

# USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



# PIPELINE

Dec 2018

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## St. Louis reunion recap

By Jeff Sturgis

Twenty Caliente shipmates were joined by 22 family members at the St. Louis reunion held at the Embassy Suites in downtown St. Louis Sept. 6-9. The hotel was situated near the convention center and just a few blocks from the Mississippi River waterfront and the famous St. Louis Arch. The rooms were spacious and the included hot breakfasts were very well provisioned. As always, we had a dedicated room which we were able to use as a base for the duration of the reunion.

Thursday was arrival day and we gathered at the reception to welcome shipmates as they arrived. The highlight of the afternoon was the arrival of two WWII veterans. John Creedon, who was one of the association's founders and a yearly attendee, was joined by Fred Griffith from Cincinnati who served on the Cal at the same time as John.

Accompanied, as always by his lovely wife, Diane, John was also joined by his daughter



Frederick Griffith, QM3, 1944-46, flanked by son Steve and wife Cindy on left and daughter Jennifer and husband Gary Cowgill on right wore matching t-shirts at St. Louis reunion.

Juliette Kuernland. Fred was joined by his son, Steve and his wife Cindy, and his daughter Jennifer Cowgill and her husband, Gary. The five members of the Griffith family made a dramatic entrance as they all had white and red Caliente caps and matching white shirts imprinted with Fred's picture as a young sailor.

Friday brought our bus tour of some of the historical places in the St. Louis area. We started out by visiting the Jefferson Barracks Military Post and Park which is south of St. Louis on the Mississippi River. The barracks served as a military installation from 1826-1946 and, in addition to becoming a park with various attractions, it still hosts the Army Air and National Guard as well as serving as a VA center. It also has a vast military cemetery where veterans may still choose to be buried. We spent a fascinating time visiting the Civil War Museum at the barracks. The museum had an interesting perspective because, as a border state, Missouri was split between rebel and yankee supporters.

We then traveled north of St. Louis to St. Charles which is on the Missouri River and was the starting point of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. We had lunch in the restored old section of the city before visiting the Lewis and Clark Boathouse Museum which had a replica of the riverboat in which they started their journey as well as exhibits and artifacts from their storied trek.

Our next destination was Forest Park where the St. Louis Zoo, History Museum, Science Center, Art Museum and Muny (theater) are all located in a pastoral setting of ponds, trees and fields. Being short on time, we were not able to stop at any one place, but the bus wended its way through the beautiful landscape as these sights were pointed out to us by our guide.

The last stop late in the afternoon was the beautiful St. Louis Cathedral. It's beauty and majesty was stunning, and it was a fitting ending to a whirlwind tour.

Saturday brought our annual business meeting after breakfast. The men who make the

backbone of the association

were thanked for their untiring efforts on our behalf. Pat

Hurton is the treasurer and his stewardship of our funds is indispensable. He also plans the tours that are the highlights of our Fridays at the reunions. Karl Seitz was recognized for his editorship of the Pipeline, one of the finest veterans newsletter in existence. Also recognized were the members of the executive committee, Mike Copeland, Dave Ludemann, Greg Perett, Tom Rawlinson, Steve Selzer and Jeff Sturgis. This is the group that helps plan the reunions and searches out members to encourage attendance.



After a short discussion, Savannah, GA, was chosen as our next reunion site for 2019. Everyone showed up at the meeting with beautiful blue Caliente t-shirts generously provided by John and Diane Creedon. These were shirts based on a shirt that John had worn to the Caliente Boston reunion with a gold impression of the ship on the front and a narrative history of the Cal's service during her 30 years in service. We all gathered for a group picture wearing these great momentos of our reunion.

The culmination of the reunion, as always, was the banquet on Saturday evening. The moving Two Bell Ceremony which honors those who died over the previous year preceded the buffet meal. During and after the meal a trio from the Matt McCallie orchestra entertained us with jazz and popular tunes. The JGs, consisting of Jeff Sturgis and Greg Perret performed as usual with their renditions of Kingston Trio favorites, "Mark Twain" and "The Sloop John B" and ending with Greg's composition "The Caliente Chantey." As our two WWII veterans left, the Caliente sailors formed two lines and saluted as John Creedon and Fred Griffith were "piped" ashore. For those who stayed, the music continued with a singalong as the McCallie trio entertained requests of songs of our era. It was a great way to end a memorable evening.

Sunday brought the usual farewell breakfast as members left to catch their flights back home. There was a universal opinion that a great time was had by all and that we should keep these reunions going as long as we can. So, plans are being made for Savannah next fall. Keep checking the Pipeline for the details.



