



## USS FLOYD B. PARKS

## DD-884 ASSOCIATION

**June 2020**

Greetings from Northern Minnesota

When Thomas Paine penned the famous line “These are the times that try men's souls” he was referring to the struggle for freedom from the King of England. However, his words certainly ring true today in the context of our collective struggle with COVID. Whether you are young or old or in between, everyone's lives have been negatively impacted by the virus. Our Association has lost one of our “Founding Fathers” Bill Birdsong to COVID and I hope all of you are keeping Sue and her family in your thoughts and prayers. Without Bill and Robby, there would not have been a USS Floyd B. Parks DD 884 Association.

Unfortunately, while we were putting this newsletter together, we got the news from Tin Can Sailors' Association (TCSA) that the 2020 reunion in San Antonio is canceled. There were several issues that when combined, did not give them any realistic choice. The tour companies cannot commit to September events, the hotels are facing restrictions on how many rooms can be rented, restaurants & hotel banquet rooms also have seating restrictions. Further complicating the problem is that just like our Association, most TCSA members are in the over 65 high risk group, and they were concerned about a possible 2<sup>nd</sup> COVID wave this fall.

We had been anticipating this and want you to know that your officers are committed to holding a Parks reunion in San Antonio with whatever activities we can come up with on our own, unless Texas is closed to visitors. At this point there are more unknowns than knowns. It is going to be a seat-of-the-pants operation, and we may spend a lot of time in the hospitality room. The upside is that you can cancel hotel reservations short notice.

For those *without* internet:

San Antonio Wyndham reservations 866-764-8536, \$119 per night – *September 27 - October 1*

My phone and email: 218-224-3581, [jwsmith@paulbunyan.net](mailto:jwsmith@paulbunyan.net). If Texas is not closed for business, we hope to see you in San Antonio!

May you have fair winds, following seas, and be virus free.

Jim Smith, Association President

### OFFICERS

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Ahoy Shipmates

To *ALL* the sheltered in place, turn to and commence ships work.

I have a few names to place on the taps list. Saddest of all is the loss of Bill Birdsong, a true shipmate to all who knew him. I know that Sue can use all the support and heart felt prayers we can muster. The loss of any shipmate is a deep hurt, but to lose two of our best such as Robbie and Bill is devastating to our small numbers left. We will carry on their legacy with loyalty and keep the memories of Bill and his devotion to the USS Floyd B. Parks crew always in our hearts.

A list of crew that has come to my attention for the taps list are as follows:

- † Orin Rogers "Plank Owner"
- † Dorman Adams '50 - '52
- † Melvin Jennings '50 - '54
- † Joe Callaway '51 - '52
- † Tom Flanagan '52 - '54
- † Raymond Fenno '60 - '61
- † Bill Birdsong '60 - '62
- † James Schmitt (Unknown)

Due to the Coronavirus, the Tin Can Sailors has cancelled the big reunion. Please note Jim Smith's information that a gathering for the Park's will take place but on a very small scale. On the lighter side, Diana said wearing a mask was like putting up a chain-link fence to keep flies out. Make your own call.

I have caps and polos as well as jackets in store items. May not replace much except for caps in the future.

**David Lewis, MM3 '70-'73, Association Chaplain and Ships Store**

*(If you know of someone that is ill or has passed away, please email or call me so I can share with the Parks Family [idawdle@nemr.net](mailto:idawdle@nemr.net) 660-216-0055)*



## OBITUARY

### Billie Rex Birdsong

MARCH 28, 1940 – APRIL 19, 2020



Bill Birdsong was born in Woodrow, Arkansas on March 28, 1940 and he passed away in Riverside, CA on Sunday, April 19, 2020. He was married to Susan Birdsong for 60 years and theirs was one of the great love affairs of all time. Bill & Sue had 3 children, Mark Birdsong, Sheila Farley (Phil) and Bill was predeceased by his son Craig Birdsong in 2012. Bill is also survived by grandchildren Rick Farley, Robby Farley and Katie Farley, Robyn Birdsong, Krystal Birdsong, Eric Birdsong and grandson Mike McAllister. He had 3 great granddaughters, Aria & Kinsley McAllister and Rowan Farley. Altogether a beautiful family. Bill is survived by his loving mother, Alene Birdsong, 98 years old and 9 of his 12 siblings.

Bill was a gunners mate in the Navy from 1958-1962 and he served aboard the USS FLOYD B. PARKS DD884. The ship was his pride and after leaving the Navy he continued to work for the Parks Assn. putting together reunions for all shipmates who ever served aboard the Parks. He took great joy in his shipmates and the “sea stories” that all of them told.

After the Navy Bill worked in the aluminum industry from 1962-2006 when he retired. He was a metal man from the word go and knew everything there was to know about metal especially his department which was the foundry where metal was melted and formed.

All his life Bill wanted to be a cowboy. In 1997 he bought a horse, truck, trailer, all the tack needed for a horse and of course a house with a barn for the horse. He took part in team penning, a competition at Rancheros. He was truly the happiest we have ever seen him when he was on his horse.

Bill was a great man loved by everyone.....his family, his friends, his neighbors, his co-workers and anyone who knew him. He will forever be greatly missed. Services to be held at a later date.

**U.S.S. FLOYD B. PARKS  
DD884 ASSOCIATION**

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**June 2020**