

USS FRANK E. EVANS DD 754

WWII KOREA VIETNAM



FOOTLOCKER TALK NEWSLETTER NUMBER 89 — THIRD QUARTER 2023

Greetings Shipmate, Family & Friends

Hope this newsletter finds everyone happy and healthy. As we watch the news each day we find the weather more unpredictable and wonder how is this effecting our shipmates, members and families. Please stay safe!

Finally we have some good news to announce, Representatives Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Kelly Armstrong (R-N.D.), and Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) introduced the USS Frank E. Evans Act (H.R. 3826) on 5 June 2023. This bipartisan effort is to ensure that the names of the "Lost 74" are added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. Since that time we have picked up more co-sponsors. If you haven't reached out to your representative, now is the time to do so. Next hurdles is to clear committee, get a senate companion bill and eventually get a vote for passage.

All plans are in place for this years reunion in Springfield, dates are September 27th to the 30th, 2023. It is not to late to make your reservation but you need to do it soon. The reunion package in on the website with all the particulars. Review it then we recommend you call Donna Kraus at 760-521-4700 to make your arrangements. She will provide you the best way to make payment and get your room reservation before the deadline.

As always, please stay in touch, write articles for our newsletter and remain healthy.

Steve Kraus, Assoc. President

Terry Vejr, Assoc. VP

IN MEMORIAM



Shipmate and Association Member BT2 Charles Wayne Berry Sr., age 77, of Sweeny, TX passed away on Sunday, April 17, 2022, at his home in Texas. Charles was born on May 15, 1944, to parents Charlie and Elizabeth Berry in Edinburg, TX. He graduated from Port Isabel High School and then joined the United States Navy in October of 1962. He came onboard USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754) on 9 December 1963 and reported to B Division. Charles proudly served his country and was a Vietnam War Veteran.

He married the love of his life Jeanette on December 18, 1963. Charles and Jeanette settled down in Sweeny, TX where they raised their children Joanna, Charles Jr., Carl, Misty, Charlie Jones, and Matt Kubena. Charles worked for over 20 years at the Dow Oyster Creek plant as a Rig Welder, he then became a Millwright until his retirement. He was

a member of VFW Post 8551.

Charles was preceded in death by his parents Charlie and Elizabeth Berry, son Carl Berry, grandson Jonathon Willy and brother Charles Hamm. He is survived by wife Jeanette Berry, daughters Joanna Willy and Mark Honea and Misty Kershaw and husband Craig, sons Charlie Berry and wife Kim, Charlie Jones and wife Lynette, Matt .



We are saddened by the news of the passing of Engineman Third Class Peter J. Wallis Jr. age 84. He died in his home town of Hill City, Minnesota. Peter died from an aortic rupture as a complication from a noninvasive heart procedure due to a condition called aortic sclerosis.

Peter came onboard USS Frank E. Evans on 31 October 1957 and was assigned to the A Gang. Peter was a long-standing association member who joined the association in the year 2000 and remained current with his dues for 23 years. Peter attended 16 reunions with his last being our 50th Memorial in Long Beach, California. When we had our reunion in Waterloo Iowa, Peter showed up on his motor cycle. He was asked, aren't you a little to old to be riding bikes? He responded, I have been riding bikes since I was 5 years old!

The family reports they are scheduling an interment at Fort Snelling national cemetery in Minneapolis St. Paul for this fall likely in the month of September. Peter requested to have some of his ashes distributed in the Pacific Ocean.

IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED



Eva E. Clark, 86 a resident of Scottsdale, Arizona, passed away June 23, 2023. Eva is survived by her husband Shipmate FT1 Charles Clark (1958-60), her son David, her sister Carmen, her granddaughter Chantal and Leslie, her great grandson Mason, and her great granddaughter Madison.

Eva was born May 11, 1937, in Atiquizaya, El Salvador, and immigrated to the United States with her family in December 1950. She attended High School in Long Beach, California. She met her husband Charles in 1958 and married in 1961. During her years, she worked as a medical office manager and as hospital office manager. Service was held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Scottsdale on July 7, 2023.

