

Jimmie Darrow Albright

U.S. Navy, Signalman Senior Petty Officer

1926 - 2002

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Jimmie Darrow Albright was born on March 12, 1926, to John and Grace Albright. Though he ended his days seventy-six years later in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, he began his life in West Virginia, where he rests today.



Jimmie Darrow Albright during his Navy days. FindAGrave

Albright was born in Fayette County, West Virginia but spent most of his childhood in Boone County. The shadow of the Great Depression hung over his youth and that of his nine siblings Elaine, Vera, Roth, Nele, Ruth, Rudy, Wayne, Annas-Gay, and John, Jr. Through the difficult 1930s, Jimmie's father worked hard to support the family as a coal miner. Perhaps the dire conditions of the Depression in hardscrabble Boone County are why Albright ended his public schooling early, never making it past the seventh grade.

After the United States entered World War II, Jimmie enlisted in the U.S. Navy on September 6, 1943, eventually serving aboard the *LSM-141*. An LSM, or Landing Ship Medium, was a type of amphibious transport vessel used by the Navy to land supplies and cargo directly onto a beach, rather than a harbor, allowing for greater operational flexibility. *LSM-141* had a forward draft of just over three feet, which allowed it to deliver large amounts of material in very shallow water indeed. The Navy commissioned the ship on June 22, 1944, at Charleston Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina and assigned it to the Pacific Fleet.

This ship and its men, including Jimmie Albright, participated in the long, bloody battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. The Allied objective was to secure this strategic island to prepare for attacks on mainland Japan. The island's three airfields were to be important emergency landing sites for American bombers that had been damaged or were low on fuel.

U.S. Marines and Army personnel began their assault on the volcanic island on February 19, 1945. The Imperial Japanese Army contested the landings making it difficult for US forces to land

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reinforcements and supplies. Much of the enemy's deadly fire came from the dormant volcano known as Mount Suribachi, which overlooked the beaches upon which American troops were landing. Japanese artillery from that elevated position raked the beach, making additional landings extremely hazardous. Marines immediately began a methodical assault on Suribachi which they secured on February 23 after intense fighting. The event is forever enshrined by Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the flag rising atop the ancient volcano.

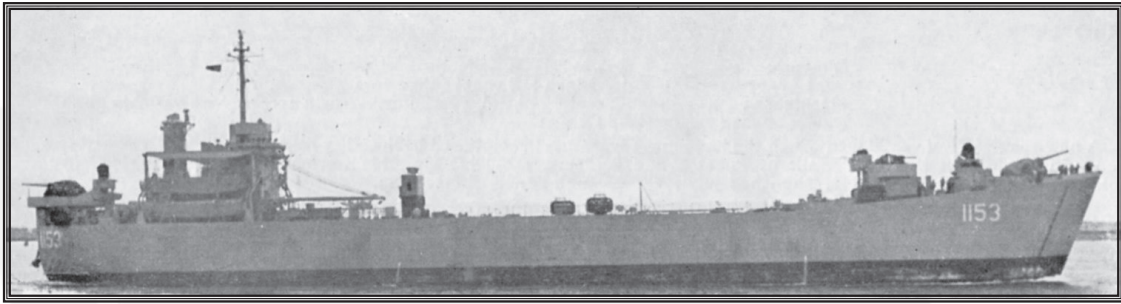


LSM-141 in a long line of landing craft resupplying American troops on Iwo Jima, 25 February 1945. Naval History and Heritage Command

Securing Mount Suribachi helped protect the beach, which facilitated the flow of men and material. On February 25, six days after the assault began, Albright and *LSM-141* landed on Iwo Jima to unload supplies. Capable of carrying everything from ammunition and food, to troops and light vehicles, the ship was a vital component to the Allied effort to secure the island. On March 26, 1945, U.S. forces declared the island secure, marking the end of a 36-day long battle.

Those who served with Albright had great praise for his leadership and called him “the quintessential sailor.” After the war ended in September 1945, Albright remained in the Navy, attaining the rank of Signalman Senior Petty Officer and serving in the Operations Division—overseeing docking, towing, and onloading and offloading supplies aboard *USS Talbot County* (LST-1153). LSTs, or Landing Ship Tanks, were similar to LSMs except that they were designed to land heavy equipment such as tanks and armored vehicles on shore. The Navy commissioned the *USS Talbot County* on September 3, 1947 at the Boston Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts and assigned it to the Atlantic fleet. The ship participated in exercises off of Puerto Rico and Greenland but never participated in any combat operations.

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An official Navy photograph of USS Talbot County (LST-1153). NavSource

For the Boone County boy with little education, the Navy must have been the right fit. Albright retired on June 1, 1966, after almost twenty-three years of service. Once back in the United States for good, Albright met his first wife Thelma L. Parker, with whom he had a son named Kevin Earl. Unfortunately, Thelma Parker Albright passed away on October 25, 1976. She is buried in the town of Frame, Kanawha County, West Virginia.

In 1984, Albright married again, this time to Suzanne Ream. They lived together in their home in South Carolina until Albright passed away on April 5th, 2002. Jimmie Darrow Albright returned to his native West Virginia to be buried at the West Virginia National Cemetery in Pruntytown, where visitors can pay their respects to his long service and dedication to his country.



**Albright aboard the USS Talbot County circa 1957.
Photo by John R. Ashburn, Sr. via FindAGrave**

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Resting Place

West Virginia National Cemetery
42 Veterans Memorial Lane, Grafton, WV 26354
(304) 265-2044

Section C1
Site 72

Date of interment: April 22, 2004

About the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project

The West Virginia National Cemeteries Project is a program of the West Virginia Humanities Council, funded in part by the Veterans Legacy Program of the Department of Veteran Affairs and initiated in 2021. All biographies produced as part of this program are composed by West Virginia high school students, who conduct original research on veterans interred at the Grafton National Cemetery or the West Virginia National Cemetery, both of which are located in or near Grafton, Taylor County, West Virginia.

As home to one of the nation's earliest National Cemeteries, the community of Grafton has longstanding traditions of honoring America's veterans, including the longest continuously celebrated Memorial Day parade in the United States. The Grafton National Cemetery, located in the heart of the city and founded in 1867, is typically the endpoint of each year's parade. When the Grafton National Cemetery began to run short of space during the 1960s, the West Virginia National Cemetery was dedicated in 1987, just a few miles outside of Grafton in the community of Pruntytown. The same National Cemetery Administration staff cares for both facilities.

The West Virginia Humanities Council is proud to thank the following organizations for their participation in the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project: West Virginia Archives and History, the West Virginia University history department, Taylor County Historical and Genealogical Society, Taylor County Public Library, and Grafton High School.

Please refer comments or questions to the West Virginia Humanities Council
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