



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*

October, November, December 2020

USS Laffey Association www.laffey.org

President's Message



Chris Kirhagis

Hello everyone!

This is the last newsletter of 2020 and had it not been for our reunion and November work party there would not be much to report with all of this lock down due to COVID-19.

If someone told me last March that this pandemic would last well into 2021, I would tell them they were crazy!! What I am really thankful for is the fact that we had two gatherings, a month apart of another. One being the reunion, in early October, where approximately forty members, spouses and children gathered together, and the second one was our work party a month later with ten participants, yet there were no COVID-19 cases reported to me. We were very lucky!

I am not going to take the thunder away from our reunion coordinator Leah-Ann Zerden, I will let her elaborate on this past reunion as well as next year's reunion. I see that some of you were surprised to see the Hallmark channel showing of USS Christmas, and at the same time were unaware that the filming took place aboard the Yorktown during our reunion. I thought it was funny when a lot of the reunion participants did not even notice all of the fake snow on the pier.

There have been several shipmates that have passed since our last newsletter and I believe Sonny will provide the small list. During our general membership meeting / board meeting, David "aka" "Billy the Boot" was elected to be the chairman of the board of directors. Thanks for taking on that responsibility Dave.

Our November work party was a success in that most of the things that we needed to get done and/or prep for February and April work parties. We had a new cook amongst us, Mike Honsinger, whose father "Chip" was a captain in the navy and served aboard the Laffey 56' - 59'. Mike served in the air force, but we won't hold

that against him Mike did an excellent job in all meals prepared. You can tell he is from Texas as a lot of the meals had a southwestern twang to them. Thanks Mike, and hopefully we'll have a double Mike cooking!

Our main course of entertainment has been eliminated thanks to Steve Bade with very little assistance from me. The door /hatch combing (shin high wall) leading from the lounge area to the galley was eliminated. We had fun watching everyone banging their shins or tripping over the knife edge, losing their balance or going down. Thanks, Steve! Rachel Kendrick and Jim Bossard were instrumental in straightening up the lounge area i.e. re-hanging plaques and photos. The "Hudak Project", with assistant Donny Watson, is ongoing. We also had a steel delivery for the Hudak Project. Ken Workley worked diligently in the chief's berthing, dusting and wiping everything down. Thanks Ken! The other Ken (McCullough) took care of the tool room, conducted an inventory and repaired some tools. We also purchased two new rigid wet vacs that were badly needed. Nick D'Archangelo also did a lot of odd jobs, and whatever assistance he

could give. I have to give kudos to SH3 Mary Bossard, - while there your president washed four loads of sheets, pillowcases, and towels, folded them and put them away - Mary you can have that 😊

Our next work party will be in April 2021 (the February work party is

cancelled), if you plan on attending please let me or VP Mike Pereira know right away so that we can guarantee berthing, if not, you may have to stay on the Yorktown.

If I have forgotten something, I'm sure I will be yelled at for it.

Respectfully,

Chris Kirhagis, President
USS Laffey Association
president@laffey.org
410-633-9936

Upcoming Association Events

April 2021 Workparty and Memorial Service 10 – 17 April 2021 tentative dates.

Fall 2021 USS Laffey Association Reunion in Gettysburg PA. Dates to be announced.

Message from reunion coordinator Leigh Ann Zerden: Planning for our 2021 reunion is in progress. We will be traveling to Gettysburg PA. I have been working with a few different hotels and gathering information on tours and events for our reunion.

Due to Covid and Pennsylvania's restrictions I am holding off till after the 1st of the year to start booking anything. Unfortunately, we are in different times and how we do things are constantly changing because of Covid. I felt it was best to hold off after talking with

these venues. They were unable to give me solid information as they are not all working at 100% capacity just yet. Your safety as well as the groups safety during these times is very important to me so I will be taking every precaution when considering every detail of our trip. I can share that we will be visiting the battlefield as well as some other local historical spots such as Sachs Bridge, cemetery hill, as well as the Gettysburg Diorama as long as Covid does not interfere. I'm super excited to plan this reunion in Gettysburg as its filled with so much history and the town is filled with ghost tours, museum tours, great dining and of course lots of shopping. If you have any questions about the reunion, please don't hesitate to call Leigh Ann at 302 249 5591.

