

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic USS Laffey (DD-724)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number West of Mount Pleasant on the east side of Charleston Harbor N/A not for publication

city, town Mt. Pleasant vicinity of

state South Carolina code 045 county Charleston code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Patriots Point Development Authority, State of South Carolina

street & number Post Office Box 986

city, town Mount Pleasant N/A vicinity of state South Carolina 29464

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charleston County Courthouse

street & number 2 Courthouse Square

city, town Charleston state South Carolina 29401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register Nomination Form has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division

city, town Washington state DC 20013-7127

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

USS Laffey (DD 724) is a World War II Allen M. Sumner class destroyer. She was built by the Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine. USS Laffey was launched on November 21, 1943, and was commissioned on February 8, 1944.

The Allen M. Sumner class was intended by the Navy to be an interim design between the Fletcher class and the soon to be built improved Gearing class. The Allen M. Sumner class was an improved design based on a twin enclosed 5-inch/38 caliber gun mount originally used for heavier ships. One advantage over the previous Fletcher class was reduced crowding along the centerline of the ship which made it easier to mount additional light anti-aircraft guns. In all other respects the Allen M. Sumner class and the Fletcher class were similar.

Specific ship data concerning USS Laffey is:

Length:	377 feet
Beam:	40 feet
Design Displacement:	2,610 tons
Full Load Displacement:	3,218 tons
Boilers:	4-Babcock & Wilcox
Turbines:	2-shaft General Electric
Fuel Oil Capacity:	504 tons
Maximum Speed:	37 knots
Armament:	Six 5-inch/38 caliber guns (3 x 2), Ten torpedo tubes, depth charges, and various combinations of anti-aircraft guns.
Crew:	336 wartime ¹

During mothballing and reactivation in 1947-51, USS Laffey's 40mm and 20mm guns were removed. In 1962 the ship underwent a Fram II overhaul (Fleet Repair and Modernization) during which a helicopter platform was mounted for the DASH (Drone Antisubmarine Helicopter) weapon system. Two hedgehog depth charge launchers and two amidship (between the funnels) sidelaunching torpedo racks replaced the original depth charge and torpedo-launching apparatus.²

USS Laffey is in fair condition and is in need of painting and repair work. Although modernized since World War II USS Laffey retains much of her integrity as an Allen M. Sumner class destroyer. Her hull, superstructure, main guns and much of her equipment date from World War II.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
... prehistoric	... archeology-prehistoric	... community planning	... landscape architecture	... religion
... 1400-1499	... archeology-historic	... conservation	... law	... science
... 1500-1599	... agriculture	... economics	... literature	... sculpture
... 1600-1699	... architecture	... education	X ... military	... social/
... 1700-1799	... art	... engineering	... music	... humanitarian
... 1800-1899	... commerce	... exploration/settlement	... philosophy	... theater
X ... 1900-	... communications	... industry	... politics/government	... transportation
		... invention		... other (specify)

Specific dates 1943-1945 Builder/Architect Bath Iron Works

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

General Statement: The role of the Destroyer in World War II

The destroyer had its origin in the late-19th century with the development of the first self-propelled torpedo. Navies quickly developed small fast torpedo boats designed to attack and sink larger battleships and cruisers. As a counter against torpedo boats, navies built a slightly larger ship, armed with torpedoes and heavier guns. These 900-ton ships were known as torpedo boat destroyers. World War I showed these ships suited to protecting larger ships against surface, submarine, and air attack. Also, they proved more effective offensively than torpedo boats, and assumed the attack role. By the end of World War I, they were simply known as "destroyers."³

The destroyer during World War II continued in this role as an all-purpose ship ready to fight off attack from the air, on the surface, or from below the sea. It could be called upon to give fire support to troops, deliver mail and people to other ships, rescue pilots who had been forced down at sea, and to serve as the distant early warning eyes of the fleet in hostile waters.⁴ Destroyers did not have the glamour of a battleship or an aircraft carrier but without them the aircraft carrier and battleship would be helpless against enemy submarines. They were all-purpose ships whose support of general fleet operations was vital. No aircraft or battleship ever proceeded into enemy waters without an escort of destroyers.

USS Laffey represents American destroyers that fought against Japan in World War II for the following reasons:

1. USS Laffey is a World War II Allen M. Sumner class destroyer. She is the only surviving Allen M. Sumner class destroyer in the United States today. The Allen M. Sumner class and the previous Fletcher class provided the bulk of the destroyer forces that fought against the Axis in World War II.
2. USS Laffey is the only surviving World War II destroyer that saw service in the Atlantic. During May 1944 she escorted a convoy to Great Britain and on D-Day she bombarded "Utah" beach at Normandy.
3. In November 1944 USS Laffey moved to the Pacific for action against the Japanese. On April 16, 1945, USS Laffey fought one of the most famous destroyer-kamikaze duels of the Pacific war when, in the space of 90 minutes, she was attacked by 22 Japanese kamikazes and bombers. During this action

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property N/A

Quadrangle name Charleston, SC

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	6	0	2	2	1	8	1	0	3	1	6	2	1	8	3	1	0	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing											

B

Zone			Easting						Northing											

C

Zone			Easting						Northing											

D

Zone			Easting						Northing											

E

Zone			Easting						Northing											

F

Zone			Easting						Northing											

G

Zone			Easting						Northing											

H

Zone			Easting						Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

N/A

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Harry A. Butowsky

organization National Park Service

date May 1985

street & number Division of History

telephone (202) 343-8168

city or town Washington

state DC 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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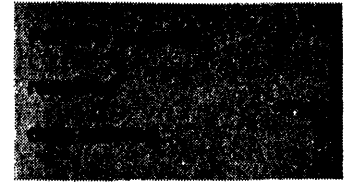
2

USS Laffey was hit by five kamikazes and two bombs killing 32 and wounding 71 of her crew. USS Laffey managed to shoot down 11 of the attacking planes and although severely damaged was still able to fight and to steam away under her own power. USS Laffey earned five battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation for her World War II service.

4. USS Laffey is in fair condition and is in need of painting and repair work. Although modernized since World War II USS Laffey retains much of her integrity as an Allen M. Sumner class destroyer. Her hull, superstructure, main guns, and much of her equipment date from World War II.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Roger Chesnau, ed., Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1922-1946 (New York: Mayflower Books, 1980), p. 132.
2. Dr. Clark Reynolds, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory USS Laffey" (Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina: Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, 1983), p. 2.
3. No Author, USS Kidd (Information Brochure) March 1984.
4. Scott Judd Harmon, The USS Cassin Young (DD-793) (Unpublished Manuscript, Boston National Historical park, 1984), p. 5.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chesnau, Roger, ed., Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1922-1946. New York: Mayflower Books, 1980.

Harmon, Scott Judd. The USS Cassin Young (DD-793). Unpublished Manuscript: Boston National Historical Park, 1984.

No Author, USS Kidd Information Brochure, 1984.

Preston, Anthony. Destroyers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1977.

Reynolds, Clark. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory USS Laffey." Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina: Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, 1983.

Schofield, William G. Destroyers--60 Years. New York: Randy McNally & Company, 1962.