



USS MC CAFFERY DD/DDE 860 SHIPMATES NEWSLETTER FALL 2014

Rich Kuroski Editor / 412-361-3147/rlski@verizon.net

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hello Shipmates. We have just enjoyed an outstanding reunion, thanks to Shipmates Jim and Susan Bell, Ron Trippett and Diane LaMontagne with over 100 Shipmates and guests attending our celebration. The reunion was held in Groton/Mystic CT, and included tours of the US Coast Guard Academy, Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park a visit to Battleship Cove in Fall River, including the WWII Battleship USS Massachusetts, the WWII Destroyer USS JP Kennedy (sister ship of the Mighty Mac), WWII SS USS Lionfish, and a PT boat. We enjoyed lunch on the Massachusetts, and held a memorial Service on the fantail to honor our departed shipmates. Many folks also visited and enjoyed `historic Mystic Seaport.

We had a business meeting, at which the site for our next reunion in 2016 was selected as Chattanooga TN. The current slate of officers was

re-elected, and Rich Kuroski has assumed duties to produce our Newsletter. Many thanks and “Bravo Zulu” to Nick Donatiello for his outstanding service as N/L editor for the past six years.

We enjoyed an excellent banquet Thursday night, with entertainment by Dan Clark, “the singing trooper” and his wife Mary, an accomplished opera singer. The McCaffery family was well represented, with special guest Pat McCaffery, who at age 9, broke the bottle of champagne on the bow of the McCaffery in 1945 to christen our ship in honor of her uncle LTCOL Joseph P. McCaffery USMC who was killed in Bougainville in 1943. A traditional highlight was trooper Dan singing McNamara’s band with Hugh and Joe McCaffery dancing Irish jigs for the enjoyment of all.

WELCOME ABOARD

We continue to add new shipmates to our association thanks to the efforts of Lee Hendrickson and Bob Biegen. If any of the shipmates listed served along with you, and you would like to contact them, let me know. No need to wait until the next reunion to say hello.

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	RATE	YEARS	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	RATE	YEARS
Arango	Anthony	EN3	66-68	Pryor	Rayford	FN	47-49
Baily	Johnathan	FN	60-61	Soli	Joseph	BT3	58
Bogstad	Joseph W	LT	72-73	VonGontard	Percy	ENS	72-73
Finger	Grover C.	SF1	70	Way	Jerry N	FN	71
Gebhard	Ronald	OS3	71-73	West	David C	LT	64-66
Hoffman	Frank W	TM3	72-73	Wiggins	James M	FN	68-70
Lochtefeld	Elmont (Ted)	S1C	46	Wills	Arthur N	MM2	67

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Listed below are the shipmates that have contributed to the publication of the newsletter since the last issue. We appreciate their support, as well as yours, and will work hard to provide you a newsletter that you will enjoy reading. To that end, we encourage emails and phone calls on what has been taking place in your life. Remember, names make news.

Contributions for the newsletter should be sent to Rich Kuroski (address is on this page). Make check payable to USS McCaffery. It is through your generous contributions that allow us to keep publishing the newsletter. * Designates Plank Owner

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	RATE	YEARS
Ammon Jr	Richard E	BT1	72-73
Beck	William W.	RM3	54-55
Bordner	Richard L	RM3	61-64
Brown	Stephen R	BT3	63-66
Cernava	John M	RM2	65-67
Deacon*	Ken	MM3	45-46
Dillingham	William	FP1	52-56
Eippert	Veachel H.	SA	53-53
Foster	Torrey N	LTJG	57-58
Fulks	Morris(Tex)	FN	50-54
Hayes	Winthrop H	SOG3	63-64
Hoaks	Leslie D	BT3	63-65
Jankoski	Peter M	MM3	60-60
Jaworowski	William J	ET2	59-62
Lammey Jr	William J	BM2	60-61
Leclair	Roger J.	BTFA	55-55
Lockhart	Bruce W	SN	69-70
Matzen	Robert J	SN	61-62
May	John W.	CS2	51-54
Raymond	Robert W	LTJG	60-63
Rogers Jr	William H	DK3	62-63
Stanczyk	Michael J	FN3	62-63
Steiner	James	RM3	59-63
Stockwell	Glenn A	OSC	72-73
Turk	J Donald	YN2	69-71
Ziska	James J	MM3	58-61

USS McCaffery Merchandise

Ron Trippett has the following McCaffery merchandise for sale in the ships store:

Blue Polo Shirts s-m-l-xl \$20.00, xxl \$24.00, xxxl \$26.00 Women's White Polo Shirts \$22.00
Jackets \$35.00 xxl \$38.00 Caps \$25.00 Belt Buckles \$12.50 Lic. Plate Holders \$8.00
Patches \$5.50 each/two for \$10.00 Coffee Cups \$8.50 T-Shirts \$6.50 xxl \$8.00
USS McCaffery Shoulder Arm Patches \$2.50. Ron's address and email are on this page.