Announcements

Board of Directors



Congratulations to Dave Bossard who was elected to be Chairman of the USS Laffey Association Board of Directors at the 2020 Annual Meeting. David and Mary Bossard are the Ship Store Managers for

USS Laffey Association Products. For Board of Directors photos, see <https://www.laffey.org/LaffeyAssoc/USSLaffeyAssocOfficersStaffBoard.pdf>

There have been some additional changes in the Administrative Structure of our Association that you will see on the Website soon. As per the Association by-laws, the Board of Directors will consist of no less than seven (7) people, and no more than eleven (11) people. Elected Officers (Executive Board) will be included in the total eleven. As a result, George Kessler has been removed from the Board as a second inclusion, and John Langevin is resigning his position on the Board effective this print. Many thanks to the board of directors.

That leaves us with a total of nine (9) members on the Board of Directors. Therefore, we have room for two more Board Members to serve. I would like everyone who will be attending the Reunion in Fall of 2021 to participate in the selection and voting process of these vacant seats. So please everyone, think about who you would like to nominate, send Chris Kirhagis (president@laffey.org) a name(s) so that he may start a folder for this purpose and create a ballot sheet. Voting and results will take place during the 2021 General membership Meeting.



Bill Casassa



Lloyd Whitnack

November Skeleton Work Crew



Steve Bade who retired from Bath Iron Works

Per Mike Pereira “The fall work party was basically cancelled and limited to number of people sleeping on the ship to around 6. We agreed at the reunion to cancel and just allow skeleton crew on because of the virus. Photos:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/Fi3H4FkhLwtgb73w9>

Patriots Point Volunteers. Lloyd Whitnack worked on new Laffey signs, rehab and painting of the 53 mount, damage control locker, ET shop and Bill Casassa worked on quarterdeck communications exhibit. Many thanks Bill and Lloyd.

Reunion and Memorial Service 2020

We had a very enjoyable reunion at the Charleston Harbor Beach Resort. The Reunion Coordinator Leigh Ann Zerden did superb job organizing this event.



Back Row: Chris Roszas, Bill Furman, Kip Campbell, John and Judy Hudak, Nancy Dittman and Tom Klett, Mike Juneman

Middle Row: Troy and Steve Smith, Bill and Marianne Furman, Leigh-Ann Zerden, Dave Starr, Suzanne Seeley, Sonny Walker, Don Watson, Chris Wagner, Ken Workley, Ken and Arlene McCullough

Front Row: Barbara and George Kessler, Aggie Coleman, Dave and Mary Bossard, Sharon Haley Felser-Juneman, Hilary Becton Wagner, Kathy and Mike Pereira, Chris Kirhagis and Bernice Broadway



Dave and Mary Bossard, Judy and John Hudak, Sonny Walker, Don Watson, Dave Starr

Everyone especially enjoyed the Monday Hawaiian luau party and games.



Many thanks to the association photographer Mike Coleman for taking adhoc and portrait pictures.



Don Watson, Steve Smith, Troy Smith, Hula Dancer, John Hudak, Tom Dittman



Sharon Haley Felser-Juneman, Bernice Broadway, Judy Hukak, Kathy Pereira, Leigh Ann Zerden

Vice President Mike Pereira and Chris Kirhagis had useful meetings with Patriots Point staff on new COVID health and safety measures, upcoming work parties, sanitizing the ship's chief's quarters and forward berthing, the fireroom project managed by John Hudak, the planned new Dash Control Panel that Chris got at the Fall Reunion in Newport, RI., and other projects. We are adapting and complying

with all health and safety measures to ensure all association members and guests are safe.



Chief Leonard Singleton and Chris Kirhagis

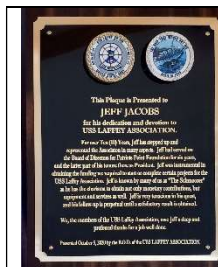


Chris, Mike Pereira, and Sonny Walker

At the memorial ceremony we honored the 32 men killed in action aboard USS Laffey on 16 April 1945. Chris presented a USS Laffey Association Appreciation Plaque to both Richard Felsing and Jeff Jacobs who have significantly assisted and supported the USS Laffey Association. This was a total surprise to them. Both expressed great appreciation for the plaques. Giving plaques is a great US Navy tradition we are following in the Laffey Association.

