

LAFFEY NEWS

THE USS LAFFEY DD-724 – THE SHIP THAT WOULD NOT DIE



“I’LL NEVER ABANDON SHIP AS LONG AS A GUN WILL FIRE”: CO F. JULIAN BECTON

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

October-November-December

www.laffey.org

2015

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

November, 2015

Another year is coming to an end and It has really been eventful. We’ve had a couple good work parties and a very successful reunion in Orlando.

The winner of the ship’s model was William Townsend. I always love to make that phone call to tell the winner that they now have a model on the way. We made about \$3,000.00 profit from the raffle sales. This will go a long way to support our work parties.

Our reunion in Orlando was really a lot of fun. There wasn’t the large attendance that we are used to but those who came had a really good time. The Okinawa Battle Memorial Service was conducted at the Museum of Military History: We donated a plaque of Bartlett Laffey and the Big Wheel to be put on display in the museum. We rode airboats, some handled alligators, and we went to a really funny dinner show at Capone’s. Of course, and as usual, our great hospitality room remains a hit of the reunion.

Jill Michel outdid herself again this time. Jill had a ventriloquist perform at the hospitality room one night. She was really funny. She picked John Hudak and Aggie Coleman out of the audience and

“wired them up” so it looked like their mouths were moving. Their costumes were a riot. We honored Jill with a plaque and a standing ovation for all of her hard work putting these reunions together. Thanks again girl.

We had the election of officers again. No one stepped up and offered to take over our jobs so we were forced to accept the positions for another 3 years. Our current list of officers includes the following: Sonny Walker, President, Chris Kirhagis, VP, George Kessler, Treasurer and Hilary Wagner, Secretary. May I speak for all of our officers and thank everyone for having confidence in us to handle the association’s business and to keep the ship in the best shape possible for as long as we can.

After the reunion dinner was over, our new member Joe Papaleo went back to his room and unfortunately had a heart attack. Joe came to his first reunion and ended up with an extended stay at the local hospital after his quadruple by-pass operation. We visited him a couple of times in the hospital before we went home. He had the operation and rehab that week. I want to thank Jill and Hudak who helped pack up “his stuff” and take his car to the hospital lot. A few days later Jim Oddo drove back to Kissimmee to get Joe’s clothes

out of the trunk of his car. Joe was going to need them for his trips to rehab. Thanks Jim. I heard from Joe last week and he is finally home and doing well. Thanks to all who visited Joe while alone 1200 miles from home.

After leaving Orlando I was a guest at John Hudak's home for a week before going to the work party. There was no need to drive home (1000 mi) and turn around in a few days and drive back to Charleston for the work party (600 more mi). We enjoyed a few rounds of Florida Golf before heading to the ship. Thanks John, my brother, for the hospitality.

We headed to the ship and arrived 3 days ahead of the work party crew. We went early so we could get things set up. We washed many sheets and blankets and cleaned up to get things ready for the work party. There is a recap of the work party in this issue. Thanks to all who helped with the work party and the reunion.

THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERSHIP WANTS TO WELCOME JOE HOME FROM HIS EXTENDED VISIT TO THE ORLANDO REUNION!

Lastly, I want to say Happy Veterans Day, Merry Christmas to all and Happy New Year.

Sonny Walker
President

WORK PARTY RECAP OCTOBER, 2015

We had another busy and successful work party:

John Hudak, Don Watson, Dave Harhager and I arrived on Wednesday October 7th to get things ready for the rest of the guys who came in on Saturday the 10th. We washed 103 sheets and 100 blankets at the local Laundromat. Our onboard washing machine broke down and we had to replace it. We had a repairman look at it and he declared the old girl "dead". We bought a new one and hauled it down below and the guys got it hooked up and working. It's a lot better when the

work party can wash their clothes and store them in a locker instead of hauling them back home and then back to the ship again. And we can get clean sheets to sleep on too!

