



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*

July, August, September 2022

USS Laffey Association www.laffey.org

President's Message



Chris Kirhagis

Hello everyone!

I am hoping that everyone has experienced a nice summer season, and that we all were able to accomplish everything we set out to do. I came to the realization that Rome was not built in a day, so pecking at something every day shows accomplishment no matter what that may be 😊

I have some good as well as some not so good news! On September 11, 2022, yes 9/11, Bernice & I

were married in a very quaint, small ceremony. We plan on having a gathering sometime in early summer of 2023. Just too much on our plates right now, hence the aforementioned paragraph. We will be going to Barbados for the month of October. October 2023 we'll find ourselves in South Africa 😊

I was notified on September 18, 2022, that our Membership Chairperson Kathleen Pereira will be resigning her tenure in this position. Known to most as "Kat", she has performed in this position with the upmost precision and integrity, always giving input to improve the Roster. On behalf of the Laffey Association, we wish "Kat" all the luck in her future endeavor(s).

I am immensely proud of all our association volunteers with our activities, ship maintenance,

newsletters, website, etc. I had asked for someone to step-up to handle the Ship's Model Raffle and I believe at this time it is still to no avail? Please let me know if you can join our team. Well done to all volunteers.

I learned via the "Grapevine" that Rorie Cartier has left his position as Executive Director of Patriots Point and has taken a position at the Air Force Museum located in Dayton, Ohio. I also understand that the "Ole Boss" Mac Burdette is back in his old position as an interim Director for approximately four months until a replacement can be found.

Respectfully,

Chris Kirhagis, President
USS Laffey Association
president@laffey.org
410-633-993



I would like to thank Chris Kirhagis and Mike Pereira for their leadership over the last six

years. They have handed off a strong organization to Jim Bossard and me.

Last week, at the reunion, I was elected as your new President. I

have served as a cook for three work parties since I joined the Laffey Association as a life member two years ago. I was also a guest aboard the Laffey when I was just a tiny guy. My

father was assigned to the Laffey from August of 1956 through May of 1959. I was born in November of 1959. You do the math.

Having ridden aboard the USS Hunley (AS-31) for a week in 1974, at age 14, from Pearl Harbor to Bremerton Naval Shipyard, and having grown up in Navy shipyards much of my life, I do have some sense of life aboard a Navy ship. Those experiences led me to believe that a life in the military was not for me. So, I joined the Air Force instead. After 33 years flying helicopters and airplanes for the Air Force, then the US Customs Service, I retired 12 years ago. For the last 12 years I have been guiding snowmobile adventure vacations in Maine each winter. I am active in four other volunteer organizations and currently serve as the President of my property owners association, a group of 400 homes near Houston, Texas.

Our new Laffey Association Vice President, Jim Bossard, whose father, Dave, served aboard the Laffey from 1962 - 1964, also offers a lifetime of experience to our leadership team. Jim is a Critical Care Registered Nurse living near Birmingham, Alabama. He has been an unpaid professional fireman and an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician for 26 years. He has been serving as the Deputy Chief of his fire district for over two years now. Jim has given a lot of his time to many Laffey work parties over the last couple of decades. He brings to the table a

deeper understanding of the ship and her needs than I currently have, and, as such, will serve as our work party daily foreman. My goal is to provide him with all the logistical, financial, and manpower support that his teams need from Patriots Point and other sources. I will do my best to have those resources at his disposal before the first day of each work party.

I am sure there are some salty Laffey sailors wondering if two guys that never served on the Laffey, or on any other Navy ship, are up to the task of keeping the Laffey afloat for many more years. Let me assure you that Jim and I and many other descendants and friends of Laffey crewmembers are committed to preserving what you men have worked so very hard to create, maintain, repair and expand over the last few decades. It is incredible to me to see what the Laffey Association has created for our citizens to enjoy. Last week I had several lengthy conversations with the top leadership of Patriots Point and was assured repeatedly that the USS Laffey will be open to the public for many decades into the future. Those promises were backed up with reassuring financial numbers and logistical specifics. I feel very comfortable saying that my great grandchildren will have the opportunity to attend Laffey work parties.

