

A GRAND OLD TIME WAS HAD IN SAVANNAH AT THE 2011 REUNION

LAFFEY NEWS



U.S.S. LAFFEY DD724 & DD459



Dedicated to those who served in Battle...and those that Preserve in Peace

October-November-December

www.laffey.org

2011

NOW HEAR THIS – NOW HEAR THIS!

It's just about that time of the year when our Membership Chairman, Fred Nardei, gets a little excited. Yes indeed, anticipation of membership renewals creates great elation for Fred....It's almost like that reporter who was getting a little tingle up his leg during the last election. Well, OK, maybe it's not exactly like that at all!!! Contact Fred Now!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE NOVEMBER, 2011

Everyone has been complaining that I've only had bad news concerning the status of our ship. Well, this "sho ain't" bad news"! The USS LAFFEY will be returning to Patriots Point January 9th, 2012! She will be moved into the berth where the USS Clamagore currently rests.

This has been a long hard road for everyone involved, especially the hard working folks at Patriots Point. Mac Burdette, the new Executive Director, has told us they are shutting down Patriots Point for a week to be able to move the ships around.

I have been asked by Mac if we would consider donating some money to help defray the cost of a formal or semi-formal affair. It is the kind of event they would typically charge the public \$100 per couple to attend. How many of you would be interested in attending at a reduced rate or perhaps without charge? Please let me know. A donation of \$20-25 dollars per attendee would really be a great help to pay for some of the costs of the gala and to assist in helping to offset the cost of bringing the

Laffey home. It is going to cost around one (1) million to effect the changes at Patriots Point but only half of that is directly used for the Laffey move. Patriots Point is going to try to get donations from local businesses like Detyens Shipyard who received about \$12 million for their work.

As I write this, two days before Thanksgiving, all I can do is thank God for saving our ship...**AGAIN!** I am only sorry that we will not be able to ride her back home. The USCG regulations are getting stricter than they were in 1982. I am also sorry that many of our older crewmen who are unable to travel cannot be there to see her when the Laffey is positioned at Patriots Point in a more prominent location. I also feel that those shipmates who have passed away pulled some strings in Heaven and used their influence to get things to work out.

If you want to be at Patriots Point to see the ship come home please let me know. I'll need to know how many want to attend so I can make arrangements. I'll try to get a good rate at the hotel too. We will not be able to go aboard the ship since the pier will be opened only to allow the sub out and the Laffey back in. We can only watch from the shore. It really should be a great engineering feat and very interesting to watch.

We had a really good work party the beginning of November: Thirteen of us showed up. Unfortunately, a dear friend of Rod Morgan became deathly ill and Rod had to leave early. My mother was taken to the hospital while I was there and I also had to leave early. John Hudak and Don Watson took over and picked up the load. Our crew prepped and painted the entire inboard

passageway from the ward room to the post office and ship store. Dave Harhager said it looked like a hospital ship. They also painted the decks with two coats in the ward room, and the two large compartments where after officers and supply used to be.

We also had a new volunteer: Pat Striplin worked in MT 53 for the entire week. Thanks Pat. Our attendees included the following: John Hudak (FL), Don Watson (FL), Dave Harhager (FL), John Miller (Wisconsin), John Nettle (Nevada), Rod Morgan (GA), Rich McKinney (TX), Barry Shugarts (IL), Roby Karlie (PA), and three new volunteers, Bill Binger (GA), his friend Daniel (GA) and Pat Striplin (FL). As you can see, the "volunteers" came from all over.

Don Watson filled in for me and was interviewed by TV4 in Charleston. He was asked "What does this move mean to you?" He told the reporter that this was how we all feel: We care about our ship, our shipmates, our Navy and, most of all, our country. I cannot be prouder than to be associated with the likes of people like this.

Please let me know how you all feel about the Laffey Gala donation.

Sonny Walker - President

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This edition of the Laffey News was purposely delayed due to the anticipated good news about our ship's movement back to Patriots Point. Sonny and I mutually agreed that ending this year with a good news edition would be appropriate after suffering through so many delays!