One of the tasks that Patriots Point asked us to do was to paint the fantail. We started out chipping, grinding and cleaning the deck. Ari took up station chipping and wire brushing the deck, getting it ready for the painters. Of course he used hand tools: Power tools are a little too sophisticated and beyond his understanding of how to use modern techniques. The old way seemed to work just fine!

The paint provided by Patriots Point was not what we expected. First, the primer wasn't the kind that matched the paint they gave us. We finally got the right stuff and put it down to prepare for the finishing coats. We ran out of finish paint and then were given more. We put it down but there was a problem after it dried. The batches were not the same color!! Not noticing that the paint didn't match, we continued to use up all the paint they had provided to us. At least the steel is covered and it doesn't look too bad. It matches the Yorktown which was painted with the same mismatched paint..... Duh!!

Pat Striplin and others got mount 51 put back together. They used a maul and pounded the top back on after removing a lot of the bad caulking. The mount was then re-caulked, chipped, prepped and painted. It looks like new. We think the other two mounts will probably need the same kind of treatment.

It was such a pleasure to be back aboard our ship. There weren't 3 ladders to climb to get to our compartment. We could sit and relax in the CPO lounge after work. The guys didn't have any problems with sharing the 2 showers: Everyone adapted very well. After all, we are Destroyer Sailors.

Our cooks didn't come to this work party so the duties fell upon the one guy that didn't have a real job.....me!! It really didn't make much sense but we did what we were told. We couldn't use the grill

that is installed due to fire marshal rules but we could use an electric hot plate (set on top of the installed grill) to cook our bacon and eggs. It is a pain in the butt but the food was good. It must have been pretty good as no one complained. Of course, if you complain, you get the cook's job. I know I gained 5 pounds in the 3 weeks that I was away from home: (The reunion, a stay at Hudak's house, and the work party).

I can't say enough about our youthful crew.....Jim Bossard and Little Mikey Pereira. These guys were everywhere and working hard all of the time!

It was mentioned by several attendees that we should try to buy our own paint so we can assure that we have enough to work with. It seems simple but when you only have 5 or 6 days to do a month's worth of work, we don't have time to be running to the carrier, chasing down the person that supposedly can give us whatever they can find. We have purchased a lot of tools and equipment for the same reason. That seems to be working well. Let's just hope our equipment is there when we get back in April.

Ari Phoutrides proved once again that he is ageless.....and.....a chick magnet! All the ladies who came aboard really thought he waswell, so cute! The ages of these ladies ranged from 15 years old to.....whatever. Seriously, the folks were really excited to meet and listen to a hero survivor of the Okinawa attack.

Another thrill for us was the opportunity to escort 4 blind ladies around the ship's main deck only. Ari took two and I took the other two. It was just amazing to watch how they got around the obstacles. They had escort dogs. Just watching how the dogs protected the ladies from tripping or bumping into bits, mooring lines, coamings, etc. made Ari and I so proud to be able to speak to these ladies. He was a chick magnet there too!

John Hudak was in charge of working in the 1st Division head. It was determined that the deck was rusted out and needed replacing. He asked if we could get some gas and oxygen bottles so we could

cut out the rusted deck and replace it with new steel. That was on Wednesday. We were told they had to have a meeting to reach a decision. Friday we were told there was no answer yet. We left on Saturday.

I received an e-mail from Mac advising me there may be a problem with the fire marshal (AGAIN) about the gas and oxygen. I will be contacting Bob Howard to find out what this problem is. We have been burning, cutting and welding on this ship for 30 years without an incident. We have been complimented in the past concerning the quality and safety of our work. We have bought our own cutting torch, hoses and gauges so not to have to request these things from Patriots Point. We did this to save more time again. We want to divorce ourselves from bothering them with our work needs. I will find out what has to be done to make it possible for us to complete the work in the 1st Division head.

Because I was the cook during this work party, most of my time was devoted to buying groceries and supplies. Therefore, the men did a lot of work around the ship without my noticing. They all did a 4-0 job. We hope to get a lot more done in April.

Once again, the great shipmates that we have make me proud to be among them and their work party efforts makes certain that the Laffey remains the best looking ship in the Navy!

