

# USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION

*Founded July 6, 2002*

June 2018  
**NEWSLETTER**

Making turns somewhere in the Western Pacific 1974



---

## ***Presidents Message***

---

Shipmates!

Plans Are underway for our 9<sup>th</sup> reunion. We will meet again in San Diego in 2019! Either September or October based upon best hotel rates. Exact dates to be determined.

As usual, we will do two tours, optional as always, on Friday and Saturday, with a visit to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, usually on Saturday.

So until then, shipmates - steady as you go!

***Bill Barrett***

### **Dedication Ceremony Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport, Washington**

By Bill Johnson

Many of you may know the story of Captain Willis Bradley and how he came to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. You may also know that he went on to have a distinguished career in the Navy and as a politician, serving as Governor in Guam and in the California state legislature. But you may not be aware that his son and grandson also had distinguished careers. This story touches on the history of Captain Willis Bradley and his family.

The seeds for this newsletter story began in Spring 2017 when our association secretary Bruce Gottsch was contacted by Program Analyst Jennifer Campbell, who works for the US Navy at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) at Keyport on Puget Sound in Washington state. She contacted Bruce because the station was going

to dedicate a conference center in Captain Bradley's name, and asked Bruce if any former crewmembers of Captain Bradley's namesake ship would be interested in attending the ceremony to represent the USS Bradley and her former crewmembers.

Bruce contacted several of us who live in the Pacific Northwest to see if we'd be interested in representing those who had served on the Bradley. It turned out that Randolph Watkins and I (Bill Johnson) were interested and said yes to opportunity. And so, with our wives Sheryl Watkins and Carol Barnard, we began the process of getting clearance to gain access to the base so we could attend. That process included submitting information so a background/security check could be conducted.

During this process we learned that Captain Bradley's grandson, Bruce McCandless



and some members of his family would also be in attendance.

And so, on 24 July we arrived at NUWC Keyport, where we met Bruce

McCandless, his wife Ellen Shields McCandless, and grandson Jackson Shields who had flown in from Texas for the occasion. While we gathered at the main gate entrance office and were introducing ourselves, the officials were anxious to begin, but the Watkins had not yet arrived. They decided we should proceed and that Sheryl and Randolph would catch up with us.

With that decision, they loaded us into a van, and the driver and a civilian Navy historian gave us a tour of the base, with the historian providing commentary and explanation

about the base, its history, mission, and integration with the surrounding community. The very first stop was on Bradley Drive (or maybe it was Road, I don't remember for sure, but I'm going with Drive). Yes, Captain Willis Bradley had already made an impression on the Keyport Naval Station as evidenced by a road in his name. As it turned out, Captain Bradley had been the base commander not once, but twice – two separate tours. Apparently, that's an unusual accomplishment.

They proceeded to take us around the base showing us where torpedoes were tested. They told about how in days gone by some of the torpedoes would go astray, only to be returned a day, or maybe a few days later by locals who had found them beached on their property. The historian did a great job explaining things and highlighting points of interest.

With the base tour concluded we were escorted to a building that housed the conference room being dedicated. Sheryl and Randolph were waiting for the tour group as we arrived. We were not allowed to have cameras, and in fact even had to leave our cell phones outside the main part of the building in small, secure lockers.

We then went to the conference room where the base commander, Captain Doug LaCoste, and a group of base employees greeted us. Introductions were made and



