

USS JOHN W WEEKS DD-701 ASSOCIATION

FALL/WINTER 2024/2025

President's Letter November 2024



Greetings to my John W Weeks family and friends. I love you all and everyone is special to me. I am happy to be part of the USS John W Weeks family. We have just had a fantastic reunion in Dayton, Ohio. It was so wonderful to spend a few days with the over 40 people that came. Visiting everyone and meeting the new people that were attending their first John W

Weeks reunion was such a pleasure. I deeply thank all those who worked so hard for over a year to make this reunion successful. Next year we plan to have the reunion in Washington, DC October 8-12. We probably will be staying in a hotel just outside of DC and taking a bus or other transportation over to DC for our activities there. We also want to stress that this is a John W Weeks family reunion that includes, wives, sons, daughters, son in laws, daughter in laws and the family of those who served on the ship. More information concerning our next reunion will be sent later.

If we are going to survive as a viable association, we need to become more like family and interact with each other more. To build interest in the association and serve each other, everyone needs to be able to communicate freely with each other. We really need to get to know each other more. We are family and not just some association. At the business meeting it was approved for the association to develop a directory that will be available to all members who want to be part of the directory. The purpose is to foster more communication between members and allow members to stay in contact with each other. Someday in the future there will not be a John W Weeks Association, but you will always be able to communicate with the remaining John W Weeks family because you will have the directory.



Now Hear This!

A REMINDER TO ALL SHIPMATES RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER...THE DEADLINE FOR 2025 ANNUAL DUES PAYMENT IS MARCH 31

Change of address, email or membership status? Please notify Dave Parent at d.parent@sbcglobal.net

(708) 703-1087

I am especially thankful for the article submitted by Captain Al Atwell. Al enlisted in the Navy in 1946 and retired in 1990 after a distinguished naval career of 44 years. He served on the USS John W Weeks from 1958 to 1960. If anyone would like to submit an article or talk about a time when you were on the ship, we would be most happy to receive your story. We are always looking for articles for our newsletter.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Washington, DC. May God bless you all and keep you safe and well until we meet again.

Fred Dalton

USS JOHN W. WEEKS DD-701 ASSOCIATION

REUNION HIGHLIGHTS DAYTON OHIO OCTOBER 2024

Members of the Weeks Association began to arrive on Monday, the 14th of October. Most drove from their homes, a few of us flew. As Chaplain, I shipped my supplies to the hotel a week before the reunion. The boxes were there when I arrived on Tuesday, the 15th. Several members were already here, so we began to prepare the Hospitality Room (HR). Not sure who brought what, but someone was responsible for the memorabilia we have accumulated over the years.

Poster boards with pictures from the various cruises the Weeks experienced were in available to view. Folks came and remarked "I remember that!" The ladies and the hotel prepared center pieces for the tables as decorations. Many brought items for door prizes and the raffles. If you run into Tom Tallackson ask him what size batteries, he needs you to buy for his DD 701 Weeks sign.

Several of us moved to the hotel bar and enjoyed favorite beverages since the shopping trip for the HR was scheduled for Wednesday morning. Groups left to enjoy the local restaurants, others decided to order from the hotel menu. The food was quite good and the service outstanding.

Wednesday morning dawned with a lovely breakfast provided as part of our room cost. It was a buffet, but refills on drinks were offered by Amy, who was a delight. She made sure all of had a good meal. Folks headed out to shop or the gym or just to relax in their rooms. Our fearless leader, Fred arrived with his lovely wife, Aida. Now the boss was here. Folks swapped memories in the HR. the Board gathered for our meeting at around 3:30. Fred had provided our agenda and we stuck to that pretty closely. The meeting ended within an hour.

The Association ordered pizzas and sandwiches for the weary travelers who arrived Wednesday during the day. We all have a grand time reminiscing with old friends and were able to new friends. For me, there

were several people I did not know and had not met in the Reunions I attended since Nashville in 2011 and the two COVID reunions which were cancelled. Wednesday was a fun evening.

