

WE'RE "A-GOIN-TA" MEMPHIS, TN FOR THE 2017 REUNION!

LAFFEY NEWS

THE USS LAFFEY DD-724 THE SHIP THAT WOULD NOT DIE



U.S.S. LAFFEY DD724 & DD459



"I'LL NEVER ABANDON SHIP AS LONG AS A GUN WILL FIRE": CO. F. JULIAN BECTON

Dedicated to those who served in Battle...and those that Preserved in Peace

January-February-March

www.laffey.org

2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – MARCH 2017

Γεια σε όλους !

Sonny was right! His message may have been the last one in English; however, after 13 long years of dedication in making this Association run like a "Precision Tune" the timing belt was due for a change! But like Sonny stated, he will not be gone nor disappear from sight, and will still handle the ship's model raffle as well as the Memorial Services.

Along with a new regime also come new policies as well as direction. Some of these changes may not be a smooth transition nor acceptable, as the older we get, the less we are susceptible to change. You can be assured that any decision that I make will be for the betterment of the Laffey's legacy and secondly of its crew and Association members.

I am open to any suggestions as long as they benefit the cause of the majority and not one individual. Over time I realize that there will be disputes, heated discussions, and personality conflicts that I will have to intercede and resolve, but we are all grown men, and the end result is to

preserve the condition of our ship and to show the visiting public of our enthusiasm for it.

This is my fifteenth year as a member of the USS Laffey Association and I have seen a lot of changes, and the majority of them have largely improved all aspects of the USS Laffey. When I first arrived to Patriots Point and up to the point (2009) when the Laffey went down river for a new bottom, everyone who was associated with the Laffey was treated like gold or Royalty.

There did not seem to be enough that Patriots Point could do for us. Always thanking us, giving us a designated area in which to park our personal vehicles, making sure our request for materials, etc. were fulfilled. Somewhere after the return of Laffey from the shipyard, attitudes, and relationships took a 180 degree turn.

It is my hope that I will be able with the assistance of each and every member of this Association; change (I'm sorry, did I just use Hope & Change in the same sentence?) the attitude and relationship between the Association and Patriots Point. In this past work party (4-11 Feb. 2017, I met with as many Patriots Point employees as well as

Supervision and Department heads as time would allow me. There seems to be a positive approach on both sides to achieve our goals.

Richard Felsing had visited the Laffey this past work party for several hours to discuss the progress of the Newsletter. It seems that Richard, Ari, and AJ are in constant conference calls with one another to do a complete overhaul of our website. From what I am seeing they are doing an excellent job, and it looks like it will be very user friendly, especially for your President's knowledge of computers, which is one step ahead of an Abacus.

There has been discussion on the disposition of future Newsletters, in that we are entertaining the possibility of going electronic (paperless). Starting with this Newsletter, we need the input of each and every member to let us know if they prefer paper or electronic. Regardless of your choice, we would like to have your e-mail address. Your answer can be sent to any of the **Current Officers, Website Manager, Editor & Circulation Manager**. Anyone of these will end up in one collection for our final tally. Going electronic will save the Association a lot of funds. This does not mean that the majority wins. Those who ask for a hard copy will still receive it.

I was told that Hank Ashton may be taking on the task from Bob Wampler as Editor and Circulation Manager. If so, welcome aboard Hank, it will be a pleasure working with you as well as conversing with you every other minute!

FEBRUARY 2017 MINI WORK PARTY

Ladies & Gentlemen, I just arrived home this past Saturday, February 11th, after a week onboard the Laffey with six other swell sailors. They were our Vice President Mike Pereira, John Hudak, Don Watson, Max Saus, Ron Bowman, and Joe Lugue. The weather had us mesmerized as it was beautiful. Without a cook we scurried around in a panic as to what we were going to do. I thought all of us were either going to get in shape or

abandoned ship. Neither had to be done, as unbeknownst to me, Our Vice President Mike Pereira is one hell of a cook. He spoiled the six of us all week long and we only had clams in our dinner once this past week. KUDOS to Mike for stepping up to that task!!

Mike (VP) and I took inventory of all perishable items in the Chief's Quarters as well as the Galley. We lined everything up, recorded what we had on hand, and also recorded and discarded anything that was bad. We are asking that all work party attendees **NOT** bring any perishable items to the ship unless it is a snack that can be shared and consumed for everyone during the week. Or unless it is a specific item that is required for your personal consumption for health reasons.

