



# LAFFEY NEWS

*Dedicated to those who served in battle and those who pre-served in peace.*



USS LAFFEY, DD724 & DD459  
THE SHIP THAT WOULD NOT DIE

*"I'll never abandon ship as long as a gun will fire"  
—F. Julian Becton, CO*

January, February, Marh 2018

USS Laffey Association • [www.Laffey.org](http://www.Laffey.org)

Θα ήθελα να ευχηθώ σε όλους ευτυχισμένο Πάσχα. Για τους συναδέλφους μας Ανατολικής Ορθόδοξοι οπαδοί, σας εύχομαι ένα ευτυχές Πάσχα στις 8 Απριλίου

(I would like to wish everyone a Happy Easter. For our fellow Eastern Orthodox followers, I wish you a Happy Easter on April the 8th)

First of all, please accept my apology for the first quarter of 2018's *Laffey News* for getting to the press late.



*Chris Kirhagis*

Yes, I do accept full responsibility, as I have been very busy in my administrative duties within this organization as well as another military organization that I hold office in. Not to mention the rentals I have.

There is not much to discuss in this edition as I am sure that everyone has been bunkered down and has just begun coming out of hibernation.

Of course I, VP Mike Pereira as well as a half a dozen of other members did not have the pleasure of doing just that. We attended a mini-work party in the later part of January to the first couple days of February. All in all the work party was a success and the main purpose was to prepare for the upcoming main work party that begins on April 14, 2018.

There are numerous chores that our VP and I have been trying to set up for the upcoming work party. However, we have either come into some resistance from Patriots Point: insufficient equipment, protocol, state, federal, and OSHA guidelines. We have even looked into renting some of the equipment necessary to complete some projects, only to find that exorbitant price tags for rentals.

It appears to me that in the upcoming years, our ability to use our own initiative and creativity will be met by the aforementioned blockades. We may rely on much easier tasks as well as Patriots Point Museum route "wish list" for us to accomplish. In doing this, I feel that it will make our visit during the work parties more enjoyable. Now that I think about it, this may not be a bad thing!

The April work party will be coordinated by VP Mike Pereira as I will be in Thailand from April 18th through May 1st. Past Prez. Sonny Walker will be

conducting the Laffey Hull Raffle and the drawing will be held on April 16, Good luck to all who purchased tickets. There will be tickets for the same type of drawing which will take place at April 2019's work party, and will continue until hull supplies are depleted. I want to thank all of you who have participated in this raffle as the proceeds go towards maintaining the Laffey.

VP Mike Pereira, who is into para-normal activity research, was able to reach out to a couple who agreed to make a trip aboard the Laffey, test and conduct possible para-normal activities aboard our ship. There was very positive results in some area more than others. Mike has invited the couple back during the April work party, so I ask everyone who attends the work party to give them as much assistance as they require. I hope that Mike Pereira enlightens all of you about this type of activity in the *Laffey News*.

Thank You,

*Chris Kirhagis, President*

**OUR GOALS:**

Ensure that the website fully documents the history and valor of the USS Laffeys.

Post current Laffey Association information on reunions, work parties, raffles, ....

Post the current Laffey Assoc newsletter from Craig Keith

Post the current Laffey Assoc members list (abbreviated from Kathy Pereira roster)

Keep the "Latest News" updated, e.g. planned Laffey movie "True WWII Tale About The Ship That Would Not Die"

Ensure the website links for PayPal (Owner George Kessler) are functioning. User may click on the home page link or directly go to [www.paypal.me/usslaffeyassociation](http://www.paypal.me/usslaffeyassociation) to make a donation

**CURRENT TASKS:**

Get any additional USS Laffey cruise books, We currently have 13 cruise books on the web site. We just published the 1967-1968 Mediterranean Cruise Book from Jerry Miller. Many thanks Jerry.

Collect additional audio and video interviews. We recently added former wardroom display of Admiral F.J. Becton memorabilia, Oral History by William M. Kelly, SM3/c, Impressions of Laffey Reunion by Warren Walker's Son, and Recollections of Chief Radarman Bob Logsdon Age 100..