USS Caliente Association  
Chairman: Jeff Sturgis  
Executive Committee: Mike Copeland, Dave Ludemann, Greg Perrett, 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](mailto: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 [jeffreysturgis54@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreysturgis54@gmail.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.

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## Savannah Reunion Preview

by Jeff Sturgis

Making arrangements for our Savannah reunion has been challenge. As a coastal, southern city, Savannah is popular tourist destination, and its climate affects the tourist trade and, therefore, the hotel prices. For most of the year, hotel room prices in the downtown historic district are in the \$180 range and on up. Even in “offseason” windows, the weekend room prices remain high. The best prices seem to occur in the last few weeks of September and for about two weeks in January and only on Sunday-Thursday evening stays.

Therefore, In order to help make things affordable for our members, we have contracted with the Fairfield Inn and Suites-Savannah Downtown at an affordable rate for the nights of Monday-Wednesday, Sept. 23-25, 2019, for our next reunion. This changes our format from the usual Thursday-Sunday format. In addition to helping us afford a downtown site within walking distance of many attractions, this change allows our members to avoid the more expensive weekend flying days which should help them to save on their airfares.

We have negotiated a room rate of \$134, plus taxes, a night for a double queen or single king bed room. These rates will also be good for the Sunday night before and the Thursday night after our reunion. The room rate includes a free hot breakfast as it did in St. Louis. This enables us to keep our registration price the same as last year because the association doesn't have to pay separately for breakfast.

Most of the other arrangements are similar to those we had in St. Louis. We will have a dedicated room for our meetings and the banquet will be a buffet. The food and beverage minimum that we have to guarantee to the hotel is easily attainable, so that our total costs will be similar to last year and well within our budget. Valet parking will also be available for \$25 a day for those who drive or rent a car. The cutoff date for reservations will be Aug. 23, 2019. Located at 35 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Savannah, the hotel's website is <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/savfd-fairfield-inn-and-suitessavannah-downtown-historic-district/>. You are encouraged to check it out.

There are a few details that are yet to be finished. Pat Hurton will be working on a tour for the Tuesday of our stay and I will be working on the Wednesday banquet details and entertainment. In addition, we will have a dedicated reservation portal for the hotel, which we will publicize as soon as it is available. Please check the next edition of the Pipeline for these details.

### Editor's message

At this writing, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018, which was reported on in the September Pipeline, remains stalled in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee with uncertain prospects.



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

## Taps

Ann E. Murphy, 95, of Whiting, NJ, died 11 Oct 2018 at Monmouth Medical Center, Southern Campus in Lakewood, NJ. She was the widow of Francis X. Murphy, who served on the Caliente from 1943 to 1945 as a GM2.

Ann held a variety of jobs over the years before being hired by the Elizabeth, NJ, Board of Education for clerical positions starting in 1968. She became a special education teacher in 1978 when she received a Bachelor of Academics Degree as Teacher of Handicapped Children, a certificate of Elementary School Education and a certificate of Language to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing from Kean College. She retired in 1989, but continued as a substitute teacher in Elizabeth.

Ann was active in a large number of education, church and social organizations, the latter often associated with her Irish heritage. She took great pleasure in singing, was an avid reader and crossword puzzle aficionado.

Ann was predeceased by her husband of 53 years. Francis, in 1999, son Vincent dePaul Murphy, parents Thomas and Margaret Flynn, siblings Mary Fischbach, Gertrude Stefanik, Rose Swain, Margaret Szotak, Geraldine Gluck, Richard Flynn, Thomas Flynn, Dolores Mitricska, Dennis Flynn, Frances Dickson and Edward Flynn.

She is survived by sons Francis X. Murphy II and Timothy S. Murphy; daughters Mary Ann Murphy, Margaret M. Misdowm, Roberta M. Murphy, Kathleen M. Mendes, Brigid M. Sisk, Sheila M. Soares, Elizabeth R. Habit and Madeline M. Kelly; sister Catherine Huffenus, 29 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.



## Memories of Ann

By Pat Hurton, SK2, 1964-66

I was very saddened to hear of the passing of the wife of one of the original members of the USS Caliente Association. Ann E. Murphy was the wife of Francis X. Murphy who served on the Cal as a GM2 from 1943 to 1945. Ann and Francis attended all the Cal reunions from 1989 until his passing in 1999.

I'll never forget Ann's presence at the reunion held in New York shortly after the passing of her husband. The banquet was held at the top of the World Trade Center and there was a piano in the banquet room. After dinner Ann, supported by John Creedon, Joe Benziger and Bob Legacy gathered around the piano and sang songs in memory of Francis. The singing continued well into the night and a great time was had by all.