Mike (VP) and I did a once over in the Galley cleaning it from top to bottom, cleaning out the drawers, scrubbing them out, lining the shelves. A note to our Past-President, Sonny Walker, your current President and replacement, turned two on both of the heads, scrubbing four toilets, three urinals, and six sinks, in addition to scrubbing both decks. Max Saus and I took all of the old or overflow of kitchen utensils and donated them to a thrift store.

Mike Pereira also took charge with Ron Bowman and Joe Lugue in cleaning out and reorganizing the paint locker and it looks great!!

I had to slow Joe Lugue down because someone let him off his leash and sicked him onto the forward janitor supply locker. Joe went through the locker like the Tasmanian Devil. I told Joe that he could not work at that pace because he would make the rest of the work party look bad and we need to leave something for the April work party to do.

Don Watson and Joe Lugue made some toilet repairs to both drain and supply in the head aft of the galley. Max Saus and Ron Bowman installed eye bolts on the head door behind the carousel of

mount # 51. They also did some electrical work on the electrical boards in aft diesel.

John Hudak brought with him a small ice machine that has been mounted on the shelf directly to the right of the refrigerator. The machine can produce up to twenty-three pounds of ice daily. Thanks John, long overdue and badly needed.

In the same head behind mount #51, John Hudak installed a separate copper water line to accommodate a filtration system which he also installed; It's connected to a hose bib. We will still have bottled water, but for those who don't like the taste or the ole' pipes our drinking water runs through the filter and you now have NO EXCUSE. Besides if we become acclimated to using this system, less water will have to be purchased.

John Hudak was also able to install two hasps to the forward storage locker. One will be placed on the surface and paint prep locker which is controlled by John Langevin, and the other lock will secure the hatch door going into the entire forward storage, just below the ladder. I don't recall this ever being secure in my fifteen years with the Association.

Marsha Ray, Executive Director USS Yorktown & Patriots Point fund raising along with Melissa Buchanan, and Cindy Lee treated five of us (Max & Ron had yet to arrive) to lunch at the Fish House for a formal "meet & greet". A lot of topics were discussed as well as a lot of good food being consumed.

Our VP also took a tour of the Laffey recording what needs to be accomplished for the next work party April 22-29, 2017. While we are on the subject of the next work party, I need 100% input of your commitment to attend, as well as to your preference of bunking, whether it will be the Laffey or the Yorktown. Just remember that we are not able to board the Yorktown until Sunday April 23rd, and we must vacate same by 0800 hours on Friday, April 28th.

See you at the April Work Party, Chris Kirhagis, President



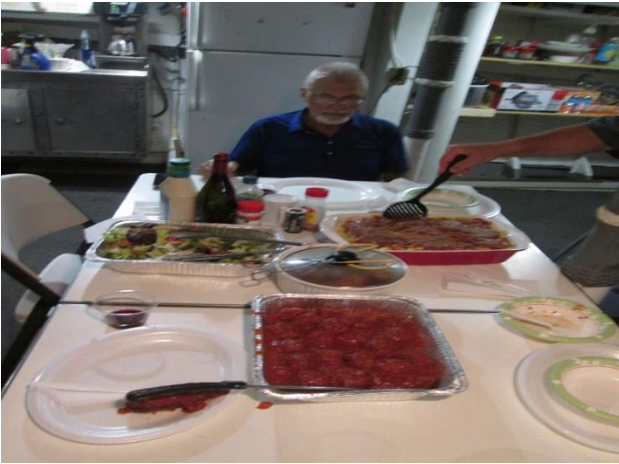
The ship's galley – Where good food is served!



New filter installed by John Hudak



Meet & Greet Luncheon with PP People



John Hudak “Sez”: Is all this for me??!!

MEMBERSHIP FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For those of you who are paying dues on a yearly basis, the \$25.00 annual fee is due on January 1st of each current year. Your personal check should be directed to our new Membership Chairperson:

**Kathy Pereira
92 Elmdale Avenue
Warwick, RI 02889**

If you are uncertain when we received your last dues payment, please contact Kathy at the following phone number: (401)-787-3014.

The fee for “Life Membership” is based upon age. Contact Kathy to determine what that fee is for you should you desire a change to life member status.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT AS WE AGE

“We turn not older with years, but newer every day.”

