



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*

April–June 2019

USS Laffey Association • www.laffey.org

2019 USS Laffey Reunion NEWPORT, RI SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 3, 2019

SEE PAGE 3 FOR RESERVATION FORM

President's Message

I hope that everyone had an uneventful and fairly healthy second quarter as well as



Chris Kirhagis

a nice Easter. Mine was not so enjoyable with the fact that my brother-in-law passed away on May 5th due to an assortment of medical issues, largest one being cancer as a result of agent orange. It is not pleasant to see a strong person wither away to nothing. But my sister is strong and I am helping her cope.

We had a very successful work party this past 13-20 April. Of course our VP Mike Pereira tended to the painting and solicited several members to accomplish this task. We were even given the opportunity to use the Genie lift that gave us access to the 01 and 02 levels of the ship's port-side aft. VP Pereira again outdid himself with the cooking and he

prepared breakfast, lunch and gourmet dinners for all 18 volunteers.

Ken McCullough returned the Laffey banner after he had it repaired, and had a second one made, which was hung on the 02 level forward starboard side. Ken also kept the shop in working order and assisted Joe Luque clean all the dogs of watertight doors that were being refurbished. I believe there is a picture floating around of Ken with a necklace full of dogs around his neck.

Joe Luque had the longest and toughest dogfight I have ever seen on any ship while fighting the dogs to be replaced on the doors.

Josh Aldridge donated some needed material for the ship and returned the chain covers, and do they look beautiful. One hell of a job, Josh. We were able to tackle the chains from the locker so the covers would fit the way they were supposed to and dogged down. They were powder coated

and the color matches. Homer Doster did his usual by assisting anybody and everyone he could. McKinney assisted with the dogs on the door hatches as well as the chain covers, running to get materials and parts. Hudak tended to the boiler room along with Sonny and was present with Patriots Point in the decision making on asbestos abatement. Tom Aust and Joe Reyes (aka Grunt) helped in all aspects of cleaning, painting, and numerous other tasks. Jim Bossard tended to the store, and SH3 Mary Bossard did another great job with the laundry. If Mary keeps this pace up, she may outrank her husband soon. Max Saus took care of all electrical issues brought to his attention.

I have been knocking my brain out as to what duties our Past President, Sonny Walker performed. So, if anyone can attest to what he did please let me know.

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If I missed anyone else or other's expertise in work they performed, please accept my apology. The work party was cut short and everyone left Friday morning as they wanted to get home for the Easter weekend.

The next work party will be held November 2-9, 2019 and I request that you notify Vice President Mike Pereira or me by October 20th if you plan to attend. The February work party will be February 1-8, 2020, so please make plans for these dates

Challenge coin sales have increased, so I just think it took time to reach everyone's interest level. I still have a limited number before I will have to order additional coins.

I received an e-mail from a Patricia Wilson, of Florissant, MO. Patricia is the daughter of MM2 Robert E. Kennedy, who was a plank owner as well and was involved in the Okinawa battle. In 2016 her son Ryan was on business in Charleston and purchased an online ticket for Patriots Point. His main mission was to see his grandfather's name on the plaque on the Laffey. Ryan arrived thirty minutes before closing and was denied entrance. After learning this, I invited Patricia and her family to the ship and to the memorial service. The entire family was given a VIP tour, Patricia was given a Laffey hat and a print of the ship. The entire family was elated by their treatment during their visit, and Patricia left a donation in memory of her father. I also believe that she may have joined the association.

In the event you do not know,



Patriots Point Selects Larry Murray To Serve as Executive Director

By Chris Hauff May 28, 2019

The Patriots Point Development Authority (PPDA) has selected Larry Murray as executive director of the state agency.

Murray will succeed Mac Burdette who has served as executive director of PPDA for the nine years. His start date has not yet been determined.

“Over the past nine years, Mac’s leadership has led us to huge strides in admissions, awesome improvements in our museum, tremendous expansion of the edu-

Mac Burdette has retired as director of Patriots Point. We wish Mac a long and healthy retirement. The Patriots Point development authority has selected Larry Murray from a pool of 250 applicants to be Mac’s successor. From what I have read, Mr. Murray has an attractive track record. Welcome aboard Larry. I will have a meeting with the new director during the February work party.