Thursday breakfast was a repeat from Wednesday. My theory is if I don't have to cook, the food is great. Amy assisted us again. There were several circular tables which held 8 people. Each day the seat mates changed around. Two treats were scheduled for Thursday. We had a bus for our transportation. Our driver had a running commentary on Dayton and showed us the Wright Brothers "practice flying field." The first treat was a trip to the Packard Car Museum. Wow! What a terrific place. One red convertible caught my eye. The guide said it had been owned by Perry Como. Many younger folks may not know who he was. Look him up.

Back to the hotel to switch out passengers. Some did not want to see the cars and others did not wish to go to Carillion Park in Dayton, another great place. Lunch choices were a Tea Room type menu and the other was a Brewery. You can guess where most of us had lunch. The Carillion Park had a museum of the history of Dayton and a small train which viewed all the grounds. Back to the hotel for naps and or the HR. I ate in the hotel bar again and headed to the HR to visit with folks. Others choose various restaurants in the area.

Friday breakfast was good and got us in the mood for a trip to the United Air Force National Museum. That was quite the BIG deal. There were four hangers to explore, and they provided scooters for us folks who are not as mobile as we had been in years past. The guides were outstanding. I chatted with one at least a half an hour. He was retired Air Force and volunteers as most of the folks who "Work" at the museum. A few Air Force One planes were available to tour. One in particular was the plane that returned John F. Kennedy back to DC.

Back to the hotel to recover from all the walking and touring. Dinner was on our own. A group of seven of us went to a Long Horn Steak House. The food was good and our wait for a table was only about 30 minutes. Back to the HR for the younger folks.

A fire alarm sounded a bit after 4 AM. I put on shoes and a jacket and poked my head out of the room. Folks were coming back and called false alarm. I stayed in my room. At breakfast folks on the 6th floor said they did not hear the alarm. Good thing it was a false alarm.

The noise level at Saturday breakfast could have broken the sound barrier. Earlier breakfasts just had old folks like us, and China plates and real silverware. Several groups of families were there for a soccer tournament. All plastic and paper replaced the table service. Saturday, we were on our own again. I worked on Home Work and ate leftover salad from Long Horn.

I went to the HR to start packing the room. I had an early flight and needed to prepare my boxes so David and Diane Parent could ship them for me. Able to prepare our dining room for the Memorial Ceremony, dinner, the silent auction, and door prizes. Had a cocktail hour and then honored Sailors who we learned of their deaths since last year. This year we honored: Bruce O. Bigger; Gilbert "Mike" Berry; Larry Bowman;

Thomas Leroy Connelly; James A. Cole; Earl F. Dressel; Leslie C. Keeton; Robert C. Loomis; Dr. David Emerson Padgett; Dennis Paul Smith; and Lawrence Don Thatcher. So, another John W. Weeks Association Reunion has been entered into the books.

Blessings on all, Kathy Fisher Michaels

JOHN W WEEKS ASSOCIATION BUSINESS MEETING

19 OCT 2024

President's Welcome – Fred Dalton

Prayer – Chaplain Kathy Michaels

Pledge of Allegiance to Flag

Meeting Called to Order – 09:07 Fred Dalton

Members present: See attached list

Minutes Read and approved by membership from 2023 business meeting – Kathy Michaels

Financial Report – John Lion

New Business: Association Directory – It is proposed that the John W Weeks association develop a directory of members with contact information to be available to all members who consent to be part of the directory. Discussion from the Board: Suggestion to contact by letter each member listed on the membership roster to determine continued interest in the John W. Weeks Association. Also, request dues be brought up to date. Proposal approved.

