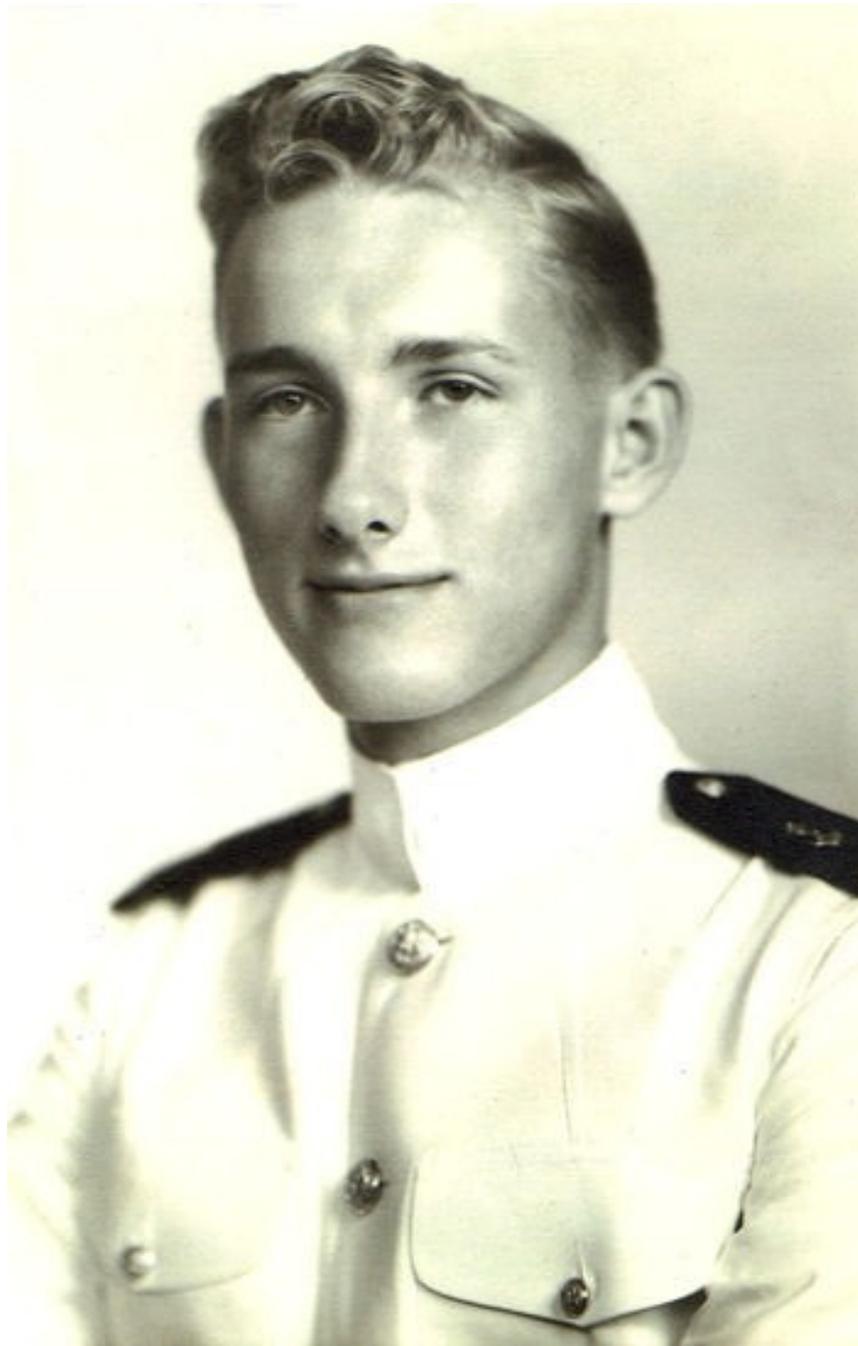


# Ltjg James Gardner Townsley

1923 – 2004

Machine Gun Control Officer on April 16, 1945  
Silver Star Recipient



## Silver Star Recipient



<https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/56563>

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

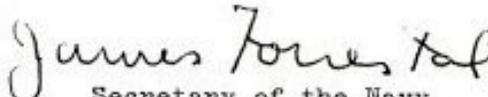
LIEUTENANT, JUNIOR GRADE, JAMES GARDNER TOWNSLEY  
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving as Machine Gun Control Officer on board the U.S.S. LAFHEY, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Okinawa Area on April 16, 1945. When his ship was under repeated enemy air attacks from several directions, Lieutenant, Junior Grade, (then Ensign) Townsley skillfully located the targets for the machine guns and contributed materially to the destruction of four enemy planes. Directing fire from his unprotected station, he inspired his men to keep shooting to the last, although direct suicidal crashes looked inevitable on several occasions. By his cool courage under fire and devotion to duty, Lieutenant, Junior Grade, Townsley contributed materially toward saving his ship from probable destruction and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

  
Secretary of the Navy

## **James Gardner. Townsley (1923 – 2004) In Memoriam**

On January 9, 2004, James G. Townsley, a lifetime member of the USS Laffey Association, passed away in Middletown, Ohio at the age of 80. He served on board the *Laffey* from August 1944 through January 1947 and was awarded the Silver Star metal for his performance of duties as Machine Gun Control Officer on April 16, 1945.

Mr. Townsley was born on December 21, 1923, attended high school in Lebanon, Ohio and completed his formal education at the U. S. Naval Academy prior to joining our ship in Pearl Harbor. He reported on board together with another classmate, Robert Thomsen in August of 1944. I clearly remember the two officers as they approached our ship where it was moored starboard side to the pier. Those of us observing him (with binoculars, no less) were unanimous in our evaluation that Jim was an Academy man.

He returned to civilian life in 1947 and was recalled into the Korean Emergency in 1950, during which time he taught navigation at the Naval Academy. Upon being discharged, he joined Armco Steel Company, serving this company for 37 years, and retiring as Corporate Vice President of Engineering. He spent much of his retirement keeping track of his 7 children and 11 grandchildren.

His wife, Mrs. Betty Townsley, may be contacted at 105 Muskingum Circle Monroe, Ohio 45050 (513) 539-0885 [townsley@infinet.com](mailto:townsley@infinet.com).

For corrections or updates, contact President, USS Laffey Association  
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