



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, March 2021

USS Laffey Association www.laffey.org

President's Message



Chris Kirhagis

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!!

Or at least what most of us thought was going to be a NEW Year other than a number?? I would have lost my back side had I made a bet that COVID would be over by now. I have my own feelings as to how it arrived here and why it is still here??

We were scheduled to have a February 2021 mini work party, but with all the uncertainties with COVID; which States were "hot"; our ages and health concerns; we were all falling like ten pins; so the decision to scrap the work party was made.

By the time you receive this message, the main April work-party will either be taking place or just completed. There are a lot of new faces that will be among us and

Vice President Pereira will have a couple of surprises for you that he will share in the next Newsletter that will come out in early July.

Dave Bossard, Chairman of the Board has been busy putting our by-laws together and ensuring that all Board members has a copy. So, for any technical issues involving the workings of our Association, please contact Dave.

I am not sure if you all are aware that Patriots Point Executive Director Larry Murray has resigned his position and the interim Executive Director is Michael Hastings who is the Director of Operations. Mike, I hope you do not have to wear two hats for too long



Leigh-Ann Zerden, our Reunion Coordinator, has been working diligently to organize our Reunion in Gettysburg, PA in spite of coordinating her daughter's wedding this month. I cannot stress any further how imperative it is for everyone to get on board and reserve both the hotel as well as the activity fee. If you are left out, it is a result of your own accord, so please be attentive to this issue.

The challenge coins are slowly dwindling and as of this writing we have four silver and twenty-one gold ones left. They are twenty dollars each plus three dollars for packaging and shipping. It is undetermined if we should purchase another lot of them. So, I will leave that up to the Board at our next reunion to make that decision.

VP Pereira is having two guests from Alaska attend our work party and they have been invited not only to help out, but another particular task which was a surprise to me and hopefully Mikey shares it with the rest of you in the next newsletter.

Mikey has also found a rust inhibitor from what he tells me will work very well on our surfaces of the ship, but it is very expensive, and we are going to start off with two five-gallon cans. We have sicced our in-house bulldog, Jeff Jacobs, on this task in an attempt to obtain the material gratis. We all know Jeff and his tenacious demeanor. 😊

Jeff Jacobs has also informed me that he is trying to get the Captains Chair reupholstered by the April work party for a good PR photo op

with the association and Upholsterer. The only issue is that she had some recent surgery and is unsure when this can be accomplished.

D.A.S.H. control box display in the hangar bay. He sent me a picture and it looks great!! Job well done Brian, and we hope to have some photo ops with Brian for the next newsletter.

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

Brian Parsons from Patriots Point was the one that spearheaded the

Upcoming Association Events

April 2021 Workparty and Memorial Service at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum 10 - 17 April 2021. The Remembrance Ceremony will be held for 32 men killed and 71 wounded in action on 16 April 1945. For Info: President Chris Kirhagis 410-633-9936, or Vice President Mike Pereira 401-787-3014.

6 June 2021 Anniversary USS Laffey in WWII Normandy Invasion on 6 June 1944. Ari Phourides donated the D-Day flag to Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum honoring sacrifices of all men and women who have participated in keeping America safe. See Captain Becton's [Chronology from 3 - 17 June 1944](#) and Ari Phourides "[The USS Laffey's Role at D-Day 1944](#)" video. Excellent video link provided by Jeff Jacobs "[Sixth of June](#)". Lots of first person memories of D-Day.

3 - 7 October 2021 USS Laffey Association Reunion in Gettysburg PA October. Contact Leigh Ann Zerden Reunions Coordinator (reunions@laffey.org) if you have any questions. See more information including registration form below.

Fall 2021 Workparty - Dates to be announced.

11 November Veterans Day 2021. As a federal holiday Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum typically provides free admission for veterans. Typically special exhibits and a large number of visitors aboard Laffey.

