



PIPELINE

Sept. 2016

Boston Reunion update

By Jeff Sturgis

My wife and I had a "dry run" for this fall's Boston reunion which runs from Thursday, Sept. 8 to Sunday, Sept. 11, as we spent two days in Quincy at the Boston/Quincy Marriott in July. The hotel is beautiful and the amenities are first class. I met with the event director to make the final arrangements, and then my wife and I toured the USS Salem in Quincy Harbor.

The heavy cruiser is being restored and is not as polished as other ships we have seen at our reunions, but is still worth seeing as many of the spaces are just the same as the day she was decommissioned. The Salem and another attraction, the Adams Historical Park, are within a short distance of the hotel and would be good choices for visits on Thursday or Saturday of the reunion.

Reserve Friday for the Boston tour which will leave the hotel at 10:00 AM and begin at the Charleston Navy Yard with a visit to the USS Constitution, followed by lunch on your own in the Faneuil Hall area and visits to Revolutionary War sites as time permits. The price will be \$35 per person for this historical journey.

As always, breakfast will be provided on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings in the Abigail Adams Room which will be our headquarters while we are at the hotel. On Saturday morning we will have our annual business meeting followed by free time until the banquet which starts with a short reception at 6:30 PM. "Jazz in the Air," a jazz trio will provide the entertainment for the banquet along with the annual appearance of the "JGs."

Boston is beautiful in the fall and there are many attractions for those who want to bring friends or family. The room prices are good for three days before and three days after the reunion, so those new to Boston have an opportunity to see even more of its history.

So, if you haven't registered, please do so soon as the deadline for reserving rooms at the reunion rate of \$139 is Thursday, Aug. 18, 2016.

The camaraderie and friendships that are fostered among those of us who served on the Caliente are reason enough to attend. The Boston attractions are just icing on the cake. Please see the registration form and the reunion agenda which are at the end of this issue. As always, please contact me with questions or concerns. My phone is 207-782-8323 and email is jandssturgis@roadrunner.com.

Sue and I hope to see you in Boston



Last Call

The 2016 Reunion
is Sept 8 to Sept 11

Agenda, Registration form
on pages 7 and 8

Visiting our plaque

By Pat Hurton, SK2 1962-1966

Charleen and I recently visited the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. The museum is part of the Admiral Nimitz Museum Complex. As part of the USS Caliente reunion held in San Antonio, Texas in 2008, Bob Howard arranged a tour of the Complex that is situated in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.

The museum was redone and greatly expanded just after our last visit. To view all the exhibits and read the material it would probably take one long day or two days.

The USS Caliente has a plaque in the Memorial Courtyard (part of the complex) and every Memorial Day a wreath is laid next to our plaque in honor of those who served on the USS Caliente and have passed away.

The complex is well worth a visit and I would encourage any shipmate who is going to be visiting either Austin or San Antonio take the time to visit the great exhibits. If one where staying in the Fredericksburg area you could round out your trip with a visit the LBJ Ranch and Texas White House located between Fredericksburg and Johnson City.



Taps

Morris G. Banks, 78, died 13 June 2016 in Virginia Beach, VA. Born 17 Oct 1937 in Albertson, NC, Morris was on the Cal from 1967 to 1970 as an SM1. He retired from the Navy with 20 years of service. He was a member of the Fleet Reserve, Branch 99, the Non-Commissioned Officers and the Softball Players associations. He was also part founder of the Tidewater Senior Athletic Association. Morris is survived by his wife of almost 52 years, Joanne, sons Brian A. (Crystal) and Christopher, brother Hugh T. (Ann), sister Grace B. (Ron) Hendrick and five grandchildren. He was buried in Rosewood Memorial Park, Virginia Beach.



Kenneth L Marshall died 17 May 2016 at home in Glendora, CA. Born 13 June 1932 in Clarinda, Iowa, Kenneth served on the Cal from 1951 to 1955 as a BM3. He enlisted in the Navy as a senior in high school and after his active duty on the Caliente, he spent another four years in the reserves. Kenneth was a printer by trade, working for Walt Disney in Burbank, CA, and other printing companies. In retirement he fished and golfed, winning trophies in both. Kenneth is survived by his wife of 63 years, Ida, children David, Becky and Donald; three grandchildren, six great grandchildren, brother James (Joan) Marshall and many extended family members. Services were held at Riverside National Cemetery.

Editor's message

by Karl Seitz

Another reunion is almost upon us. In a matter of weeks, many of your shipmates will gather in Boston. We'll visit historical sites, have some good food and entertainment and, most of all, enjoy each other's company.