PRESIDENT'S 2011 REUNION RECAP

This year's reunion had a lot of different things going on. Unfortunately Dave Bossard, our Laffey apparel supplier, ended up in Savannah's Memorial Health Hospital with pneumonia and missed the entire reunion. He got better when he got home (after a couple of relapses). Hang in there "Billy the Boot": For those who don't know, that is my nickname for Dave dating back to the early sixties.

First off I must thank JILL MICHEL for doing such a great job dealing with all of the "surprises" that came up during the entire reunion. Jill Darling, we are so lucky to have you in charge of these affairs. Thank you so much for all you do and thanks also to Gemma McLuckie for her contributions. Gemma

did her work while dealing with a knee replacement and the death of her mom, Lillian Spriggs.

We can't forget John Langevin working behind the bar for another year, and donating his time and money for the bar. Thanks again John. Stay with me now Billy the Boot, this is what you missed while you were languishing in the hospital bed with all those good looking nurses.

We had a great bus tour of historic Savannah. It sure is a beautiful city. Jill held a "Game Night" at the hotel. I was in the waiting room at the hospital with Bob Karas waiting to hear about "Billy" and missed the entire game night but everyone told me that it was a lot of fun.

We had our memorial service at St. John the Baptist Cathedral. This is the most beautiful church I have ever seen, excluding the Vatican in Rome. I was in awe just being able to stand at the pulpit and conduct the service. The acoustics were just fabulous. We sang "The Navy Hymn", "The National Anthem" and "Amazing Grace" and it gave you chills just to hear them. A special thanks to Tom Kish and Lareine Kurtz for doing such a great job with the vocals and Don Watson doing a super job at ringing the bell. HUH?

The restaurants we went to were just great. We had lunch at The Pirate's House, the oldest restaurant in Savannah. The Pirates used this house in their recruiting efforts before Governor Oglethorpe made the city of Savannah civilized! The unsuspecting future sailors were "shanghaied" after being liquored-up and "escorted" through a basement exit door to their new at sea homes! The Pirate's House is also said to be haunted!!!!

We also had a dinner at Paula Dean's Lady & Sons Restaurant before attending a performance at the Savannah Theater where one of our members, Jim Oddo, was selected from the audience to be a part of the show. He did a bang up job with his performance. We didn't know Jim could sing like that???

This was probably the best hospitality room we have ever had and it was well used, too. Much of our time there involved fun activities that Jill had scheduled. There was also plenty of time for many sea stories to be told by our old salts in attendance.

Our "departing banquet" was fun, and "just a little squeezed" as the place wasn't very large but we

Tin Can Sailors can adapt to any situation. Let's face it - we came from a destroyer background!! After the meal we went back to the hospitality room and had our drawings. The 2011 winner of the Laffey model is Eddie Palmer IC2 who served onboard 64-66. Congrats Eddie, I know you will love the model.

We are now looking forward to our next reunion in Charleston in the fall of 2012. The ship should be back at Patriots Point on January 9, 2012....and it will be especially nice to have her as part of our reunion ceremonies once again.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Bobbi Karas for staying with Mary Bossard while husband Dave was in the emergency room until the very late hours. This does show how being SHIPMATES can be contagious even to our spouses.

Proud to be president,
Sonny Walker

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Mrs. Helen Vanhorne, wife of Commander Alfred L. Vanhorne, recently purchased a Laffey Plate Frame from the association for her husband. She wanted all of us to know that the Commander has been ill with heart failure for some time and is not able to do much. She also wanted to say hello from the Commander to all of us who served with him. If you would like to send a card or note to Commander Vanhorne, please send it to the following address:

408 Presidential Blvd
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

A THANK YOU FROM BILLY THE BOOT

I want to thank everyone who attended the 2011 Reunion held in Savannah, GA for your kindness and assistance to my wife while I was sipping tea with some **really pretty** Nurses and Female Doctors at Memorial Health University Medical Center in Savannah.