Emily Dickinson

LISTEN UP LADS

The first of the year is a good time to make certain we have correct information on file under your name. For those of you who have and use computers, go to our association’s website www.laffey.org and scroll down to the membership section.

Verify your personal information including your correct phone listing. If there are errors or if

something is missing, contact our Membership Chairperson, Kathy Pereira, at 401-787-3014 or email her at kaylo1954@yahoo.com to review this matter. For those without a computer, please contact/phone Kathy as well to discuss your status and verify your address and phone number.

ARI PHOUTRIDES SENDS HIS GREETINGS TO “THE BECTON GIRLS” FOR CHRISTMAS 2016

December 6, 2016

Dear Hilary and Julie:

During the past few years, I have been sorting thru the many pictures accumulated in a lifetime attempting to assemble them in some sort of order. Needless to say, this has been an extremely frustrating experience for me.... especially the older I get! At any rate, I found the enclosed picture taken of your father when the ship was tied up in Seattle and open for inspection to the public. I have seen it before, and I am sure you have also. For some reason, it struck a most sensitive chord in my body. He is standing on the starboard side of the open bridge, a location where he was much of the time during the attack on April 16. Missing in this picture is his battle helmet and kapok life jacket. The serious expression on his face was the same.

This picture generated an instant flashback to that eventful day. I cannot stop thinking of what a brave and competent individual under whom I served. I have told you this before, but I will say it again....only because you are never to forget how we all thought of him. He was, to me, the finest officer in the United States Navy. His competency as an officer is easily understood when examining his record in combat. More important, however, was his compassion for, and understanding of, the needs of those who had the privilege of serving under him. I will be forever grateful for knowing him and for his role in shaping my life.

Being the Commanding Officer of a combat vessel is a difficult position to be in. You are directly responsible for the lives and well-being of your crew — in his case, 330 enlisted men and officers. Being able to infuse a sense of caring and faith in the abilities of your men and officers, yet keeping any personal relationships at a distance, is no small task. Your father was able to do so. But it hurt knowing that he must have felt some sense of

loneliness as he commanded his ship. Many were the times he ate his meals alone....and I thought about this quite a bit. Nevertheless, his interaction with the officers and the crew was such that we knew he was the Commanding Officer, and we sensed — especially initially — that the decisions that he made were in our best interests. After our initial baptism of fire, we knew this to be the case always.

If the Lord is good to me, I may live to see a few more days on this earth. I'm not exactly sure why this is, but I have been blessed with many good things in my life, not the least of which is having served under your father's command and knowing him as your father, as my father away from home, and as a good friend.

I wish for the both of you the Merriest of Christmas holidays and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

*A grateful friend
Ari Phoutrides*

Commander Becton on the bridge



EDITOR'S REUNION COMMENT

Sign up early for the Memphis 2017 Reunion to get the room of your choice!

ARI PHOUTRIDES IS HONORED



THE "USS ARI PHOUTRIDES" UNDERWAY



"THE PHOUTRIDES" UNDER CONSTRUCTION



"THE "SHIPS NAME" IS REVEALED

Ari & Sonny,

For the past several summers when his family has been visiting in TN, Cooper has participated in a weekend local sailing camp for young people on one of our TVA lakes.

This summer, Ed & I bought him a used Laser sailboat of his own. It's taken a little work to get it in good shape, but he is very excited about "his boat"! I thought you both might enjoy some pics.

Sue Lockett

Editor's Comment: Over many years, Cooper and Ari have become very good friends with a special relationship. Ari has provided Cooper with a living history of the Laffey and its experiences during WW II. We truly enjoyed having the opportunity to relate stories to this interested young man!

RECENT WORK PARTY DONATION

William Townsend	\$125.00
Julian B. Winston	\$ 50,00

IN MEMORY OF GLENN SETMIRE DONATION

Sharon Setmire, Daughter \$50.00

The USS Laffey DD724 Association sincerely appreciates all donations received and we can assure you that monies received will be used to help maintain the ship at Patriots Point.

**SAD NOTIFICATION FROM SONNY WALKER
FORMER PRESIDENT**

It is with great sorrow that we must say goodbye to a great shipmate and a close friend.

I received this e-mail from Nancy Powell today.

