

USS FRANK E. EVANS DD 754

WWII KOREA VIETNAM



FOOTLOCKER TALK NEWSLETTER NUMBER 98 — THIRD QUARTER 2025

As promised this publication of the newsletter is early in the quarter in comparison to our normal times. We wanted to cover the events of 3 June and bring everyone up to speed on the upcoming reunion and the memorial dedication now planned for Veterans Day this coming October.

For those who were not watching the news on memorial day this year, there were sever thunder storms in the mid west which caused the City of Lake St. Louis to cancel the planned memorial day functions including the dedication of the new memorial stone in the Cities park. The new date is now planned for Veterans Day October.

Pam Glines-Chilcutt and her Jackie Glines-Holland weathered the storm and conducted a brief ceremony at the Washington Cemetery in Independence, Missouri.

Our reunion plans have been completed and our 32nd Reunion Gathering is just on the horizon. There is still plenty of time to make your hotel and reunion reservations. Dates this year are September 17-20 at the Embassy Suites By Hilton Oklahoma City Medical Center. The \$149 rate is tough to beat in this current economy. Rate includes a made to order breakfast and a parking rate of \$10 per night. Our memorial ceremony will be conducted under the survivor tree located at the Oklahoma National Memorial Park. Lots to see and do in this city so please join us.

Welcome to our 53 new members. We are headed upward in membership and would like to break 350 by years end. If you haven't taken advantage of the new membership plans please look at the 2025 Membership dues article in this newsletter.

"Lest We Forget"

Steve Kraus
Association President

Terry Vejr
Vice President

LONG BEACH—3 JUNE 2025 MEMORIAL & HIGHWAY-BRIDGE DEDICATION

Months of preparation played out well on an overcast typical summers day in Long Beach , California. Early in 2025 the City of Long Beach reached out to our Association suggesting we do a joint Veterans event on or around Memorial Day. The City of Long Beach holds two veterans events per year, one around Memorial Day and the other on Veterans Day in October. We explained we had conducted a 3 June Ceremony each year since 2005 and wanted to continue that tradition this year. The City agreed and the planning process was underway

During the course of the last four months we met weekly (zoom meetings) and worked out the specifics of the Ceremony and events of the day. Fortunately for us we had also learned that the State of California had passed a resolution to honor the “Lost 74” by naming a portion of Interstate 710 and the bridge on Pacific Coast Highway as the USS Frank E. Evans Memorial Bridge & Interchange. At this point in time we incorporated the highway and bridge dedication as part of the days events.

Through some dialogue we found two sources of sponsorship that would help with the costs of the event, they were Del Mar Blue Print Company (owned by Association Members Mike & Kelli Kraus) and the Port of Long Beach (owed and operated by the City of Long Beach).



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LONG BEACH—3 JUNE 2025 MEMORIAL & HIGHWAY-BRIDGE DEDICATION (continued)

A new addition to this years ceremony was Tress Maksimuk (Piper.) To say she made the celebration more beautiful than ever is an understatement! Tress played, God Bless America, America the Beautiful, Amazing Grace, Meadley of all Military Branch Songs, Taps and lastly the Walk of Life. The Ceremonial “Walk of life” played by the lone piper is an Ancient Scottish tradition. The Bagpipes with their haunting sound and dissonant tone has a beautiful way of connecting us with our loved ones and bringing healing on both sides of the veil. Each moment in this ceremony represents Birth, Life and Death. Some reported they felt “The Lost 74” surround us as she played.



In the pictures (above left) rendering honors during the presentation of colors are Rich Fichtelman, Tim Wendler, Terry Vejr, Eric Lee, Richard Alverdes and Chaplin Anthony Ruff.

Our guest speakers for the event were Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Jeff Prang (above right) and Vice Mayor of Long Beach Roberto Uranga (left).

Vice Mayor of Long Beach, Roberto Uranga ,

by proclamation .declares

3 June 2025 as USS Frank E. Evans Day

LONG BEACH—3 JUNE 2025 MEMORIAL & HIGHWAY-BRIDGE DEDICATION (continued)



The sign displaying the Lost 74 surrounding the picture of the drawing commissioned by Arthur “Jock” Donnelly is always a center piece for ceremonies. This new display was donated by Del Mar Blue Print company. These four wreaths were presented on behalf of the City of Long Beach (Roberto Uranga), Survivors (Butterball Conely), Australia (Eric Lee) and the Relatives of the Lost (Fred Kerr).



