



SIXGUN

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

Winter-Spring 2021



2021 Reunion

USS Charles S Sperry DD697 USS Conway DD/DDE 507

To be held jointly September 19 – 23 in Myrtle Beach, SC

Finally! We talked about it in business meetings in Jacksonville and Washington. It was discussed when Covid prevented our April 2020 Reunion in Albuquerque. The Conway lost their reunion last year, too, in Buffalo, NY. Shipmate Joe Friend, who served aboard both ships brought an invitation to the **Charles S Sperry** Board of Directors:

“All of the Conway Shipmates look forward to having the Shipmates of the USS Charles S Sperry join in this combined reunion.”

On behalf of our Shipmates, the Board unanimously agreed: Yes! And Thank You!

A message from Frank Smith, president

Last year, Shipmate **Joe Friend** invited us to come to *the USS Conway* reunion in Buffalo, NY. Since we share a few shipmates, we liked the idea of possibly joining them for dual reunions in the future. This year seems like the right time to meet up in Myrtle Beach. As both groups become smaller in number, dual reunions make for better deals with hotels and tours.

The Conway Association functions much like the **Charles S Sperry**. We enjoy our hospitality suite, reconnecting with old friends, and swapping sea stories with new friends. We will have our separate times for business meetings and electing new officers. But both groups have past traditions such as taking a bus tour of local venues, eating out at area restaurants, having a banquet dinner and the Two Bell Ceremony, and of course, spirited bidding “wars” on surprise totes, mystery bags, and live auctions. The Sperry and Conway crews will enjoy our Reunion time together. I hope to see you there. Frank

Hello Sperry Shipmates. Welcome to Myrtle Beach South Carolina!

Our own Sperry Reunion Coordinator **Gary Chesser** (and his lovely wife Linda) are pleased and delighted to announce that Rick and Pam Miller of the **USS Conway** will be your Myrtle Beach Reunion Hosts. Rick and Pam have found beach front resort lodgings in a relaxing atmosphere at the **Beach Cove Resort**. ALL rooms are Ocean Front Executive Suites. These one-bedroom suites include two queen beds and bath, living room with sleeper sofa, a small efficiency kitchen, table and chairs, and a private ocean front balcony. Cost: \$85 plus tax and fees for a total of \$112 per night. (This rate is honored for three days prior and after the Reunion.)



The Hotel will, of course, be providing one large hospitality room throughout the Reunion for our Shipmates and families to get to know one another. The Conway has very graciously offered to provide a large wall banner for the **USS Charles S Sperry** which will match the **USS Conway**.

Bring your Sperry-Conway pictures and memorabilia to share in the Hospitality Room.

Scheduled Events: lots of activities and lots of free time. Perfect.

Sunday, September 19: Welcoming Shipmates throughout the day in the Hospitality Room. At 6:30 pm the **Conway** is providing free Pizza and Salad (soft drinks, beer, wine and snacks).

Monday, September 20: The morning and early afternoon is yours to explore the area, sit on the beach, or meet up in the Hospitality Suite. The Association Board meeting is TBA.

Rick and Pam encourage you to have a lite lunch as we have Dinner and Show tickets (departing the hotel at 4:15 pm). They promise an amazing dining experience at the award-winning, world famous **Original Benjamin's Calabash Seafood Restaurant**. In addition to bountiful SC seafood buffet (or chicken, steaks etc.), they have an onsite Master Shipwright showing his large-scale models of historical cruise liners, schooners, military ships, and an 18-foot Queen Elizabeth II.

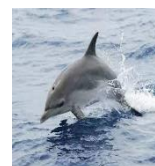
Following dinner, 7 to 8:30pm we have prime seats at the **Carolina Opry Theater** for a “top attraction” evening of Opry country meets Las Vegas-style dancing girls; winning performers from *The Voice, America's Got Talent*; more music and comedy. And, hip-hop cloggers. Rave revues.

By the way, for anyone who is a Michael Jackson fan, the Carolina Opry Theater has a one night-only show (Sunday, September 19 at 7 pm, tickets on sale now and will sell out quickly) said to be the “#1 MJ tribute show in the world” called **INVINCIBLE: A Glorious tribute to Michael Jackson**.

