



Volume XXI, Issue 28

April 2010



# The Six Gun

Official Newsletter of the USS Charles S. Sperry DD 697 Association

## President's Message



Cal and Fran Dyk

Greetings! As we move forward to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the USS Charles S. Sperry DD-697 Association, Fran and I look forward to the reunion. I am grateful to the officers who have made a difference in our association and lives through their selfless dedication to our association.

Have a safe trip to Charleston and I look forward to seeing each of you soon.

Sincerely,

*Cal*

Calvin Dyk  
President

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## Charleston Here We Come-20th Anniversary Reunion

The Sheraton Charleston Airport Hotel will be the host for the 20th Anniversary Reunion on April 22-April 25, 2010.

### PATRIOT'S POINT TOUR:

The tour is scheduled for Friday, April 23, 2010 from 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. You can check out the web site for Patriot's Point <http://www.patriotspoint.org/exhibits/fleet/laffey.html>

Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum is home to the USS Laffey (DD724) and a fleet of historic ships, including the *USS Yorktown* and *USS Clamagore*, as well as the Medal of Honor Museum, Cold War Submarine Memorial and the Vietnam Naval Support Base. This is the only exhibit of its kind in the United States, which provides a first-hand look at life on the front lines. We won't get to

visit the Laffey because of recently completed repairs it won't be ready for visitors for a while. Maybe next time!







*"We who remain do not  
know the course to steer  
and we believe our  
shipmates setting their  
course by those  
beacons that were given  
to them have found  
their harbor safely."*



## Condolences

It is with great sadness that I share the passing of Billie Psencik, wife of shipmate Ernest Psencik. Billie informed me on Sunday, March 28 that she had been diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. The cancer was in her spine, shoulder, lungs and ribs. She was set to start radiation the following week. At the time of her passing she was in the hospital and went into cardiac arrest. The doctors were unable to revive her. Billie and Ernest loved the reunions they were able to attend. She was a great worker assisting Rose, Vera and Linda in the Hospital-ity Room. Ernest served aboard the Sperry from 1948-52. Condolences

may be sent to him at : 1413 N. Chetango, Angleton, TX 77515-3214.

Past President, Roger Mueller passed away in February after a long battle with cancer. Roger fought a good fight. During his time aboard ship from August 1959 to August 1961 he served our country fearlessly. Roger was in the E Division. Roger was former president of the association and he will be missed.

Condolences also go to Bob and Barbara Jennings at the passing of Bob's daughter, Elaine Jennings Horton on March 17 after a long battle with diabetes and COPD.

## Gone But Not Forgotten

John Bartton, Andrew Brinson, William Brooks, George Burke, John Higby, A. Q. Howell Jr., John Misko, Roger Mueller, Innis O'Rourke, Galen Smith, Walter Suggs, Richard J. Vari, Roy Wilhite, Walt Wilkerson.

Names provided by Chaplain Roy Welch on April 2, 2010.

Shipmates Batton, Brinson, Brooks, Burke, Higby, Howell, Misko, Mueller, O'Rourke, Smith, Suggs, Vari, Wilhite, and Wilkerson sailed through life meeting their share of calms, storms, adverse tides, and favoring winds.

Their ship of life has now come to its final anchorage in a harbor unknown to mortal man.

We who remain do not know the course to steer and we believe our shipmates setting their course by those beacons that were given to them have found their harbor safely.

To those loved ones who our departed shipmates have left behind, awaiting their own day of departure and voyage to that same harbor of eternal mercy, we can offer our sincere condolences in this time of separation and loneliness.

**Treasurer's Report:** None

**Audit Report:** None



## Crews News



**Charles S. Dohm** (5/45 - 6/46) of Turlock, CA wrote to the president on March 25 that there was an article in the July 9, 1945 Life Magazine that the USS Bunker Hill was hit by a Japanese kamakazi on May 11, 1945 around 9 AM and he knows firsthand because he was there. (Ed. Note: One of the photos that was donated to the Sperry several years ago shows the Bunker Hill just after she was hit. The Sperry can be seen alongside the Bunker Hill providing damage control and rescuing sailors who were thrown overboard by the explosion.)

