

U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

9 a.m.

Friday, June 3, 2011

Windward Ferry Landing



BATTLE OF MIDWAY COMMEMORATION



The Battle of Midway
Robert Benny
Oil on canvas
ca. 1943

Sequence of Events

Posting of Colors	U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Color Guard
Invocation	Chaplain Douglas Holmes, LT, USN
Welcome	CMDCM (SW/AW/EXW) J.D. McKinney III, USN
Keynote Speaker	CDR William M. Rabchenia, USN
Placing of the Wreath	CDR William M. Rabchenia, USN
Benediction	
Closing	



CDR WILLIAM M. RABCHENIA KEYNOTE SPEAKER

CDR William Rabchenia is a native of River Rouge, Michigan. In 1976, he graduated from high school and joined the Navy that same year, attending boot camp in Great Lakes, IL. After boot camp, he continued his training at Fire Fighting School in San Diego, California before reporting to his first ship – the USS Worden CG –18, homeported in Yokosuka Japan. He reported to the ship as an undesignated seaman, subsequently leaving the two-year tour as a rated Signalman. In October 1978, he was transferred to the USS Mahan DDG 42, homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. Rabchenia was honorably discharged in March 1980 as a Second Class Petty Officer.

For the next three years, Rabchenia worked in Colorado at Ripsams Steel Fabrication and completed a two-year drafting program at Laramie County Vocational School.

Missing the Navy, he reenlisted as an Active Reservist in Cheyenne, Wyoming in January 1983. By May of the same year, he reenlisted on active duty and reported to Ft. McEllan Alabama for Physical Security training. Upon completion of Military Police School, his new skills were utilized at the U.S. Navy Brig in Seattle, Washington.

In September 1985, Rabchenia reported to the USS Esteem MSO 438, homeported in Seattle, Washington. In support of Operation Earnest Will in 1987, the USS Esteem deployed to the Persian Gulf for Mine Counter Measure Operations, along with several other Mine Sweepers from both East and West coast.

September 1989 marked Rabchenia's advancement to Chief Petty Officer and 1991 marked his commissioning date as a Limited Duty Officer. After completing Officer Indoctrination, Rabchenia was assigned to the USS Inchon LPH 12, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia as the Ship's BOS'N.

In 1994 he transferred to EWTGLANT Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. There he instructed Amphibious Indoctrination, Staff Planning, and Facilitating War Games, as well as redesigning the amphibious demonstrator.

Rabchenia served as the First Lieutenant onboard the USS Ponce LPD 15 in 1996 and the USS Peleliu LHA 5 beginning in 1998. In January 2000, he reported to Commander Amphibious Group Two as the Well Deck Certifying SME and Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection Officer. In August 2001, Rabchenia transferred to ATG Norfolk as the Training Liaison Officer and later as the N-3 Director.

The USS Detroit in February 2003 was the next First Lieutenant assignment, and the tour concluded with a "fleet up" to the Executive Officer position. Later that year, Rabchenia reported for duty at Naval Weapons Station Charleston, assuming the duties of water front operations and base operations officer.

In 2007 CDR Rabchenia transferred to Naval Base Guam as the Public Safety Director. Within a year, he was selected as the Staff Regional Operation Officer to the Joint Region Marianas Command, which included the only live training range in the Pacific supporting Fleet exercises.

Currently, CDR Rabchenia is serving as the Executive Officer at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

CDR Rabchenia's personal awards include: Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal (6), Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal (4), Combat Action Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, National Defense, Expert Rifleman, Expert Pistol, and other various unit's awards.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

JUNE 4-7, 1942

The Battle of Midway, fought over and near the tiny U.S. mid-Pacific base at Midway atoll, represents the strategic high water mark of Japan's Pacific Ocean war.

Prior to this action, Japan possessed general naval superiority over the United States and could usually choose where and when to attack. After Midway, the two opposing fleets were essentially equals, and the United States soon took the offensive.

Japanese Combined Fleet commander Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto moved on Midway in an effort to draw out and destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet's aircraft carrier striking forces, which had embarrassed the Japanese Navy in the mid-April Doolittle Raid on Japan's home islands and at the Battle of Coral Sea in early May.

He planned to quickly knock down Midway's defenses, follow up with an invasion of the atoll's two small islands and establish a Japanese air base there. He expected the U.S. carriers to come out and fight, but to arrive too late to save Midway and in insufficient strength to avoid defeat by his own well-tested carrier air power. Yamamoto's intended surprise was thwarted by superior American communications intelligence, which deduced his scheme well before battle was joined.



The burning Japanese heavy cruiser Mikuma, photographed from a U.S. Navy aircraft during the afternoon of June 6, 1942, after she had been bombed by planes from USS Enterprise (CV-6) and USS Hornet (CV-8). Note her third eight-inch gun turret, with roof blown off and barrels at different elevations, Japanese Sun insignia painted atop the forward turret and wrecked midships superstructure.



USS Yorktown (CV-5) is hit on the port side, amidships, by a Japanese Type 91 aerial torpedo during the mid-afternoon attack by planes from the carrier Hiryu, June 4, 1942. This was the second of the two torpedo hits she received. Note very heavy anti-aircraft fire.

This allowed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, to establish an ambush by having his carriers ready and waiting for the Japanese. On June 4, 1942, in the second of the Pacific War's great carrier battles, the trap was sprung. The perseverance, sacrifice and skill of U.S. Navy aviators, plus a great deal of good luck on the American side, cost Japan four irreplaceable fleet carriers, while only one of the three U.S. carriers present was lost.

The base at Midway, though damaged by Japanese air attack, remained operational and later became a vital component in the American trans-Pacific offensive.

"If anything great or good is born of this war, it should not be valued in the colonies we may win nor the pages historians will attempt to write, but rather in the youth of our country, who never trained for war ...

When you hear others saying harsh things about American youth, do all in your power to help others keep faith with those few who gave so much.

Tell them that out here, between a spaceless sea and sky, American youth has found itself and given itself, so that at home, a spark may catch."

–Ens. William R. Evans, USN

Pilot, Torpedo Squadron 8

Killed in action at Midway, June 4, 1942

