

2016 REUNION - A WINNER! - SEE PICTURES INSIDE

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

2016

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE - DECEMBER 2016

Hi all,

This will be my last President’s message. After 13 years, it was time for me to step down and give new blood and ideas a chance to carry the “Laffey Legacy” forward. Also, this could possibly be the last message you receive in English, the next may be in Greek!! Seriously, Chris Kirhagis has agreed to step in and take over the reins. I must admit that I will miss being at the helm but I won’t be disappearing either. You may still trust me to handle the ship raffle and the memorial services. I won’t be gone forever.

You all have been the best bunch of shipmates that anyone could ever hope to have. We have had some really good times together and a few that we want to forget. The ship is looking great, the folks at Patriots Point are putting in a lot of new displays and the visitors really love it. I can’t say enough about the staff at Patriots Point during my tenure as president. They were all great.

I must say, this last work party (November 2016) was the best I have had in years. Anyone had a problem..... “See Chris or Mike”!! The first thing I

did at this work party was clean the toilets. Now that turned a few heads!!!! No, not a play on words!! More on the work party later.

The Laffey Association has made a lot of friends and one of them is Jeff Jacobs. Jeff has become the best “Scrounger” in the business. If we needed some sort of tool or supplies Jeff would come up with them. They were donated by the dealers. I kid Jeff about forcing these good people to donate the stuff. He must own a black book with all kinds of info in it to make people donate. He is a great friend of all of us. By the way he was just elected as President of the Patriots Point Foundation. Congrats to Jeff and it couldn’t happen to a better guy.

We are now looking for a new Newsletter Editor. This is an important job and needs to be filled as quickly as possible. Bob Wampler will be glad to help whoever takes his place. Please consider joining the team – Contact me as soon as your creative juices start to flow! The pay is just great!!! Overtime pay for all holidays and unlimited vacations too. The base pay is 0. You’ll receive double time for overtime and vacations: 2 x 0 is 0. What a deal! .And, you’ll get a Laffey provided lap top computer to carry on with your duties.

George Kessler has been one of the best Laffey Association Treasurers too. He always seems to have the money we need to keep things rolling. Now that is something special considering all of George's Travels and cruise ship adventures! Thanks George. (Is your check in the mail?)

Bob Wampler was great as VP until he had to give it up for health reasons. I think he was just tired of dealing with me. Thanks Bobby. Hilary Wagner has been secretary for a long time. Thanks Hilary, for all the help you gave me over these many years

We've gone through a "bunch of membership chairmen" over the years: Jim Spriggs, Pete Lacore, Jack Strand, Fred Nardei, Mike Pereira and now Kathy Pereira. That is the toughest job of all. Thanks to all of you for your efforts.

We've been through 4 or 5 executive directors of Patriots Point too. Additionally there were so many friends at Patriots Point who helped us with our renovation missions: Vic Fletcher, Robbie Robinson, Lee Ford, Hoot Gibson, Dave Suchind, Paul Jeffers, Tom Sprowl, Malcolm Jenkins, Brian Parsons and a whole bunch of the workers. They helped us the most!!

Jill Michel has been my rock when it came to handling the reunions. She stepped in when I was at the end of my rope. We have had a lot of good reunions and a lot of fun. She will be showing us a good time in Memphis in the fall of 2017. Thanks girl for all that you did for me and the association.

Thank you all for being such "loyal subjects"!!!!
He-he!

We hope all of you have a great Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year.

Sonny Walker - **EX**-President

SONNY'S FUTURE

"I look to the future because that's where I'm going to spend the rest of my life." **George Burns**

HELP WANTED

This issue of the Laffey News marks the end of my ten (10) years on the job as the editor and as circulation manager of the newsletter. My, how time has just flown by!!

I had originally intended to inform Sonny of my intentions during the 2016 reunion but we all know what Sonny did – He one-upped me by announcing his retirement intentions!! Therefore, I opted to formally announce my intentions during this end of my ten years issue of the Laffey News.

It has been an extreme pleasure for me to work on the quarterly editions of the association's newsletter. The Officers of the association and the work party attendees spend a lot of time and effort making certain this association successfully proceeds with its mission of USS Laffey DD-724 restoration and ongoing maintenance.

Go to Patriots Point and witness the results of their efforts!! We have the best looking ship at PP and it is a reflection of the love and devotion that the men and women who attend the Work Party's have towards our very historic "tin can"!