A special thanks to Bobbi Karas who insisted I needed some kind of treatment for my physical ailments: She spent many hours at the Medical Center along with her husband, and Sonny, and Cher. Everyone agreed there is no hope for my "mental ailments" but the physical ailments needed attention!

I want to extend a special thanks to "Duty Driver" Don Watson who made several trips to the Medical Center.

I also want to thank all those who assisted with the sale of Laffey Gear while I was in the hospital; especially Dan Essig, Joyce Hannau, and Jill.

It was determined on Thursday that pneumonia was the culprit, and there were no heart problems. I was finally discharged from the hospital on Thursday afternoon.

Thank you all and we hope to see you at next year's reunion.

Jennings David Bossard, Billy the Boot, Boot Chief, and all the other names...

EDITORS COMMENT: Hm-m-m-m, **really pretty** nurses and female doctors....He's still a sailor!!!

USS LAFFEY DD-724 ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND STAFF

Edgar "Sonny" Walker..... President
Bob Wampler..... Vice President
George Kessler..... Treasurer
Julie Becton..... Secretary
Fred Nardei..... Membership Chairman

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Ari Phoutrides
John Langevin
Francis LaSala
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John Hudak

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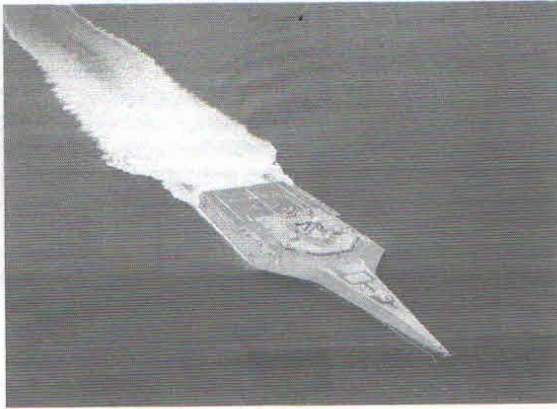
Newsletter Staff

Bob Wampler.... Editor and Circulation Manager

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Please be reminded that the Board of Directors of the USS Laffey Association voted to have all dues payable on the 1st of January of each year. This will help to eliminate the confusion surrounding when to send your membership dues. For those who have not yet paid their 2012 annual dues, please remit \$25.00 to Mr. Fred Nardei, Membership Chairman: His address is shown in the Laffey News Notes Section.

A NEW SHIP IN OUR NAVY



SLEEK, FAST, AND POWERFUL

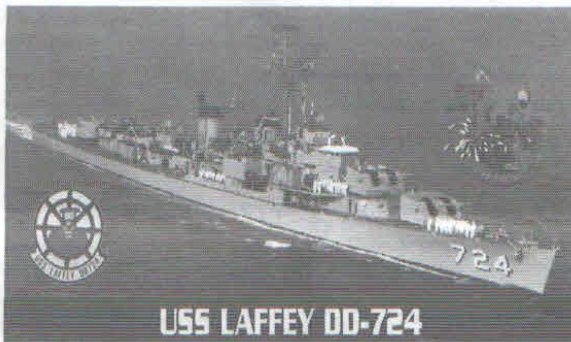


LAFFEY NEWS NOTES:

- Please notify the editor (Bob Wampler) of any change in your address and inform him of any spelling or numerical errors that are contained on your newsletter mailing label. Changes and corrections should be sent to the editor whose address is shown on the back page of this and every edition of the Laffey News (or call and leave a message at 843-705-2296). You should also include a **new phone number** if your address changed.
- USS Laffey Association Membership Applications can be found at our website: www.laffey.org. Please encourage others to join or rejoin our dedicated and proud membership!

Annual \$25.00 membership fees, life membership fees, and new membership \$25.00 fees should be in the form of a check or money order made out to the USS Laffey DD-724 Association and then sent to **Mr. Fred Nardei, Membership Secretary, 13565 SE 93rd Court Road, Summerfield, FL 34491. (RECENT CHANGE)** For membership questions please phone Fred at (317)-402-7235 (Cell Phone).