21 November 2021 Anniversary of the USS Laffey DD-724 Launching 21 November 1943. See <https://www.laffey.org/HomePage/DD724WWII.html>.

Fall 2021 USS Laffey Association Reunion in Gettysburg PA. October 3-7, 2021

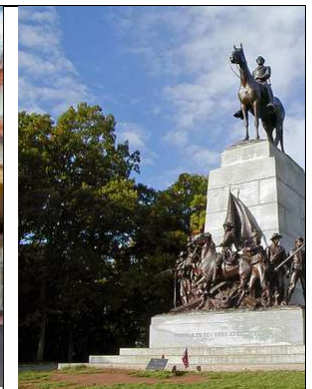
Message from reunion coordinator Leigh Ann Zerden: USS Laffey Reunion is set for October 3rd-7th. We will

be traveling to Gettysburg PA. Hotel reservations are now available for you to book under the USS Laffey!!! We are staying at the Comfort Inn and Suites Gettysburg. It sits right in the historical area of Gettysburg. Close to the battlefield, Cemetery and Steinwehr St. shopping n ghost tours. I will be setting the tours up in April since COVID still has restrictions in PA the tourism group feels the new hours of operations will be available in April since the vaccine has been rolling out. Any questions please feel free to call me or text me as that's my best line of communication. 302 249 5591 I do have an email as well reunions@laffey.org. Below is the link for the hotel please CALL to make your reservation and make sure you tell them you are with the USS Laffey!!!

<https://www.choicehotels.com/pennsylvania/gettysburg/comfort-suites-hotels/pa553>



Comfort Inn and Suites Gettysburg



Gettysburg National Military Park

Registration: <https://www.laffey.org/LaffeyAssoc/LaffeyReunionRegistration.pdf> at the end of the newsletter.

Announcements



Charleston AFB Honor Guard



Marine Corps Band from Parris Island, SC

Remembering RD3 Frank Mayeda and the 2012 Memorial Service. Frank was born 1925 (about) and died 2 February 2013. He served aboard USS Laffey 1945 - 1946 as RD3 (Radarman 3rd Class). He joined the ship in Seattle just prior to leaving for the Bikini Atoll A-Bomb Tests. Frank participated in the April 2012 Remembrance Ceremony. V.P. Bob Wampler then read the names of the men killed at Okinawa while Don Watson tolled the bell in their memory. The bugler played TAPS from the Drone Helo Deck as the memorial wreath was cast into the water by Frank Mayeda and Wilburt Gauding. The Honor Guard then fired a rifle salute followed by the Marine Corps Band beautifully playing The Navy Hymn: It was very moving. The celebration came to a close as the band played Anchors Aweigh and The Marines Hymn.

Craig Keith (1947 – 2021) Passed Away January 7, 2021

LT Craig Keith was the Dash Officer aboard USS Laffey 1969 – 1971. The DASH was a Helicopter Drone that carried Anti-Submarine torpedoes. Craig went on several Mediterranean deployments at the height of the Cold War. See various cruise books from the Cold War era

<https://www.laffey.org/HomePage/DD724ColdWar.html>.

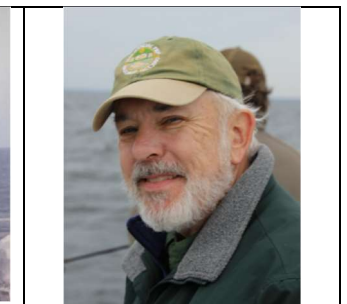


LTJG Craig Keith



DASH Weapon System

Most recently Craig served as the USS Laffey Association Newsletter Editor. He published many Laffey News with informative articles. He used his talents as a graphic designer to create beautiful newsletters. His service to the US Navy, USS Laffey, and USS Laffey Association are immensely appreciated.