Larisa Reilly-Thomas (relative of the lost) reads the poem titled “The Turn”



The crowd was stunned when Donna Kraus took to the stage to read the poem “A heroes Welcome”

**Long Beach
Fire Boat
Tribute,
Always
Breath
Taking**



LONG BEACH—3 JUNE 2025 MEMORIAL & HIGHWAY-BRIDGE DEDICATION (continued)



Top photo, the crowd listens as the program is outlined, at one count we had over 120 attendees. Left top, Tress prepares to Lead the Honor Guard from Hawthorne High NJPOTC. Top right & bottom, Hawthorne High NJROTC lead by Chief Ron Gray. Left bottom, people line up to purchase Evans keepsakes and to make donations to the Highway Fund.

LONG BEACH—3 JUNE 2025 MEMORIAL & HIGHWAY-BRIDGE DEDICATION (continued)

Update on Our Efforts to Remember Our Lost 74 Heroes

By Tim Wendler, son of Radarman 2nd Class Ron Thibodeau and USS Frank E Evans Association Board Member

We, the shipmates and families of the Lost 74 have been working for over 20 years to add the names of these heroes to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Sometimes, it can feel discouraging that it has required so much effort and time, and we are not there yet. Yet, if we look back at all we have accomplished, we have come a long way – memorial stones in each state where our Lost 74 called home, an impressive Memorial in the home Port of Long Beach, and additions of the names to State Memorial Walls including California where the largest number of our Lost 74 were from.

Currently, under the bipartisan leadership of Senators Kevin Cramer and Adam Schiff, we are seeking to add language to the National Defense Authorization Act to add the names to the Wall. I had the opportunity to discuss this effort personally with Senator Schiff, as well as two California Congressmembers Nanette Barragan and Judy Chu, during a visit to Washington in May.

We are seeking a meeting with the Navy to refine the criteria for adding the names to the Wall to include international joint military exercises in the Vietnam area to support the War effort. Our thinking (thanks to David Kraus, our legal advisor) is that this approach may be easier to accomplish in the inertia of the bureaucracy. Senators Schiff & Cramer have sent a joint letter to the Secretary of the Navy requesting a meeting for us.

Closer to home, my former state Senator Anthony Portantino shared our efforts with Long Beach Senator Lena Gonzalez. She immediately embraced our goal to recognize these 74 heroes, and obtained California legislative approval to rename the Interstate 710 / Pacific Coast Highway 1 interchange and the bridge to PCH in honor of our 74 Lost heroes. The signs are in the process of being created. We are still raising the necessary funds for the Highway project to pay for the purchase and installation of the signs - any contributions welcome!

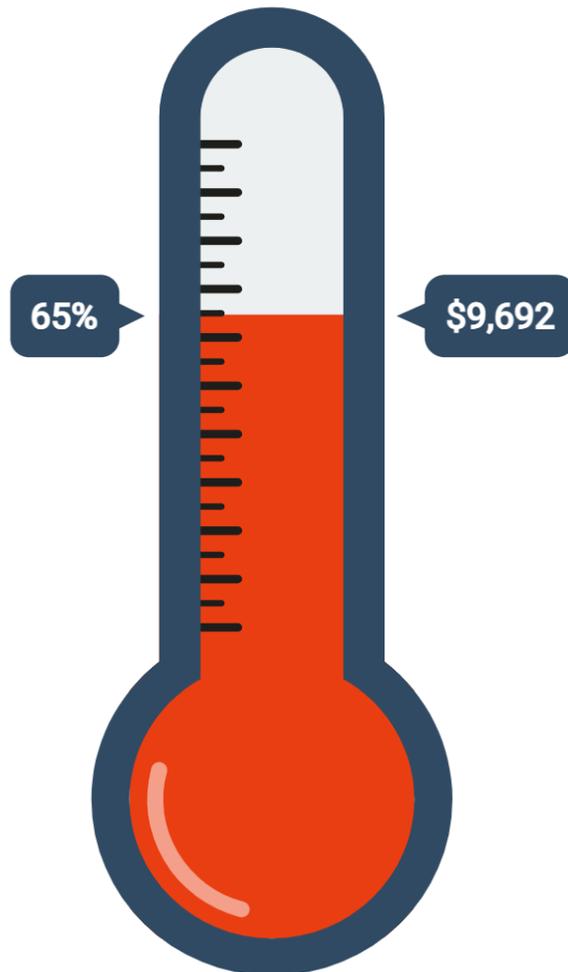
<https://www.ussfee.org/donations/lost-74-memorial-highway-bridge-fund/>



During the Highway and Bridge Dedication Ceremony, Skyler Kraus and Fred Kerr hold the display of what the Memorial Interchange & Bridge signs will represent.