Charles reported that his dear wife of nearly 62 years, passed away June 23, 2023, after a long bout with dementia. They met in 1958 at the Armed Services YMCA in Long Beach, CA, while stationed on the Evans. They married in 1961 and enjoyed a wonderful life together. Charles will certainly miss her.

We were shocked and saddened with the loss of Kenneth "Ken Norton." Ken passed away on 30 June 2023 after a bout of lung cancer. He was at our last reunion in Portland Maine and appeared to be his normal fun loving self. Shortly after returning home he became short of breath and experienced a significant loss of energy. He was then diagnosed with lung cancer and treatment began immediately. Shortly after his first treatments of chemo he lost so much energy that he was told he needed to regain his strength before any more treatments.

Ken lived in Beacon, New York close to family. On Sundays you could always find Ken at his mother house. Ken's mother, Lena, died last November at age 100. He attended his first USS Frank E. Evans reunion in 2004 and never missed a reunion after that. He recognized the importance of having his brother's name (Ensign John Townsend Norton) along with the other 73 added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. Ken took pride in his contribution in producing YouTube videos that supported the reasons why his brother's name deserved his place on the memorial wall.



The family indicated a memorial will be done, but not now. Condolences can be sent to his sister Elizabeth Norton-Lasley through Facebook or by email at liznorton88@gmail.com.

On behalf of the association we offer our sincerest condolences for the family. You have our deepest sympathy and unwavering support. Wishing you peace, comfort, courage, and lots of love at this time of sorrow.

IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED



Frances Leona Cherry (Messier) was born on September 24th, 1940, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. After a life filled with love, she peacefully departed on May 30th, 2023, in Post Falls, Idaho, after bravely battling Alzheimer's disease. Frances was preceded in death by her beloved parents, Anna and Fredrick Messier, her husband George, as well as her dear daughter Dawn and infant son Joseph as well as a brother, Dick, whose memories and love reside in her heart. Frederic Conrad Messier died in the June 3 1969 collision between HMAS Melbourne and USS Frank E. Evans DD 74-54.

Frances's legacy lives on through her devoted sons, Sean (Raini) and James (Megan), and her adored grandchildren, Reilly, Tarryn, Reagan, and Avery. She also leaves sisters Elayne (Richard), Anne, Joanne and brothers Michael and Charles (Nancy) as well as numerous nieces and nephew's. A dedicated homemaker, she poured her heart into creating a warm and nurturing home. Later in life, she found fulfillment in banking, pursuing her career until her retirement in 2006. In retirement, Frances and George moved to Coeur d'Alene, ID, to be close to their children and grandchildren. She cherished her family, supporting her grandchildren's sports activities with boundless enthusiasm. Her love for the Boston Red Sox brought her excitement and helped retain a bond with New England. Frances found solace, strength, and friendship in her faith, remaining an active member of St. Thomas Church in Coeur d'Alene.

Shipmate and association member FT3 Howard "Nolan" Craig passed away on 12 May 2023 in Albuquerque, NM. Nolan served onboard USS Frank E. Evans DD 754 between 1955 and 57. Nolan was onboard Evans when it went to Australia for the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. Nolan provided his Olympic ticket as memorabilia, we display it at reunions.

Nolan attended his first reunion along with his wife Shirley for the 2010 San Diego gathering. We were amazed with all the stories he had about the ship, he was a great story teller. He then came to the next 10 reunions until 2020 when he lost his wife.



Sadly, we report the passing of Joanne Conely, wife of MM3 Duane 'Butter Ball' Conley, survivor. Joanne passed away on 31 March 2023. Joanne had a significant heart attack in December of 2022 and remained in several medical facilities since.

Joann was active in many Association activities, especially in the California area. A memorial ceremony is planned in the future and information will be shared when plans are made. Condolences can be sent to Duane at 28262 Chula Vista Ave. Sun City, CA 92586



Marlene Stephens passed away on July 3, 2023 in Glendale, Arizona. Marlene is the wife of shipmate and association member BT3 Ron Stephens 1967-69 (S). A celebration of life was held on July 22, 2023. Marlene Stephens, affectionately known as Beebo or Bim, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family and loved ones. Bim was a beloved wife, mother, sister, aunt, friend, but her favorite title was Grandma. She will be deeply missed by all.