Respectfully,

Chris Kirhagis, President

cation programs, enviable relationships in Columbia, and Patriots Annex—possibly the greatest thing to happen to Patriots Point since its inception,” said PPDA Board Chairman Ray Chandler. “In the end, we selected Larry Murray, an executive with over 34 years of domestic and international experience in operations, legislative affairs, strategic planning, and training. He has 27 years in the US Army, including service in Afghanistan, and has served the past seven years in state government, most recently as Director of Vehicles Services. He is a distinguished veteran, an accomplished civil servant and brings excellent leadership abilities to Patriots Point. We look forward to having him on board.”

Larry Murray currently serves as the Director of Vehicle Services for the SCDMV. He is responsible for vehicle titling and registering, including the help desk and data quality, motor carrier services, the agency’s contact center, and alternative media.

Larry joined the SCDMV in 2012. He previously served as Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs for the agency. He has enjoyed serving the citizens and businesses of South Carolina and looks to continue serving them in his new role. He is a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, earned a Master’s of Science from Central Michigan University, and holds numerous certifications.

PPDA launched a national search to find candidates for the executive director position six months ago. Murray was selected from a pool of more than 250 applicants.

2019 USS Laffey Reunion

NEWPORT, RI • SEPTEMBER 29, – OCTOBER 3

QUALITY INN, 936 WEST MAIN RD, MIDDLETOWN, RI 02842
(401) 846-7600

2019 REUNION ITINERARY

Sunday–Registration and Meet and Greet

Monday–Memorial at the Battleship Cove and Maritime Museum, lunch, wine tasting and tour at Newport Vineyards, game night!

Tuesday–Mansion tour at the Breakers and scenic overlook tour through Newport 3½ hours. Free afternoon.

Wednesday– Meetings and then Farewell Dinner at the FOP (Fraternal Order of Police)

WE ARE ASKING EACH PERSON TO BRING A DONATION ITEM/

BASKET FOR THE CHINESE AUCTION.

50/50'S WILL BE GOING ALL WEEK AND CALLED AT THE BANQUET

Booking for your rooms at the Quality Inn in Middletown, RI, **should be done as soon as possible**. If you are booking late or need assistance in booking a room, please contact Leigh-Ann directly.

Please let us know if you will NOT be attending a specific function that is part of the itinerary during the reunion. We must pay per person when a function/event is scheduled. You will not be refunded, but the

money will stay in the Association instead of paying for something that is not used.

Send reunion registration form and check made out to

USS Laffey Association to
Leigh-Ann Zerden
2 Albright Way,
Quarryville, PA 17566.

NOTE: Cut off date for registration is August 15, 2019.

Contact: Call or text
302-249-5591 or by email:
Sweeten2780@aol.com

USS LAFFEY 2019 REUNION

COST FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES: \$200 PER PERSON

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Number and names of person attending _____

Email _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ What years did you serve on the USS Laffey? _____

What was your rank/rate? _____

What day do you expect to arrive? _____ Will you have a car at the hotel during your stay? _____

Will this be the first reunion you have attended? _____

Emergency contact name and number (not traveling with you) _____

Special Needs/Food Allergies? _____



Battleship Cove and Maritime Museum, Fall River, MA

Vice President's Message

Hello and hope everyone is doing well. The April Work Party was again a big success as we got more done than we thought we would. I want to thank Bobby Keenan of International Paint for another wonderful paint donation. International Paint is always there when we need them. They have been supplying the Laffey with just about all the paint we need for a few years now. Their product is excellent and they have sent us hundreds of gallons and shipped it to us at no cost. As for the November 2-9 work party, if you want to come, please call me at 401-787-3014 as we have limited number of beds and need a head count.