WORK PARTY ATTENDEES – OCTOBER 2015

The following shipmates participated in our October 2015 Work Party:

Harold Borton, Pat Striplin, Don Watson, Sonny Walker, Ari Phoutrides, John Hudak, Max Saus, Homer Doster, Jim Bossard, Dave Harhager, Joe Luque, Mike Pereira, Mike Pereira, Jr., Ken McCullough, Tom Heidecker, Barry Shugarts, Richie McKinney, Dave Bossard, Dave Tillinghast and Jill Michel.

Well done to all from the USS LAFFEY DD-724 Association and its entire membership. If anyone is

in communication with these shipmates, please express our and Patriots Point's gratitude for their efforts in keeping our ship looking great!



SONNY WALKER HARD AT WORK AFTER THE REUNION AND BEFORE THE WORK PARTY...IS THAT A GOLF CLUB IN HIS HAND??!



WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN? WHY...WHY IT'S OUR WWII HERO/SURVIVOR ARI PHOUTRIDES



ARI AND HAROLD ORDERING ICE CREAM – AFTER WORK HOURS, OF COURSE!



WWII OKINAWA BATTLE SURVIVOR ARI PHOUTRIDES AND WALT HARRINGTON, OLD SALTS, SHARE SEA TALES AND MEMORIES

WORK PARTY PHILOSOPHY

“My father taught me to work, he did not teach me to love it.”

Abraham Lincoln



ARI HARD AT WORK DURING WORK PARTY



ARI PHOUTRIDES ENJOYS A BEVERAGE IN HIS NEW GV MUG...PROVIDED BY THE GREEK VILLAGE RESTAURANT IN BEL AIR, MD



(From Military.com)

Navy Turns 240

The U.S. Navy traces its roots back to the privateers that were employed to attack British commerce in the early days of the revolution. On October 13, 1775 the Continental Congress, established a small naval force, hoping that a small navy would be able to offset the uncontested exercise of British sea power.

The early Continental navy was not expected to take on the British navy for control of the seas. This small naval force was designed to work with privateers to wage tactical raids against the transports that supplied British forces in North America. To accomplish this mission the Continental Congress purchased, converted, and constructed a fleet of small ships—frigates, brigs, sloops, and schooners. These navy ships sailed independently or in pairs hunting British commerce ships and transports like prey, avoiding whenever possible fights with Royal Navy men-of-war.

The Modern US Naval Arsenal



From Military.com

Navy Equipment and Weapons

The U.S. Navy is indeed a force to be reckoned with. With thousands of surface, submarine, and aviation assets, the Navy can reach out and touch our enemies anywhere in the world..

- **Aircraft Carriers** – help deliver and support Naval Air Power across the globe.
- **Amphibious Assault Ships** – deploy and support U.S. ground forces in remote locations.
- **Battleships** – heavily armed and armored warships designed to engage other warships and provide shore bombardment.
- **Cruisers** – multi-mission warships capable of engaging multiple simultaneous targets and employed in force support or independent action.
- **Destroyers** – fast warships providing multi-mission offensive and defensive capability, independently or in fleet support.
- **Frigates** – warships designed to protect other ships and as anti-submarine warfare combatants.
- **Submarines** – carryout underwater operations and designed to carry out research, rescue, or specific wartime missions.
- **Aircraft** – capable of aviation operations ranging from transport to air-to-air combat, the Navy has over 25 types of aircraft capable of meeting any military aviation mission or need.

Birthplace of the U.S. Navy

From Military.com

The Continental navy faced several obstacles both during and after the revolution – mostly political and economic. Two years after the end of the war, the money-poor Congress sold off the last ship of the Continental navy, the frigate Alliance.

In the 1790's Europe began to relax many mercantile commercial restrictions and the U.S. trade and the shipping industry expanded accordingly. However, as the number of U.S. ships increased so did the possibility of increased attacks by the European powers and pirates. In March 1794 Congress responded by calling for the construction of a half-dozen frigates. And, once again, the United States had a navy.