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL HIGHWAY & BRIDGE FUND

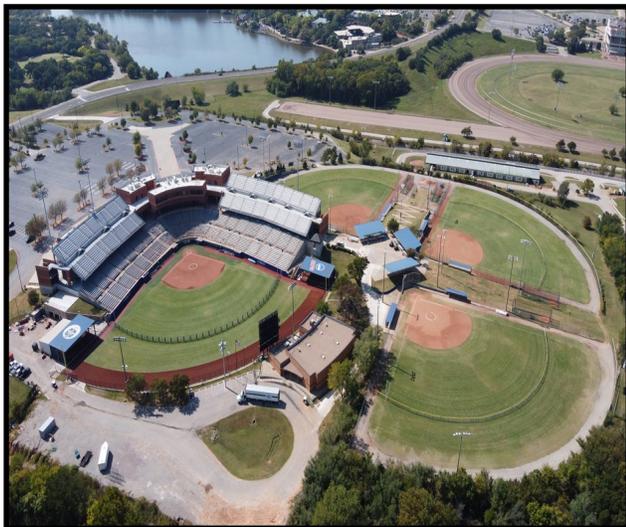
GOAL: \$15,000



We are almost there! If you would like to donate, you can send a check to Donna Kraus or go through the website. Want to donate now, just scan the QR code.

THINGS TO SEE IN OKLAHOMA CITY

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum our tour for Friday (left below) is a museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States, with more than 28,000 Western and Native American art works and artifacts. The Survivor Tree our tour and memorial ceremony for Thursday is an American elm tree in the heart of downtown Oklahoma City, it survived the bomb's blast and witnessed one of the worst terrorist attacks on American Soil.



Myriad Botanical Gardens is a 15 acre garden in Oklahoma City's downtown district. Visitors can explore the Inasmuch Foundation Crystal Bridge Conservatory, which features exterior grounds that are free to roam around.

A visit to the National Softball Hall of Fame is an educational experience and a walk through history as you learn why softball is one of the most popular team sports in the United States and why it was an Olympic sport.