Towards that end, I hope that each member of the Laffey Association will help us to reach

our goals. What can you do to help? Good question. We are sitting pretty well financially at the moment, thanks to the generosity of many of you and our friends over the years. That said, Patriots Point has a pretty tight budget. Their leadership is very thankful for the time and finances we have contributed, but they, and we, see some substantial projects coming up over the next few years. So, please do encourage our expanded Laffey family to keep the financial momentum going. Manpower is a second area that you can help us with. Since our former crewmembers are not getting any younger, we have to find ways to recruit from the next two generations. If you have children or grandchildren (age 18+, please) that have a strong back and willing hands, please ask them to contact me about attending a work party. I have already recruited several friends, that have no connection whatsoever to the USS Laffey, to attend work parties, so those kind of folks are out there. Please talk it up and help us to recruit workers.

Finally, I would like to ask our volunteer work force to help Jim and me to maximize our productivity during work parties. As cook, I can tell you first-hand that it is very helpful to have an accurate count of mouths to feed at each meal. Jim and I are collecting and documenting the extensive list of projects that we would all like to see addressed in the coming years. For each project it is my goal to do our

best to anticipate the manpower, tools, supplies, permits and financing required so that when our work crews show up, we can put everyone to work and keep you busy while you give of your time, energy, and finances to join us. Whether you are able to serve at work parties or not, please email me with your

thoughts on how the Laffey can best be preserved, repaired, expanded or have her experience with the public improved.

If you can attend a work party, please do your best to commit to specific dates when you will be aboard to eat, sleep and work. Please email or call those

commitments to me at least a week prior to the work party.

Again, thank you for all the work so many of you have put in over the years to preserve the USS Laffey for America's citizens.

Mike Honsinger

Upcoming Association Events

- 2022 Fall Work Party** – Sat-Sat. November 5-12
- 2023 Winter Mini Work Party (Weld/Fab crews only)**
– Late Jan/Early Feb, dates TBD
- 2023 Spring Work Party** – Sat-Sat, April 1-8
- 2023 Reunion in Atlantic City, NJ** – Sun, Sept 10
(Arrival reception) – Wed, Sept 13 (Final Dinner)
- 2023 Fall Work Party** – Sat-Sat, Oct 21-28

Current News

Congratulations to USS Laffey Association President Chris Kirhagis and Bernice Broadway Marriage



We wish Chris and Bernice the very best of luck.

Well Done Kathy Pereira Membership Chairperson



service to our association.

After many years of service as our association membership chairman, we wish you well. You have maintained accurate membership records, welcomed new members, and so much more. We greatly appreciate your dedicated

Congratulations to Joyce Hanau the new Membership Chairperson.



We all appreciate your important contribution to the USS Laffey Association. Joyce may be contacted at membership@laffey.org 347-439-2452.

USS Laffey Association Election of Officers

Congratulations to the new Association President Mike Honsinger and New Vice President Jim Bossard.



Mike can be reached at president@laffey.org 281-923-4969. Jim Bossard can be reached at vicepresident@laffey.org 484-824-1117.

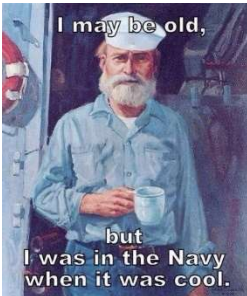
Well Done to Chris Kirhagis and Mike Pereira

We acknowledge your immense contribution to the USS Laffey Association as President and Vice President. We appreciate everything you've done and will do to maintain the USS Laffey as the Premiere US Navy Museum Ship. You have honored the memory of all who served on the USS Laffey especially the heroic WWII crewmembers. You have carried on the traditions of all past USS Laffey Association Officers from 1975, e.g. Cy Simonis, Don Vorgeity, Bob Langevin, Ari Phoutrides, and others. Well Done.

