

USS FRANK E. EVANS DD 754

WWII KOREA VIETNAM



FOOTLOCKER TALK NEWSLETTER NUMBER 97 — SECOND QUARTER 2025

Ahoy Members, Shipmates and Family,

Several events took place this last quarter with the highlights being the 3 June 2025 memorial ceremonies held across the country. We will be sending out the third quarter newsletter early so we can provide you the story of the 3 June Memorial in Long Beach and Niobrara. FYI, due to significant lightening, rain and thunder storms on Memorial Day in Lake St. Louis, the memorial day event and the dedication of the memorial stone was cancelled. The City is considering next Veterans Day as the new dedication date, stay tunes and we will let you know.

To date we have enrolled 58 new members. Several spouses took advantage of the opportunity to enroll under the new Membership Plans. In addition several families took advantage to enroll everyone in the household for \$60 unlimited Plan. If you are still interested in enrolling or make a change our new membership director is LTJG Richard Fichtelman 1965 –67, he will be more then willing to help you. His email address is rfichtelman@sbcglobal.net. Many also took advantage of the opportunity for life time membership. Please keep in mind for Survivors life time membership this year is only \$199.

Oklahoma City is just around the corner; if for some reason you have yet to receive your registration package by mail, please reach out to Donna Kraus krausdfm@gmail.com immediately. Make your room reservations today, then submit your reunion registration form in order the take advantage of our early bird offering. The reunion will not be the same without you!

Steve Kraus
Association President

Terry Vejr
Vice President

JUNE 3RD MEMORIAL—PURCELLVILLE

Purcellville American Legion Post 293 Memorial Ceremony for the USS Frank E. Evans Lost 74.

The East Coast June 3rd USS Frank E. Evans Lost 74 Memorial Ceremony was hosted by the Purcellville American Legion Post 293 in Purcellville, Virginia.

The Purcellville American Legion Post 293's Commander, Troy Brown began the ceremony by welcoming everyone and introducing honored guests. He delivered the Invocation, the National Anthem was played, and we said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commander Brown then told the story of the USS Frank E. Evans, the Collision, & her final fate. We observed a moment of silence for Lost 74.

Carol and her granddaughter, Paige, presented the Missing Man Table. Richard Rines, an Evans collision survivor, read the poem The Turn. As he prepared to read, Richard mentioned something about "if you had been there that morning." His feelings were felt by all as he began to read.

As we remembered our Lost 74 Commander Brown read each name, our daughter-in-law, Kathy, rang the Post's Navy Bell, After reading the names, I laid a Wreath provided by Wreaths Across America. It was incredibly special that they provided one of their wreaths for our ceremony.

At the close of our ceremony, I presented Commander Brown and the Post with a plaque thanking them for honoring our Lost 74. Commander Brown offered the Benediction.

A special thank you to Commander Troy Brown, Purcellville American Legion Post 293, Carol, her family, and Richard for making this ceremony so special.

Ceremonies were also held in Long Beach, CA, Independence, MO & Niobrara, NE We will cover those in detail in the next newsletter . We hope to have the newsletter out by the middle of August.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - RDSN THOMAS ANTHONY

Our very own Frank E. Evans member, Tom Anthony was featured in the Patriots Point - Home of the USS Yorktown Newsletter. We are featuring it here this month and our Member Spotlight will return in the next newsletter.



Tom Anthony 2024

The Last Night of the Sumner Class Destroyer Evans By Bill Casassa

In early November, I was privileged to be asked to provide an unusual tour on Lafey. A family was coming to Patriots Point from Texas on November 23rd. They were asking to have someone take their father, mother and other family members on a tour in some specific areas on the ship.

Corresponding with them ahead of their visit, I learned I would be helping their father, Tom Anthony, describe for them an incredible tale of his surviving a tragic event aboard another Sumner class destroyer.

At the time, June 1969, Tom Anthony was a Radarman Seaman. His training prepared him to operate and interpret the radars, communications circuits and operational tactics centered in the ship's Combat Information Center (CIC). Tom was a junior rank so most of his time was spent watching radar screens. Like Lafey, his ship was also a FRAM 2 (Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization) destroyer. It was the USS Frank E. Evans, DD-754.

On 3 June 1969, Evans was involved in a large SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) Exercise with some 50 ships from the US, Australia, Thailand, New Zealand and Britain. The area of operations was the South China Sea near the Philippine Islands. In tactical command was an Admiral on the Australian aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne. At 3:13am local time, Evans was struck and cut in-half between the smokestacks in a collision with the Melbourne. As a result of the collision, the forward part of the ship sank within minutes, while the stern remained afloat.