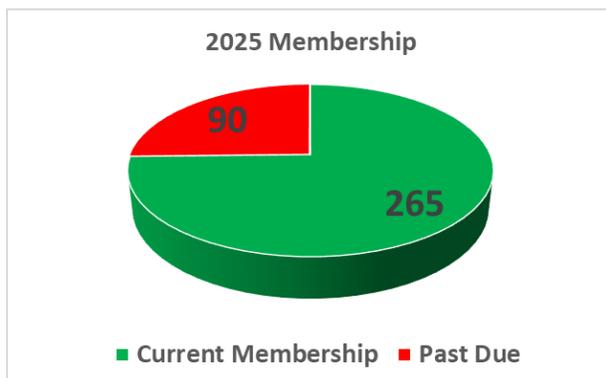
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Welcome aboard to our new members. We received a tremendous amount of new members who took advantage of our reduced rates for Limited Households and Unlimited Households membership. We are so happy you have joined the USS Frank E. Evans family. Thank you for joining , we are thrilled to have you as members and look forward to meeting you and seeing you at our annual reunion.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY/STATE</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
Darlene Aldinger	Albany, NY	Wife of member David Aldinger.
Teri Alverdes	Marysville, WA	Wife of member Richard Alverdes.
Leslie Anthony	Mansfield, TX	Wife of member Tom Anthony.
Sue Belec	Gurnee, IL	Wife of member Glen Belec.
Steven Bethell	Oceanside, CA	Son of member Mary Gregg.
Gregg Bittner	West Chicago, IL	Husband of member Kristen Bittner.
Jack Bittner	West Chicago	Son of member Kristen Bittner.
Diana Carlson-Sherbo	Lakewood, CO	Wife of member Paul Sherbo.
Nancy Collins	Hawthorne, CA	Wife of member Al Collins.
Kattie Davidson	Del Mar, CA	Wife of member Glenn Pudick.
Robert DeLong	Cedar Hills, MO	ROL & wife of member Alice DeLong.
Rose Marie Duffy	Fox Lake, WI	Wife of member Bill Duffy.
Jim Dunham	Carlsbad, CA	Husband of member Holiday Geiger.
Tom Dutton	Justin, TX	Husband of member Sondra Dutton.
Gayle Ficek	Pierz, MN	Wife of member Larry Ficek.
Carol Frey	Evansville, IN	Wife of member Chuck Frey.
Jewel Fritz	Tawas City, MI	Wife of member Richard Fritz.
Jeannine Glennon	Canby, OR	ROL & wife of member James Glennon.
Deborah Grant	Fargo, ND	Wife of member Richard Grant.
Carol Hallmon	Dallas, TX	Wife of member Billy Wayne Hallmon.
Duanne Henley	Dallas, TX	Husband of member Jennifer Nichols-Henley.
Joneen Holleran	Mission Viejo, CA	Wife of member Pat Holleran.
Dana Holman	Long Beach, CA	Granddaughter of Steve & Donna Kraus.
Jaid Holman	Long Beach, CA	Friend of member Kyra Kraus.
Kari Hopfauf	Murphy, TX	Wife of member David Hopfauf.
Nicholas Hopfauf	Murphy, TX	Son of member David Hopfauf.
Kate Hopfauf	Murphy, TX	Daughter of member David Hopfauf.
Sharon Hopfauf	Allen, TX	Wife of member Nick Hopfauf.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY/STATE</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
Tom Kazor	Omaha, NE	ROL—Cousin, Sage Brothers.
Diana King	Springfield, MO	Wife of member Carl King.
Fletcher Kraus	Clayton, MO	Son of member Kyle Kraus..
Julie Kraus	St. Louis, MO	Wife of member Colin Kraus.
Norah Kraus	St. Louis, MO	Daughter of member Colin Kraus.
Meredith Kraus	St. Louis, MO	Wife of member Gary Kraus.
Dale McKeand	Murfreesboro, TN	Friend of Nany Gerstle.
Sheri McKeand	Murfreesboro, TN	Friend if Nancy Gerstle.
Angela Murray-Smith	Fort Worth, TX	ROL & cousin of member Linda Vaa.
Elizabeth Neff	Yucca Valley, NY	Wife of member Gary Neff.
Luke Page	Queensland, AU	Husband of member Tiffany Baker-Schaffer.
Jean Ralston	Averill, NY	Wife of member Tom Ralston.
Alyssa Reilly	Lubbock, TX	ROL & Cousin of member Larisa Thomas.
Ashley Reilly	Spokane, WA	ROL & Cousin of member Larisa Thomas.
Vickie Rosen	Troy, NY	Wife of member Marc Rosen.
Mary Sawyer	Ocean Springs, MS	Wife of member Richard Sawyer.
Gina Shoemaker	Cumming, GA	Wife of member Ed Shoemaker.
Suzonne Slaughter	Georgetown, TX	Wife of member Randy Slaughter.
Jennifer Stephens	Oceanside, CA	Significant Other of member Jason Kraus.
Sandra Stever	Sebastopol, CA	ROL & wife of member Ron Stever.
Nancy Tallon-Gerstle	Brooksville, FL	ROL & widow of Thomas Fred Tallon.
Jeff Thomas	Novato, CA	ROL & Husband of member Larisa Thomas.
Sue Thomas	Novato, CA	ROL & Daughter of member Larisa Thomas.
Marcie Vega	Winchester, OR	Wife of member Larry Sutton.
Joanne Wendler	Pasadena, CA	ROL & wife of Tim Wendler.



**Our target is to
break 350 members
by years end**

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please welcome LT Richard Fichtelman (1966-67) as our membership liaison. Rich has agreed to take on this ALL important task for the Association. Please make his job a little easier by making you dues payment now. Rich can be reached through email at rfichtelman@sbcglobal.net or by calling him on his cell at 909-816-1703

We don't think anyone will disagree that inflation has affected everyone in one fashion or another. Like your household, the Association has seen prices increase significantly. The membership committee has looked at all aspects of our costs in order to not have to increase dues. The good news! We are not increasing individual memberships in 2025, and are now providing you membership plans that will provide additional overall savings and hopefully increase membership.

We have 265 current members including the new members that took advantage of our Limited Household and Unlimited House Hold plans. We have almost 90 past due members. By the numbers we could have 350 members if all were current. Please take action now if you have yet to pay your dues.