She is survived by her husband Ronald (known as Steve to her), son Brian, daughter in law Kirin, their children Andrew and Abigail, daughter Elizabeth, son in law Dickson, their daughter Zakia, sister Shirley, brother in law Ron and many adored nieces and nephews.

**USS Frank E. Evans DD 754 Memorial Tree
Arlington National Cemetery July 25, 2023
This tree was 6 foot tall when planted**



MEET COMMAND MASTER CHIEF GRAVES—USS KIDD (DDG 100)



Command Master Chief Graves is a native of Louisville, Kentucky. He entered the United States Navy and attended Recruit Training in August of 1998.

Since his initial training he has been assigned operational assignments at Fighter Squadron Eleven (VF-11), Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Eight Five (HSC 85), Destroyer Squadron One (DESRON ONE) and USS KIDD (DDG 100.)

His shore assignments include; Navy Reserve Recruiting Command Great Lakes, Navy Recruiting District Nashville, Navy Recruiting District Ohio, Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command, Navy Reserve Center North Island, Commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve, and Navy Reserve Center Minneapolis. Master Chief Graves reported in April 2022 as the Command Master Chief onboard USS

KIDD (DDG 100). Awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (5 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (8 awards) and various other personal and campaign awards.

UPDATE FROM USS KIDD

By Mike Lehman

Kidd has been busy the past 3 months away from homeport, conducting training and getting updates to their Combat Systems suite. I always thought it would be tough to be stationed in Everett with the 16 hour sea detail, but having to leave for training and workup has got to be challenging.

Chief Mike

XO's REPORT

Mr. Lehman,

KIDD is currently in its integrated training phase as part of Carrier Strike Group ONE (CSG-1) and Destroyer Squadron ONE (CDS-1). The crew recently returned to Everett after a three-month period in the Southern California and Hawaii operating areas while participating in a Surface Warfare Advanced Tactics and Training (SWATT) exercise and Group Sail. During that time KIDD honed its warfare skills with other CSG-1 and CDS-1 units, to include a live missile firing exercise. Before returning to Everett, the ship visited Naval Base Ventura County in Port Hueneme, California, for extensive grooms to its combat systems suite, and was visited by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) for a periodic material inspection. The crew performed admirably through every challenge and returned to Everett more capable and combat ready.

Please let me know if there are any questions. We look forward to seeing the next newsletter.

v/r
CDR Kevin Pilcher

NEW HAMPSHIRE MARINE MEMORIAL REDEDICATION CEREMONY (JUNE 3, 2023)

BY TIM WENDLER

Thanks to the fantastic efforts of Terry Vejr (Vice President of the USS Frank E Evans Association), Rob Biron (veteran and Manchester fireman), and American Legion Post 35 Commander Berk Bennett, now Ron Thibodeau and Gary Vigue are remembered in New Hampshire for their sacrifice. Terry had been trying to reach out to New Hampshire without success. At our last reunion, Rob Biron saw our members and asked Terry what it was all about. Terry told him our story. Rob worked his own network, and before we knew it, everything was approved for a June 3, 2023 ceremony to add their names to the Lady of the Sea Memorial at Hampton Beach, NH.

Quartermaster 3rd Class Gary Vigue was born in Dover, graduated from Farmington High School, was married and had started a family. His cousin Bryan Lebel was there to remember him. Radarman 2nd Class Ron Thibodeau was from Manchester (like William Downs whose son was lost at sea and inspired the Lady of the Sea memorial). Ron married his high school sweetheart and enlisted in the Navy. His family including sister Christine, brother-in-law Brad, niece Tamra, cousin Cora attended to remember him.



MEMORIAL DAY 2023

By Bob Berweger

On Memorial Day 2023 EM3 Robert Berweger 1968-69 (survivor) being escorted to the podium by a Sea Cadet to unveil the permanent road sign for Highway 18 just west of McMinnville, headed westerly toward the Oregon Coast. The dedication of the sign was spearheaded by Peggy Boquest , wife of State Senator Briam Boquest with the assistance of Bob Berweger. Peggy was the major reason a State Senate, Concurrent Resolution was passed to allow the placement of the sign on a State Highway, honoring Garry Hodgson.

