

USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



PIPELINE

Dec 2019

Celebration in Savannah

By Jeff Sturgis

Forty-two shipmates and spouses and 24 members of the John Creedon family were on hand at the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Savannah for this year's USS Caliente reunion. The hotel was located next to the historic downtown in Savannah so that many of the attractions were within walking distance or a short ride. Some of us arrived on Sunday, Sept. 22 and went on a ride to Tybee Island thanks to Steve Selzer and his van. Most everyone else arrived on Monday. Tuesday brought a two-hour tour of the historic district which gave us a sample of the available attractions for later viewing.

Wednesday began with the annual business meeting. After Chairman Jeff Sturgis' yearly report and Pat Hurton's financial report, we voted to hold next year's reunion in our old homeport of Long Beach, CA. However, we also voted to make Salt Lake City a backup in case the prices in Long Beach were prohibitive. I am pleased to report that Long Beach is a good choice. I am presently negotiating with four hotels whose prices are within our budget. In addition, the Long Beach Airport, three miles from downtown Long Beach, hosts several major airlines including JetBlue, Southwest, Delta and American providing easy access to those flying in. We're still looking at a Thursday through Sunday in the last weeks of September. Negotiations should be completed soon so that all the details for the reunion should be available in the next issue of the Pipeline. Stay tuned.

The highlight of the reunion was the banquet on Wednesday night. We recognized the two Caliente World War II veterans who were in attendance, Frederick Griffith and John Creedon. They were presented plaques by Pat Hurton and Jeff Sturgis recognizing their World War II service. In



Frederick Griffith and John Creedon receive plaques from Jeff Sturgis.

addition, John Creedon was presented a plaque by Steve Selzer with a ship's bell mounted on it recognizing him for his role in the formation of the USS Caliente Association and in organizing the first reunion in New York at the Metropolitan Life Headquarters in 1989.

Rounding out the evening was a celebration of John's 95th birthday which was the occasion for 24 of his relatives to join us. Pat Hurton had a Powerpoint presentation with highlights of John's life, and a large cake was presented which prompted the singing of Happy Birthday. Both John and Frederick were treated to Anchors Aweigh and three cheers as they left the banquet between two lines of saluting Caliente shipmates.

Thursday brought many farewells as shipmates parted after another successful reunion. Everyone is looking forward to being in Long Beach next year. The Long Beach Navy Base no longer exists and there have been many changes to the area since the Cal was decommissioned in 1973. New attractions are the Queen Mary and the USS Iowa (BB-61). Hopefully, we will soon have a site for our 2020 reunion in the city so many of us called home while serving on the Cal.

Leadership and association are strong

By Pat Hurton

In 2015, at the New Orleans reunion, the association president decided to step down and needed another person(s) to take over. Jeff Sturgis said he would "step up" if he could run the association with a "governing committee" with himself as committee chairman and his team named as committee members. "By a landslide vote," Jeff and his committee were voted in as leaders of the association. The team consists of Mike Copeland, Dave Ludeman, Greg Perett, Tom Rawlinson and Steve Selzer.

The secret to the success of any association, organization etc. is its leadership. We now have a great team with a great leader and as more and more of their shipmates from the Cal retire, they are being contacted and encouraged to attend our reunions. At recent reunions, we have seen first time attenders and I think we can look forward to more shipmates joining.

A significant part of the success of the association and its reunions are the wives that join us. It is not just an adage but a verifiable truth that "happy wife, happy life, happy marriage." Over the past 30 years the association has seen many ups and downs but has always sailed through those troubled waters with the right person(s) stepping up to the helm at the right time. The past four reunions have shown the present leadership team, with Jeff Sturgis as chairman, has continued the role of dedicated leaders necessary to the success of the association. As shipmates from the later years of the Cal retire, the team has contacted them and encouraged them to attend our reunions. The new faces at the last couple of reunions show the fruits of their efforts.

One person has been continuously prominent in the association throughout its 30-year history. That person is John Creedon. He was part of the team that founded the association and has provided leadership, guidance and support to the association over those 30 years. It was a rare occasion that John and his wife Diane didn't attend a reunion. Many thanks to the current leadership and especially Steve and Linda Selzer who presented John with a cleverly designed plaque at the Savannah banquet. I know John greatly appreciated it and was touched by the very thoughtful and kind words that accompanied the plaque.

Charleen and I thank the present leadership team for continuing the strong leadership practice of past presidents. We look forward to seeing old friends at future reunions and I think with the current team we can hold great reunions for at least the next 5 to 10 years.

Taps

Lita M. Brown, 84, widow of Kenneth L. Brown, BT2, 1951-54, died 5 Aug, 2019 in Reno, NV. She was born 19 Jan. 1935 to Teresa and Ralph Moriconi. Lita graduated from Armstrong College in Berkeley, CA, and worked at Anaconda Mining Co. before her marriage to Kenneth 22 Jan. 1956. They enjoyed 56 years together before his death. She was also the secretary for attorney Ron Banta in Yerington, NV until she retired. An excellent Italian cook, she was fluent in Italian and loved to bowl. She was a devout member of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Yerington, Saint Anne's Society and the Italian Catholic Federation.



Lita is survived by sons Darryl (Susie) and Kevin (Kristen); sister Lora Jean Rapini, brother



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 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.