Many Thanks to the USS Laffey Association Board of Directors



Congratulations Mike Pereira on your election into the USS Laffey Association Board of Directors.



A Sailor's Thoughts Collected Over the Years from Jeff Jacobs. Samples: "A guy who doesn't share a care package from home is no shipmate. Good shipmates are friends forever".

https://www.eugeneleeslover.com/Humor/Sailors_Thoughts.html

National Defense Service Medal won't be awarded after December



<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2022/09/06/national-defense-service-medal-wont-be-awarded-after-december/>

Navy offers future sailors, veterans up to \$115,000 in enlistment, loan repayment incentives



<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2022/08/11/navy-offers-future-sailors-veterans-up-to-115000-in-enlistment-loan-repayment-incentives/>

Last Living WWII Metal of Honor Recipient Tours Laffey

U.S. Marine Corps veteran Hershel W. "Woody" Williams, the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, visited USS Laffey. He died on 29 June. He was 98.



In the Battle of Iwo Jima, he distinguished himself with actions "above and beyond the call of duty", for which he would be awarded the Medal of Honor. See <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2022/october/farewell-woody-williams-last-living-wwii-medal-honor>

5 - 12 April 2022 April Work Party

Many thanks to all who completed many deck and bulkhead restorations, painting, and other projects to preserve the ship as the premiere US Navy Museum ship.



Back Left to Right: Ken McCullough, Don Watson, Steve Doyle, Ed Fitzsimmons, John Hudak, Bill Fitzsimmons, Mark Maresco, Ed Fitzsimmons, Joe Luque, Mike Honsinger, Mike Pereira, Tony Pereira.

Front Left to Right: Tom Aust, Joe Reyes, Chris Kirhagis, Bob Fitzsimmons, Harry Stoner

For photos see

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/qYXHKA1CDu8LK1EB6>

Honoring Fallen Laffey Heroes

One way to honor our fallen Laffey heroes is record their records in family history genealogy sites, e.g. FamilySearch, Ancestry, other family history sites.



Contact Richard Felsing 843-367-2208
webmaster@laffey.org or rfelsing@gmail.com if you are interested in assisting to collect and submit records to family history sites.

Navy Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star Recipients

Navy Cross	Silver Star	Bronze Star
		

See <https://www.laffey.org/Shipmates/Awards.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.

Patriots Point Fragile Collections Exhibit Now Open
with Painting of USS Laffey in 1945



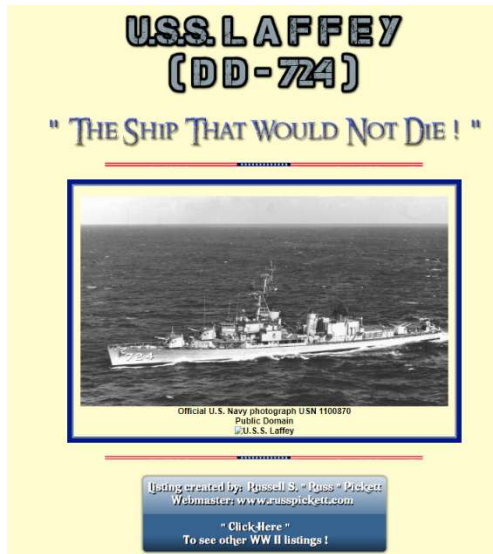
Melissa Buchanan, Curator



USS LAFFEY OKINAWA APRIL 16, 1945
BY FRANCIS MASTRANGELO
THE DIVINE WIND BLEW IN A TOTAL OF FIRE
BUT THE MIRACLE SHIP STAYED AFLOAT AND ALIVE
ALTHOUGH BATTERED AND BURNED
THE LESSON WE LEARNED IS
GOD'S BLESSING ARE JOINED WITH OUR WILL

Patriots Point Free Admission for Former Laffey Crew Members. Former crew members of the USS Yorktown, Laffey, and Clamagore and their immediate family members are entitled to free admission to the museum. Immediate family refers to a person's parents, siblings, spouse, child by blood, adoption or marriage, grandparents and grandchildren. Former crew members of our vessels and their immediate family members do not need to belong to any specific organization to qualify for free admission.