USS Laffey Association President Chris Kirhagis presented plaques of appreciation to Jeff Jacobs and Richard Felsing at the 5 October 2020 Memorial Service aboard USS Laffey.

Jeff Jacobs is the past president of the Patriots Point Foundation. He has greatly contributed to the US Laffey Association in support of workparties, special projects, the Laffey website, and www.eugeneleslover.com with USS Laffey information. Per Jeff "After I retired, I wanted give back to all the men, women, and family of service members. I honor your service and I honor the men and women of the USS Laffey Association."



USS Laffey Assoc Plaque to Jeff Jacobs



Jeff and Susan Jacobs

Richard Felsinger is the USS Laffey Association webmaster responsible to keep the website up to date with association and member news, new historical information, and photos. Richard retired from the US Navy in 1985. He served as Weapons Officer and Operations Officer on the Laffey 1968 – 1970 with cruises to the Mediterranean during the Cold War.

	
<p>USS Laffey Assoc Plaque to Richard Felsinger</p>	<p>Geni, Isaac, Jon, and Richard Felsinger</p>

You can view the ceremony online. See www.facebook.com/PatriotsPoint.org/videos/697168567551256/.

Again, many thanks for all members and guests for your participation and support and many thanks to the Association Photographer Mike Coleman (photographer@laffey.org) for taking photos. Contact Mike for additional portrait digital files.

Captain's Chair



A recent visitor, Richard Graham, commented on the poor condition of the Captain's Chair and offered a donation for reupholstery. In researching

local upholsterers, a local vendor, SO Canvas, was more than interested in doing the job. The owner, Bridget, explained one her relatives was a bomber pilot in WWII, and she couldn't wait to show her appreciation and respect for the Laffey Family. She volunteered to donate the entire job. She explained that she was going in for her second knee surgery in a few days, but she would do it when she recovered. We anticipate another one to two weeks into the New Year before that can happen. The material will be a dark brown, easy to clean, hospital grade rugged material to match existing.

Larry Murray and Mike Hastings at Patriots Point were more than cooperative by having numerous photos taken and forwarded for the upholsterer. They graciously offered labor to remove the chair and get it to the parking lot where it could be picked up. It is a one-day job and after that it will be returned for reinstallation by Patriot's Point. Big thanks to all participants.

A big thank you to Richard Graham. His donation will be repurposed for a future project need.

Harbor Freight Gift Card



After a long and drawn-out process, beginning with an application many months ago, President Chris Kirhagis, through diligent and tenacious follow up, right up to the point of being banned from the store, was finally able to successfully obtain a \$100 gift card from Harbor Freight. They figured it was worth it to make him stop calling. This can be used for abrasive disks or any other product. Great work Chris and big thanks to Harbor Freight for their patriotism and support.



Spotlight on Sailors

Lt Walter H. Graham served on the USS Laffey from 1963

through 1966 as Engineering Officer. He retired from the US Navy as a Captain. He passed away in 2009 and was buried in the Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Attorney Tom Burris, representing his widow, is seeking to locate and speak briefly with any of his old shipmates who may remember serving with him. Contact number is 757-397-6424 and email address is tburris@nichollaw.com.

Plankowner CTN Wayne Haley in USS Laffey Battle Poster



Mike Juneman and Sharon Haley Felser-Juneman with USS Laffey Battle Poster at 2020 Fall Reunion

Sharon Haley created this poster to honor the USS Laffey and her father CTN Wayne Haley

Torpedoman Chief Wayne Haley Plankowner



CTN Wayne Haley about 1942

Wayne Haley and his wife Muriel Jarrett about 1943

Torpedoman Chief Haley was plankowner member of the USS Laffey commissioning crew. He participated in the Battle of Normandy and the Battle Okinawa. He fought bravely on 16 April 1945. He was severely injured with scrapnel and burns. He was discharged from the US Navy on 11/20/1946, after a lengthy hospital stay. Later in life, he suffered from the battle trauma and lost both legs due to the scrapnel wounds. Cy Simones, Admiral Becton, and other Laffey Association members assisted him getting Veterans Administration medical treatment after the war. See <https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/WayneHaley.pdf>