I located and read the Naval Inquest report that covered the investigation into how the accident happened. The overarching theme holds the Officer of the Deck (OOD) and the junior OOD on Evans responsible. They were controlling (or conning) the ship at the time. Of the 86 men in the forward section of the ship, 74 went down with it when it sank. Only one man's remains were recovered.

Tom's bunk was in the forward part of the ship, on the second platform level, which is one deck below the Crew's Mess deck, on the starboard side of the berthing compartment. He was one of the few to survive from the forward section!

TOM ANTHONY CONTINUED

Laffey is the last remaining Sumner class destroyer in the US. Patriots Point's Laffey allowed Tom to take his family (and me!) on the route he followed to get out of the sinking forward section of the Evans. It was a story he had shared with them, but now on Laffey he could bring much of it to life.

This was not an easy trip for Tom. In his 70s and fighting Parkinson's disease, he still wanted to (and did!) climb each ladder, take each turn and tell what he had seen that morning. He also explained along the way what he was faced with, his thoughts about whether he would make it or not and where his final jump into the water off the sinking, forward section was.

We started up in CIC at his last watch station, the radar repeater inside the door from the pilot house. Tom was relieved from the watch at midnight by Greg Sage and headed down to get some sleep. According to the Inquest Report, no one in CIC survived the collision, including Tom's watch relief. Greg was one of three brothers on the ship. Sadly they, like the five Sullivan brothers on the light cruiser USS Juneau sinking in World War 2, all perished.

From CIC we followed Tom's path down to his berthing space to get to his bunk. It was mostly down the internal portside ladders he had climbed down.

I had a key so when we reached his berthing compartment, we could access the usually locked space. In the berthing compartment his rack was no longer in place, but his family marveled at what he remembered as he set the scene at its prior location. They also couldn't believe how little room he had to himself and the crowded space for some 40+ people! The Evans was struck on the portside which threw Tom and others out of their bunks. The severed forward part of the ship listed to starboard and started filling with water. However, the water did not come into the area Tom was in until later. We then followed Tom in a procession out of the compartment (the ladder on Evans was sideways now!) and up to the Mess deck. Mess deck tables on the Evans were now also sideways, so the men had to pull themselves up across each table, then reach across and grab the next one.



Then they climbed up the now sideways serving line ladder, where the water rushing into Evans' forward hull finally started to catch up to Tom. He then worked his way out a watertight door across from the Wardroom Pantry to the weather decks (initially closed for condition Darken Ship, the door was forced open by someone who was in the water already but returned to help his shipmates escape). Tom then showed us where he went over the side in the area of the portside covered passageway, walked out onto the now exposed hull (!) and jumped into the water. All in the space of a few minutes!

TOM ANTHONY CONTINUED



Tom said he swam to some floating debris to hold on to. He saw another crewman swimming towards him. He turned out to be the Commanding Officer, Commander McLemore! He had been asleep in the CO's at-sea cabin at the time of the collision. The OOD chose not to awaken him for anything that morning, even though the Captain's standing orders required the OOD to inform the CO of things like course changes (which the ship was executing at the time of the collision) and about ships that were approaching to within a certain distance from Evans. The CO asked Tom if he knew what had happened. Tom told him he thought the Carrier had hit the ship. They both

watched the bow section of Evans sink below the waves. At the Naval inquest, the CO was found guilty of dereliction of duty and at his court martial he was reprimanded. The OOD's and the Junior OOD's careers were over.

Helos and boats from Melbourne began the effort to pick up survivors almost immediately. Other ships converged on the collision site as well. Tom and the CO were picked up by a boat from Melbourne.

Tom also talked about some instances of other men that survived as well as some that perished. Some were saved by shipmates, rescuers and their own efforts. Others who were trapped in the debris or were too injured didn't survive. Still others gave their lives to help their shipmates to make it out.

He told of the experience of one survivor that seemed like it was out of a Hollywood movie. The man was on top of the Evans Signal Shack (Tom said the man was sleeping!). When the collision happened, he was actually thrown from the Signal Shack roof up onto the Melbourne's flight deck! He suffered many broken bones but survived. I found the event mentioned in the Inquest report.

At times I saw Tom seemingly remembering a lot of details of his horrific night. But his resolve to accomplish this was strong and I believe it helped him to be able to flesh out his unforgettable story. His family had a new perspective of what Tom survived and took copious amounts of photos! June 3rd already had a special meaning for them. Laffey helped make it very real.