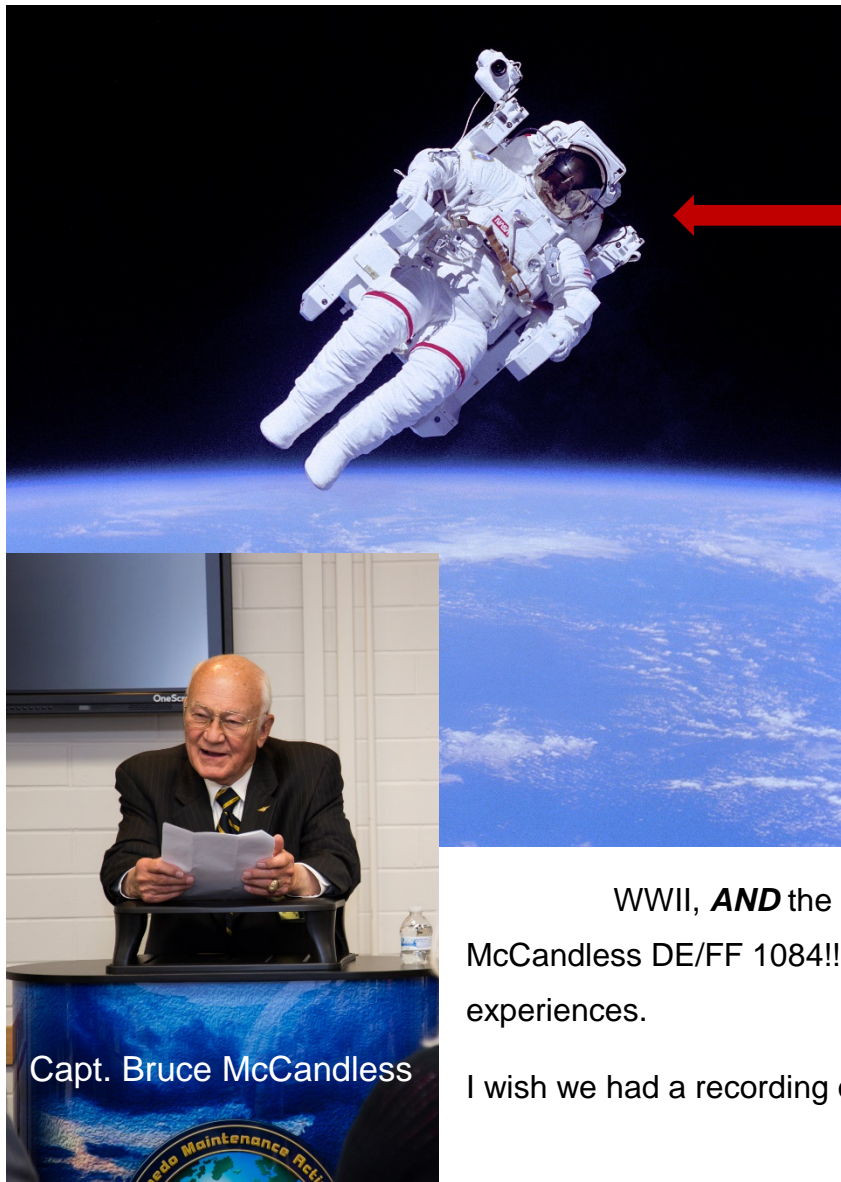
time was allowed for socializing before the official dedication ceremony began.

Tom Lacey, head of the Maintenance, Engineering and Industrial Operations Department was the emcee and opened the ceremony with a

few words before inviting Randolph and me to say a few words (we were asked during the weeks running up to the ceremony if we'd like to speak, so we weren't caught flat

footed). I didn't have any prepared remarks and spoke generally about how important my time aboard the Bradley had been to me, laying the foundation for a life that followed my time in the Navy. Randolph represented former Bradley crewmembers very well with a bit more formality, wearing a suit and speaking from prepared notes.

Following Randolph's and my remarks, Bruce McCandless was invited to speak. Now, I have to tell you that looking at Mr. McCandless you'd never know what a truly inspirational man he is. Turns out he too was a Captain in the Navy. **AND** – he was an astronaut!! But not just any astronaut. You may not recognize his name, but I'm



guessing you've seen his photo. Bruce was the first person to perform an untethered spacewalk. Yup – that's the guy!

Captain McCandless spoke from prepared notes, and it was clear he was accustomed to speaking to groups. Also dressed in a suit, Capt. McCandless talked about his grandfather, and his father (an Admiral who was awarded the Medal of Honor and Silver Star in

WWII, **AND** the namesake for the USS McCandless DE/FF 1084!!), as well as his own life and experiences.