Monitor the Laffey Association Google Account [laffeyassoc@gmail.com](mailto:laffeyassoc@gmail.com) Chris Kirhagis Owner. We can use this account to send out bulk emails to members. Our plan is to use the Google Drive to back up Laffey Association documents, newsletters, membership rosters, website backups, ... in digital format. This is a free account to store digital info for years and years.

Key official info for [laffey.org](http://laffey.org) website:

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*Three generations of warriors*

*We met the gentleman on the left waiting to be seated at Ora's He was a 92 year old WWII veteran At right is Rod Morgan, an 84 year old Korean War. In the middle are Ritchie and Chris, Vietnam War era vets.*



*This sailor visited us during the mini work party and I believe we have him hooked to start attending our work parties.*

*He is Joe Clark MM/EM3. Joe served aboard the USS Frank Evans, DD754. Said the Evans was cut in half by an Australian carrier.*



On the last day of the mini-work party, the last five of us had just secured the ship by locking up the place tight, turning off the lights and water at the pier and had our vehicles loaded to go eat breakfast. As we arrive at the parking lot, Laffey member Calvin Eichsteadt, MM2 arrived from Manawa, WI. with his son to tour the ships especially the Laffey. I was going to place a title under the pic. which would read "A day late and a dollar short" for the work party!

# Plank Owner Bill Kelly Honored

In January President Chris Kirhagis and Past President Sonny Walker had the opportunity to drive to New Jersey to meet with Laffey Plank Owner Bill Kelly in celebration of his 93rd birthday. In attendance were numerous family and friends. New Jersey Congressman (R) Chris Smith was also there to present Bill with a U.S. flag that had flown over the Capitol building in Washington.

During the the Okinawa attack on April 16, 1945 Bill recovered the ship's American flag. A severely injured shipmate asked to hold it. The shipmate died holding the flag. Congressman Smith also presented Bill with a proclamation recognizing his involvement in this famous battle.

Bill was in his wheelchair in the center of the activity and was

so glad Chris and Sonny came for the ceremony. Chris lent Bill his phone and he talked to Ari Phourides. It was really great to see two heroes speaking to each other.

After the ceremony, Bill showed his room. An entire wall is covered with Laffey memorabilia. On his bed is a blanket with USS LAFFEY embroidered on it.



# Sonny's Work Party Memories

When I look at the pictures, it is hard to not get sad. The WWII guys that used to come to the work parties in the 90's taught me a lot about our ship's history and they were fun to work with. I remember Ray Pressberger painting the deck of the signal bridge when a group of Marines came aboard. They were vets of Okinawa. Ray was talking with them from the signal bridge. They thanked the ships for protecting them from air attacks. It was awesome.

The Korean War guys were the wildest. That was a bunch that should *still* be in Leavenworth. It was great to work alongside these guys.

Looking at the picture of the 2001 work party, I sadly note that most of them have died. Vic Fletcher from Patriots Point was the best. He taught us a lot. Lee Ford, also deceased, was a top notch worker. He was definitely a friend of the Laffey.

Jim Spriggs, WWII survivor was really a good guy and shipmate. He was Membership Chairman for years.

Bill Lloyd was a riot. When painting the signal bridge we painted him into a corner. We had a lot of laughs.

Woody Gedusky was one heck of a welder. He worked his butt off when we opened the after engine room.

I can't say enough about Dave Harhager. He was a real man. We came aboard the ship the same day in 1960. Friends for life.... and now....beyond.



*Lon Caulk detailing one of the valves on the port side. Not the most flattering view, but he wouldn't look up at the photographer. Marines are basically shy people.*

Don Vorgity was a trip. He would show up in the mornings and bring doughnuts for all.

Then there was Lon Caulk. Our favorite Jarhead. We needed him there to make fun of. He was a good sport.

I will miss them all.

Of course we still have Ari and we can laugh with him. He is our link to the history of the Laffey.

—Sonny



*Vic Fletcher in his favorite supervisory position. Lee Ford and Ed Fitzimmons are the recipients of his encouraging remarks.*



*Most of the work party assembled on the fantail on Monday, October 15, 2001. Walt Harrington made sure he could be seen by wearing whites and standing in the front row.*

# 2018 USS Laffey Reunion

Mt. Pleasant,  
SC  
September 30–  
October 4

We will be staying at  
The Indigo Hotel  
(formerly Holiday Inn)  
in Mt. Pleasant, SC

Rooms will be  
\$119 per night.  
Make reservations at  
1-843-577-5900.