USS Laffey WWII Killed in Action, Missing in Action, Wounded in Action, and Survivors



Site is from Russ Pickett

<http://russpickett.com/history/laffey.htm> and
<http://www.russpickett.com/history/laffeydd459.htm>

Taps for Fallen Shipmates



Gary Zozlowski MMFN ('60-'64)
Nick Giordano SH3 ('50-'52)

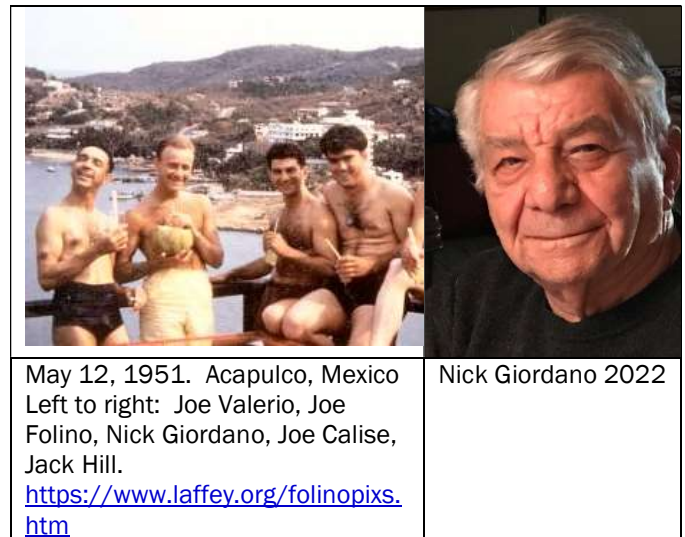
Gary Kozlowski MMFN Served on USS Laffey 1960-1964



Gary Kozlowski passed away in September 2022 at the age of 81 Rochester Hills, MI. He served aboard USS Laffey 1960-64 as a MMFN (Machinist Mate Fireman) in A Division and the After Engine Room. Gary was on the 1961 Mediterranean Cruise in the US Navy Sixth Fleet. See the 1961 Cruise Book <https://www.laffey.org/Cruises/1961%20World%20Cruise/1961medcruiseindex.htm> .

After the US Navy, he did computer programming and systems work. He was a USS Laffey Association volunteer who contributed greatly to the website.

Nick Giordano SH3 (Ship Serviceman 3rd Class)



We have lost another Korean War sailor. He served aboard USS Laffey 1950-52. He will be remembered at our October reunion. Our prayers are with his family and Joan Lee.
<https://www.mchoulfuneralhome.com/book-of-memories/5022353/Giordano-Nicholas/index.php>

Website Volunteers Needed

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 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.

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 to uncover hidden and lost stories of Laffey heroes. 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.

Contact Richard Felsing 843-367-2208 webmaster@laffey.org or rfelsing@gmail.com if you are interested in assisting to collect and submit records to family history sites.

Annual Dues Reminder from Membership Chairperson

Joyce Hanau. Annual dues need to be paid on the 1st of each year to keep the U.S.S. Laffey Association functioning. Mail your check made out to the USS Laffey Association to: Joyce Hanau 1956 Lincoln Ave, East Meadow, NY 11554. Annual membership is \$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 Joyce Hanau at (347) 439-2452, 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 Joyce Hanau, (347) 439-2452 or 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.....

Memorial Donations:

In Memory of Gary Kozlowski

John Saenz ----- \$200.00

Deborah Cavanaugh ----- \$ 25.00

General Donations:

Jill Michel ----- \$100.00

Harold Borton ----- \$154.00

William Townsend ----- \$ 75.00

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 Baryliski Newsletter Editor newsletter@laffey.org

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USS Laffey April Work Party