USS LAFFEY AUTO PLATE AVAILABLE



One of our members has created an auto license plate suitable for mounting on vehicles not having a front plate state tag requirement. They can also be installed on golf carts. The cost of each plate is \$23 with shipping and handling included. Normal delivery is within 3 weeks.

The USS Laffey Association is not directly involved with the ordering or shipment of these great looking

plates. Instead, your orders and payment checks should be directed to the following:

Mr. Bob Karas
452 Wilmington Circle
Oviedo, FL 32765-6186

Include your phone number and address with the mailed-in order.

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA HAVE OTHERS NOTICE YOUR FRAME!!



The Ship That Would Not Die will soon be returned to Patriots Point and we want all to know that she lives once more! Many of us have been noticed and have had comments made about our plate frames.

Over Thanksgiving we were at the Biltmore in Ashville, NC and the valet parking manager inquired about our plate frame....It turns out he had been aboard the USS Mullinix at the same time that Sonny and I were onboard the Laffey. We operated with the Mullinix in the sixties.

So, let's make certain that you do your part in making everyone know that the Laffey lives! Install these plate frames around your tags and be noticed!! Remember, \$1.00 of each frame price goes to help fund the Junior Laffey Sailor Program and the Associate Member Drive. So, what do you have to do to get your license plate frames?

The price for each custom frame is \$10.00 with shipping and handling included. Decide how many frames you might want, write a check made out to the USS Laffey DD-724 Association and send it to:

Bob Wampler, Editor Laffey News
USS Laffey DD-724 Association
100 Landing Lane
Bluffton, SC 29909-6060

We'll do the rest: Your car, truck, golf cart, boat etc. will be proud of your decision to purchase their very own plate frame!! Be noticed!!

Editor's Note: Ari Phoutrides made a \$25.00 "In Memory of Donation" to the USS Laffey DD-724 Association in memory of his friend and shipmate, Bob Karr.'

GENEROUS DONATION RECEIVED

On November 10th 2011 Sonny sent the following notice via e-mail:

Hi guys,

I received a check, sent in error to Patriots Point from the Cunningham Reunion Association. This check is for the restoration of the USS Laffey. It is in the amount of \$752.00.

I am sending a thank you letter to their treasurer. I think it should be noted on the website and in the newsletter. This money will be used to buy material and supplies for the work parties.

Thanks to Mike Merkel, Secretary/Treasurer
The check is marked FROM: DD-752'
Thanks to all Tin Can Sailors, we are still a family.

Sonny

Lillian Spriggs was a theatre seamstress

Written by Mary Lu Strange - mstrange@nky.com



COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP - Laura Lillian Brown Spriggs was an expert seamstress whose costumes helped weave magic on the stage of Mariemont Players and other community theatres across Greater Cincinnati. She had an artist's heart, a creative eye and won accolades for her designs.

"She could dress everything from dolls to brides," said her daughter, Gemma McLuckie of Columbus, Ohio.

"We all hunted costumes and fabrics for her. I found costumes from thrift shops in Columbus and Dad said they would drive to Dayton, Ohio to find a 'hard to get' fabric. We were all really involved."

"She and her husband were very productive members of the Mariemont Players," said friend and fellow Mariemont Player member Eleanor Shepherd of Indian Hill. "Her husband helped build the sets and Lil would alter the costumes or make them outright. That is how I mostly remember her. Plus, I do have a personal reference, when I made my daughter's wedding dress; it had miles and miles of fabric. Bless her heart, she hemmed it all and saved me. She did a wonderful job."

Mrs. Spriggs died Friday, Aug. 26, at her home from heart failure. She was 83.

She was born in Greenup County, Ky., the youngest of seven children of India and Albert Brown. She graduated from Wurtland High School and attended Ashland Community College before marrying Oliver James Spriggs in 1947.