## Vice President's Note

Hello everyone, I like to first say that if you pay your dues yearly it's time to send them in if you have not already. Send check to Kathy Pereira At 93 Elmdale Ave, Warwick RI, 02889. Make check out to USS Laffey Association. Any question about dues you can call Kathy Pereira at 401-787-3014.

As for work party news, we will now be doing all work only with Patriots Point approval. So from now on we will be making out

work request forms and have Patriots Point sign them. This is to protect us from a number of things. Chris and I have been in talks with the Point and things came up that that makes this necessary after the last mini work party. Also this will help us have a record of when things were done. So before major work is to be done on the ship we will have signed approval from Patriots Point so there will be no misunderstanding.

—Mike Pereira

## Own a Piece of The Laffey

The Association will be selling tickets at \$5.00 each to win a piece of the original hull of the Laffey mounted on a plaque. Our VP Mike Pereira owns the one seen here. The Association will be raffling off one approximately 10"x12" piece of hull with rivets which have been sandblasted and powder-coated. I have two unsigned and the rest were auto-

graphed by Ari Phoutrides. Make copies of the ticket and send in \$5.00 for each entry. The drawing will take place at the work party on Monday April 16, 2018



### USS LAFFEY HULL PLAQUE RAFFLE TICKET

#### Own a Piece of the Laffey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy and fill out copies of this ticket if you want to enter multiple times. Cut out ticket and send to:

Chris Kirhagis, 6714 Hudson Street, Baltimore, MD 21224.

Make check out to USS Laffey Association or pay through PayPal through *Laffey.org* site.

All funds will be used to support future work parties.

# Challenge Coins

Twenty Laffey Challenge Coins were sold at last April's work party. Chris ordered 200 (150 gold and 50 silver). He picked more gold as we do brass in the Navy not silver, but silver coins are available for those who prefer them. Either style is \$20 each plus \$3 each coin for shipping.

You can purchase these coins through PayPal and make a notation what they are for. Or send your payment directly to George Kessler who will then inform me to release the coin(s). Proceeds will go to funding future work parties.



## Bob Logsdon's Photos & Memories 1950–1952

*Bob's album consists of several hundred slides starting with the Laffey being taken out of mothballs in San Diego, California, around the world cruise, and return to Norfolk, Virginia.*

*There are more of Bob's photos at [www.laffey.org](http://www.laffey.org)*

“I enlisted in the Navy in 1945. After boot camp in San Diego, I went to Radar School, then was assigned to an aviation repair ship, USS Aventinus ARV(E)3, which went from San Diego to Pearl and Okinawa. Due to a bad typhoon, we sailed via the China Sea. In Okinawa we performed repair on aircraft brought to our docked ship. When WWII was over, I returned to San Diego for discharge, opting to stay in the Reserves, training new recruits until recalled to active duty in 1950 to take the Laffey out of “mothballs.”

He reported aboard Laffey in



1950 as Radarman 3rd Class. He recalls his pride that “Laffey had the best radar in the Fleet”. Aboard during the Korean War, he says “We were shooting and dodging the enemy’s shells but never took a hit”. “We picked up a wounded airman”. “We carried some prisoners of war”. He recalls riding out terrible typhoons but loving the around the world cruise. He left the Laffey in 1953 and remained in the Navy reserves until 1977, retiring as a

Chief Radarman. With his love of cameras, he had several camera shots. Bob turned 100 last year. Contact him at (909) 864-0660 to chat and wish him a happy birthday. Many thanks to Bob for sharing over 1,000 photos from 1950 to present. Thanks to Ari Phoutrides for scanning these photos and for creating the web pages that we can all appreciate. Well done Chief Bob Logsdon for your service to the US Navy and the country.

## ALL HANDS:

Ari notified us that Lt. Lloyd Hull, CIC Officer at Okinawa passed away Saturday Jan 13, 2018. His wife said he died peacefully. His memorial service was held on Saturday, Feb 3. Lloyd was a plank owner and survived the battle at Okinawa.

