



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 2022

USS Laffey Association www.laffey.org

President's Message



Chris Kirhagis

Hello everyone!

I sincerely hope that all of you experienced a wonder Christmas / holiday and that the first quarter of this year finds you in good health and that you are all prospering. Thank god that the majority of this nation is maskless and that we do not have to go through this anytime soon.

Considering only having five people at the mini work party in mid-February, I feel that we were able to get a lot accomplished. Ken McCullough, of course, was tidying up the tool room, making some repairs, as well as marking what will be moved out into our new storage area. This area is port side of where the tool shop is. Bill Kunnman (Sonny's son-in-law) and I spent the entire week scrapping that room and needle gun it down to bare metal and

place two coats of rust inhibitor on same. We will be storing large bulky items that are currently cluttering up Ken's shop, (I actually think that Ken wants to install a rack in his tool shop) 😊 John Hudak was still going at it in the fireroom with all the metal fabrication, and of course Sonny was his water "boy".

The fantail as well as the bridge wings had to be taken down to bare metal and the fantail was being dealt with, with the Patriots Point crew, and they were getting ready to start on the bridge wings when we left. The five of us were excited as the Laffey was to get underway on the Friday before we left but that was cancelled due to high winds. Actually, Patriots Point was supposed to move it ten feet forward and move the gangway that much more back to accommodate room to remove the metal where the gouge was in order to weld a new plate in place.

I would also like to thank the Executive Board of the Patriots Point Foundation for their kind donation of \$1,500.00 to the USS Laffey Association. This donation was greatly appreciated in that it helped us offset the expenditures

we experience at almost every work party.

Mr. Alston Middleton and the rest of the Board have been invited by me to our 5 - 22 April 2022 work party and told that we would be giving them the VIP tour when they arrive.

I am still working with Sherwin-Williams marine division, this time with a new person. Other than the original ten gallons they sent Patriots Point for the primer, nothing has come our way. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that something will break through last minute.

Patriots Point will be experiencing some major development plans in the near future that I hope will not affect us in any way, but if it does, all of you will learn about it as soon as I do.

We are all getting older, and some of the responsibilities that some of us have are becoming tedious, cumbersome, etc, etc. I'll start off with the ship's raffle. Unless we have someone to step up and take it over, there will be no more. Sonny will be glad to relinquish all that he has, and to show that

person who takes it over, how to run it smoothly.

newsletter. We need help everyone, so please consider!!

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

That also goes for the webmaster which you will read later in this

Respectfully,

Upcoming Association Events

2022 Reunion – October 2-6, 2022 (see below)

2022 Fall Work Party – dates to be announced

2023 Fall Reunion in Atlantic City, NJ – dates to be announced

Reunion Update from Leigh Ann Zerden

The dates for this year's reunion are October 2nd-6th 2022.

This year things will be a little different as you all have requested a lot more down time to just hang out with one another. I am currently working out all the details for this year. Right now, the hotel is booked. We are staying at the Comfort Inn and Suites at Patriots Point. Everyone can start making your reservations! Please let them know you are with the USS Laffey group.

We will have our meet and greet as usual on Sunday. Monday we will have our Memorial and afterwards I am planning on a nice lunch and a trip to a vineyard or distillery. The rest of our time we will have plenty of time to just relax and enjoy each other's company. I am planning daily games and a little friendly competition to keep things fun. We will be having our annual banquet on the USS Yorktown on Wednesday night the 6th.

We will be doing the Chinese Auction once again this year! I am looking forward to seeing what everyone comes up with this year!! Every year you guys get more and more creative!! So don't forget your donated item for the auction!!

The registration form will go out in the next newsletter as I am still working out the budget for our event!

HOTEL INFORMATION:

The Comfort Inn and Suites
196 Patriots Point Rd, Mt Pleasant, SC 29464
Phone Number: 1 843-606-6363

Room Rates:
King Deluxe-\$114
2 Queen Deluxe-\$114

King Suite-\$124
2 Queen Larger room-\$124

2 Queen Suite connects
To 1 Executive King Suite \$134

1 King bedroom, 2 room executive
Suite connects To 2 queen Suite \$134

2 Queen Super Suite \$134

If you have any questions, please call Leigh Ann Zerden at 302 249 5591

Current News

USS Clamagore Submarine Will Be Destroyed and Recycled, Museum Says



The USS Clamagore submarine, built at the end of World War II, will be dismantled and recycled, the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum in South Carolina announced Friday.

The submarine, which opened as an exhibit more than four decades ago, closed to the public in December due to "safety concerns caused by a leak in a main ballast tank," the museum said in a news release. Ballast tanks are used to control the buoyancy of a vessel.

The submarine has undergone repairs for more than a decade due to "extensive corrosion," the museum added. One 2019 assessment found it would cost "upwards of \$9 million" to fully restore and repair the vessel, the museum said.