I wish we had a recording of his talk.

After he concluded, Capt. McCandless stepped out the conference room door and was



Captain McCandless cuts the ribbon

handed a pair of scissors. Two ceremonial torpedoes with a ribbon stretched between them was placed across the doorway, and Capt. Bruce McCandless cut the ribbon to cheers by all present.

After the ribbon cutting, cake and coffee were served, and more socializing took place among all present.

Then, after the cake and coffee, we were treated to a tour of the torpedo development facility. This was a fascinating look behind the scenes at how torpedoes work, with views of cutaways along with explanations by the designers and technicians responsible for their development. We even got a look at one that was in development, but there were some questions they weren't allowed to answer.



Touring the development facility

As the tour was concluding and we were departing the development area, Randolph spotted a number of ships' plaques on a wall, and amazingly, there was the USS Bradley shield! Very cool - check out the photo with Capt. McCandless, Randolph, and me!!



Bill Johnson, Capt. McCandless, and Randolph Watkins in front of the Bradley shield in the development facility

We returned to the building entrance where cell phones were reunited with their owners. Randolph and Sheryl went on the base tour that the rest of us had received when we first arrived, and the rest of us returned to the main gate where we said our goodbyes.

I think it fair to say we all felt privileged to have been included in the day's activities and to have met Capt. McCandless.

Sadly, Captain Bruce McCandless passed away this past December at the age of 80. Speaking for my wife Carol and me, and I'll take the liberty of speaking for those in attendance at the dedication ceremony, Capt. McCandless carried himself with confidence and pride, having a self-awareness that was neither pretentious or self-serving. He showed grace and dignity, not only in his comments, but in his personal interactions with those of us in attendance. We were impressed and inspired by Capt. McCandless.

Here is a link to a remembrance/story about Capt. McCandless and his accomplishments which was posted upon his passing. It's about four minutes long, but worth listening to. Copy and paste the link below into your browser.

<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/22/517135809/bruce-mccandless-first-astronaut-to-fly-untethered-in-space-has-died>



Conference Room Dedication Plaque

## Remarks below from emcee Tom Lacey

*Maintenance, Engineering and industrial Operations Department Head*

- Good Afternoon ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Division Keyport for the dedication of the Captain Willis W. Bradley, Jr. Conference Room.



Randolph Watkins, NUWC Technician, Tom Lacey, and Bill Johnson talking about the base and its functions prior to the dedication ceremony.

- My name is Tom Lacey, I am the Department Head of our Maintenance, Engineering and Industrial Operations Department. I will be serving as your MC today.
- As a reminder to all in attendance, please ensure that all cell phones are off or silenced and please refrain from any photography within the building.
- I would like to thank all for your attendance today, and would like to take a few moments to recognize and extend a very special welcome to **our guests** for today's ceremony:
  - Captain Bruce McCandless II, the grandson of Captain Willis Bradley, Jr., his wife Mrs. Ellen Shields McCandless and their grandson Jackson Shields.
  - From the namesake USS Bradley Association Board of Directors, Randolph and Cheryl Watkins, William Johnson, and Carol Barnard.

- Captain Doug LaCoste, Commanding Officer, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Keyport
- And Our Fellow Keyporters.