Rest in peace shipmate

Carl Cooper, MM3, died in January Carl served aboard 1964-67. He came aboard via high line at the end of the 1964 MED Cruise.

He and Lynda were married 51 years and Carl was 73 years old.

Carl will be remembered at our memorial service at our 2018 reunion.

We received word that Joe Papaleo's mother Jeanette Papaleo passed away January 8, 2018 at the age of 96.

Don't know how she took 77 years of Joe without killing him. She must have been one heck of a lady.

Please send your prayers and thoughts of Joe's family.

—Sonny

## Donations

(Received since previous News, compiled by Treasurer George Kessler)

### Work Party Donations:

Vernon Honsinger ..... \$100  
USS Rupertus DD851  
Association ..... \$100  
Julian and Karen Winston . \$100

### General Donations:

Thomas Roell ..... \$100  
Sue Nokes ..... \$100

### Memorial Donations:

In Memory of Glenn Setmire:  
Sharon (Sharry) Setmire .... \$50  
In Memory of Robert Kennedy:  
Bob and Pat Wilson ..... \$200  
In Memory of Carl F. Cooper:  
Indianapolis Metro Police  
Bomb Squad ..... \$100  
Dave and Sue Roland ..... \$25  
Candy McBride ..... \$20  
James Hayter ..... \$50  
David and Dee Edwards ..... \$20  
Nancy Clemmons ..... \$25  
Susan Bonnell ..... \$100  
Virginia Roberts ..... \$100  
Craig and Karen Fendrick .... \$25  
Amy Young ..... \$50  
Bryan and Cheryl Cooper ..... \$50  
Stephen and Mary Wehrle . \$100  
In Memory of Robert P Lucey:  
Robert Lucey (Son) ..... \$1,000



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## *Ray Broll Remembers...*

**U**SS New Jersey BB-62 Launched at Philadelphia Navy Yard December 7, 1942, and I, a child of 6, was there.

I'm sure that my father, Raymond F. Broll, attended the launch.

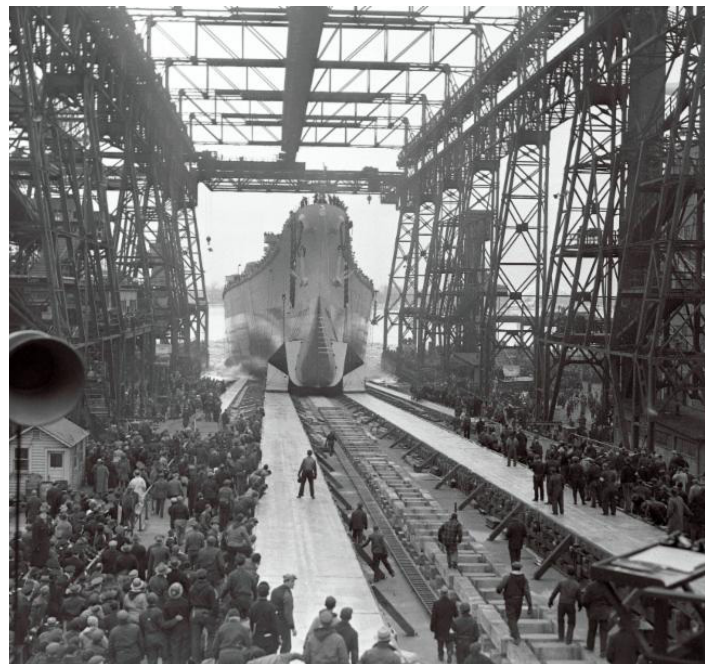
He was a Machinist who worked in the #31 Shop, the Inside Machine Shop.

I honestly believe that I was also present for this historic launch.

In addition to Navy officials, politicians and dignitaries, Navy Yard workers and guests attended launches. I recall

having attended the launching of a 'major' ship that may have been the USS New Jersey. I absolutely recall being physically reprimanded for falling on my butt after having climbed up on the 'ways'. (Punishment was acceptable then.) (And, Dad had helped me climb.) With grease on my pants, I had to ride standing and holding on to the back of the front seat for the ride home from the shipyard. TRUE!

As I remember it to be. Raymond A. Broll  
12/1/2017



Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial