

# In Memoriam



## Navy League

of the United States

### Palm Beach Council

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services

***H. Lamar Parker Aug 1926 – Aug 2018***

***U.S. Navy Aviator \*\*\*\* WW-2 Veteran***

We lost a good friend and stalwart member of our Navy League family when Lamar Parker passed away last week.

Lamar flew the OS2U Kingfisher spotter plane as a crew member of the battleship USS New York (BB-34) in WW-2, including reconnaissance and gunfire-directing flights during the battles of Iwo Jima.

When reporting aboard USS New York before deployment to the Pacific, Lamar circled the Statue of Liberty in his Kingfisher float plane and taxied alongside the ship in New York harbor to join the crew..... pretty classy arrival!



Lamar and Betty were married after meeting online several years after losing their first spouses. They enjoyed a lot of traveling around the country in their RV and spending time in their North Georgia cabin.

Lamar and Betty rarely missed a Navy League luncheon or dinner and were solid supporters of our council.

God speed, shipmate!

A more comprehensive history and report of visit to USS NEW YORK (LPD-21) during Fleet Week 2014 is attached, penned by friend and visit organizer, Phil Dunmire.

## **HERRION LAMAR PARKER**

**24 August 1926 - 29 August 2018**

He was a quiet, proud veteran who became a member of Navy League along with his wife Betty, in 2012, having been recruited by Sue Comerford and Catherine Brister. The Parkers subsequently also became members of the Association of Naval Aviation. Lamar Parker wore the Wings of Gold on his lapel which signaled there was a story to be told and as it turned out a very important perspective on the US Navy in WWII.

He was taught to fly by an uncle and was commissioned at a young age in the Alabama National Guard, later completing flight school at Pensacola. Too tall to fly anything but a PBY or OS2 Kingfisher, he chose the later. The OS2 was an observation aircraft equipped with floats. He was assigned to the USS New York (BB-34). The *New York* was a battleship commissioned in 1914 and armed with 14" guns.\* As he arrived in New York with "his Kingfisher," he circled the Statue of Liberty before landing in the Hudson River and taxiing up to join the ship.

Lamar departed on the *New York* and returned to the same piers following the end of the war. His experiences provided amazing insight into his and a little recognized warship's contribution to defeating our enemies. Their first assignment was to neutralize a Nazi shore battery in northern Africa. They then transited the Panama Canal and participated in allied combat operations throughout the Pacific.

Flying the Kingfisher, Lamar directed Naval gunfire onto targets including Iwo Jima. There he and his radioman spotted a man made structure and directed fire onto it. Initially only solid steel rounds from the 14" guns hit the target. When it was eventually breached, explosive rounds were fired which caused the tunnels underneath to blow-up. As Lamar related, the explosions from that attack on what turned out to be the ammunition dump continued for three days. Later in the war, his Kingfisher was destroyed by a kamikaze attack which he observed from the deck of the *New York*. These are but a few of many experiences shared by this quiet, proud naval aviator.

In 2014 Lamar and Betty paid a visit to the current USS New York (LPD-21) in Fort Lauderdale. A collage of photographs recording that visit is attached. 7.5 tons of steel from the rubble of the World Trade Center, destroyed by a modern day kamikaze attack on 11 September 2001, was used in casting the bow section of the ship.\* The photograph of Lamar with a Marine standing next to a cobra gunship in one sense could represent a current day Kingfisher.

Following the war Lamar became a high school football coach. He flew single engine general aviation aircraft for much of his adult life. Lamar and his wife Betty met on the internet years after their first spouses passed away. They traveled throughout the United States in an RV and spent the last several years in the West Palm area and at a summer cabin in North Georgia.

Lamar is being interred with his first wife in Orlando. In addition to Betty, Lamar's son, Billy and wife Donda survive. Betty authorized this report of his passing but otherwise Lamar wanted no obituary or local service. A quiet, proud American is being laid to rest.

**USS NEW YORK (LPD-21)**



LAMAR PARKER visit 30 April 2014