There are also environmental concerns – including the presence of PCBs and lead batteries – with keeping the submarine at Patriots Point, said executive director Dr. Rorie Cartier.

"Leaving this submarine in the Charleston Harbor could cause serious environmental problems with the landfall of a major hurricane," Cartier said. The museum is located in Mt. Pleasant, less than 10 miles from Charleston.

The USS Clamagore is the only submarine of its design that is preserved in the US, according to the museum's website.

Commissioned in June 1945, the boat operated in the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean until 1962. The submarine is best known for its service off of Florida's Key West coast, where it became known as the "Gray Ghost of the Florida Coast," according to the museum. It was decommissioned in 1975 and opened as a museum about six years later.

It's the smallest of the three military vessels kept on display at the museum.

But the museum "cannot financially sustain the maintenance" of all three, Cartier said. "The USS Yorktown and USS Laffey also need repair, and we are fighting a never-ending battle against the corrosion that comes from being submerged in saltwater," Cartier said.

Some key parts of the submarine will be removed and preserved for a smaller exhibit, the museum said. Other parts will be sold and reused or recycled. The full dismantling project will take months and cost around \$2 million, according to the museum.

"The vast majority of the steel will be used to make new products, lowering the demand for mined iron ore and reducing energy costs in the steelmaking process," it said. Source:

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/19/us/uss-clamagore-submarine-destroyed-museum-cold-war/index.html>

Finding Joe Finch from Pamela Barylski

Former Navy doctor Harvey Blumenthal wrote a story titled "Finding Joe Finch" for a writing content – winning third prize. Prior to serving on the first USS Laffey (DD459),



Joe Finch saved 3-year-old Harvey Blumenthal from drowning. Joe Finch died when the USS Laffey sunk during the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal. Harvey learned the story of his rescue and about Joe's death when he was 15. Sixty years of a hazy desire to know more about Joe became a quest once Harvey retired.

“Finding Joe Finch” is the story documenting this quest. It also shares some insight into the Joe Finch himself including this information about Joe’s death:

During the night of Friday, November 13, 1942, The Laffey found itself in the crossfire of three Japanese warships which trained a searchlight on her and the Laffey took multiple direct hits. One five-inch shell exploded in the Laffey's chart room and plunged the compartment into darkness. Ens. Pat McGann and Ens. Joe Finch were flattened. Getting to his feet, McGann turned on his flashlight and saw that Finch had been directly in line with the hit....

In 1943 the ship USS Finch DE-328 named in Joe’s honor.

For the complete story “Finding Joe Finch”, please see:
<https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/FindingJoeFinch.pdf>

Website Volunteers Needed from Chris Kirhagis

Every organization, including ours, must have a plan to ensure its future. Part of our plan deals with the maintenance and expansion of our website. As we transition through the years, we need more than one



This site is dedicated to the destroyers USS Laffey (DD 459 and DD 724). We, of the Laffey, honor all ships and crews that fought and served in defense of world freedom.



individual who has the experience, knowledge, and commitment to be able to continue the operational aspect of the website, i.e., information sharing, honoring USS Laffey veterans/family, telling the Laffey stories of heroism, death, sacrifice, injury, recovery, maintaining our website www.laffey.org into 2040s and beyond. When we’re all gone, the physical USS Laffey will be available at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum with tours, videos, and stories from volunteers. The USS Laffey website www.laffey.org will continue to be the lasting memorial to USS Laffey veterans. We need help from you to continue the website into the 2040s and beyond. We need help from someone with some knowledge of web pages, photo editing, and similar skills.

Currently the website is maintained and kept current by Richard Felsing with advice from Jeff Jacobs, Advisor. We need one or more enthusiastic computer savvy volunteers to work with Richard, learn the current coding format from him and work together to maintain and expand the website. We need to tell the incredible Laffey story for all future generations. We need you to walk in the footsteps of Ari Phoutrides the first webmaster. We need you uncover hidden and lost stories of Laffey heroes. Contact me if you have some time to contribute and become a USS Laffey Association volunteer. We are looking for one or more volunteers. Coding knowledge is a big plus, but not a necessity. Richard has a comprehensive web maintenance manual to guide you and you will be able to learn from him to hopefully take control one day as we transition into the future. Chris Kirhagis
president@laffey.org
(410) 633-9936



Richard Felsing Current Webmaster, Ari Phoutrides 1st Webmaster, and Sonny Walker Past Association President in 2016. See <https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/AriPhoutrides.pdf>



Rainbow over the Laffey - Seeing a rainbow at sea was always a special event with its colors and beauty. Many thought "Fair Winds and Following Seas Ahead". Sometimes the Captain would announce in the 1MC "Rainbow off the port side" so everyone including the "Snipes in the hold" could see it. Thanks Chris Kirhagis for this special photo.

Laffey Signal Bridge Restoration from Chris Kirhagis

Patriots Point Volunteers Bill Casassa and Frank Seagriff have been refurbishing the Signal Shack They completed painting, replacement of the windows and comm/power box

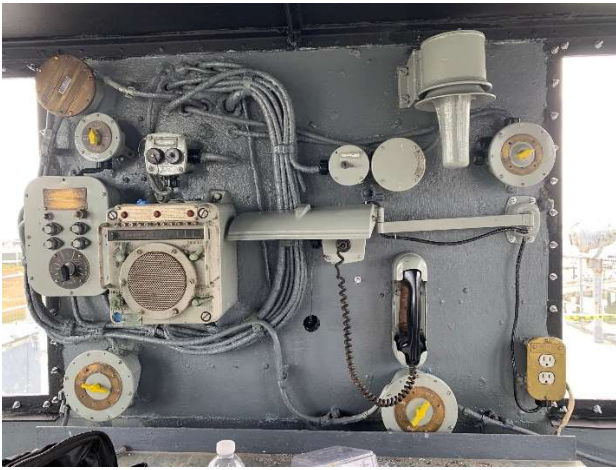


restoration and installation. The effort to populate the shack with some artifacts will be starting week of 28 March since there are couple of anniversaries to be honored at Patriots Point this week/weekend. Hope to be completed in the shack when the crew shows up on 5 April. We are seeking suggestions from prior Signalman or curator Melissa as to what items can be displayed on and in the Signal Bridge that would make it more realistic to whatever era is chosen. I know that they are going to reinstall another rack, so I will need input from anyone that is knowledgeable with this rate and the "shack". Any and all input is greatly appreciated." Chris Kirhagis president@laffey.org (410) 633-9936

From William Townsend SM2 (Signalman 2nd Class) who served aboard USS Laffey 1968-1972 then homeported in Norfolk, VA. "There was (what we called BIG EYES binoculars) welded to the deck, also there was a pair of semaphore signal flags inside the shack, attached to the back bulkhead to use when alongside ships, otherwise at long distance we used the lights to signal a ship or the yardarms to signal ALL ships. Also along with the lights were some cone shaped colored filters that attached to the front of the lights to use at nighttime so signals couldn't be seen by everyone. A coffee pot ALWAYS sat on the signal desk inside the shack. There was a set of signal publications books on the desk also, which were some confidential publications from the NAVY, explaining different signals and moves."

Photos from Bill Casassa and Brian Parsons Patriots Point Exhibits Support for the Signal Shack

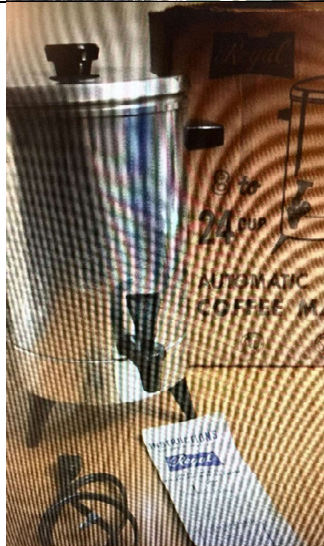




Bill Kunman, Richard Felsing, John Hudak, Sonny Walker



Ken McCullough and Chris Kirhagis



(John Hudak tallest in back row middle in 1960)

February 2022 Mini Workparty aboard USS Laffey at Patriots Point. Work is progressing to create storage area next Aft Toolshop and After Steering. Work continues on Fantail restoration and general maintenance. See

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/6YvEK3riXJBDGF8r7>

The Love That Would Not Die – WWII Widow Margaret Casaday visited USS Laffey about 2010. Her husband Seaman Calvin Cloer died from burns and other injuries in Mount 53 on 16 April 1945.

	<p style="text-align: center;">The love that would not die</p> 
<p>Boatswain's Mate Second Class Calvin Cloer 1944</p>	<p>His Widow Margaret Casaday on USS Laffey about 2010</p>

See

<https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/CalvinCloer.pdf>

touching Post and Courier Newspaper Article from Jeff Jacobs. See

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83064633/calvin-wesley-cloer> (Goleta Cemetery)

Patriots Participate in Work Parties Old Moultrie News Article. See

<https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/PhoutridesHarrington.pdf> for Moultrie News Article from Jeff Jacobs. Ari Phoutrides was a plankowner, WWII veteran and past president of the USS Laffey Association (1925 - 2018). Walt Harrington served aboard Laffey 1950 - 1954 during the Korean War. Walt passed away in 2020.

Annual Dues Reminder from Membership

Chairperson Kathy Pereira. 2022 Annual Dues are due 1/1/2022. 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".

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.

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.....

Work Party Donations:

John Binseel ----- \$50.00
Julian & Karen Winston ----- \$50.00
Maritime Museum Foundation ----- \$1506.21
(work party expense reimbursement)

General Donations:

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

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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USS Laffey 2021 Reunion – Little Round Top