Please consider replacing me: This "job" is a treat and so very, very fulfilling. The year ahead for me is going to be more demanding for several reasons and I will need as much free time as possible.

So do your duty – Let your creativity surface - Someone step-up - Volunteer!

Bob Wampler - Thanks for considering this high paying "job".

SPECIAL THANK YOU

Once again I would like to thank Member Mike Coleman for providing many of the photos of the reunion shown in this newsletter. I do appreciate your assistance on this matter. More photos in the next edition of the Laffey News.

NOTICE TO THE MEMBERSHIP

"Annual dues are due" in January, 2017. Contact Kathy Pereira, Membership Chairwoman, if you are not certain of your current status: 401-787-3014.

NOVEMBER 2016 WORK PARTY

Our work party came late due to Hurricane Mathew as it savaged North and South Carolina including Charleston. The work party dates were changed to November from the originally scheduled October dates.

We ended up with 11 workers this time. It was a big disappointment but understandable. I must say that Chris and Mike took the bull by the horns and things got done!

We had a surprise with the fantail. The hurricane put a lot of salt water on the decks and caused a lot of rusting. This added a load of work that we had not intended to have to do this time. But, as Laffey sailors we adapted and overcame.

We “turned to” on the fantail: Homer Doster, Harold Borton, Chris Kirhagis and Ken McCullough used grinders and wire brushes and got the fantail prepped to paint.

Mike Pereira took charge of the man lift and did a mighty man job. He alone prepped and painted the superstructure above the main deck on the starboard side.

I spent two days painting the DESRON 60 logo to hang on the side of the ship. I had threatened Ari that I would change it to DESRON 32 and he told me “Not if I am alive!!!!” Mike hung it back up when it was dry.

John “Too much milk” Kapusta did his usual thing in the galley. Good job John! Harold Borton had to leave early due to a family problem. He took the plaque on Mt. 53 with him. The storm had subjected the plaque to salt water and it was almost unreadable. Harold said he would try to get it recoated. As it turned out, the folks said they would make us a new one and donate it to the ship. This is the spirit of a lot of people in this country. A businessman donates the plaque to the veterans of WWII. How great is that. In case you don’t know, this is the plaque that was bought by the association around 2001 for about \$2,500.00. It has the names of all the crew who were aboard at

Okinawa. It will be great to see a new and shiny plaque back on MT 53 once again.

As Harold was leaving Dave Tillinghast came aboard and took his place. Richard Felsing always shows up at lunch time..... I always kid him about that! Richard did his clean up job wherever he went. He worked in the Exec and Ops Officer staterooms trying to get them cleaned up. He worked on the fantail too.

Rich McKinney was in charge of doing the laundry - For a week! John Hudak and Joe Luque arrived on Monday and worked in the heads fixing leaks and drains. Now we have both heads operational. Good job guys.

On Friday, Hudak and I were invited to play in a golf tournament in honor of Lee Ford. John and I are the only ones who were working on the ship when Lee oversaw her. We were very proud to have been invited to play in the tournament with Lee’s son Billy. Lee passed away earlier this year and was honored at our reunion aboard the Yorktown.

The folks at Patriots Point invited us to dinner aboard the Yorktown prior to the Viet Nam War Symposium. It was very interesting.

Thanks to all of the guys that showed up and busted their butts. Good luck Chris and Mike. Again, I urge you all to support Chris and Mike as they take over the reins of our organization.

We will be having our next work party in April. Be there and ready to work!!!!

Ex-President - Sonny Walker

2017 REUNION IN MEMPHIS, TN

As of the date of the printing of this newsletter, no firm date has been established for the 2017 annual reunion. However, we can advise that it will occur at the end of September or early October 2017. Jill Michel will keep us posted when details are known.



Sonny shows off his paint covered finger tips to new President, Chris Kirhagis, and Pat Waters



VP Big Mike Pereira tries his best to paint the entire ship during one Work Party!!



Dave Bossard impressing President Kirhagis with his unique techniques with a swab



The long reach of the 85 ft. man lift donated rent-free to the association by Ahern Rentals



The Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60 insignia was brilliantly restored and repainted by none other than our past President, Sonny Walker. He said he did this during his free time from his many other duties during the Work Party! (Y'all believe that???)



Approximately \$3,000.00 of paint donated by International Paint Co.- Norfolk, VA. This is the second time they donated that amount of paint.



The power washer donated by Hughes Rental in Charleston. This is the second time they have donated the use of the power washer.