It's not too late for you to make plans to join us, although the deadline for hotel reservations at a favorable rate is rapidly approaching. Information on signing up is found elsewhere in this issue of the Pipeline.

A tip that might help some of you. If you are planning to rent a car anyway, you might consider flying in and out of Providence, RI, instead of Boston. My wife and I are doing so because the flight schedule is better for us and the Marriott Hotel in Quincy is less than an hour away, according to Google maps. That is actually less time than using public transit from the Boston airport to the hotel, although not faster than driving. In addition, we're spending time on Cape Cod after the reunion and the Providence airport is more convenient than Boston's.

Back to the reunion. A large portion of our time together is spent swapping stories about our times on the Cal. The recollections may involve brief incidents described by a single individual or they may be about major events to which several shipmates contribute memories. Either way, the result is usually a story that shipmates who couldn't make it to the reunion would enjoy.



USS Caliente Association
Chairman: Jeff Sturgis
Executive Committee: Mike Copeland, Dave Ludemann, Greg Perett, Tom Rawlinson and Steve Selzer
Treasurer: Pat Hurton
Pipeline Editor: Karl Seitz



The Pipeline is the official quarterly newsletter of the USS Caliente Association. It is a place to share your memories and pictures. Please send them via e-mail to seitzao53@gmail.com or by regular mail to Karl Seitz, 1212 30th St. South, Birmingham, AL 35205-1910.

Association dues are \$10 per year due Jan. 1, payable by Jan. 15. Checks should be made out to The USS Caliente Association and mailed to treasurer Pat Hurton, 156 Greenfield Drive, Chico, CA 95973-0185.

Chairman Jeff Sturgis can be reached via email at jandssturgis@roadrunner.com or by mail at 84 Old Woodman Hill Rd, Minot, ME 04258

Masthead picture of USS Caliente (AO-53) used with permission of Dan Davis.

The Pipeline is the perfect platform for sharing these stories with those who were unable to attend. If you tell a story that brings a lot of praise, consider putting it in written form and sending to me at one of the addresses below along with any pictures you might have. If more than one person contributes to a story, decide among yourselves who should compile a written version from all the contributions and have him send the result to me. If you hear a story that you particularly like, encourage the teller or tellers to send it to me for publication in the Pipeline.

If you can't make it to the reunion but have a story to tell, I want to hear from you, too.

I hope to see you in Boston in September. If not, there will be another reunion next year.

Memories



These pictures come from Kitty Hammer, wife of the late Steve Hammer, RM3, 1967-69. The swim call was in the summer of 1968. The aircraft carrier is the USS America (CVA-66), date unknown. Steve is to the right of an unidentified shipmate, apparently in the forward crew quarters of the Caliente.



A reminder if you are on Facebook, Jack Hughes has created a Facebook group for former crew members of the USS Caliente (AO-53) and their families.

Dragon boat races on the Love River

by B.A. Buscher, LTJG 1958-1960

While deployed with the Sixth Fleet in 1959, the Caliente was ordered into Kaohsiung Formosa Harbor as station ship. As part of his duties, the captain visited the port captain. While there, our captain was told about the “dragon boat races” that were to be held the following week and the port captain thought it would be a great idea if the Caliente would participate. Our captain also thought this would be a great idea.

Upon his return to the ship, he called me to his cabin. One of my collateral duties was “athletic officer.” He said we were to take part in the dragon boat races and to get volunteers to participate as crew.

I sked what a dragon boat was and he said it was some sort of a canoe. I could go over to Pier Two and see one. I did. What a shock. Here was this beautiful boat, bright red with a dragon painted on the bow.

I put a note in the Plan of the Day and made a request over the ship’s “mic” for volunteers. I got three. What to do? I went back to the captain and suggested I check with all the men on “restriction” and offer them release from restriction if they would volunteer. He approved and I had more men than I needed, all of them twice the size of the local crews we would be rowing against.

We got in one practice, which was a comedy of errors. The second time we were better coordinated, and the third time we were really moving.

The day of the race, there were five other boats, all with crews who had been racing for years, and it seemed like a “zillion” people cheering along the river.

We got off to a slow start, but soon passed the lead boat and crossed the finishing line two boat lengths ahead.

We returned happily to the ship, the captain was happy and all the volunteers previously on restriction got to go on liberty again. Not too bad for a bunch of swabbies who had never seen a dragon boat before.

Editor’s note: Two dragon boat crew members wrote of their memories of this race in the March 2009 Pipeline. The picture is from one of them, Miguel Ronquillo, RD2, 1958-1961.