Thank You All, Mike Pereira, Vice President



Mike Pereira in Paint Locker on starboard side



Tom Aust and Jim Berg



Jim Berg on crane



Homer Doster and Joe Luque



Chris Kirhagis and Hank Ashton



Tom Aust under crane on starboard side



Chris Kirhagis and Homer Doster in Mount 52, 5 inch 38 gun ammunition carousel

APRIL WORK PARTY



Hank Ashton, Sonny Walker, John Hudak, Peyton (Fish) Warner in Chief's Quarters



Evening Colors with Payton (Fish) Warner and Cub Scouts



Max Saus in entrance to Chiefs Quarters



Chris Kirhagis with WWII veteran Bryan Rowell



Hank Ashton, Rich McKinney, John Miller, Joe Luque on Forecastle



Ken McCullough in After Repair Shop



Ken McKCullough, Richard Felsing, Joe Lukque, Homer Doster, Rich McKinney, Sonny Walker, John Miller on forecastle.



Sonny Walker in Boiler Room

ALL HANDS:

Edwin Konopka FTG2, passed away August 14, after a long illness. He loved his ship and was so proud of being a member of its crew. He often spoke of his time on the ship and had fond memories.

Ed served aboard 1958-1961. We will miss him, but know that he is in a better place

Daniel Zack SO3
Plank Owner

Served aboard 1944-1946
Survivor of Okinawa and Normandy

Passed away August 13, 2018

We have lost **Marguerite Fern** the widow of **Tom Fern**, Silver Star, Plank Owner.

Marguerite passed away on Tuesday May 21, 2019. She will be missed by many of us that knew and loved her. She will be remembered at our memorial service at the reunion in Rhode Island at the end of October.

Robert Logsdon RD1

Served aboard 1950-1953
Korean War Vet. Passed away Sept 30, 2018. Bob was 101 years old. He definitely was a bundle of energy even at 100.

Bob will be missed by all of us at the reunions.

He was the official photographer at all of our reunions.

To sign up for the Patriots Point Newsletter to get a heads-up for upcoming events.

go to

<https://www.patriotspoint.org/>

click on Menu

Fill in the form: last name, first name, and email.

Select the info desired, e.g. Special Events



Sonny heard from John Wukovits as to where they are in regards to Mel Gibson's film of the Laffey at Okinawa:

Sonny,

The producers are trying to finalize the budget right now. Once that is settled, they'll set a schedule. Hollywood is unpredictable, so it could be a bit until they film, and then another bit in post production. Hard to be more specific than this, but this is what I know as of now.

For the latest USS Laffey Association info and photos go to www.laffey.org. Tap or click on *Announcements* or *Work Parties* and *Reunion* at the bottom of the home page.



Wilbur Sloan and John Hudak reunite at Virginia Beach after 58 years.



Donations

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

Work Party Donations:

Vernon Honsinger \$100
Tom Aust & Jim Berg \$100
Joseph & Barbara Reyes \$100
Dean Larsen \$ 56.22

Memorial Donations:

In Memory of Robert Kennedy
Patricia (daughter) &
R L Wilson..... \$200

Anyone wishing to make a donation should make the check payable to the USS Laffey Association and mail to
George Kessler
9686 Baughman Rd
Harrison Ohio 45030

www.laffey.org

USS Laffey D-Day Flag unveiled at Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum

This flag was flown on the Laffey on 6 June 1944. Ari Phoutrides donated the flag to Patriots Point. Google “Patriots Point D-Day” to view news coverage of the ceremony. We honor sacrifices of all men and women who have participated in keeping America safe.

Mac Burdette, Executive Director and Richard Felsing, USS Laffey Assoc Unveiling USS Laffey D-Day Flag

During the ceremony we saw videos of Ari Phoutrides and Bill Kelly recalling Laffey participation in the invasion.



Challenge Coins

Twenty Laffey Challenge Coins were sold at the April, 2017, 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.



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USS Laffey DD724 Association

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APRIL WORK PARTY

SEE PAGES 4 AND 5 FOR MORE PHOTOS



USS Laffey Association Members at 2019 April Work Party and Remembrance Ceremony left to right: Peyton (Fish) Warner, Mike Pereira (Vice President), Mary and David Bossard (Ships Store), Ken Workley, Richard Felsing (Webmaster), Max Saus, Rich McKinney (Board Member), Tom Aust, Chris Kirhagis (President), Joe and Barbara Reyes, Jim Berg, Homer Doster, Ken McCullough, John Miller, Sonny Walker (Past President), Rod Morgan, Ron Albright, John Hudak (Board Member), Joe Luque, Hank Ashton.