RECENT DONATIONS RECEIVED

WORK PARTY

Julian and Karen Winston	\$100.00
Bob and Barbara Karas	\$250.00
Dan Isaacs	\$ 50.00

IN MEMORY OF FRED GEMMEL

Ari Phoutrides \$25.00

SHIP STORE DONATION

Dave & Mary Bossard \$200.00

The USS Laffey DD-724 Association sincerely appreciates the generosity of all donors and each of you should know that these funds are used to extend the life of Laffey – “The Ship that Would Not Die.”

USS LAFFEY DD-724 ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS AND STAFF

Current Officers

- Chris Kirhagis.....President
(MASH752@aol.com)
- Edgar “Sonny” Walker.....Past- President
(soncher724@verizon.net)
- Mike Pereira.....Vice President
(antiredsox@yahoo.com)
- George Kessler.....Treasurer
(gfkessler09@yahoo.com)
- Hilary Wagner.....Secretary
- Kathy Pereira.....Membership Chairwoman
(antiredsox.yahoo.com)

Board of Directors

- Sonny Walker
- Ari Phoutrides
- Bob Langevin
- John Langevin
- Francis LaSala
- John Hudak
- Bob Wampler

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Bob Wampler, Editor and Circulation Manager
(rdwjcw@hargray.com)

WORDS OF WISDOM

“Be honorable yourself if you wish to associate with honorable people.”

Welsh Proverb

THE USS LAFFEY DD-724



ATTENTION - ALL HANDS NOTICE

If you do not have a copy of your DD214 (Your military discharge paper) you should get a copy and let your spouse/relatives know where it is readily available to them.

The address of the website where you can order yours is:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

Just go to that website and follow the directions on the site and they will mail you a copy of your DD214 within a couple weeks. Once received, it is recommended that you make several copies of it.

PASSING OF ANOTHER WWII MEMBER



Richard G Jacobs, WT3

A Daughter's recollection

Hello Bob,

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. My dad was 89 and in great health a year ago. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor and chose not to fight it. He told all the doctors he lived a good, long life. And he did. He was buried at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery with military honors. We were very proud of him . . . he was a good man.

My Dad loved the Laffey and had participated in her restoration, even though he was only assigned to her for 8 months. He proudly showed us the ship on display at Patriot's Point several times.

We gave him a laptop computer for the first time 4 years ago and the first thing he Googled was the Laffey! In his diary, he entered "Assigned to the U.S.S. Laffey Destroyer" on September 22, 1945. His grandson gave him a car license plate that said "RJ DD724."

His Dad was in the Navy during WWI, and now his grandson is in the Navy as an F-18 pilot, getting ready to deploy in 7 weeks.

RICHARD G. JACOBS OBITUARY

On Monday, September 19, 2016, Richard G. Jacobs, 89, Carlisle, entered the church triumphant

at Cumberland Crossings. He joins his beloved wife, Beverly, who passed away in 2008 after over 60 years of marriage.

Born December 13, 1926 in Easton, he was the son of the late Michael Jacobs and Mabel (Weaver) Jacobs Savitz and was a graduate of Wilson High School. In addition to his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by his brother, Eugene Jacobs, his sister, Patricia Clevensline and his mother's husband, Samuel Savitz.

Before his 18th birthday, Dick entered the United States Navy, and served during WWII and the Korean Conflict. While in the Navy, he served on the USS Laffey, the USS Henderson, and the USS Severn. He continued to join his shipmates in maintaining and preserving the USS Laffey while he was physically able. Following his honorable discharge in 1951, Dick went to work for the former Bell Telephone, retiring in 1985 as a Right-of-Way Engineer

While he was in the Navy, he married the love of his life, Beverly H. (Frick) Jacobs on May 19, 1946. Together they raised two daughters, and moved to Mechanicsburg in 1968.

Dick was a longtime member of Paxton Presbyterian Church, where he was a deacon and member of the Kirkers Sunday School Class and was a member of the Dillsburg American Legion, Post 26. He also spent many years volunteering at the Downtown Daily Bread and truly enjoyed woodworking, surf fishing on the beach, and hunting with his grandson, Nathan

Surviving are his daughters: Susan D. Shuey (and her husband, David), Newville and Diane M. Jacobs, West Fairview; one sister: Carolyn Royer, Reading; one brother: Donald Jacobs, Felton, DE; his grandson: Lt. Nathan D. Shuey, USN, Newville; nieces and nephews; and many other family members and friends, all of whom will miss him dearly.