Following World War II, employment opportunities brought Spriggs and her family to Columbia Township.

She was introduced to the Mariemont Players through her daughter Leila's dance studio.

She fashioned huge party dresses for "Little Mary Sunshine" and made costumes for circus performers and dancers in "Carnival." She created costumes for the play, "Applause," for a theater on the west side of Cincinnati.

"The play I remember the best is 'Godspell,' because she took my 1960s psychedelic clothes and was really fun," McLuckie said. "Godspell" is the play that she won the best costuming award for."

"She knew what she was doing and she was a real pro. She was always willing to help, and pleasant to work with," Shepherd said.

Mrs. Spriggs was also a sales associate for American Financial Insurance, membership chair, along with her husband, for the U.S.S. Laffey Association, a volunteer election poll worker and member of Anderson Hills United Methodist Church.

Along with her daughter, survivors include her husband of 64 years, Oliver James Spriggs; son, David L. Spriggs of Cincinnati; daughter, Leila Spriggs of Batavia; sister, Edith Adkins of Greenup, Ky.; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Newsletter Note: It has become obvious that we continue to have our WWII members receiving "final orders" to a "better place". Their dedication to the Navy and to the Country must not fade from memory. Our prayers go out to them, their families, and to all surviving WWII shipmates.

Junior Laffey Sailors – The essay contest deadline date has been extended to February 29, 2012 because of a recent increase in new membership. This is the absolute final date for entries to be received. Enter now and get a Laffey Tee Shirt!



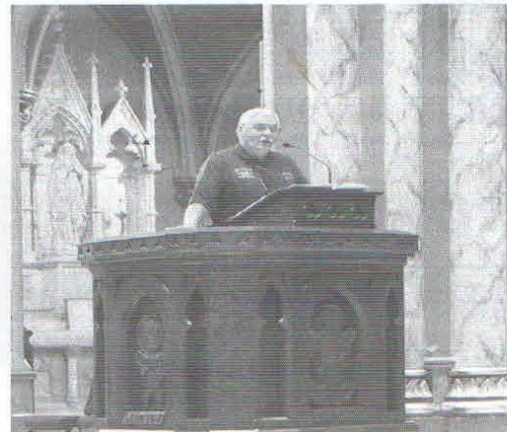
Taking the "Trolley Car" to St. John the Baptist



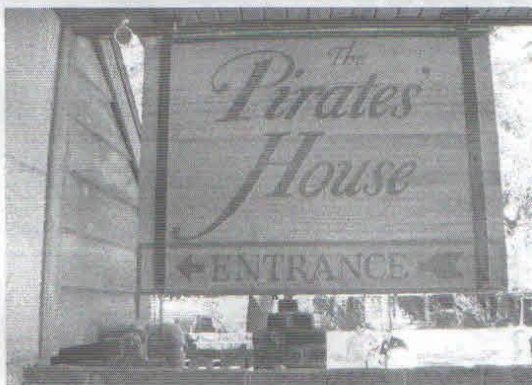
Ira Kurtz entering St. John the Baptist-Convert?



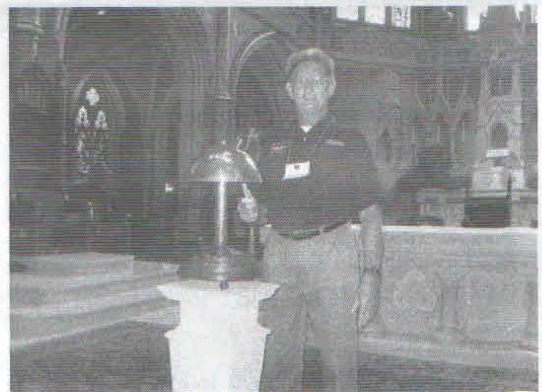
Follow that other "Trolley Car"!



