

James M. LaPointe

Coxswain Killed in Action 16 April 1945

Recipient of Silver Star and 2 Purple Hearts

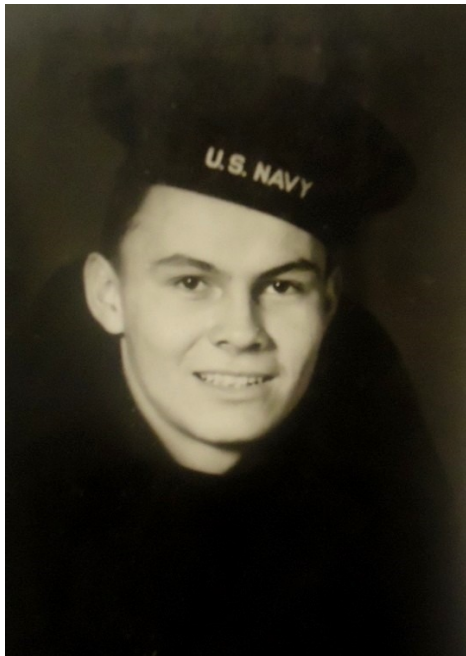


Silver Star



Purple Hearts

Courtesy of Frank Morrison Cousin of James LaPoint



This is a brief account and two pictures of James M. LaPointe. Added to "The Honored Dead" section on the website www.laffey.org.

On the morning of April 16, 1945, 21 year old Coxswain James W. LaPointe from South Dakota was a gunner in Mount 53 aboard the USS Laffey. He and the rest of the Mount 53 crew fought feverishly to stop the onslaught of suicide attackers. The number seven Kamikaze, a Japanese VAL was hit by one of 53's five inch guns, altering it's path. Instead of a direct hit the VAL grazed the mount causing a gasoline fire and exploding fragments which wounded James M. LaPointe and Calvin Cloer. Cloer was sent for treatment, but LaPointe stayed at his station refusing treatment. The number ten attacker another VAL rammed the starboard part of Mount 53 killing Chester Flint. Shortly after at 8:47 am the eleventh suicide bomber, a VAL or JUDY hit Mount 53 directly, it's bomb blew

up killing six including James M. LaPointe. After being wounded previously James LaPointe stayed at his station to defend his shipmates, his ship and his country. For his sacrifice that day he was awarded two purple hearts and the SILVER STAR.

Thank You for preserving the USS Laffey and the memory of her brave crew. James LaPointe was my cousin.

Frank Morrison

HonorStates.org

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

<https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=81922>

James M Lapointe

He was a **World War II Era** casualty on April 16, 1945. ★ He served with honor in the **United States Navy**. ★ He is remembered by the people of **South Dakota** ★ May his positive example inspire us, as global citizens. ★ When we work together, we can help one another.

America's Fallen



World War II



US Navy



South Dakota



▼ STATE OVERVIEW

South Dakota

James M Lapointe is among the [1,921](#) American Gold Star casualties recorded in our archive with close ties to [South Dakota](#). This is a substantial number of individuals who gave their lives in service to their country.

[Read More](#)

SERVICE OVERVIEW

Name	James M Lapointe
From	South Dakota
Death	April 16, 1945
War	World War II
ID	7309455
Rank	Enlisted

Specialty	Coxswain
Branch	US Navy
MIA Status	Declared Dead while Missing
Cause	Missing in action or lost at sea
Awarded	★ Purple Heart

ORIGINS



According to our records [South Dakota](#) was his home or enlistment state.

SERVICE



He had enlisted in the United States Navy. Served during World War II. Lapointe had the rank of Enlisted. His military occupation or specialty was Coxswain. Service number assignment was 7309455.

CASUALTY



During his service in World War II, Navy enlisted man Lapointe was reported missing and ultimately declared dead on [April 16, 1945](#). Recorded circumstances attributed to: **Missing in action or lost at sea.**

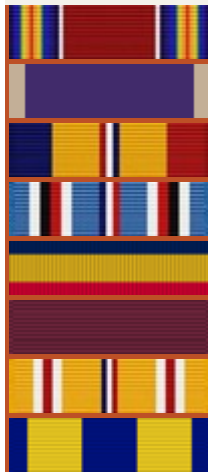
REMEMBERED



James M Lapointe is buried or memorialized at Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii. This is an American Battle Monuments Commission location.