From Chris Kirhagis



Bob and Donnis Logsdon 2016 Reunion with Richard Felsing

“I had about a 15-minute conversation with Donnis Logsdon (Bob's) wife. Just to chat & wish her a Merry X-mas as well as Happy New Year. Donnis is doing fine, and she finally retired last year, doing what she enjoys most of all, staying home and reading a ton of books. Donnis will be 92 in May 2021 and she advised me to wish all of the Laffey family a wonderful, safe, and prosperous New Year. Contact me for Donnis contact info president@laffey.org (410) 633-9936”. Bob died in 2018. He was honored at his 100th birthday at the 2018 Reunion. See www.laffey.org/LaffeyAssoc/bob_logsdon_honored_on_his_100th.html

I came across these old photos and thought everyone would get a laugh at them. I was a E-2 right out of bootcamp - Great Lakes US Navy Naval Training Center in January 1971. Photo taken in Baltimore Maryland.



The photo below was taken in Fall of 1973 in Baltimore Maryland with my son Adam. He just retired from the Baltimore Police Dept January 2019 as a Sergeant starting his 29th year.



Free Entrance to National Parks for Veterans and Gold Star Families In national parks that charge an entrance fee, a veteran will need to present one of the following forms of identification where entrance fees are collected. See <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/veterans-and-gold-star-families-free-access.htm>

Annual Dues Reminder from Membership Chairperson Kathy Pereira. 2021 Annual Dues are due 1/1/2021. Mail your check made out to the USS Laffey Association to: Kathy Pereira (Membership Chairman) 92 Elmdale Avenue, Warwick, RI 02889. Annual members renew every January at \$25/year. Lifetime Membership, which is a one-time payment, is as follows: 55 years old and younger \$375; 56 - 60 \$250; 61 - 64 \$225; and 65 years and older \$125. If you are unsure as to your status or need to update our records if you have moved or changed your phone number or Email address, contact Kathy Pereira at 401-481-1954. or email membership@laffey.org. You may also pay using PayPal. Click on the PayPal icon on the USS

Laffey home page www.laffey.org. Be sure to include your name and the words "Annual Dues".

Donations Update from Treasurer George Kessler.

All donations are greatly appreciated. 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

You may also make a donation on PayPal. On the Laffey homepage www.laffey.org, tap on the PayPal icon at the bottom of the page. Enter the donation amount and comments, e.g. In Memory of.....

General Donations:

James Kuhns ----- \$100.00
Greg Evans computer Solutions ---- \$15.00

Work Party Donation:

John Binseel ----- \$50.00

In Honor of Robert E. Kennedy:

R.L. Wilson ----- \$100.00

In Memory of all deceased members of USS Harold J. Ellison DD-864 Family:

USS Harold J. Ellison DD-864 Assct \$100.00

Paper Laffey News US Postal Service

(USPS). Currently we are publishing the Laffey News on the website www.laffey.org. Tap on Laffey News at the bottom of the page. We are also emailing the Laffey News pdf file to all members with an email address, and USPS mailing paper copies to all who have requested the paper Laffey News. Please contact the Membership Chairperson Kathy Pereira 401-481-1954 membership@laffey.org to be **added to the USPS mail list** if you would like.

USS Laffey Website www.laffey.org Send inputs to Richard Felsing webmaster@laffey.org 843-367-2208.

Laffey News Send inputs or comments to Pam Barylski Newsletter Editor newsletter@laffey.org

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2020 Fall Memorial Service

Back Row: Chief Leonard Singleton, Mike Pereira, Bill Furman, Steve Smith, Tom Klett, Kip Campbell, John Hudak, Ken McCullough, Richard Felsing, Mike Coleman

Front Row: Don Watson, Chris Kirhagis, Chief Elgin Greene, Dave Bossard, George Kessler, Sonny Walker, Dave Starr