**Lyle Miller** (5/45 - '47) submitted the following story about his naval career: "The Sperry was my third ship and I was part of the initial crew that reported aboard while she was being built and outfitted in the Federal Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Kearney, New Jersey. I stayed aboard the Sperry until 1947, at which time she was in Algiers Naval Station in New Orleans. I remember my original Chief named Carter, a Water-tender (CWT), who had almost twenty years in the Navy. The original Chief Engineer was Lt. Dennison and his successor was Lt. E.W. Osman. During conversations with Carter, I learned he had some harrowing wartime experiences, and was not planning on going to sea aboard the Sperry. Under the assumption he was "shell-shocked", he checked himself into the naval hospital. That made me the leading petty officer of B Division. After commissioning in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the shakedown cruise we left for the West Coast, where, if I remember correctly, we picked up a replacement for Chief Carter. As hard as I tried I could never remember his name until I read the list of personnel who had received awards in one of the Sperry newsletters. His name was Duard E. Wilson, CWT. He was the one who recommended me for Chief. Does anyone have his address or phone number? He would be about 88 or 89. I've tried Intellius and other sources that I thought would lead me to him. Each time I struck out. Now, wasn't that a nice long story just to get information about one name? Something that could have been said in about five lines."

Another e-mail from Lyle mentioned Shipmate Yacovangelo, a machinist's mate 1/C, from Massachusetts, who was in the damage control party and jumped in the water to rescue pilots after they had been shot down. On such occasions, the Sperry was dead on the water, and when she came under attack from Japanese planes, the swimmers' safety lines had to be cut loose. Later on, the ships would go back and pick

them up. Lyle requested the e-mail address for Yacovangelo and another shipmate, Vessia, from B division, who he believes lives in Florida.

**Al Ward** (8/52-11/53) Al's wife Carol advised us that they are unable to make one of the reunions because he has neuropathy in his feet, and a trip is out of the question. He is too proud to be put in a wheelchair. They wish everyone a great time at the reunion and reminded us that we don't appreciate our health until something hits us.

**George Olson** ('51-'54) It is always great to hear from George through his e-mails as he keeps us informed about his travels which include Thailand and New Hampshire. He has been able to attend American Legion and VFW meetings and reunions on his trips, but misses making the Sperry reunion. He suggested that April is a very strange month for a reunion because school is in session, it is too cold and other reasons. He proposed that Sperry members consider another time of the year for reunions. He has organized his library and photos of the Sperry, which includes Sperry plane guard duty, refueling and more onto a video tape that he can bring to a reunion if he is able to attend at some point. He also has many color slides of torpedo exercises near Culebra Island in the Caribbean; Bordeaux, France; Andalsnes, Norwa.; Isle of Wight and Plymouth, England; Norfolk, Virginia, and others.

### INQUIRIES ABOUT FORMER SPERRY SHIPMATES:

**John Nugent** (1965-66) Was a SN (GM Striker), retired as EO1, His email address is [deejon45@yahoo.com](mailto:deejon45@yahoo.com)

**Duane Kallen** (1962-65) Was Electricians Mate, retired after 20 years. His email address is [kjalene2892@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kjalene2892@sbcglobal.net)  
Home address is 80 Avery Hill Rd., Ledyard, CT 06339

**Neal Crain** (1944-45) His son advised us that he has a picture of his dad and several other Sperry shipmates (Including Nick Kroeper) on Samar Island. He would like to give him a copy of the photo and see if he remembers his father Neal.

**Ken Swiderski** (1969-71) He ran across the Sperry website, but is not interested in becoming a member at this time. His email address is [kjswiderski@gmail.com](mailto:kjswiderski@gmail.com)