The visit also dug up a related memory from my past that I had forgotten. I had a year of technical training in San Diego, in anticipation of reporting to USS Comte De Grasse, DD-974 in 1976. Shipyard schedules slowed and many of us found ourselves in limbo while the issues got worked out. So, we were put to work teaching operator courses. One of the other instructors I worked with was Sonar Technician John Spray. After a few months of working with him, I learned he too was a survivor of the Evans collision! I mentioned it to Tom, and he remembered him as well!

IN MEMORIAM



Fred Rubly

We received information that one of our former members and survivor Fred Rubly of HMAS Melbourne passed away on 3/20/205 Marimbula, New South Wales, Australia. Fred and his wife Jenni attended two reunions, first in 2010 in San Diego and again in 2019 for the 50th Celebration in Long Beach.

Rober Arthur Hacker

Robert Arthur Hacker, 94, passed away on May 25, 2024, in Citrus Springs, Florida. Born on December 16, 1929, Robert dedicated four years of his life to the U.S. Navy from 1951 to 1955. Robert came aboard Evans on September 9, 1941 and worked as a machinist Mate 2nd class in the forward Engine Room.

Following his military service, Robert embarked on a long and dedicated career with the U.S. Postal Service, where he worked for 35 years. He served as the quartermaster for VFW Post 7991, demonstrating his ongoing commitment to fellow veterans and his community.

Robert was a beloved family man, survived by his daughters Kimberly and Shelly, and his son Robin. He was also a proud grandfather and great-grandfather, as well as a cherished uncle. He was preceded in death by his wife, Jan, and his son Bryan.



Dorothy Jane (Moeller) Kazor

Dorothy Jane Kazor, age 78, of Omaha, NE, passed away peacefully on February 12, 2025, surrounded by loved ones. Dorothy was a cousin to the three Sage Brothers. Dorothy was a long-term member.

Dorothy was known for her kindness, generosity, and deep love for those around her...especially her grandchildren. Dhe created a warm and welcoming space for all, ensuring everyone felt cared for, valued, and when needed, wrapped in a warm hug to remind them they were loved.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Irene Moeller; and her brothers, Jimmy Moeller, Howard Lindgren, and Wayne Moeller.

Dorothy is survived by her loving husband, Tom; son, Jeff Kazor (Jen); daughter, Jenny Mariotti (Brian); cherished grandchildren, Josephine Kazor, Zane Kazor, Stella Kazor, and Ruby Mariotti; brother, Jerry Moeller (Ginny); and many dear friends and extended family.

IN MEMORIAM



Vicki (Rankin) Lynch

Vicki (Rankin) Lynch passed away on April 6, 2024. Vicki was the daughter of one of our association founding members, Cal & Barbara Rankin. She was the sister of our Memorial Director, Sharon Shirack.

She is survived by her husband Wes, children, Breezie Lynch, Dalton (Morgan) Lynch & granddaughter Hayden. Two brothers & one sister. She is preceded in death by her parents and one sister.



Judy Bass

Judith Ann Bass, age 82 of Baxter passed away on April 4th, 2025 at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Brainerd. She was born in Minneapolis on December 21, 1942 to James and Virginia (Green) Congdon.

Judy spent much of her life guiding and supporting individuals on their journey to sobriety, offering compassion and strength. Her quiet resilience and commitment helped countless women find hope and healing in their darkest moments.

She is survived by her loving husband Lawrence

Cuzzupe of 26 years, daughters Tracey (Tony) Bodway of Howard Lake, MN, Tammy (Bob) Hanson of Aitkin, MN, son Rob (Karri) Bass of Isanti, MN, Amy Schmidt of Anoka, Angela (Eric) Solie of Tampa, FL, Anthony (Niki) Cuzzupe of Brooklyn Park, MN.



Geri Lynn Smyd

Geri Lynn Smyd, 67, wife of member Mike Jones of Spokane Valley, Washington passed away surrounded by her loved ones on December 7th 2024. Geri had a long battle with cancer. She was an adored mother, partner, sister, daughter and friend.

