are celebrated on Aug 14.</p>					

Senior Wisdom

Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it the most never use it....

I'm not saying I'm old and worn out, but I make sure I'm nowhere near the curb on trash day....

As I've gotten older, people think I've become lazy. The truth is I'm just being more energy efficient....

I want to be 18 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas....

I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologizes....

Hard to believe I once had a phone attached to a wall, and when it rang, I picked it up without knowing who was calling....

She says I keep pushing her buttons. If that were true, I would have found "Mute" by now....

There is no such thing as a grouchy old person. The truth is, once you get old you stop being polite and start being honest....

I'm responsible for what I say, not what you understand, or you think I said....

My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously there's a new strain out there....

Me, sobbing: I'm not coming back here anymore ... I'm not going to let you hurt me again. My Trainer: It was one sit-up....



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Hours of Operation
Wednesday through Saturday
Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org>