1. **Discuss future reunions of the association.** Board decided on Washington D.C. for the 2025 Reunion. In the past, members had difficulty with travel arrangements in cities without direct flights available. The D.C. proposal was offered to the membership and was approved.
2. **Use of Armed Forces Reunions Incorporate (AFRI)**-The board decided to eliminate AFRI from our reunion registration process. It will reduce registration costs. Tom Tallackson and John Lion will handle registrations.
3. **Election of Officers** – no vacancies at this time. Tabled until a vacancy arises.
4. **Discuss any issues appropriate.** IT assistance is needed to manage the Weeks website. The Board will obtain the passcodes to take over control of the Site.
5. Bill Gibson addressed the membership that although he did not get 100% disability he did receive Agent Orange disability for his Parkinson's disease. Bill will provide contact information for assistance to other members applying for Agent Orange benefits.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 09:59.

Meeting Adjourned – Liberty Call



Dear Shipmates,

The USS John W Weeks DD-701 Association is contacting as many shipmates as possible to determine their interest in being a member of the Association. If you receive this letter, our records indicate that you served on the ship. The Association publishes a newsletter on a periodic basis and has a reunion in different parts of the country each year.

As we age, we realize health issues may cause loss of interest or prevent traveling to reunions. At the latest reunion in Dayton, Ohio October 2024, we learned that a Weeks Blue Water Sailor has been approved for Agent Orange exposure. As a result, he is now receiving Agent Orange benefits for his disability. By remaining in the Association, we can share this type of information with you if you encounter similar health concerns. Another goal is to provide an avenue to contact your fellow sailors.

Although every effort has been made to locate everyone, there are some service members who we have no information on. If you are in contact with a former shipmate, check with them to make sure they know about the Weeks Association. Or if a shipmate has passed away, it would help the Association keep their records up to date, so please notify Thomas Tallackson.

You may contact Thomas Tallackson by email, telephone or regular mail. We hope you enjoy your complimentary newsletter. If you would like to join the Association, please fill out the Dues Request Form and mail it to John Lion. We use the money to help pay for our newsletters, reunions and other expenses.

USS JOHN W. WEEKS DD-701 ASSOCIATION

INTEREST FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

DO YOU WISH TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE JOHN W. WEEKS
ASSOCIATION **YES/ NO**

PLEASE PRINT; REMEMBER OUR EYES ARE OLD

For more information or to express your wishes please contact:

Thomas Tallackson – (612) 296-3707

9775 Grove Circle North # 311

Maple Grove, MN 55369

Thomas tallackson@hotmail.com

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TIN CAN SWO – THE WAY TO GO!

By Captain Al Atwell US Navy Retired

This is a story of how the crew of the USS John W Weeks DD-701 trained an ex-Aviation Chief who thought he never wanted to serve on a destroyer to be a well-qualified and very proud SWO (Surface Warfare Officer)

Background: I was born and raised in Annapolis, the home of the Naval Academy. Just about every male in the Atwell clan was in the Navy and/or working or teaching at the academy. There was no question that I was going to go into the Navy – just a matter of when and how! I had my own boat and spent all my spare time on the waters of Chesapeake Bay and surrounding rivers and creeks. I could have gotten an appointment as an Annapolis midshipman, but didn't want to spend four more years in school after high school and wanted to go to sea ASAP. So, I quickly enlisted and after boot camp went to aviation fundament school intending to be trained as an aircraft mechanic. The lead aerographer there asked me if I ever experienced any bad weather at sea and I told him about several episodes where I wasn't sure I was going to survive. He then convinced me that I should be an aerographer's mate. A few years later I was the lead weather forecaster on an Essex class aircraft carrier. Our flight deck was 57 feet above the water line and when it got too rough to fly, we would bring the tin cans alongside to provide urgently needed fuel. We would be taking swells over the bow and the tin cans would be almost under water and often a fuel line would break. I clearly remember saying to myself "that I don't think I ever want to do that."