We had a lot of fun with Emil and Rose Ann at the reunions throughout the years. He will be missed by all of us.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Nancy and Patty and all of the family. Sonny Walker

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD



EMIL JAKUBIC – REST IN PEACE

It is with deep sorrow that I must let you know about the passing of my Dad, Emil Jakubic early this morning, Jan 26, 2017. Dad was 86 years old and had been living with Alzheimer's disease for several years. We are so thankful that he is now at peace and with our mom Rose Anne in heaven.

Dad absolutely loved recalling his time in the Navy and was a very proud Veteran. He and Mom thoroughly enjoyed the many Laffey reunions they attended over the years - somewhere around 30 of them. They looked forward to it every year. I'm so glad that we were able to bring him down to Charleston this past fall for one last wonderful reunion. He had a great time and it is a great memory for my sister Patty and I and our husbands. I love this picture of him - the last time he was on His Ship. "Permission to board, sir".....

Love - Nancy

THE LOSS OF ANOTHER WW II VETERAN

We are losing our heroes: LT. Joel Youngquist, plank owner, passed away December 18, 2016 from throat cancer.

"Pay" as he was known was the paymaster to our WWII crew. He lost his wife Shirley, recently and he lost his battle with cancer yesterday.

I have no funeral arrangement info – Sonny Walker

BAD NEWS CONTINUES

Loss of shipmates Son: I was informed today (12-17-16) that Scott MacCaskill, son of Jack MacCaskill, passed away November 4, 2016 from brain cancer.

Scotty was one of our young work party members. He was 3 weeks short of his 51st Birthday.

He called us his "Uncles" after Jack passed away in 2004. Scott was a great kid and a hard worker.

He will be missed by all of us. Sonny Walker



THE LCS PROGRAM IS UNDER FIRE

(From Military.com)

The author Hope Hodge Seck can be reached at hope.seck@military.com (Excerpts From)

The Navy's littoral combat ship is costing taxpayers billions more than budgeted, failing survivability assessments, and may never live up to the original vision for the program, a panel of Navy and government oversight officials told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday.

The hearing, which focused on continued testing and acquisition of the small surface vessels, came at the close of a 12-month period in which five of the eight littoral combat ships in service have

suffered major mechanical and engineering casualties.

PRESIDENT’S OBSERVATION

I was going down the first page of our roster and making calls to see what preference our members would have in receiving the Newsletter, whether it is paper or Electronic.

When I got to the name of Battista, I called the individual & spoke with a one Bill Bradley who is the grandson of Joseph Battista. Bill advised me that his grandfather passed away on December 18, 2016. Bill further told me that his sister prepared a beautiful Eulogy which he wishes to share with the Laffey family. Bill will be forwarding me this Eulogy for insertion in the 2nd or 3rd quarter Newsletter.

Bill wants us to know that he & his sister are avid runners and that he is in the process of organizing a 5K race for some time in August, 2017, in the name of his Grandfather. Bill also stated that after all permits as well as other associated fees are taken care of, the proceeds of the race will go to benefit the USS Laffey Association in the name of Joseph Battista. Bill hopes to continue his Grandfathers legacy in this form for years to come.

I believe this is very honorable of Bill to think of his Grandfather this way. According to Bill, Joseph loved the Navy life and equally admired the USS Laffey. As a result I would respectfully request that Bill Bradley's membership type be designated as Honorary. If Bill so wishes to contribute the annual membership fee, then so be it. But I feel because of the upcoming & future causes that Bill has initiated, he should not be required to pay annual fees.

Respectfully,

Chris Kirhagis, President, USS Laffey Association

**USS LAFFEY DD-724 ASSOCIATION
OFFICERS AND STAFF
Current Officers**

Chris Kirhagis.....President
(MASH752@aol.com)

Edgar "Sonny" Walker.....Past- President
(soncher724@verizon.net)
Mike Pereira.....Vice President
George Kessler.....Treasurer
(gfkessler09@yahoo.com)
Hilary Wagner.....Secretary
Kathy Pereira.....Membership Chairwoman
(kaylo1954@yahoo.com)

Board of Directors

Sonny Walker
Ari Phoutrides
Bob Langevin
John Langevin
Francis LaSala
John Hudak
Bob Wampler

Website Manager

A.J. Tarquino (Assistant – Richard Felsing)
(atarquino@columbus.rr.com)

Laffey News Quarterly Newsletter

Bob Wampler, Editor and Circulation Manager
(rdwjcw@hargray.com)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU EXTENDED

By Jeff Jacobs
President Patriots Point Foundation

Recently, as is their custom multiple times a year, the crew and family of the destroyer USS Laffey DD-724 at Patriots Point came from all over the U.S. at their own expense, for a work party. This all-volunteer effort was to continue the exterior bulkhead (wall) painting they started on the previous work party.

