



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USS Hornet Museum remembers WWII Veteran Richard E. “Dick” Miralles

Alameda, CA: The USS Hornet Museum mourns the passing of Richard E. “Dick” Miralles, a distinguished World War II Navy Veteran, who passed away at age 101 on November 13, 2025 in Sacramento, California.

Miralles served as an Aviation Radioman in Air Group Eleven, flying from Guadalcanal as a gunner in the SBD Dauntless dive-bomber during some of the most pivotal operations in the Pacific Theater. He later continued his service aboard the escort carrier USS Hoggatt Bay (CVE-75). As the last surviving member of Air Group Eleven from WWII, Dick represented a living bridge to a defining moment in naval aviation history.

In 2022, nearly 80 years after first climbing into the cockpit of an SBD, Dick returned to the air in a restored Dauntless for one final flight—an emotional and historic moment that reconnected him with the aircraft that defined his wartime experience and symbolized the resilience of his generation. ([General Aviation News](#))

A Veteran Who Helped Bring Another Hero Home

Miralles’s legacy extends far beyond his own wartime record. In recent years, he worked closely with USS Hornet Museum volunteers on a complex research effort that helped solve the decades-long mystery surrounding the loss of Navy Commander Frederick R. “Fritz” Schrader, who flew from the USS Hornet (CV-12) during WWII and was listed as Missing in Action. ([DVIDS](#))

Dick led the effort with museum volunteers—Matt Robins, Tim Hampton, and George Retelas—to analyze mission logs, historical documents, and eyewitness accounts. In 2022, their work supported the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in identifying remains long labeled “Unknown X-136” as those of Commander Schrader.

Dick’s dedication to this mission reflected his lifelong devotion to his squadron mates and to preserving their stories for future generations.

A Life of Service, Valor, and Generosity

Miralles displayed the courage and resolve emblematic of Naval Aviators of his era. His service earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal, awarded in 2024—more than eight decades after his combat deployments. ([Stars and Stripes](#))

After the war, Dick continued serving his community for 30 years with the California Department of Forestry (now CalFire) and later documented his experiences in his memoir, *War and Fire*. But it was his generosity, humor, and eagerness to share his story with younger generations that endeared him to staff and volunteers at the USS Hornet Museum.

“His efforts, energy and enthusiasm inspire all who walk our decks,” said Museum Executive Director Laura Fies.

A Story Preserved on Film

In 2025, Dick became the subject of the upcoming documentary “Sundown to Eleven,” directed by George Retelas. The film captures his extraordinary spirit, service, and the late-life journey that brought him back into the public eye. From combat in the Pacific to his return to the SBD Dauntless 80 years later, to the emotional work of helping bring Commander Schrader home, the documentary highlights the breadth of his impact and the humanity behind the uniform.

By Dick’s personal request, the film will be released on **Pearl Harbor Day**—a date that changed the trajectory of his life when he left high school early at seventeen to serve his country.

“Sundown to Eleven” will premiere on YouTube on December 7, 2025.

More information is available at: <https://www.ElevenTheMovie.com/Sequel>

What: USS Hornet remembers WWII Veteran Richard E. “Dick” Miralles

When: November 18th

Where: USS Hornet Sea, Air & Space Museum 707 West Hornet Ave, Alameda, Ca 94501

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CVS-12

Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation preserves and honors the legacy of the USS *Hornet* CV-12 and its role in naval aviation, the defense of our country, the Apollo Program and the exploration of space. The USS Hornet Museum connects the greatest generation of Americans with future generations, educating and inspiring them to meet their challenges. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the USS Hornet Museum relies on the generosity of individuals to fund our educational programs, restoration projects, create and enhance exhibits and much more. The Museum is not supported in any way by regular grants from city, county, state or federal sources. Through field trips and live-aboard experiences, the USS Hornet Museum offers educational programs focusing on naval history, science and space technology: <https://uss-hornet.org/youth-education>. A registered state and national historic landmark, the ship is open to the public on weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is permanently berthed at 707 W. Hornet Ave., Pier 3 in Alameda, CA. Ample free parking is available across from the pier. The USS Hornet Museum is also a unique, unforgettable venue available for corporate events; trade shows and expos; private parties and big band dances; and TV and film productions. For more information, ticket prices and event planning, visit: www.uss-hornet.org or call (510) 599-4272.