A PERSONAL NOTE: Thank you and all the fine men who served on the Laffey for their service and sacrifice. And I thank all those who presently serve.

"Fair Winds and Following Seas,"

Sue Shuey – Daughter of Richard G. Jacobs

SUBJECT: PASSING OF A FAMILY MEMBER

Notification per Sonny's email:

It is with great sadness that we hear of a passing of a younger person. Bill Fitzsimmons called me today and told me of his older brother Chuck passing yesterday Dec. 2, 2016.

We send our thoughts and prayers to Ed, Helen, Bill, Bob and Eddie Fitzsimmons for their loss.

Chuck Fitzsimmons was 62 years old and died after a 6 months battle with cancer.

God Bless them all.

Sonny

TAPS LIST

Richard G. Jacobs, WT3
Served Aboard Laffey 1945-1947
Also served during Korean War
Passed Away September 19, 2016

Chuck Fitzsimmons, Family Member
Son of Ed and Helen Fitzsimmons
Brother of Bob & Bill Fitzsimmons
Passed Away December 2, 2016

John Tolley
Other information not available
Passed Away October 24, 2016

David Suchand
USS Rich crewmember and Laffey Work
Party Volunteer
Passed Away November 19, 2016

Elwood E. "Woody" Powell, SFP2
Served Aboard Laffey 1953 – 1957
Passed Away October 23, 2016

May they all rest in eternal peace.

EDITOR'S VIEW

Our 2016 Reunion, like past events, was a huge success. We had this year's reunion in Charleston, SC (Always nice to be near the ship!) We did, however, stay at a different hotel this year. Instead of the Quality Inn at Patriot's Point we slumbered down at the Double Tree Hotel in North Charleston. Our farewell banquet was also held at the Double Tree in their Aileron Ballroom.

On Monday Jill had arranged for two buses to carry all of us to two different locations in the morning. One group went to the City Market in Charleston while the other group toured the Boone Hall Plantation. While at Boone Hall we had a self-guided tour of the cabins and grounds followed by a Gullah Theater presentation and then a self-guided garden tour followed by a tour of Boone Hall's house. During the afternoon, both groups switched destinations.

On Tuesday we had our annual memorial service on the USS Yorktown due to inclement weather. We enjoyed lunch at the Yorktown's crew's galley. We transited to downtown Charleston where Charleston Harbor Tours provided a Harbor Tour.

On Wednesday morning we had our annual Board meeting followed by a general membership meeting. We then had free time until the evening's banquet. We concluded our 2016 reunion with good food, drink, and the friendship we all share with each other.

What else is there to say? Once again Jill Michel, Reunion Coordinator did a great job in handling the reunion details – Well done Jill!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson



Boone Hall Plantation House



Gullah Entertainer – a genuine treat!



Some "Laffeyites" hanging around the porch at Boone Hall Plantation



Jeff Jacobs, The “scrounger extraordinaire” and President of The Patriots Point Foundation



The three oldest of all of us elders! Emil Jakubic (86), Fran Lasala (86) & Bob Logsdon (99)



Hmmm, I think I got a spot on my brand new blouse!!



Part of the crowd at the Memorial Service aboard the USS Yorktown



Dave Bossard with his “deplorable” name tag!



Mike and Aggie Coleman



Fran and Rose LaSala: Happily Married for well over a billion years according to Fran!



OK, Then. Now that the rules are established let's get ready to arm wrestle!



An exclusive picture of Hilary leaning as far right as one can get. How does she do it?!!



The patriotic pooch and the official puppy dog mascot of the USS Laffey DD-724 Association



Cal and Shirley Bowen had the biggest smiles of all reunion attendees!!



Outgoing and incoming Presidents Sonny Walker and Chris Kirhagis: Give me that now!!



I don't know but he seemed to really enjoy his role as President...Must have been the pay!!



So, what do you think? Will the Laffey still be around for another 50 years?



John Hudak and Mike Pereira prepare to launch the memorial wreath during reunion ceremony.



Two "old salts" reflecting and comparing their years of service onboard Laffey



Once a Laffey sailor always a Laffey sailor according to Robert Klimesh



John and Kathy Kish returned for another reunion filled with memories.

Editor's Note: We (Mike Coleman and I) have many more photos which we will include in the next edition of the LAFFEY NEWS.



USS Laffey DD-724 Association

Bob Wampler

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Bluffton, SC 29909-6060