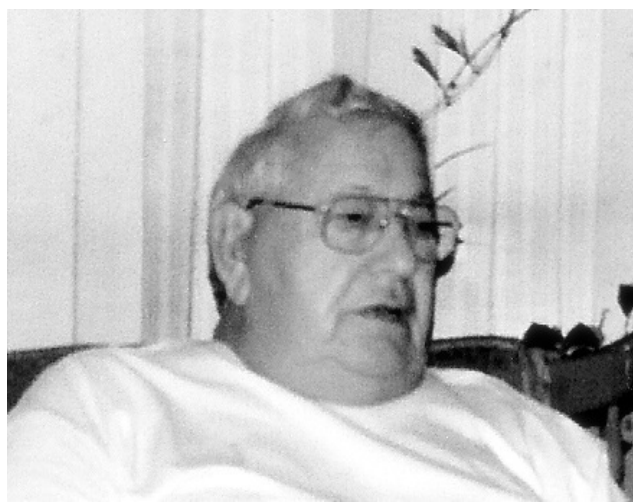


CQM GEORGE T. LAFFERTY October 1944



I George T. Lafferty "Laff" was born 14 August 1918, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My hair was brown and my eyes are hazel. I enlisted in the Navy at Philadelphia in 1934.

From October 1944 through 30 January 1946, I was a member of the pre-commissioning detail at Staten Island, New York. I was there for the commissioning of USS FRANK E EVANS DD-754 on 3 February 1945, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I am a Plank Holder. I was aboard for the shake down cruise to Guantanamo, Cuba, passage through the Panama Canal, and on to Westpac.



SM1c James Edward Long CQM George T. Lafferty Unknown



CDR Harry Smith & CQM George T. Lafferty on the Bridge 30 Jan 1945

I remember...

Bell Cracked - Upon completion of commissioning and supplying FRANK E. EVANS, we headed for shake down at Gitmo. We got as far as the Narrows in New York Harbor, where we ran into dense fog, really heavy stuff! CDR Harry Smith, the skipper, decided to drop the hook, to play it safe. We started sounding the ship's bell in accordance with the, "Rules of the Road." Regarding the bell, the anchor watch was instructed with the proper procedure of how many strikes and how often to hit it. Everything went well for a short time, and then...no sound from the bell, just dull thuds; the bell had cracked! As we well know, New York Harbor is quite a busy place, and in foggy weather, some sort of signal better be in effect. Our skipper came up with a solution. He had the ship's cook bring two large dishpans and large spoons from the galley. One set went to the fo'c'sle, and the other to the fantail. The banging started again, not ringing, but plenty of bangs, which apparently worked. We made it until the fog lifted and we headed on our way to Gitmo.

After-Steering - With shake down completed and out of the way, it was back to the States for a few minor changes, replenish the ship, and then on our way to the Pacific. Everything went fine until we were going through the locks of the Panama Canal. Our steering locked. The electric motor, located at the hub of the ship's wheel, overheated and locked. The wheel wouldn't budge. We went to after-steering, located one deck below main deck in the last compartment aft. It was a funny situation, the wheel and gyro repeater faced aft. You steered looking aft toward the ship's stern, with the bow at your back; looking one way yet going the other! It took a little getting used to, I know because I was the one sent aft to do the job. After a few hot sweaty hours, we tied up on the Pacific side entrance. Our captain was a man of few words. After getting back to the bridge, he gave me a "thumbs up" sign and placed one of his favorite cigars in my "soggy" khaki shirt pocket. For me that was plenty!

About the Captain - My understanding was that he had command of a destroyer somewhere around the Aleutian Islands. He was supposed to get some other assignment, but requested destroyer duty, and got one. From what I heard, he was fairly high on the Commander List. Being in charge of the bridge gang CMs and SMs, I soon learned that CDR Harry Smith was right up there with them, regarding all types of visual signaling. This, you can be well assure, kept the bridge gang on their toes. I heard somewhere that our CO had made Admiral with duty somewhere in Europe.

About Me - After leaving FRANK E. EVANS I put time on three destroyers and one escort pulling radar picket duty. Also had a tour as an instructor at an "Instructor Training School." In 1961, after 27 years naval service, I retired. Shortly thereafter, I became Superintendent of Beaches at Ocean City, New Jersey - Captain of Lifeguards. After 22 years, in 1983, I retired again. It was a good job, keeping me around the water. In fact, we have a home right on a bay in Ocean City, but come cold weather, we bail out and head for sunny Florida, "Hobe Sound."

Laff currently resides at 35 W. 17th St., Ocean City, NJ 08226. You can reach him at 609-399-7122.