Tuesday, September 21: We leave by charter bus at 9:30 am for the **Crazy Sister Marina** (home of charter fishing boats) at Murrells Inlet. We board the flat bottom



Saltwater Marsh Explorer for a 90-minute excursion exploring the coastal waters ecosystem. The Captain uses nets and dredges to retrieve small specimens to be seen – and possibly held -- before being returned to the water. We're having lunch at the Wicked Tuna Restaurant, then back to the hotel at 2:30 pm.



The **Annual Meeting** is at a time and place TBA.

Tuesday Dinner is at the hotel with an Italian Buffet and cash bar. Following is the annual **Silent and Live Auctions**. We will, of course, have our Secret Suitcase(s) -- of course, with hidden cash, and the **Conway** has an annual "White Elephant Auction." This has always been a major fundraiser for both groups, so we are expecting some lively and fun bidding "wars" led by our own auctioneers Shipmate Robert and Annette Dykes. Anyone can bid on whatever catches his or her eye (and wallet). Proceeds from every item goes to the Association that brought the treasures and donations.

Wednesday, September 22: Today is a free fun-day until we gather in the early evening for our last formal event together, a **Farewell dinner**. We will be taking group pictures. For the "on your own" day our Reunion Hosts Rick and Pam Miller are providing a Welcome Packet with brochures of Myrtle Beach sightseeing, museums, golf courses (9, 18, and Putt-Putt), area gardens, restaurants, local dive bars and shopping. You have all day to walk, ride, relax, or Christmas gift shop to your heart's content. Or, swap sea stories in the Hospitality Room.

However, rather than shopping or Putt-Putt, if you want to spend the day adventuring, let this editor point you in one possible direction. During our 2020 Covid-year of isolation, did you watch the Netflix TV documentary "**Tiger King**" about the big lion and tiger turf wars between 3 zookeepers Joe Exotic; Carol Baskin and her missing and presumed dead/eaten multi-millionaire husband Don Lewis; and, yes, THE Doc Antle of Doc Antle's Myrtle Beach Safari.



The photo to the right is Doc Antle and Hercules the 900 pound, 11 foot tall standing on his hind legs, Guinness Book of World Records three-time winning Liger. If you have on your "Bucket List" spending three hours at night in a tiger palace garden up close and personal, hand feeding, yes hand feeding, an adult Snow-White Bengal Tiger, well, Doc Antle can make this happen. Reservations required; bandages will be provided.

*A bonus: you can roast marshmallows with a world-famous chimpanzee. (Presumably "Sugriva" has his own marshmallow stick.) If wandering in the dark with tigers isn't your thing, you can take a daytime Safari tour AND have your expensive picture taken with a baby tiger. (BTW, baby tiger picture-taking for profit started the "**Tiger King**" feud, and got Joe Exotic 22 years, no presidential pardon.)*



Thursday, September 23: Check out and Farewells to our Shipmates and families. Should the **Charles S Sperry** members vote to do so, we will join the **Conway** in a dual 2022 Reunion next year in Buffalo, NY.

"Shipmate, you stand relieved ... We have the Watch"



Thomas Francis Doyle, 95, **planker**, (44-47) passed on September 14, 2020. Seaman First Class Doyle was among the special crew to commission DD-697 on 17 May 1944 with Commander H.H. McIlhenny in command, and served through the last battles of the war. He was in the Association until 2011, and remained our friend and honored shipmate. He enjoyed war movies, war books and his family.



Salvatore A. "Sal" Termine, 95, (44-46), passed away on Easter Sunday April 4, 2021 in Norristown, PA. Sal was proud of his status as a WWII veteran on the *USS Charles S. Sperry* first crew. After the war years, Sal and his late wife Ann owned and operated numerous gas stations. He attended the Pensacola, Norfolk, and Philadelphia Reunions. "A sweet man" Sal is survived by two daughters, two grands, nieces and nephew.

John Louis Callahan, 91, **planker**, (44-47), was living in Pace, Florida when he passed July 28, 2017. Shipmate Callahan held the honored distinction among shipmates as a Planker of DD-697. He had been active with the *Charles S Sperry* Association through 2011.



Joseph Bowles, (68-71) It was reported by Manfred Hilberer that his long-time friend and Shipmate passed from Covid-19 on January 4, 2021. Manfred and Joe had served in B-Division together. Joe and his wife Amy had moved to Myrtle Beach in 2020. They made the 2015 reunion in Nashville. Hopefully, Amy will be able to join us at the 2021 reunion in Myrtle Beach. Sympathy cards can be sent to Amy Bowles 2700 N. Ocean Blue, Myrtle Beach SC 29577.