The cost of the materials and equipment needed to complete the job were considerable, so the call went out for help. Three companies, (two local and one regional), stepped up to donate. From Norfolk, VA., International Paint supplied the special (and expensive) U. S. Navy paint and cleaners at no charge. They even shipped them in. From Mount Pleasant, Hughes Rental supplied the power washer needed to prep the bulkhead surfaces. This was the second time for both of those companies. From North Charleston, Ahern Rental

supplied the 80-foot man lift needed to safely reach from the dock to the upper surfaces of the ship.

These items represent several thousands of dollars of donations and show the patriotism and support of our business community for the men and women who served and continue to serve. On behalf of the USS Laffey Association and Patriots Point Foundation, we sincerely thank these companies. Please consider them next time you need their services.

Thanks, also, to the crew and family of the USS Laffey for generously giving their time and effort to maintain their ship, saving many thousands of dollars in the process. I hope you will visit Patriots Point and experience all the new exhibits and updates to the ships and the ship's store.

If you would like to support Patriots Point, I invite you to PatriotsPointFoundation.org where you can see past projects and also donate for future work parties or exhibits. Patriots Point Foundation is an all-volunteer nonprofit with 92 percent pass through that supports the Naval and Maritime Museum as well as the new National Medal of Honor Museum. You may also contact me directly at Jjacobs@patriotspointfoundation.org.

ALL HANDS NOTICE

This is your notification for the April Work Party. Due to Easter being on April 16, it has been decided to have the work party from April 22-29, 2017. Please let me know if you plan on attending. This is important to contact me due to availability of bunks. Sonny Walker, soncher724@verizon.net 410-515-3223

Thanks – Sonny

EDITOR RETIRES

After ten (10) years plus this edition, I am putting my Laffey computer in the capable hands of my replacement as editor of the Laffey News. Yes,

Past-President Sonny Walker managed once again to find a "volunteer" to do the quarterly newsletter. It seems like only yesterday that Sonny talked me into this "high paying position" with its many, many, many benefits! **(NOT!!)**.

The next edition will be edited by Hank Ashton, TM3. Hank is an Associate Member who was not a Laffey Sailor but he sure behaves like one of us!! Hank has been "a regular" at the work party sessions for several years and he told me that he always worked "much harder" than Sonny!! Now that might sound impressive but one must recall all the pictures I've included in past newsletters showing vividly how "hard Sonny "works"!

Hanks address is: 18 Ferriss, Queensbury, NY 12804.

Phone Number: (518)-792-2517.

His email address is: hshazmat@roadrunner.com

As done with me, you should continue to report home address and phone number changes to Hank and the membership chairperson Kathy Pereira (See the Officers and Staff Listing).

I want all members to know that it has been my pleasure to serve this terrific association as the Laffey News Editor over these many years and I'm leaving that position in very good hands.

SEE Y'ALL – IT'S BEEN A LOT OF FUN"

TO MY SHIPMATES:

December 7, 1941 was a tragic day in the history of the United States. At the same time, it indirectly provided the opportunity for me to know and work with many of you who served on the USS Laffey (DD 724) during her illustrious career, and as she served her nation until 1975.

It has been an honor and privilege to have had this opportunity, and to call you "shipmate".

God bless you all. - Ari Phoutrides

TAPS LIST

Ed Almendinger, an FT
Served aboard Laffey late 60s to early 70s
Passed away February 14, 2017

Joseph Battista, F1/C
Served aboard Laffey 1946-1947
Passed away on December 18, 2016

Paul Cowin, PN1
Served Aboard Laffey 1969-1971
Passed away on February 23, 2017

Scott MacCaskill
Son of Deceased Member Jack MacCaskill
Passed away November 4, 2016

Lt. Joel Youngquist, Plank Owner
Served Aboard Laffey 1-44 to 9-45
Passed Away December 9, 2016

May the families of the deceased find comfort in their memories of those who have passed away.
May the deceased rest in eternal peace.

