

National Museum of the Pacific War
Admiral Nimitz Foundation
Fredericksburg, Texas

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**Series Premier of the History Channel's: HERO SHIPS Continues at
The National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas**
USS Laffey and LSTs to Premier Saturday, February 9, 2008

Fredericksburg, Texas (February 4, 2008) - The premier of the History Channel film series HERO SHIPS will continue with two films February 9, 2008 at the National Museum of the Pacific War. The first film, USS Laffey will begin at 1:30 p.m. and the second, LSTs will begin at 2:30 p.m. Terry Miller, Executive Director of the Tin Can Sailors Association, will join a panel of veterans and WW-II historians for discussion following the premiers at 3:30 p.m. Daymon Monday, a veteran of LST 467, and other LST veterans will also be part of the discussion panel.

USS Laffey, a 1620-ton Benson class destroyer, was built at San Francisco, California, and commissioned at the end of March 1942. Following training operations off the west coast, she was sent to the South Pacific to take part in the Guadalcanal campaign, arriving in late August.

Operating with U.S. cruisers and destroyers, Laffey took part in two night gun and torpedo battles near Guadalcanal. In the first, the Battle of Cape Esperance on 11-12 October 1942, she helped repulse a Japanese bombardment group. A month later, on the night of 12-13 November, she participated in the first surface action of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. She engaged the Japanese battleships Hiei and Kirishima, then was torpedoed in the stern by the destroyer Teruzuki. USS Laffey was sunk shortly thereafter, when her after ammunition magazines exploded.

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USS Laffey's wreck was discovered and examined in mid-1992, nearly a half-mile below the surface of Iron Bottom Sound, off Guadalcanal. She is upright and largely intact from the bow to amidships, but her after third has disappeared. Both forward 5-inch guns are trained out to port, and her midships superstructure bears a hole where a Japanese 14-inch battleship projectile passed through her in the darkness of 13 November 1942.ⁱ

LSTs were designed during World War II to disembark military forces without the use of dock facilities or the various cranes and lifts necessary to unload merchant ships. They gave the Allies the ability to conduct amphibious invasions at any location on a foreign shore that had a gradually sloped beach. Some LSTs were used for special missions. They were used as troop ships, ammunition ships, hospital ships, repair ships and numerous other special purposes.

From their combat debut in the Solomon Islands and throughout the war, LSTs demonstrated a remarkable capacity to absorb punishment and survive. Although considered a valuable target by the enemy, only 26 were lost due to enemy action. However, crew members often referred to them by the nickname large slow target, loaded for a single trip. Naval historians have pointed to the aircraft carrier, submarine and LST as key American warships employed in World War II.ⁱⁱ

Rear Admiral Chuck Grojean, USN (Ret), Executive Director of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation says, "We are really pleased and honored to be a part of this important program. Opportunities such as this help the Museum inform the American public of the great stories to be told about the Pacific War and the sacrifices of those who served."

“We inspire our youth by honoring our heroes.” - The National Museum of the Pacific War, a Texas Historical Commission property operated by the Admiral Nimitz Foundation, is located in Fredericksburg, Texas, and is the only institution in the continental United States dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific Theater of World War II.

Located on a six-acre site, the facility includes the George H.W. Bush Gallery, Admiral Nimitz Museum, Plaza of the Presidents, the Memorial Courtyard, Japanese Garden of Peace, Pacific Combat Zone and the Center for Pacific War Studies.

Originally named the Admiral Nimitz Museum and housed solely in the historic Nimitz Hotel, the Museum has grown into a dynamic, first-class experience that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and from all backgrounds, a great family educational experience. In addition to nearly 34,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space, the Museum boasts an impressive display of Allied and Japanese aircraft, tanks, guns and other large artifacts made famous during the Pacific War campaigns. An additional 40,000 square-foot expansion is planned to be completed in late 2009. Visit us at WWW.Nimitz-Museum.org

ⁱ Previous three paragraphs from the Department of the Navy - Naval Historical Center

ⁱⁱ Previous two paragraphs from USS LST 494 Association Web Site