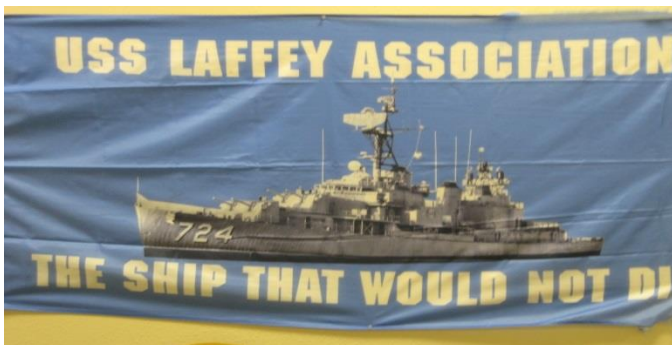
Although the Continental navy was later dismantled, October 13, 1775 remains the U.S. Navy's official birthday.

From these humble beginnings, the world's most powerful naval force was born. With thousands of ships and aircraft serving worldwide, the U.S. Navy is a force to be reckoned with. To learn more about the early years of the U.S. Navy, visit the U.S. Naval Historical Center website.

WORDS TO REMEMBER

It is the dull man who is always sure, and the sure man who is always dull.
H.L. MENCKEN

LET THE REUNION BEGIN – REGISTRATION



THE USS LAFFEY DD724 ASSOCIATION FLAG ON DISPLAY IN THE HOSPITALITY SUITE



ARI & SONNY TOUR GUIDES TO BLIND LADIES



ARI AND THE CHICKS!



ARI, DAVE HARHAGER, HOMER DOSTER & HAROLD BORTON DISCUSS THE DAY'S WORK

REUNION REGISTRATION DAY



LET'S EAT BEFORE THE ENTERTAINMENT GETS STARTED!



EAT, EAT...IS THAT ALL WE DO DURING THESE REUNIONS? NOPE – WE DRINK, TOO!!



DID SOMEONE MENTION FOOD?



JIM MOODY, MAGICIAN AND COMEDIAN , SERVED AS OUR ENTERTAINMENT SUNDAY EVENING!



MIKE & AGGIE COLEMAN ENJOYING REGISTRATION DAY EVENING FESTIVITIES



THE RAMADA GATEWAY, KISSIMMEE, FL HOST HOTEL FOR THE 2015 REUNION



NOW, NOW BARBARA...DID GEORGE KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING BEHIND HIS BACK?



THIS IS TOUGH. DO ANY OF YOU HAVE A HAND HELD CALCULATOR?



FRAN LASALA TO WIFE ROSE: DO YOU REALLY KNOW HOW THIS THING WORKS?



JUST TALK "AMONGST" YOURSELVES!



HONESTLY - IT WASN'T ME...ONE OF THESE GUYS DID IT!



THE FAMILY OF DANNY ESSIG CONTINUES THE TRADITION OF REUNION ATTENDANCE



CMDR BOB KARAS AND HIS WIFE BOBI RETURNED TO THE REUNION THIS YEAR



PPSSST – HAVE I GOT A GOOD JOKE FOR YOU!



THE CAMPBELL FAMILY ATTENDED THIS YEAR'S REUNION IN ORLANDO, FL

GATORLAND VISIT



HOLD ON THERE LITTLE FELLA! DON WATSON "HANDLES" THIS ONE!



GINNY "SEZ" I CAN HANDLE THESE, TOO!

(PLEASE NOTE TAPED SHUT SNOUTS!)

REUNION ATTENDEES VISIT MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY



A VERY IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION INSIDE



ATTENTIVE LAFFEY GROUP AT THE MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY

USS LAFFEY DD-724 ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS AND STAFF

Current Officers

- Edgar "Sonny" Walker..... President
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- Chris Kirhagis.....Vice President
(MASH752@aol.com)
- George Kessler..... Treasurer
(gfkessler09@yahoo.com)
- Hilary Wagner.....Secretary
- Mike Pereira.....Membership Chairman
(antiredsox@yahoo.com)

Board of Directors

- Ari Phoutrides
- Bob Langevin
- John Langevin
- Francis LaSala
- John Hudak
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Laffey News Quarterly Newsletter

Bob Wampler, Editor and Circulation Manager
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WORDS FROM A FOUNDER

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past"

Thomas Jefferson



A NICE WELCOME TO THE MUSEUM!