After two six months back-to-back combat tours off North Korea, I was transferred to the Navy Weather Research and Development Division in the Pentagon. One day I was going by the front desk area of the Pentagon and the CNO came out, saw me and said, "Hey sailor I see you have been to Korea. Come in, tell me about it – have a cup of coffee and a donut." I told him that one of our biggest challenges was the weather particularly when the sea state was going to be too rough to safely get our aircraft back aboard after their combat missions. Knowing that he was also "31 KNOT BURKE"- I told him about the Tin Can fueling operations. He said I should get a tour on a destroyer to see the real navy and let him know if I wanted a Tin Can tour! After a couple of other research and development tours I got orders to USS John W Weeks DD-701. The Weeks was getting underway for a six-month Med tour in a couple of days, and I wanted to be aboard! I drove quickly to Norfolk, put my wife and two kids in a motel and reported aboard the next morning. As I reported aboard, the JOOD was a BM1 Williams. We looked at each other quickly recalling that we had gone to Boot Camp together 12 years earlier. We didn't have a Chief BOSN. Williams was the lead Weeks BOSN. Having seen him operate in boot camp, I knew he was up to the challenge. He was one of the more mature guys in our group and whenever an issue came up, he would never hesitate to get involved and tell it like it is, regardless of the circumstances. He told me I was going to be his division officer, and I said OK, good. Take me for a quick tour of the spaces that we control, and I can see the people in our division! In several of the

spaces I saw paint cans, rags, old paintbrushes, etc. I told him they look like fire hazards to me, and he needed to get that resolved. He replied, "Mr. Atwell, please don't try to tell me how to do my job. This is stuff I need to keep Weeks looking good – but anyhow when we get underway you will probably be so seasick that I won't be seeing much of you!"

As we got underway the next day, we encountered a major storm that was one of the roughest that I had ever experienced. Both of our motor whale boats were washed away, our front 5-inch 38-gun mount was pushed about 8 inches aft, and most of the bridge panels were damaged. We had to go into a repair facility at Gibraltar!

I quickly learned that getting seasick was a real challenge, but I was determined not to let it embarrass me so every time that I was about to up-chuck, I just swallowed it back down and by the time I got to the Med I had adjusted to tin can motion.

On another occasion we were rigging the high line BOSN chair to exchange gear with one of the other destroyers in our division. The CO looked down and said, "How does it look Mr. Atwell?" I looked at Williams and he gave me a thumbs up and I then gave the CO a thumbs up. The CO replied, "OK Mr. Atwell hop in and give my best regards to the CO." I got a quick ride to the other tin can and back.

Shortly thereafter I was assigned a collateral duty as mess caterer for the officer's mess and most of the officers were not satisfied with the meals. At our first port call, I checked with one of my OCS Shipmates on another tin can and found out that there was a company that provided really good meals at a reasonable price. We tried it and were very happy with the results.

There was no lack of leadership on the John W Weeks and as I turn 95 years old in a couple of weeks, I just can't remember all their names except for some of the ones that I worked very closely with. CDR Lovejoy was the CO and was a very personable and friendly guy who just let his department heads do their jobs. LT Charlie Wilson was the Gunnery Officer who was later famous for his role in helping the Afghanistan Nation drive the Soviets out of their country. There is a book, and a movie called "Charlie Wilson's War" that details this significant accomplishment. BT1 Vaughn had been on the Weeks 7 years and when I was Main Propulsion Assistant for a while he asked me to not come below into his workspaces and that he would notify me if he ever needed any help. CDR Tippie relieved CDR Lovejoy as CO. He had been in Washington a long time and he liked to take the Conn and tended to drive the ship too fast and often had to "back down full" to correct his fast maneuvering. I will say more about him later. The QMC Chief Quarter Master and I became a good team after some initial differences. He did a great job in getting all the maps and corrections for the island sea cruise.