TAPS

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of our departed shipmates. If you know of a shipmate that is hospitalized or deceased, please notify Doug Hackett so he can respond on behalf of the association in an appropriate manner. The following list are those for which we have been notified on their passing since our last issue. We publish the names when we receive them and verify their passing as best we can. If we have erred, in any way, please let us know.

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	RATE	YEARS
Crowell	Edward T.	RDC	62-67
Feldman	Harold C.	YN3	46
Flumer *	Ralph T.	FN	45-46
Goddard	Clinton P.	YNSN	54-55
Hoop	William K.	SN	66-69
Hornaday	Paul B.	BMSM	52
Johnson	Kenneth R.	FTGSN	53-54
Kallman	Harold E	EN3	59-63
Larimer	James M	BT2	55-59
Lavrinc	John R	FN	48
Oswald	Albert C	FTA3	56-58
Ragland	O E (Gene)	SN	63-66
Robinson	Gilbert	LTJG	53-57
Salafia	Anthony	ME2	52-57
Smith	Forrest C	FN	60
Tormey	Lawrence P	RD1	51-54

The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors

By James D. Hornfischer

Reviewed by *Dennis J. Ringle*

In this naval version of "David versus Goliath," author James D. Hornfischer masterfully brings to life the heroic actions of a handful of officers and sailors. It is a fresh look at the men, ships and events that shaped one of the U.S. Navy's finest hours, the monumental naval engagements of October 23-26, 1944, known collectively as the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Hornfischer is especially skilled at introducing the reader, in a very personal way, to the key players in the unfolding drama. This is a compelling section of the book, and it addresses not only the senior naval officers, but also the junior officers and enlisted sailors who would bear the brunt of the fighting. This personalization of the participants adds a great deal of emotion to the drama as the battle is joined.

The author also does a commendable job of introducing the various ships that played such an integral role in the contest. He views them as a sailor would, and he has an uncanny knack of personalizing them, just as he does the men. The author's description of life at sea on the small rolling and pitching deck of a destroyer is highly realistic. His detailed account of the daily work routine, the duties, food and entertainment—not to mention the time honored "crossing the line" ceremony—leaves the reader feeling like a member of the crew.

Most of the book deals with the critical daytime surface engagement between the overwhelming firepower of the Imperial Japanese Center Force and Task Unit 77.4.3 ("Taffy 3"), Rear Adm. Clifton A.F. Sprague's vastly outgunned force of escort carriers and destroyers. The Battle of the San Bernardino Strait opened with the simultaneous sighting by the two adversaries around 7 a.m. Sprague soon realized that Admiral William F. Halsey had departed the area with the majority of the surface ships in pursuit of the Japanese carriers. Sprague's "tin cans," therefore, were all that stood between the massive Japanese fleet and the invasion force of General Douglas MacArthur. Adding to the peril, the Japanese ships enjoyed a speed advantage, denying Sprague the prudent course of flight. Knowing full well the hopelessness of the situation, but also seeing the necessity of buying time, he ordered his destroyers to attack the

(The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors continued)

vastly superior force of battleships and heavy cruisers. Naval aviators were also ordered to attack and harass the enemy despite lacking armor-piercing bombs and torpedoes. Armed only with aerial depth charges, antipersonnel bombs and .50-caliber machine guns, the aviators descended upon the Japanese like a swarm of angry hornets.

The combination of surface torpedo attacks from the destroyers and the harassing attacks from the air hindered a Japanese pursuit of the hapless carriers. Following their torpedo attacks, the destroyers actually closed to within 4,000 yards of the Japanese leviathans and engaged them with their 5-inch guns. The enemy answered the American fire with 8-, 14-, 16- and even 18.1-inch rounds. Despite the early success of the American destroyers, their luck finally ran out after an hour of fighting as the Japanese gunners found their mark and methodically demolished one escort carrier, two destroyers and one destroyer escort.

It was not in vain, however. Just after 9 a.m., the enemy commander ordered a withdrawal of his forces. The Japanese inability to close with the escort carriers had deprived them of the initiative and cloaked Vice Adm. Takeo Kurita in a true fog of war. MacArthur's invasion force had been saved by the sacrifices of the tin can sailors and a handful of aviators, although the cost was high. In addition to the enormous loss of life on the destroyers and escort carriers, another 116 men perished due to the poorly coordinated rescue efforts of Admiral Halsey and his staff. The survivors of the three destroyers were left to the mercy of shark attacks, dehydration and exposure as the men drifted helplessly on the high seas for 2 1/2 days.

Hornfischer closes this epic by describing the reunion in 2001 of three of the tin can survivors. During the meeting, the former commanding officer of USS *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) delivered an emotional speech describing the ship's near destruction by a mine in the Persian Gulf during the Iraq–Iran war. He described how the men fought to save their ship and received inspiration from a bronze plaque listing the names of the men who had served on its namesake. As each man went to his station he touched the plaque that bonded him to the men who had fought to save the ship 44 years earlier. With their legacy intact, the silver-haired veterans took solace in the fact that their sacrifices had not been in vain.