SO, WHO WANTS TO JOIN THE ARMY AND FIRE-UP ONE OF THESE BABIES?

NOW HEAR THIS, NOW HEAR THIS!

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO PAY ANNUAL DUES TO THE ASSOCIATION, PLEASE NOTE THAT THOSE DUES FOR NEXT YEAR (2016) SHOULD BE PAID IN/OR BEFORE JANUARY 2016.

If you have questions or want to verify your current dues status, contact Mike Pereira, Membership Chairman at the above shown e-mail address or give him a call at 401-787-3014.

Your annual check in the amount of \$25.00 made out to the USS LAFFEY ASSOCIATION should be sent to Mike Pereira at the following address: 92 Elmdale Avenue, Warwick, RI 02889

The association's officers and staff sincerely appreciate your active participation in the USS LAFFEY DD-724 ASSOCIATION. The Ship That Would Not Die remains alive at Patriots Point, SC with your support.

Navy Poised to Open SEAL Teams to Women: Report (From Military.com)

The chief of naval operations has said that the Navy is poised to let women become members of the elite SEAL teams if they meet the same non-gender-specific established training and entry standards, according to a news report.

"Why shouldn't anybody who can meet these [standards] be accepted? And the answer is, there is no reason," Adm. Jon Greenert said Tuesday in an exclusive interview with Navy Times and its sister publication Defense News.

Greenert added that the special warfare community conducted a rigorous objective analysis of the training and entry standards for the SEALs, finding that the standards were good. "We did all the Navy specific work on this – but that will have to be part of a larger joint discussion. The final decision will be part of a larger joint, special operations discussion. The decision will be made in the next several weeks," a Navy official told Military.com.

Citing the integration of women into the submarine force and explaining that 96 percent of jobs in the Navy are open to women, officials with the sea

service have said that other services contemplating the integration of women for certain roles may look to the Navy as an example.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND THANKS TO MIKE COLEMAN FOR PROVIDING MANY OF THE PICTURES IN THIS ISSUE OF THE LAFFEY NEWS. LOOK FOR MORE REUNION PICTURES IN THE NEXT EDITION. (EDITOR)

DVD DONATION: 9-8-15 E-MAIL FROM SONNY

I just received a package of DVD's donated to the ship for viewing at the work parties. They are about "Halsey's Typhoon". I am sure we will enjoy watching them. Our donor is Joe Battista. '46-'47 - Sonny

E-MAIL FROM JACK STRAND (11-08-15): Let's keep Jack in our prayers.

Hi everyone

I thought I would try to bring you all up to date with my latest health issues.

Well, first off, I am not dead yet and second I will be having more surgery on bad omen day Friday the 13th. Why? Since I had surgery to remove part of my right lung everything was on-track and healing except for an area about 2 inches long a little below my right breast and this continued to require dressing changes and flushing as the wound was supposed to heal from inside out and could not be sewn up because of drainage.

After numerous questions and complaints about why it was taking so long and why isn't this healing, visits to the ER, on and off of antibiotics and a culture that showed MRSA infection. Oh don't be so concerned everybody has it. They didn't seem too concerned because tissue looked good, no odor, no fever, etc. Therefore antibiotics are not necessary, and infectious disease said this also!!!

What about a CT scan I asked ...nah it won't show anything. Finally after numerous requests and 4 months a CT scan was ordered and the result is an abscess infection and also it was determined that rib bone # 6 requires removal and another incision too clean up the infection area and remove 3 or so inches of rib.

Preop is tomorrow and surgery at West Roxbury VA medical center. This bone infection is called OSTEOMYELITIS if I spelled it right.?! Wish me LUCK - TX

USS Laffey DD-724 Association

Bob Wampler

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