Geri was preceded in death by her father Milton Smyd and is survived by her mother Genelle Worden; Significant other Mike; Daughters, Kimberly, Alise and Holly; Son-in-laws, Anthony and Travis

IN MEMORIAM



Dean C. Wyse

Dean C. Wyse, 81, of West Unity, Ohio passed away Thursday, May 15, 2025, in his home under the care of Heartland Hospice. Dean was born in Wauseon, Ohio to Edward A. and Georgia C. (Stuckey) Wyse on March 28, 1944. He was a 1962 graduate of West Unity High School. After working at ARO Corporation in Bryan, Dean enlisted in the United States Navy on August 9, 1966. He was serving on the USS Frank E. Evans on June 3, 1969, when

a collision killing 74 shipmates. Dean was honorably discharged from the Navy on July 6, 1970, and served in the Naval Reserves until April 3, 1972. Dean was a proud Navy Veteran.

Upon leaving the Navy, he moved to Arizona where he resided until 2023. He was the owner of Wyse Machine Service until his retirement in 2020. His faithful dog Metzger will miss the extra treats he provided.

Dean was a very involved Veteran and active with the Frank E. Evans Association, working tirelessly to see his shipmates added to the Vietnam Wall. He was a member of the Junior Wyse American Legion, West Unity, Maricopa, Arizona American Legion, Chandler, Arizona American Legion where he was invited to join the 40 & 8 Membership. He was in the VFW where he served as a District 10 Commander for the State of Arizona, the Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, Tin Can Sailors Association, life member of DAV, Chandler Elks and the White Mountain Lodge Loyal Order of Moose. He was also a member of the West Franklin Community Church.

Dean is survived by his wife, Cheryl Wyse of West Unity, Ohio; three daughters, Kelly (Mike) Routhier of West Unity, Ohio, Monica (Ray) Smith of West Unity, Ohio, Cher

FLAG TRIVIA

Who raised the first American flag over a US ship?

ANSWER: Lt. John Paul Jones.

On 3 December 1775, Lt. John Paul Jones, having just received his first commission from the Continental Congress, hoisted the Grand Union Flag in Philadelphia Harbor aboard USS Alfred.



BRAVO ZULU TO OUR DONORS

We are a little over half way to raising the \$15k we need to pay for the materials and installation for the Highway and Bridge Signs in Long Beach. The signs will be installed soon on Interstate Highway 710 and State Highway (Coast Highway.) The following is a list of donors through May of 2025.



BRAVO ZULU TO OUR DONORS

*Luanne Reilly Oda
George McMichael
Tommy & Leslie Anthony
Ben & Reva Alcoser
Randy Slaughter
Timothy & Joanne Wendler
Steve & Donna Kraus
Stanley & Sharon Wastowicz
Vickie DeLong
David & Darleen Aldinger
Kathleen Pecarovich
Carl Jackson
Eric & Mary Lee
Darwin Sietsema
James Flanigan
Richard LaLiberte
Lawrence Reilly
Richard & Karin Cooke
Greg & Kristen Bittner
Larry Cuzzupe
Randy Henderson
Richard Rines*

*Larisa & Jeff Reilly Thomas
Leslie & Donna Albert
Betsy Smith McCorkle
Luke & Tiff Schaffer
Kathleen Pecarovich
Nancy Tallon Gerstler
Anne Messier White
George Taggart
Richard M Fritz, Jr.
Robert Hughes
Kelli & Michael Kraus
Lauren Spray
Richard & Deb Grant
David Aldinger
Pat & Joneen Holleran
Laurine Donoho
Esmeralda Barragan
Darwin Sietsema
Ray & Fran Camagna
James Flannigan
Betty King
Paul & Diana Sherbo*

*Rolf Buchner
Colin Kraus
Joanne Derosiers
Joe Bob Mann
Darwin Sietsema
Ralph Serafin
Carol Platt
Ron Stever
Florence Hoog
David Hopfauf
Lesley Rose
Jerry Kraus
Beth Atkins
Carl Jackson
Anne White
James Reilly
Judy Au
Robert Ryan
Nancy Tallon
Alan Fortunate
Glenn Pudick*

Seventy-Four Film Festivals Update

Here is an update of where Seventy– Four is in the film festival run. So far it has been selected for 8 out of 19 festivals.

- American Golden Picture International Film Festival.....HONORABLE MENTION
- New York International Film Awards..... FINALIST
- US Presidential Service Center International Film Festival 1st PLACE WINNER
- Iowa/Nebraska Heartland Film Festival.....BEST NEBRASKA FILM
- Brookfield Film Festival.....OFFICIAL SELECTION
- New York Monthly Film Festival.....OFFICIAL SELECTION
- Military & Veteran Media Awards.....OFFICIAL SELECTION

Finalists were announced for the Military & Veteran Media Awards which will be held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills on May 24, 2025. Bill Thibeault and Steve Kraus will be in attendance. Unfortunately we did not make it to the finals. However, last month I did receive the trophy for our 1st place win at the US Presidential Service Center International Film Festival. I've attached pics of it along with the updated poster with laurels from the festivals.