Michael Schwartz, BM3 1967-1969, sent this clipping from the New Zealand Herald about the Caliente's 1969 grounding on a mudbank in Auckland, N.Z., Harbor.



AUG. 3, 1969
SECTION 1 * N.Z. Herald, Saturday

Two Auckland Harbour Board tugs, the Auckland (left) and the Te Awhina, straining in shallow water to free the 7700-ton American tanker Caliente from the mudbank near Bean Rock.

U.S. NAVY OILER REFLOATED FROM MUDBANK

Officers in the American fleet oiler Caliente realised too late that the ship was going aground near Bean Rock in the Auckland Harbour yesterday morning.

Last in line of 14 naval ships entering the harbour, the Caliente glided into a mudbank about 1600 yards north-east of Bean Rock at 7.45 a.m.

With the help of two Auckland Harbour Board tugs, the Te Awhina and the Auckland, the tanker was refloated three hours later.

Because of what is believed to have been an error of navigation, the Caliente strayed nearly a quarter of a mile from the channel.

Displacing 7700 tons, she had the deepest draft of any of the naval ships which have just completed the four-day exercise Operation Longex off the New Zealand coast.

Pilot Not In Command

The Auckland harbour-master, Capt. R. H. Carter, who went out to the grounded tanker, said later that the board had a pilot in the Caliente but she was under the command of her own officers at the time of the mishap.

The pilot, Capt. R. Bedwell, had been told he would take over his duties when the ship neared her berth at Biedisloe Wharf.

Capt. Carter said: "The pilot realised before she went aground that they were getting too close, but it was too late."

He said the Caliente's engines were put astern but she glided sideways into the mudbank. She was lifted up and her draft was decreased by three feet when she grounded.

The two tugs arrived alongside about 8.15 a.m. and for the next two and a half hours kept strain on lines to the tanker.

More Ready

Preparations were made for six more tugs, including two Japanese tugs, to assist from about 11 a.m. if the tanker was still fast.

The destroyer USS Mullany and the frigate HMNZS Blackpool were placed on standby ready to assist.

Capt. Carter said: "When I got there I realised that it was better to get everything we could early in case she didn't come off."

The Caliente, which displaces 25,000 tons when fully laden, was about half full. While aground she transferred fuel from aft to amidships.

Capt. Carter said the Caliente began to move about 10.45 a.m. The tide was rising. Five minutes later it was quite obvious she was moving and by 10.55 a.m. she was clear of the mudbank.

An official statement from the Caliente said full application of the ship's 13,000-horsepower engines was insufficient to overcome the squally winds and flood tide.

They rang for full astern on the engines just before she touched the bank. As soon as the ship had run aground, all engines were stopped.

One of the seamen on board said he had not even felt the ship go on the bank but had wondered why she had stopped moving.

USS CALIENTE (AO-53) BOSTON REUNION



Boston Marriott Quincy



Old State House

BOSTON MARRIOTT QUINCY
1000 Marriott Drive, Quincy, MA 02169
8 September-11 September, 2016

Reservations can be made at the Boston Marriott Quincy by calling 1-800-228-9290 or 617-472-1000 and identifying yourself as a part of the USS Caliente Reunion. The room rates are good for three days prior and three days after the reunion dates. The group rate is \$139.00 per room plus a 11.7% charge for state and local taxes. The cutoff date for reservations is Thursday, August 18, 2016. Parking is available at no charge.

Reunion Agenda

Thursday, 8 September

- a) Hotel check-in
- b) 3:00 PM-6:00 PM-reception with snacks provided

Friday, 9 September

- a) 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM - Continental Breakfast
- b) 10:00 AM Boston Tour (cost \$35 per person) or free time

Saturday, 10 September

- a) 7:00 AM - 9:00AM - Continental Breakfast
- b) 9:00 AM - Annual Business Meeting
- c) Free Time
- d) 6:30 PM - Pre-banquet Social Gathering
- e) 7:00 PM - Banquet

Sunday, 11 September

- a) 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM - Continental Breakfast
- b) 9:00 AM - Noon - Farewells

2016 Boston Reunion
Registration Form

Shipmate's Name _____

Spouse or Guest Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Years on Cal 19__ to 19__ Rate/Rank while aboard _____

Registration Fee:

\$180.00 per person x _____ persons = \$ _____

Registration fee includes reception, three continental
breakfasts, and the banquet

Additional Guests:

Banquet Meal Choices:

Herb Crusted All Natural Chicken Breast _____
Braised Boneless Short Ribs _____
Seared Atlantic Salmon _____

Please return to: USS Caliente Association, c/o Pat Hurton,
156 Greenfield Drive, Chico, CA 95973-0185