-----

- I would like to begin with a brief background of this facility and this conference room.
- This is the front office area of our Torpedo Intermediate Maintenance Activity or “IMA” for short, where we produce MK 48 submarine launched Heavyweight Torpedoes; MK 46 and the newer MK 54 Surface and Air Launched Lightweight Torpedoes, and Vertical Launched ASROC Weapons. All combined, we produce over 600 weapons annually to support Fleet inventory requirements, Fleet exercise firings, R&D test events, and Foreign Military Sales customers.
- The Weapon’s Maintenance work performed here in this facility is one of several capabilities we have within the Maintenance Engineering and Industrial Operations Department supporting material readiness requirements of the Navy;
- For as long as I can remember this facility was also where the Department Head’s office was located, and was so when I took over the position in 2012. At the time, this conference room had as wall decorations a visual history of Keyport, certainly including its Torpedo heritage, but also representing the broader technical work we do across Keyport in support of the fleet.
- About a year ago, I relocated the Department Head office to a more Department-central-location a few buildings away. With this move came the question of what to do with this pictorial history. In discussing the question with the Intermediate Maintenance Activity, they proposed the idea of taking the opportunity to assemble a team to redesign this conference room. The extraordinary result was a Weapon’s Maintenance ***mission-focused*** theme and the idea of the Dedication to Captain Willis W. Bradley, Jr. It was ***the great work and***

**inspiration** from this team that brought us here today, and I would like to introduce and recognize this team:

- Please stand when I call your name: The Conference Room Team consisted of Brian Burleson, Roger Hager, Tracy Harris, Nicole Morey, Derek Reese, Ashley Brown, Dan Bujok, and Paul Watrous.
- Thank you all for your great work!

-----

- At this time, "It is my honor to introduce Captain Doug LaCoste, Commanding Officer, Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Division-Keyport.
- CAPT LaCoste is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a career submariner. He's served on the Joint Staff, as the submarine liaison officer aboard a Destroyer, and completed the US Army Command and General Staff College. Captain LaCoste commanded the Naval Submarine Torpedo Facility in Yorktown, VA from July 2011 to June 2013, and assumed command of NUWC Keyport in May, 2016."

-----

- Thank you Captain.
- As mentioned Captain Willis Bradley is the namesake of the USS Bradley, FF-1041. It is an honor to have representatives of the USS Bradley Association here today. I would like to welcome William Johnson and Randolph Walkins, both former crew members on the USS Bradley to share a few words.

-----

- Thank you Mr. Johnson and Mr. Walkins. At this time, and with the introduction provided by Captain LaCoste, it is an honor to welcome Captain Bruce McCandless II, to speak.

-----

- Thank you Captain McCandless.
- At this time, I would like to direct your attention to Ms. Jennifer Campbell who will unveil the conference room dedication plaque.

This plaque was sponsored by the NUWC Division Keyport Veterans Affairs Special Emphasis Program, and the wood backing provided by Paul Watrous, a member of the Conference Room team.



- The plaque cites Captain Bradley's two tours as the Naval Torpedo Station Keyport Commanding Officer; provides the citation for his Medal of Honor, and commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his heroic act, which occurred 100 years ago yesterday on 23 July 1917.
- This dedication serves several purposes for us. First, it underscores a history of excellence and service to the Navy. His heroism on the U.S.S. Pittsburgh will also serve as an enduring reminder of the need for safety and the inherent risk of our work!
- Thank you Jennifer.
- It is time to perform the official Ribbon Cutting. I would like to invite Captain McCandless and family members, Captain LaCoste, and Nichol Williams our IMA Manager to join us near the door for the cutting. I also ask Captain McCandless to do the honors of the actual ribbon cutting.

- Before we conclude, I want to again thank all of you, our special guests – the McCandless Family and USS Bradley Association; and Captain LaCoste for joining us here today.
- I also want to say a special thank you to Jennifer Campbell for her outstanding work organizing this event. Thank you Jennifer.
- This concludes our ceremony; I welcome everyone to enjoy some cake and refreshments.
- Finish

## **Remarks below from Captain Doug LaCoste**

*Commanding Officer, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Keyport*

### **Willis Bradley Room Remarks**

Captain Doug LaCoste

24 July 2017

Thanks Tom -

Good afternoon everyone, thank you all for joining us.

I'm especially happy we have a former crewmember from Captain Bradley's namesake ship, DE/FF1041.

Welcome from the USS Bradley Association, Bill Johnson and your wife, Carol Barnard. We also welcome Randolph Watkins and his wife Sheryl Watkins.