In the pictures show Peggy, at the podium, eulogizing RD2 Garry Hodgson as the sea cadets standby. The American Legion, Post 21, Memorial Rose Garden, with the USS Frank E Evans Memorial stone, being flanked by the Lost 74 banner.



MEMORIAL DAY—MISHAWAKA, INDIANA

Pictures submitted by Dixie Mason

The parade was in downtown Mishawaka. Note in the picture, the light post has Bob Mason's picture with the float in the background. Lowe's displayed the banner and will display it again in July and on Veterans Day. Lowe's also donated material for the float. Ralph (Surf) and Nancy Serafin, Glen and Sue Belic, Chuck and Carol Frey all traveled to here to be part of the parade. Surf's brother and sister-in-law came from Florida. Francis Hastings sister to Joe Louis Gonzales moved here from Clovis, NM and was also part of the parade. It was a great weekend.



USS FRANK E EVANS IN THE PENTAGON, WHY NOT THE WALL?

By Tim Wendler, son of Radarman 2nd Class Ron Thibodeau, one of the Lost 74

In May, I had the privilege of receiving a private tour of the Pentagon from Major General John Andonie, the Deputy Director of the Army National Guard. John and I were good friends in high school and have stayed in touch over the years. As part of our tour, we walked through a hallway dedicated to United States military history in Vietnam. As we reached 1969, we saw a panel titled, 'June 3, 1969, USS Frank E Evans Collides with HMAS Melbourne.' If our military considers this a part of our Vietnam History, why aren't the names of the Lost 74 on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall?



PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO REACH OUT TO YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND REQUEST THEY CO-SPONSOR H.R. 3826.....DO IT TODAY

VETERANS INFORMATION UPDATE

Cost of Living Increase

On June 14, 2023, President Joe Biden [signed](#) into law the Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2023, which directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide a cost-of-living adjustment for Veterans benefits in 2024 equal to the COLA applied to Social Security benefits, as determined by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The COLA will affect certain VA benefits, including, but not limited to: disability compensation, clothing allowance, and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for spouses and children. Based on the timeline of previous years, SSA is expected to announce its 2024 COLA early in the next fiscal year, which begins on Oct. 1. VA will then set its compensation payment rates to match and Veterans can expect to see the new amounts starting with their January 2024 payment.

The latest issue of the quarterly newsletter *Military Exposures & Your Health* is now online at: [Military Exposures](#)

Salute to Our Veterans

Through the Shades of Green “Salute to Our Veterans” program, all military Veterans who have received an honorable discharge have an opportunity to vacation at Shades of Green (on Walt Disney World Resort) during January and September. Reservations are subject to availability.

Proof of honorable discharge is required with a copy of a current DD-214 form. Rooms booked with this special promotion will pay the Category 3 rate. You may sponsor up to three (3) rooms if you qualify for this promotion. Room rates are based on two adults occupying a standard room and four adults occupying the suites. Add \$15 per additional adult ages 18 or older. Reservation Information: Please call our Reservation Office at 888-593-2242 to book your reservation: [Shadesofgreen.org](#)

Veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, Veterans who are former POWs, all Veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings, and individuals assessed, approved, and designated as the Primary Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers are eligible Shades of Green Resort users when identified as follows:

Veterans must present a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) indicating at least one of the three acceptable eligibility statuses (PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW, or SERVICE CONNECTED); or HEC form H623A indicating placement in VA health care priority group 8E paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant State driver’s license or a U.S. passport.

Restrictions apply for Disney’s Military Promotional Salute Tickets and Universal Orlando’s Military Promotional Ticket offers.

**USS FRANK E EVANS ASSOCIATION
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**MAKE
YOUR
RESERVATION
TODAY

OUR NEXT
REUNION

IS IN
SPRINGFIELD, IL
SEPT 27—30, 2023**