Craig Keith Obituary (Age 73)

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=craig-keith&pid=198110470>



Craig Keith of Alexandria, VA died at home on January 7, 2021, surrounded by his family. The cause of death was glioblastoma (aggressive type of cancer that begins within the brain). He was born in Miami, FL to Janice Race Keith and

Jack Joseph Keith, Jr. The family settled in Alexandria in 1947 and moved to Lake Barcroft ten years later.

Although Virginia was home, Craig's father's CIA career took the family to various diplomatic posts including Turkey, Japan, the Philippines and London. Living abroad was formative to Craig's interest in world

history, maps and politics and to his lifelong interest in stamps, coins and flags of the world. He was a 1965 graduate of J.E.B. Stuart High School where he was a National Merit Scholar. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1969 where he majored in international affairs and was a member of the Jefferson Society. After completing NROTC at UVA, he was awarded a commission in the U.S. Navy. He served as a communications officer on ships in both the Atlantic and Pacific, notably aboard the famed WWII-era destroyer, USS Laffey. He remained deeply committed to the Navy and the Laffey Association for the rest of his life.

Following his military service, he attended the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, DC where from 1972-74 he trained in the then-emerging field of graphic design. In 1984 he established Craig Keith Design in Old Town Alexandria, a small firm specializing in a wide variety of design types. He cultivated a diverse array of clients and was appreciated for his inventive, effective design as well as the exceptional care he gave to every project.

Craig Keith's vast knowledge of Alexandria history was just one of the ways in which his love of the city and its community revealed itself. A friendly, familiar sight on the streets of Old Town, he employed his photographer's skills to capture the city's beauty in all seasons and weathers. He was an inveterate collector of Alexandria ephemera and artifacts. Over the years of his career, he counted Alexandria businesses, non-profits, schools, and churches among his most meaningful clients. He served as a longtime board member and officer of the Alexandria Library Company. A devoted parishioner of historic Christ Church for over 40 years, he became the parish designer and a member of the Christ Church Foundation. He was the 2020 recipient of the Rector and Wardens Award.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Sherley Osgood Keith; two sons, Harrison Wentworth Keith and Robert Clark Keith (Emily), and one grandson, Samuel Brooks Keith, all of Alexandria; brothers, Kirk Hendrick Keith of Radford, VA and Kevin Scott Keith of Berkeley Springs, WV, and many other devoted relatives.

He was predeceased by his father in 2015 and his mother in 2018.

Craig Keith's family and many friends loved him for his warmth, his perfect integrity, and the goodness and optimism that characterized every aspect of his life. Known for his lightning-quick wit and clever wordplay, he could reduce his companions to helpless laughter, but his humor never came at the expense of others. He was kindness itself. He threw himself into his passions: his family, his lifelong friendships, his many collections, his beloved fishing and supper clubs, and the golden weeks he spent with his family every August in Bayside, ME. His keen powers of observation allowed him to see things no one else saw, and his peaceful presence and generous spirit endeared him to all who knew him. Interment of ashes in the churchyard of Christ Church will be private. A memorial service will be held when it is safe to gather. Memorial contributions may be made to the Christ Church Foundation, 114 N. Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314 or to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Herndon Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403.

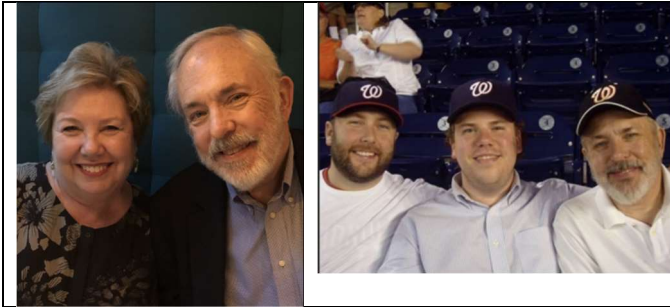
To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our Sympathy Store. Published in The Washington Post on Mar. 21, 2021.