After Gibraltar, we went into all the major ports in the MED wherever the action was and then through the Suez Canal on the way to Karachi, Pakistan where we took part in SEATO Exercises. Knowing that the

waters in the harbors were contaminated we shut down our evaporators about 50 miles out. We tied up just aft of the Pakistan PNS Jahangir (D168). There was camel poop on the pier and all sorts of debris in the water. As the most junior officer aboard the Weeks, I was volunteered to go as an exchange officer during the exercises. I packed a small bag and reported aboard Jahangir. Noticing that they were pumping water out of the contaminated harbor, I had considerable concern. The Pakistan crew treated me well but are probably still talking about me drinking so much of the whiskey in their wardroom bar to treat my upset stomach, diarrhea, etc. On one occasion I was standing a JOOD watch and had the CONN. Someone sighted a whale, and the CO quickly took the CONN, set battle condition and fired a hedgehog missile to disable the whale. They then towed it into port to sell their catch. The exercises ended and I was really glad to get back aboard the John W Weeks where our chief Pharmacist Mate fed me lots of antibiotics to resolve my medical situation.

By the time the new CO came aboard I was a well-qualified OOD, but one of my concerns was the navigation situation! Whenever the weather or cloud cover permitted, the navigator was required to shoot morning and evening star shots and noon sun lines. This meant that the navigator would often not be able to eat meals at the normal times. I had noted that the XO navigator had never seemed to miss a meal! That meant to me that the chief quartermaster was doing most of the navigator's work. Whenever I had my OOD watch I went up 30 minutes early to check on the position information, and I would tell the QMC I wanted to see the last fix and where was the nearest possible obstructions to safe ship navigation for the next 6 hours and how did he know. He had all the latest information! I also told him I wanted to pass on this essential navigation information to my relief OOD.

As a teenager, I had worked in several shipyards in Annapolis, mostly chipping paint and removing barnacles off vessels damaged because of navigation errors and one of my retired Navy uncles ran a fish factory boat on Chesapeake Bay that I had often visited. He had shown me how to use a navigation sextant and while going through the navigation course, at OCS I had several QMC friends that I had often questioned to make sure I really understood what I was doing. So, I guess you can say that I was a navigation nut, but to this day I can't imagine any OOD standing watch without knowing exactly where he is. After the new CO took over, I told Charlie Wilson, my department head, that I wanted to be the navigator. He agreed and convinced the XO that it would be a good move. The XO was pleased to be relieved, and I wasn't worried about missing meals because as the officer's mess caterer the cooks and bakers worked for me, and I could get a meal anytime I needed one.

Later in the summer of 1959, the Navy was ordered to participate in the inland sea cruise on the Saint Lawrence Sea Way and we were going to go from Norfolk to Chicago, through all five Great Lakes and return. We had to obtain all the NAV charts to carefully plan safe passage as there were some areas where our hull was only a few feet from the bottom and numerous strong currents were prevalent in the narrow water way. We would have a civilian pilot aboard as an advisor, but safe navigation was clearly our responsibility!

We left Norfolk and headed up to Annapolis to pick up some midshipmen and were going to anchor off Greenberry Point near the Naval Communications station. There are about 8 large radio towers that one could use to get a good fix. As we approached our anchor site in the darkness all the lights on the towers went off and I had no information to get a good fix, but knowing the area and that I was far enough offshore I used my DR position to safely anchor about 7:00 PM. We got in our whale boat and were heading up the Severn River to the boat landing at the Naval Academy pier when Charlie Wilson said, "Hey, Al knows the way lets land at city dock and we won't have to walk but about a mile to get out in town for a drink and some chow." As we approached the landing site, which was only about 40 feet from Charlie's favorite bar and grill, our boat ran aground and came to a stop. The dock water had silted up a bit and was now a little shallower. Not to be detoured Charlie said, "let's all move quickly from side to side and back down with full power and then come in with full power at a better angle," We did as Charlie said and landed at the pier and walked across the street to Charlie's favorite bar and grill where we had some booze and chow. Shortly after midnight we boarded the boat, backed out with full power and went back to the Weeks to get ready for a most interesting trip. The next day we headed south to get out to the Atlantic then Northeast to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, then Southwest past Quebec, Montreal and into Lake Ontario then to Lake Erie and Lake Huron and Lake Michigan and Chicago, then to Lake Superior and Sault Ste. Marie, Toledo, Montreal and finally back to Annapolis and Norfolk, Virginia. The CO, I as OOD/ navigator, the QMC and the pilot were on watch the whole time to ensure we were keeping it safe. The pilot was totally familiar with all the navigation challenges and an example of his advice is when he said, "when you go around the next bend you will see a large barn on your right with an advertisement that says mail pouch tobacco. There is a strong cross river current, and you will need some right rudder to stay mid-stream." We only had one minor problem on the trip when the CO had the Conn and was approaching one of the locks to get from one lake to another and he was drifting right and had to back down full as our starboard bow hit the lock entrance. The minor impact knocked our fire and flushing pump off its mounts which our engineering gang promptly fixed as we continued. It was a remarkable trip, and we had some good liberty at Chicago, Sault Ste. Marie, Toledo, Montreal and Annapolis.