JEOPARDY / KNOW IT ALL !!

It appears that we have a helper who showed up at the recent mini work party and I hope he will become a member as well as a permanent fixture to our Association. His name is Ron Bowman and he came along and was sponsored by Max Saus. Ron is a very easy going guy and has his hands in anything you may ask him to help with. The one thing this work party can say about Ron is that our VP attempted to stump him on numerous trivia questions with a 90% correction rate. Ron needs to be on Jeopardy. So make it your goal to try to stump Ron!!

THE VIEWPOINT OF A SUCCESSFUL MAN

"Don't let the noise others' opinions drown out your own inner voice,
Steve Jobs



Clamagore submarine move from Patriots Point to Florida hinges on vote

By Dave Munday Charleston Post & Courier (1-8-2017) (Excerpts from the article)

Time has almost run out for Patriots Point's Cold War submarine attraction. For years, the Clamagore has faced the prospect of being submerged permanently along Florida's Atlantic coast because of mounting maintenance expenses. A vote this week could finally clear the way for the vessel's final voyage. The Palm Beach County Commissioners are set to vote to approve \$1 million to haul the Clamagore from Mount Pleasant and deposit it in 75 feet of water about a mile off Juno Beach, north of Miami.

Keeping the vessel at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum in Mount Pleasant costs \$250,000 a year in maintenance, and the sub needs \$6 million in repairs to keep it afloat, said Mac Burdette, executive director. It's an expense that the state-owned tourist attraction can't afford anymore, he said

REUNION "STUFF"

2017 USS LAFFEY REUNION - MEMPHIS, TN

It's that time of year again to start thinking about the reunion. We are going to Memphis,

Tennessee, the birthplace of Rock & Roll and the home of the Blues.

We will be staying at the Sheraton Downtown Hotel located at 250 North Main Street, Memphis, Tennessee. The rooms are \$119 a night plus taxes, there is also a \$26 a day parking fee (with in & out privileges). We are trying to make arrangements for parking off site for reduced rates. The room rate is available 3 days prior and post of the reunion. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle service but transportation is available at the airport to various hotels. The hotel is located in the heart of the city and situated on the Memphis trolley line.

Call the Sheraton (901-527-7300) to make your reservations.

Sunday night we will have Registration in the Hospitality suite starting at 6pm.

The Itinerary is still being worked out but will consist of a City Tour, Memorial Service, Banquet Dinner and of course no visit to Memphis is complete without a stop at Graceland.

Memphis has so much history and things to see and do. The National Civil Rights Museum, the Brooks Museum of Art, Auto Zone Park, the Memphis Rock & Soul Museum, Memphis Zoo and Sun Studio. They also have the biggest Bass Pro shop that I have ever seen and that includes great views of the city from the platform located off the restaurant. Beale Street is located near the hotel and has world renowned entertainment.

The cost for the reunion is \$150 per person. The cut-off date for registration is September 24, 2017. Hope you can join us in Memphis!

**2017 USS LAFFEY REUNION
REGISTRATION, MEMPHIS, TN**

Reunion Dates: October 8th - 11th 2017

Cost for Activities: \$150 per person

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Number and name of persons
Attending: _____

E/Mail: _____

Home Phone _____

Cell
Phone: _____

What Years did you serve on the USS Laffey?

What was your rate?

What day do you expect to arrive?

Will this be the First reunion that you are attending?

Special Needs / Allergies?

Please let us know if you will NOT be attending a specific function that is part of the itinerary during the reunion. We must pay per person, you will not

be refunded but the money would stay in the Association instead of paying for something that is not used.

Send Reunion Registration and check made out to "USS Laffey Association" to Jill Michel, 26 Quaker Road, Mickleton, NJ 08056-1303

Contact: Jill.Michel @comcast.net or call 609-870-0600 / 856-423-4263

Please contact the Sheraton Downtown directly at 901-527-7300 to reserve your room. The room rates are \$119 per night (plus taxes). Make sure to mention "The USS Laffey".



THE LAFFEY "IN PORT"



THE LAFFEY "AT SEA"

USS Laffey DD-724 Association

Bob Wampler

100 Landing Lane

Bluffton, SC 29909-6060