Email from Sherley Keith (Mrs. Craig R. Keith)

Dear Mr. Walker, I found your address among my husband's emails, and am writing to tell you the sad news of his death on January 7. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor in January of 2020 and although he initially responded to treatment, the tumor was ultimately incurable. Our family adored him, and of course we are devastated. He was the best of men. Craig's obituary was published in yesterday's Washington Post, and I am sending you the link to the online version. It's my hope that you will send it to the members of the Laffey Association. As you'll see from the obituary, we were careful to include Craig's life-long devotion to the Laffey Association. He was honored to serve in any capacity, whether it was designing the newsletter or buttons for a spring work party. He was deeply loyal to the ship, its history, and the men who had served on it. Even though he is gone, DD-724 is forever enshrined in our family's collective memory.

With all best wishes, Sherley Keith (Mrs. Craig R. Keith)

To communicate with family, contact president@laffey.org



Engineman Dennis I. Davis passed away on January 16, 2021



Engineman Dennis I. Davis served aboard USS Laffey 1966 – 1967. In 1969 he left active duty and continued to serve in the US Naval Reserve. He lived in Fairview Township, PA where he owned and operated the Dennis Davis Plumbing Co. Obituary <https://www.parthemore.com/obituaries/Dennis-I-Davis?obId=19679829>

USS Laffey Ship Model Raffle Tickets

There will be a raffle for the model of the ship this year. It will be my last one. We will need someone to take over the raffle next year. If you are interested please give me a message or a call. I will give whatever help you need to set it up.

Sonny
410-960-5696 Cell phone / soncher724@gmail.com

Five raffle tickets will be mailed to all members at \$5.00 per raffle ticket. This is a large source of

revenue to sustain our work parties. The USS Laffey Ship Model with case will be raffled off on during the next reunion. Model with case is valued over \$2000.

Purchase as many tickets as you can. Mail your check, made out to USS Laffey Association and the raffle stubs with your information on it to: Sonny Walker 2951 Colchester Ct. Abingdon, MD 21009. For questions or PayPal payment contact Sonny.

Model below is Sonny Walker's with case. Coins and lighter are Sonny's personal items.



Model below without case

<https://www.factorydirectmodels.com/uss-laffey-dd-724-ship-model-mm9-074/>



Shipmate's who have passed

by Chris Kirhagis

Craig Keith LT
Served Aboard '69 - '71
Passed Away 1/7/21



Eugene Arehart FT2
Served Aboard '51 - '54
Passed Away 2018

Phil Bongiorno STG3
Served '51 - '55
Passed Away 12/10/20

Don Nicholson FP2

Served '54 - '57
Passed Away 11/16/20

Dennis Davis Engineman
Served Aboard '66 - '68
Passed Away 1/16/21

Jim Cox TE 2/C Teleman
Served Aboard during Korean War
Died November 2020

Jerry Jones Volunteer
Passed Away 9/14/20

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:

Julian & Karen Winston ----- \$25.00

Captain Chair Repair Donation:

Richard Graham ----- \$50.00

Work Party Donations:

Vernon Honsinger ----- \$200.00

Julian & Karen Winston ----- \$100.00

William Townsent ----- \$100.00

In Memory of Glenn Setmire:

Sharon Setmire ----- \$50.00

In Memory of Karl Bussert:

Mark Kersey (grandson) ----- \$1000.00

In Memory of CPO Kenneth T. Knuteson (USS SHEA DM-30):

Miles Knuteson (son) ----- \$50.00

In Memory of Donald Nicholson:

Rodman & Cynthia Romberger ---- \$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

2021 USS LAFFEY REUNION REGISTRATION

Reunion Dates: October 3-7, 2020 Gettysburg, PA

Cost for Group Activities: \$200 per person. Send reunion registration form and payment (check payable to USS Laffey Association) to: Leigh-Ann Zerden 2 Albright Way Quarryville, PA 17566. Note: Cut-off date for registration is July 1, 2021

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Number and name of persons 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 that you are attended? _____

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

Special Needs / Food Allergies? _____

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2020 Fall Reunion