Membership Plan	Price	Applies To
Individual (Identical to pre-	\$30	Per person per year
Limited Household	\$50	Per household, per year, limited to 2 people in same household
Household	\$60	Per household, unlimited members per physical address over 2
Lifetime Member	\$299	Per person, one-time fee
Shipmate Lifetime Member	\$199 (This is a Limited offer for 2025 only)	Per person, one-time fee Must have served aboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USS Frank E. Evans (any years), or • Desron 23 • Operation Sea Spirit Participants

Membership Includes:

- ◆ 10% Membership discount on all Ships Store merchandise (Website and Reunion)
- ◆ Reduced Reunion Registration fee
- ◆ Quarterly Newsletter
- ◆ Access to Annual Video
- ◆ Immediate updates on news and information affecting the Association

MEET THE NEWEST BAKER

Donna Kraus received an email from Sam Baker on June 26th with news of the newest Baker family member. Sam and Brittany Baker have welcomed Edgar Sebastian Baker to their family! Some difficulties breathing, but all is well now. Reach out to Sam and Brittany and wish them congratulations on their new arrival Sam at sammuel-baker3@fleet.defence.gov.au.

For you that are not aware, Sam is the grandson of former Chief Radioman Ronald Baker who passed away on October 17, 2016. Ron was the very first Australian USS Frank E. Evans Association member.



Proud Mother, Brittany Baker



Edgar Sebastian Baker



**Welcome to the
Evans Family
Edgar!**

A decorative border of colorful balloons (blue, pink, orange, purple) surrounds the text.
We love to receive good, happy news so if you have any news that you would like to have posted in the news letter please send to Dulce Huggins at dulce.huggins@gmail.com

THEY WILL LET ANYONE INTO THIS COUNTRY



A DISASTER BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER, NOW THEY FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION OF THE LOST 74 USS FRANK E. EVANS COLLISION

By Caroline Saint James THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Eric Lee was one of 23 candidates for U.S. citizenship who took the oath last August in a ceremony at Spokane's federal courthouse. The group represented 14 countries and each candidate was supported by families and friends.

Sponsored by wife Mary Manley, Lee had long been anticipating the official start of his American life after growing up in Australia.

One reason was that he could finally join a nation whose military personnel have impacted his life for years.

Lee, now 77, was born in Brighton, England. When he was young, he relocated to Australia. There, he bounced between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, among other cities.

He joined the Royal Australian Navy during the height of the Vietnam War, and, while aboard the HMAS Melbourne, an aircraft carrier working in the South China Sea, he experienced a life-altering tragedy.

On June 3, 1969, his ship collided with the USS Frank E. Evans, a destroyer vessel, in a nighttime naval exercise involving multiple countries. The Evans fractured into two pieces.

THEY WILL LET ANYONE INTO THIS COUNTRY CONTINUED

Its front portion sank within three minutes, according to its eponymous association. With it, 74 American sailors drowned – only one body was recovered.

Lee’s memory consists of being suddenly awoken by “the bang and the vibration.”

While dozens made the ultimate sacrifice that day, Lee said the U.S. government won’t memorialize the “Lost 74” along with the 58,318 names listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

“(The government) refused to put them on the wall because they died outside the war zone. They still reckon they’re not eligible,” Lee noted. “Well, we reckon they should be on the wall.”

At first, Lee recalls choosing to not let the tragedy at sea “bother” him. Then, “all of a sudden,” he said, “back in 1990, it hit me. I wanted to find out more about it, so I did some research.”

His research led him to discover the USS Frank E. Evans Association, which holds annual memorials and reunions.

In 2016, he attended his first reunion in Buffalo, New York. There, he met Manley, a widow whose husband had also survived the collision. Lee and Manly married in 2019. Now, they regularly attend the association’s events.

Most recently, the reunion – 55 years after the fatal incident – was held in Spokane Valley.

Engaging with former shipmates is one goal of the reunions. Maybe more importantly, Lee knows they serve as opportunities to keep the Lost 74’s legacy alive.

Though Lee was not an American sailor, he feels it is his duty to fight alongside the victims’ families and fellow survivors.

“They’re still losses,” he said. “All 1,000 people on the (Australian) aircraft carrier are affected in one way or another. Some manage to come to reunions, and they feel guilty because it happened.”

Manley, whose first husband sailed the Evans, said “(the American shipmen) never felt any kind of hatred towards the Melbourne.” Rather, “they really gave her credit for turning when it could” to stop the impact from becoming even worse.

For Lee and his wife, the fight is emotional but worth it.