We have also submitted to the festivals listed below for May and June.

<u>FESTIVAL</u>	<u>NOTIFICATION DATE</u>
Los Angeles Movie Awards	May 12
Palm Springs International Film Festival	May 16
Raindance Film Festival	May 16
Stony Brook Film Festival	June 1
Indy Shorts International Film Festival	June 2
Boston Short Film Festival	June 14
LA Shorts International Film Festival	June 14
Melbourne International Film Festival	June 30



BRAVO ZULU BILL

USS KIDD UPDATES

The USS Kidd (DDG 100) continues its long yard period in Seattle. While we don't have any news to report on the USS Kidd in this newsletter, please remember to keep all aboard in your thoughts and prayers. Periodically Kidd posts on social media, the most recent promotions and training were recently shared.

VA CHAT APP

The VA Health Chat App (https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=05MAR2025) enables Veterans to quickly connect with VA staff members. No need to travel to a VA facility. Just sign in to the app and start receiving services.

With VA Health Chat, you can chat with VA staff when you have a question about a non-life-threatening health issue, want to schedule a VA appointment or refill a VA prescription, and more. VA Health Chat is available to Veterans in all 18 VISNs, including in U.S. territories, except or Veterans in some parts of VISN 16.

Please Join Us in Oklahoma City! September 17-20th, 2025

Registration Packets have been mailed out and everyone should have received them. If you have not, please reach out to Donna Kraus at krausdfm@gmail.com or 760-521-4700

We are pleased to inform you that Modifications to the room block have been made to offer greater flexibility for attendees with the Embassy Suites in Oklahoma City.

The special rate of **\$149 per night** is now available from **September 14 through September 23**, allowing you the option to extend your stay if desired.

As a reminder, our reunion will officially begin on **September 17**, with the last evening of scheduled events taking place on **September 20, 2025**.

Hotel information

Embassy Suites Hotel

405-239-3900

741 N. Phillips Ave.

Oklahoma City, OK 73104

<https://group.embassysuites.com/2kj638> **Our group code is 907**

THE REILLY TRADITION

THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE

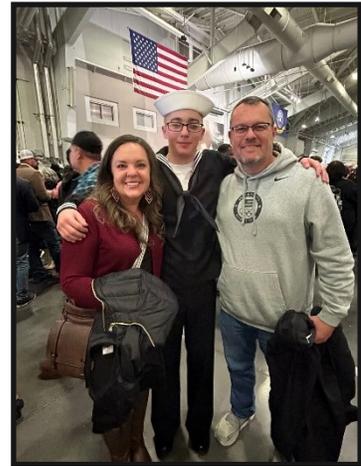


Meet Jesse Berry, great grandson of Master Chief Lawrence Reilly. Jesse turned 19 in May and prior to his 19th birthday he graduated from Navy Basic Training at Great Lakes. Jesse was adopted when he was really young and raised by two amazing adoptive parents Robert and Tamara Berry in Clovis California. Tamara is the daughter of Luanne Reilly-Oda.

Jesse grew up with 6 siblings one of them being his twin sister. He came from a very sports-oriented household and he started running Cross Country in the fourth grade.

Jesse reports that he started watching war movies as a child and he always wanted to be

alongside them fighting for America. So, his reason for joining the Navy can be attributed to patriotism. Jesse is currently stationed in Charleston South Carolina at Navy Nuclear Power Training Command training to be an MMN or a Nuclear Machinist's Mate.



Jesse is proud of his great grandfather, Master Chief Lawrence Reilly, who served on the USS Frank E. Evans alongside his son, Lawrence Reilly Jr. Unfortunately, when the Evans sank Lawrence Reilly Jr. lost his life. Jesse says "I can only hope to serve my country as half as good as both those great men."

Jesse can be reached at his email address thebigboy00002@gmail.com

**THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS
FOR THE 3 JUNE MEMORIAL AND HIGHWAY
DEDICATION IN LONG BEACH**



Port of
LONG BEACH
THE GREEN PORT

Del Mar Blue Print
Company Inc.

2201 San Dieguito Drive • Del Mar, CA 92014 • Ph: 858.755.5134 • Fax: 858.755.7179