Sonny at the pulpit during Memorial Service



Lunch followed the Okinawa Memorial Service



Don Watson Tolling the Bell at the Service

so proud of our guys doing so much to keep Laffey afloat. Keep up the good work and get her back to her berth! Regards to all and hello to Cher – Miss u all. "Bravo Zulu Laffey". Nick Giordano

(B) President Walker – Enclosed is a check for \$20.00 for the four (raffle) tickets. I also want to thank you and the officers and staff for the great job you are doing for the USS Laffey DD-724. Thanks again and keep up the great work. Plank-owner Frank Laskowski.

(C) Sonny – Please accept this check in lieu of my entering the ship's model raffle (Editor's note – This was a \$100.00 donation to the association). I really enjoy the model I won last year...it's prominently displayed in my living room. Andy (Andrew J.) Martinis, M.D.

(D) Sonny – The second check is to go toward the Work Party Fund. I can't go so this small token will help a little. Sincerely, Roland Letourneau (Editor's Note – Roland served aboard the Laffey 1944-46)

(E) Edgar Walker – My family and I including my grandfather were on vacation south of Myrtle Beach so we stopped by Charleston to see the Laffey. My grandfather was on that ship so it meant so much to my family. We saw how great it looked and were happy to be there: You guys did such a great job restoring it. We spent the rest of the day at Patriots Point. We had a wonderful time. Best wishes – Emily Karlie. Long live the Laffey!!

TAPS LIST

The following shipmates and USS Laffey DD-724 Association members and/or their close relatives have been transferred to a better duty station:

Robert Irving Karr, GM2, WWII, Plankowner, and Survivor of Okinawa Battle
Served Aboard 2/44-2/46
Passed Away on June 9, 2011

Joseph M. Jagielski, Jr. MM 2/C
Served Aboard Laffey 12/51 to 04/55
Passed Away September 16, 2011

Lillian Spriggs, Wife of Okinawa Battle Survivor and Life Member Jim Spriggs and Mother of Associate Member Gemma McLuckie
Passed Away on August 26, 2011

Elisa Yates, Wife of Life Member Ronald Yates
Passed away on June 24, 2011

Please take a moment in silence to honor and reflect upon the memories of those who have passed away: May the departed rest in peace.

Courtesy of Ari Phourides:

Robert Irving KARR, 87, passed away Thursday, June 9, 2011 at Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, Washington.

Bob was born April 10, 1924 in Shirley, West Virginia to Ivan and Mary Karr and grew up near Mannington, WV with his



older sister, Kathleen (Kitty) and younger sister, Virginia (Corky). Bob, in his youth, loved to hunt, trap, and fish. He graduated from Mannington high school in 1942.

He joined the **U.S. Navy** in June of 1943 and served as a gunner's mate aboard the USS Laffey during the D-Day campaign and later in the Pacific. At the battle for Okinawa, the Laffey survived a brutal kamikaze attack and was returned to Seattle, Washington for repairs.

A striking brunette, Ardath Bengé, met him at the pier where the Laffey was docked and offered to show him the city. Two years later, in June of 1947, they were married. Bob received his mechanical engineering degree from West Virginia University in 1950 and he and Ardath settled in Seattle, WA. He spent his entire career with Smith-Berger Corp. designing equipment for the logging, offshore oil, and fish processing industries.

He retired in 1989 as Vice President of Engineering. Bob's hobbies included designing and building furniture, and gardening. He served as a deacon at West Seattle Christian Church and was a member of the West Seattle Masonic Lodge. He loved pampering his grand and great-grand kids.

Bob is survived by his wife of nearly 64 years, Ardath of Marysville, WA; sister Kathleen Butcher of Fairmont, WV; son Kevan Karr and his wife Erin of Mukilteo, WA; granddaughter Rachel DuPont and husband Matthew of Forest Grove, OR; and their children, Elisabeth, Tessa, Andrew, and Emma; granddaughter JoyLynn Karr of Maricopa, AZ; granddaughter Ruth Miller and her husband Dwight of Marysville, WA; and their children, Ethan, Elijah, Joy, and Fiona.