Richard "Dick" Biondo, 87, (58-60) passed September 27, 2020. Dick was a YN1 aboard the *Charles S Sperry*, and retired as a CWO. He and his wife Maggie hosted the first reunion that Shipmates Gary and Linda Chesser and Fred and Theresa Hilberer attended at Norfolk, VA in 2005. He lived in Virginia Beach for 58 years, and was active in many civic clubs. Dick donated his body to the state of Virginia for medical students.

Robert Disipio, 68, (71-73) passed November 18, 2020 in Philadelphia, PA. A proud Navy Veteran, Bob stayed in contact through the years with shipmate Walt Beattie who reported his death. They were both on the 1971 DECOM crew. Bob's wife Carol predeceased him.

Wilton H. Dorris, 89, (50-51) passed November 1, 2019 in Lemoyne, NE.

Alfred V. Bitetti, 73, (52-55) passed October 11, 2007, in Buellton, CA. He was inactive 2002.



Charles W. "Charlie" Fields, 76, died June 8, 2014 in Hartsville, SC. Shipmates serving with him remember a first-class storyteller of the South Carolina kind. Charlie loved kids, started the Hartsville Boxing Club, going on to become the SC Boxing Commissioner of the Amateur Boxing Federation. Those close to Charlie said you always walked away laughing with a funny story or good joke.



Shipmate **"Skip" Belz** let us know his wife Kathy, after a life full of love and adventure, peacefully passed November 19, 2020. She and Skip celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 9. Kathy and Skip have attended many Charles S Sperry Reunions, and her friend Barbara Jennings said she is most remembered for being a fun lady. Not ones to stay still for very long, the couple became "Summer Michiganders" and travelled to the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas where they wintered for 33 years in San Benito, Texas. They become travel hosts for Viva Mexico Tours, Inc., which gave Kathy and Skip many opportunities to criss cross Mexico.

Financials October 2020 thru March 2021

Third Quarter 2020		DUES	SHIP	REUNION	SUP	BALANCE
ENDING BALANCE						\$22,948.59
October	Lyle Miller deposit	25.00				\$22,973.59
	No expenses					
November	E. Clayton deposit	50.00				\$23,023.59
	No expenses					
December	No deposits					\$23,023.59
12/21/2020	Expenses Lee Barnes					
	Six Gun Printing				(\$262.00)	
Fourth Quarter 2020						
ENDING BALANCE						
First Quarter 2021						\$22,761.59
January, February, March	No activity					\$22,761.59
First Quarter						
ENDING BALANCE						\$22,761.59

2020 - 2021 Officers and Directors can be reached thru email sperrydd697@yahoo.com

President, Frank Smith; Vice president, Robert Dykes; Treasurer, Ron LaPlaca; Secretary, Lee Barnes; Chaplain, Joe Friend; Webmaster Gary Chesser, dd697dm@bellsouth.net
Trustees, B.W. Jennings and Charles Quehl; Six Gun Editor, Beverly Barnes Rayfield

AHOY, SHIPMATES, NOW HEAR THIS. THIS IS YOUR ASSOCIATION SECRETARY SPEAKING:

On the following pages, **WHICH CAN BE TORN/CUT OUT AND RETURNED**, are:

1. **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION** WHICH ALL SHIPMATES SHOULD FILL OUT AND RETURN WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEES.
2. IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON ATTENDING THE 2021 REUNION IN MYRTLE BEACH, FILL OUT AND RETURN THE **2021 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**; AND
3. **WE DIDN'T HAVE ROOM FOR OUR NORMAL REUNION BADGE ORDER FORM IN THIS NEWSLETTER.** SO, PLEASE USE THE BACK SIDE OF THE MEMBERSHIP FORM PAGE TO PRINT THE NAMES OF EACH PERSON ATTENDING THE REUNION. IF YOU HAVE BADGES, YOU CAN BRING THEM. IF YOU NEED A NEW NAME BADGE FOR YOU OR GUESTS, PLEASE INDICATE THE NEED ON THE BACK OF THE MEMBERSHIP FORM (NO CHARGE FOR NEW BADGES).
4. IF YOU ARE TRAVELING **ALONE** TO THE REUNION, PLEASE **USE THE BACK OF THE MEMBERSHIP FORM PAGE TO GIVE EMERGENCY CONTACT/MEDICATION/ALLERGIES INFORMATION.**
5. THAT IS ALL.