Ann attended many, many reunions after Francis' passing some with family members and always entertained us. Her bright and cheerful personality and calm demeanor were always present and will never be forgotten.

## A reunion surprize

By Chris Schuster, BM2, 1966-70

Attending my first Caliente reunion I was looking forward to seeing someone I hadn't seen since I left the ship in 1970. He was one I could always depend on and a great guy in my division, Chris Mueller. I was very happy to see him and be able to spend some time with him and meet his wife Barbara. Sad to say for a number of reasons this most likely will be the last and only reunion I will be able to attend and it was great. I very much enjoyed being able to attend.



This article is not about me but I will give you a small amount of my history. I was assigned to the Caliente directly out of boot camp in 1966 until my discharge in 1970. I was on the Cal. for three tours and could tell you quite a number of experiences during that time but will not bore you with those.

After making rate I was assigned second division leading petty officer and master at arms. That came to quite a surprise to me just before sewing on second class at the end of my second tour. This came with a great deal of responsibility but I did have for the most part a very good

crew and one of the best was Chris Mueller.

Upon being discharged in 1970 while the ship was in New Zealand, I had given Chris a number of items and one was an engraved belt buckle. I was very surprised and almost shocked that he still had some of the items I had given him for all these years. At the reunion he gave the engraved belt buckle back to me.

Thanks to Chris I will keep this along with some of the items I still have from my Navy years.



Pat Hurton, Chris Schuster, Mike Swartz and Chris Mueller

## On the trail of Lewis and Clark



Reunion attendees look over exhibits at the Lewis and Clark Boathouse Museum.



Left: Charleen Hurton with son Patrick and daughter-in-law D'Lorah at Gateway Arch. Above: Dan and Marie Martinez inside the Embassy Suites in downtown St. Louis.



Ed Fordyce, Tom Kroes and father-in-law Bob French



John and Zelda Coleman



Marie and Gene Fujimoto



Mickael Atta Korang and Juliette Creedon Kuernland

Photographs in this issue were provided by Pat Hurton, Chris Mueller, Jeanne Rawlinson and Karl Seitz with assistance by Mickael Atta Korang.

## Attendees

John and Zelda Coleman, MMFN, 1960-64, Jena, LA

Mike Copeland, SK3, 1971-73, Muncie, IL

John and Diane Creedon, QM1, 1943-45, Larchmont, NY, with daughter Juliette Kuernland and aide Mickael Atta Korang

Ed Fordyce, PN3, 1960-62, Mount Vernon, IA

Bob French, RM3, 1956-59, Nicholasville, KY with son-in-law Tom Kroes

Gene and Marie Fujimoto, LTJG, 1971-73, Middletown, RI

Fred Griffith, QM3, 1944-46, Cincinnati, OH, with children and spouses Steve and Cindy Griffith and Jennifer and Gary Cowgill

Pat and Charleen Hurton, SK2, 1964-1966, Chico, CA with son and daughter-in-law Patrick and D'Lorah Hurton

Dan and Beth Keller, SN, 1971-73, Gladstone, MO

Dave and Martha Ludeman, SK3, 1969-73, Millington, TN

Dan and Marie Martinez, SN, 1970-72, San Leandro, CA

Chris and Barbara Mueller, BM2, 1968-72, Redondo Beach, CA

Jim and June Niquette, BM3, 1950-54, Port Ludlow, WA

Greg Perett, LTJG, 1969-72, Arlington, VA

Tom and Jean Rawlinson, CS3, 1971-73, Indianapolis, IN. with sister and brother-in-law Mary and Wes, Gintner

Chris Schuster, BM2, 1966-70, Yates Center, KS

Michael Schwartz, BM3, 1967-69 Boeme, TX

Karl and Pat Seitz, PN2, 1961-64, Birmingham, AL

Steve and Linda Selzer, CS3, 1971-73, Edinburgh, IN

Jeff and Susan Sturgis, LTJG, 1970-72, Minot, ME

Larry and Nan Wallace, PC3, 1969-71, Moweaque, IL



Linda Selzer, Beth Keller and June and Jim Niquette.



Jean Rawlinson and Mary Gintner.



John Creedon and Fred Griffith.



Bob French, Marie Fujimonto and Pat Seitz.



The JGs, Jeff Sturgis and Greg Perett, perform at Saturday banquet.



Above: Nan and Larry Wallace and Tom Rawlinson.

Right: World War II veterans John Creedon and Fred Griffith depart banquet.





## Attending crew members 1943-1973



## ... and their wives and daughters





John Creedon created a sensation at the 2016 reunion when he wore this T-shirt with the history of the USS Caliente on its back. This year, he provided reunion attendees with shirts of their own, which they are wearing in the group pictures on this and the previous page.