An important duty we assumed when CDR Tippie became CO was Division Commander as he was the senior CO of the four tin cans that included USS Ault DD-698, USS Waldron DD-699, USS Haynsworth DD-700 and USS Weeks DD-701. As Division Commander the OOD had to maintain contact with the aircraft carrier and ensure that the tin can screen was properly carried out to provide effective ASW and Air Defense Coverage. This required evaluating communication inputs from the carrier's CIC, our radar contacts and ship lookout reports. This was particularly challenging at night and when the weather was bad or if the carrier was required to change course and speed to get 30 knots of wind over the deck to be able to safely launch or recover aircraft. This and refueling from an aircraft carrier in heavy seas were the most challenging OOD duties I had aboard the Weeks.

Looking back at my 44 years of active duty, I must admit that when I completed my tour on the USS John W Weeks, as Admiral 31 Knot Burke had said, I felt like I had seen and experienced the real Navy. When I completed OCS, I had a choice to be commissioned as a Warrant, LDO or Unrestricted Line. I chose Line because it provided an opportunity to qualify for the five-term college degree program and as promised when I left John W Weeks, I was transferred to George Washington University to get a bachelor's degree. I then got transferred to NAS Pensacola for flight training and assignment to a fleet squadron. My next assignment was to the US Naval Academy to teach celestial navigation, piloting and ship handling. While there I found out that they were sending officers to sea without any requirement to complete any course in meteorology and oceanography. I was pleased to take part in changing the curriculum to require this essential training. Ironically, while teaching at the Academy, I got a phone call from BUPERS one Friday night telling me to be at NAS Jacksonville by 0800 Monday morning to get my orders. They were forming a new squadron to fly the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam to cut off supplies to the North Vietnamese Military. We had to go to the boneyard in Litchfield Park, Arizona to get some retired P2V Neptune Patrol Bombers to rework to have this capability. Apparently, the XO of the Fleet Squadron that had gotten me sent to the Academy was going to be the CO of the new squadron. A couple of months later the Naval Academy decided they needed me back there to continue teaching the new marine environmental course.

I had a most interesting and challenging career but can honestly say that the first time I felt like a real sea going sailor was when I completed my tour on the USS John W Weeks where I was surrounded by leaders and shipmates that kept me going in the right directions.

GO NAVY! GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Sincerely,

Al Atwell

2025 DUES REQUEST FORM

AMOUNT DUE: \$25.00

DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2025

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

REMIT CHECK MADE OUT TO *JOHN W. WEEKS ASSOCIATION* TO:

JOHN LION

129 CRESCENT ROAD

LANDENBERG, PA 19350

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Newsletter Editors: Donna Coughlin & Ray Goodmuth

WEEKS CLOTHING

Dave Parent

Weeks clothing can be purchased via the USS JOHN W WEEKS SHIPS STORE by Military Gifts.

Click on the link below:

[USS JOHN W. WEEKS \(DD-701\) SHIP'S STORE by military gifts | Redbubble](#)

You can also order Weeks clothing from Flying Tigers Army Navy Surplus.

Contact them at 708-535-9921 or <https://www.flyingtigerssurplus.com/>

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