COMMENDATIONS

- ★ World War II Victory Medal
- ★ Purple Heart
- ★ Combat Action Ribbon
- ★ American Campaign Medal
- ★ Navy Presidential Unit Citation
- ★ Navy Good Conduct Medal
- ★ Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal
- ★ Navy Expeditionary Medal



PLEASE NOTE THIS MIGHT NOT BE A COMPLETE OR COMPL

James M. LaPointe (1924 – 1945) In Memoriam

National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56122895/james-marcelle-lapointe>

COX James Marcelle LaPointe

HONOLULU MEMORIAL (aka Courts of the Missing) World War II

LAPIERRE EARL E
SEAMAN 1C USNR NEW JERSEY

LAPINSKI FRANK M
SEAMAN 1C USNR CONNECTICUT

LAPOINTE JAMES M
COXSWAIN USNR SOUTH DAKOTA

LAPP RAYMOND C
CHIEF COMM STEWARD USNR OREGON

LARACY JOHN J JR
ELECTRICIAN'S MATE 3C USNR NEW YORK

LARAMEE ROMEO A
MOTOR MACHINIST'S MATE 2C USNR VT

LARASON JOHN A
GUNNER'S MATE 2C USNR OHIO

LAREAU EDWARD H
SEAMAN 1C USNR MASSACHUSETTS

LARIVIERE RAYMOND E
SEAMAN 1C USN NEW JERSEY

LARKINS FLOYD O
SEAMAN 2C USNR MISSOURI

LAROCCA MARINO A JR
ELECTRICIAN'S MATE 2C USN OHIO

LARSEN CHARLES T
LIEUTENANT USN IDAHO

Honolulu Memorial

(aka Courts of the Missing)

World War II

COX James Marcelle LaPointe

BIRTH unknown

DEATH 16 Apr 1945

At Sea

MEMORIAL SITE*

Honolulu Memorial

Honolulu, Honolulu County, Hawaii, USA

* A structure erected in honor of someone whose remains lie elsewhere.

PLOT Courts of the Missing ~ Court 3

MEMORIAL ID 56122895 · [View Source](#)

James served as a Coxswain, U.S.S. Laffey (DD-724), U.S. Navy during World War II.

He resided in Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota prior to the war.

James enlisted in Navy on December 12, 1942 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He reported for duty on the Laffey on February 8, 1944.

The Laffey on April 16-17, 1945, while assigned to radar picket station 1 about 30 miles north of Okinawa, was successful in repulsing an air attack which downed 13 enemy aircraft.

During this attack, however, the Laffey was badly damaged by four bombs, six kamikaze crashes, and strafing fire that killed 32 and wounded 71. And still the "U.S.S. Laffey" survived the attack!

James was one of those "**Killed In Action**" in this attack during the war.

He was awarded a "Silver Star" and the Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster.

Service # 7309455

James was buried at sea.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. James LaPointe who resided in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

(Bio by: Russ Pickett)

Historical Notes: The Laffey earned the nickname: " The Ship That Would Not Die " !

The Laffey, after the April 16th attack, was then taken under tow and anchored off Okinawa on 17 April 1945 and eventually, with some repairs, arrived at Tacoma, Washington on May 24th where it was fully repaired and returned to service on September 9, 1945.

The Laffey went on to participated in Operation Crossroads, the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll, took part in the blockade of Wonsan in Korea during the Korean War, and participated in what was known as the Cold War and finally decommissioned on March 9, 1975. She was the last of the Sumner class destroyers to be decommissioned.

The Laffey received the " Presidential Unit Citation " and " 5 battle stars " for World War II service, the Korean " Presidential Unit Citation " and " 2 battle stars "

for Korean War service, the " Meritorious Unit Commendation " during the Cold War, and the Battle " E " during all three conflicts.

The U.S.S. Laffey (DD-724) was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1986, at which time she was recognized as the only remaining US-owned Sumner-class destroyer, and for her spirited survival of the kamikaze attack in April, 1945. She is now a museum ship at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, alongside two other US National Historic Landmarks: the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown and submarine U.S.S. Clamagore.

Also Note: In 2007, the attack on Laffey was recreated using computer graphics for the History Channel series Dogfights. The episode first aired on July 13, 2007.

In May 2018, it was officially announced that Mel Gibson would direct a major feature film about the attack on Laffey titled Destroyer.

(Notes by: Russ Pickett)

Hawaii

Honolulu County

Honolulu

Honolulu Memorial

COX James Marcelle LaPointe

Maintained by: Russ Pickett

Originally Created by: War Graves

Added: 6 Aug 2010

Find a Grave Memorial 56122895

For corrections or updates, contact President, USS Laffey Association
president@laffey.org and webmaster@laffey.org