The family would like to thank the caregivers at Merrill Gardens of Marysville for their kindness and support of Bob and Ardath. In lieu of flowers please make contributions to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle Children's Orthopedic Hospital, or the USS Laffey Association. A public memorial service for Bob will be held at a future date to be announced. (Photos courtesy of the Daily Herald of Everett)



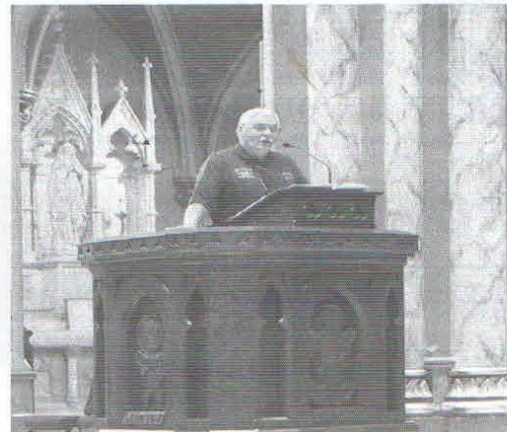
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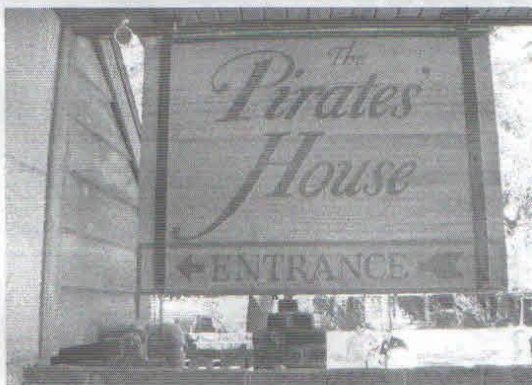
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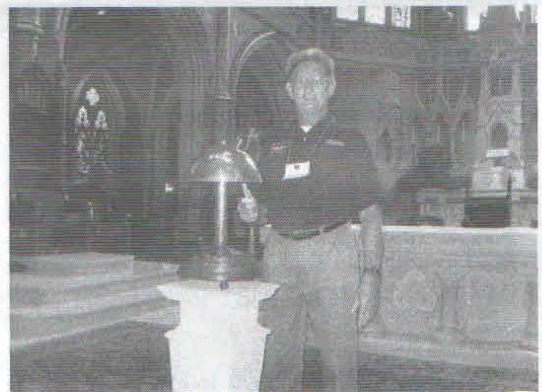
Follow that other "Trolley Car"!



Sonny at the pulpit during Memorial Service



Lunch followed the Okinawa Memorial Service



Don Watson Tolling the Bell at the Service



George Kessler and Tom Klett "meet" the Pirate



Let the race begin!



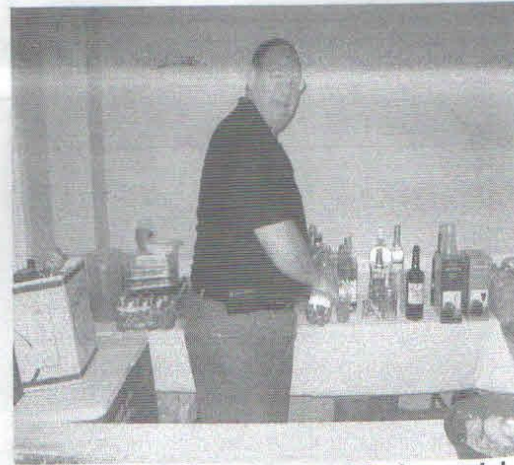
Jill's "Snack" at Monday Fun and Games Night



Savannah's Paula Dean Joined the Association!



Jill Michel announces fun night contest rules



Belly-up to the bar and meet John Langevin!



Danny Essig (Okinawa) with family and friends



Thanks for the memories of a great reunion



A gathering of friends at the banquet



Dave Bossard selling USS Laffey Apparel



Sonny did say it was a tight squeeze for diners!!



Paula Dean's Recruiters...Sonny and Cher