We're very fortunate as well to have descendant of Captain Bradley's with us today.

His Grandson, Captain Bruce McCandless II Captain McCandless' wife, Mrs. Ellen Shields McCandless and Captain McCandless' grandson, Jackson Harry Shields.

I learned that not only was Captain McCandless' grandfather a Medal of Honor recipient, but also, his father was a Medal of Honor recipient, for his actions aboard USS San Francisco during the Battle Guadalcanal, and retired as an Admiral.

And his father and grandfather both had ships named for them.

I guess with those family reputations to live up to, the only thing a kid can do to keep up is to, well, become an astronaut.

For those didn't know, Captain McCandless was a Naval aviator and an astronaut. He was selected to NASA's astronaut program in 1966, flew on two Space Shuttle flights, and logged over 312 hours in space, including performing the first untethered spacewalk.

Again, we're very honored that you and your family could join us.

Your family member we're here to commemorate, by dedicating this room to him, is of course Captain Willis Bradley.

Yesterday was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the action for which then Lieutenant Willis Bradley received his Medal of Honor.

On 23 July 1917, while serving aboard USS Pittsburg, an accidental explosion of cartridges left him temporarily unconscious.

When he was able to come to, Bradley crawled into the space where the explosive charges were burning and extinguished multiple fires, preventing further explosions, and possibly the loss of his ship.

For this "extraordinary heroism," he was awarded the Medal of Honor

Captain Willis Bradley served two tours as senior military leader at Keyport, what was in his time called the Pacific Coast Torpedo Station, from 1919 to 1920, and from 1922 to 1924.

Only two CO's to have done that here in Keyport's 103-year history.

During Bradley's tenure, Keyport was a very young Command - the workforce consisted of about 80 civilians, 30 enlisted Sailors, and 18 Marines, and usually just one Naval officer.

In 1919, when he first arrived in the area, the Kitsap Peninsula had very few passable roads during his first tour, the small workforce commuted on foot, or by horse, and not infrequently, by row boat.

By the beginning of Captain Bradley's second tour, enough cars were being driven to work that it was decided that the Torpedo Station should build a parking lot. The Station supplied the materials and the workforce donated a day's labor to the effort.

As a side note, I think that Captain Bradley may have been the first and last Keyport CO to come up with a parking plan that made every Keyporter happy, but that's another story.

For many of us Keyport commanding officers, including me, being the Keyport CO is a dream job, and the last we hold in the Navy. This is the highlight of our careers.

But Willis Bradley would follow-up his Medal of Honor and leadership of this base with many, many more accomplishments.

From Keyport, he went to Command USS Gold Star, became Naval Governor of Guam, commanded USS Portland, commanded a destroyer squadron, and served as Commanding Officer of Pearl Harbor Navy Shipyard.

He also earned a couple of graduate degrees.

And then, for something to occupy his time in retirement, he was elected to Congress.

I'm not sure exactly what I'm going to do after I leave Keyport, but I'm certain it won't be as productive or illustrious as Captain Bradley's post-Keyport life.

When Captain Bradley was here, this was a Command focused exclusively on torpedoes - on testing, repairing, and improving what at the time was a pretty new technology.

We do a lot more than torpedoes today, but they're still a core part of our mission.

This is the conference room for our Torpedo Intermediate Maintenance Activity - essentially, the same work that was going on here during then Lieutenant Bradley's command. The basics of providing that technical capability to the Fleet, the combination of knowledge, expertise, engineering, and testing that we did then, we also do now.

I'd like to think that if he could see what we've become nearly a century after he left, he'd be amazed by the technology, the state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, and that our workforce is now more than 2000 people who operate around the globe.

But I think he'd understand the heart of our mission – what we do, why we do it, and why it matters even more in this century than it did in the last.

And I hope he'd be pleased that the ideas and collaboration that will keep advancing torpedo work and our dominance of the undersea domain will come from the room that bears his name.

Thank you all again for sharing this event with us...

###







The End