Ralph Moriconi (Anthony Alonzo); five grandchildren, two great granddaughters; two nieces, two great nephews and a great niece.

We have belatedly learned of the deaths of Ralph R. Doll and Betty Jean Gardner Doll. Ralph served on the Cal from 1970 to 1971 as BMCM.

Ralph was born 2 Jan. 1927 in Reading, PA to Frank and Emma Doll. He died at home in Norfolk 6 May 2015 at age 88. Ralph joined the Navy in 1944 and served 31 years, retiring in 1974 as a veteran of World War II, the Korean and



Vietnamese wars. After graduating from Norfolk State University in 1980, he taught in the Norfolk Public Schools.

Betty was born 4 Sep. 1928 in Norfolk VA. She died at home in Norfolk 11 May 2017 at age 88. As a Navy wife, she resided in Long Beach CA, Owensboro KY and Norfolk.

Ralph and Betty are survived by sons Ralph Jr. (Judith), Frank (Elizabeth) and David (Tatyana); daughter Lorie (Mark) Humphrey, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. They are buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Norfolk.

We have belatedly learned of the death of Gary Frederick Zinck Sr. at age 65 in Jamestown ND 15 Dec. 2012. Gary was born 30 Sep. 1947 in Jamestown to Fred and Olive (Snyder) Zinck. He served on the Cal from 1968 to 1971 as an SN. He enlisted in the Navy 30 Sep 1964 in Fargo, ND and was honorably discharged 14 Oct 1971 at Long Beach, CA. Gary married Kathy Jewell, who survives him, in 1976. They returned to Jamestown in 1991. In addition to his wife, Gary is survived by children Gary Fredrick Zinck Jr, Sheri Diaz (Chris Carneal), Candy (Gary Jr.) Schultes and Robin West (Shawn Ogden); numerous grandchildren, three brothers and two sisters.



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.

Celebrating John Creedon's 95th birthday



Members of the Creedon clan gather for celebration of John Creedon's birthday.

Creedon Family attendees

Bart Creedon (nephew)

Danny Creedon (nephew)

David and Debra Creedon (son and wife)

Jean-Philippe, Amanda, Emma and Zara Creedon (son and wife with granddaughters)

Melissa Creedon (niece)

Andrew and Miriam Creedon (grandson and wife)

Michelle and Kevin Fox (daughter and husband)

Juliette and John Kvernland (daughter and husband)

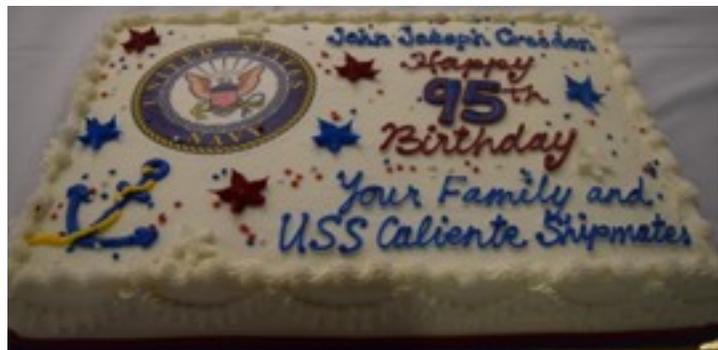
Kristin Kvernland, Rica Catano and Juniper Kvernland-Catano (granddaughter and husband with great granddaughter)

Ellen and Mark Sheppard (niece and husband)

Amanda, Nicholas and Eleanor Strickland (granddaughter and husband with great granddaughter)

Scott, Tish and Nala Wenzler (grandson and wife with great granddaughter)

Michael Korang (John's caretaker)



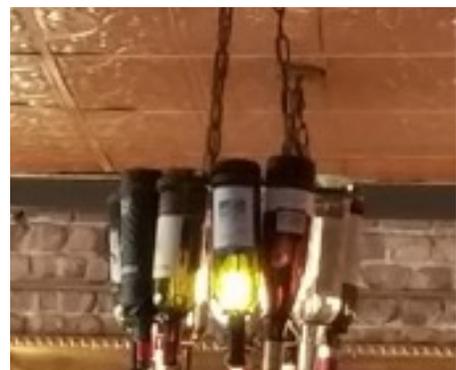
Visiting Savannah



A group of early birds for the reunion went to the beaches of Tybee Island. Among them were Sue and Jeff Sturgis, Tom and Jean Rawlinson and June and Jim Niquette.



Carlitos Mexican Bar and Grill, a couple doors down from the hotel, was a popular place for dinner Monday night. Above are some of the attendees who enjoyed food and camaraderie there. The restaurant closed just under a month after the reunion in preparation for reopening in a new location in January.





Caliente veterans weren't the only oiler sailors visiting Savannah in September. Some of us encountered members of the USS Elokomin (AO-55) Crewmen's Association at the Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum. The Elokomin was commissioned in November 1943 and scrapped in 1970. The Cal's sister ship served in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Gulf of Mexican and Caribbean. The two ships may have refueled some of the same ships during the Cuban Missile Crisis; the Cal on the way to the Panama Canal, the Elkomin when the task force arrived in the Caribbean.



Skip and Barbara Schembari and Chris and Barbara Mueller rest at Maritime Museum.



Patrick, D'Lorah, Charleen and Pat Hurton took a riverboat cruise.

The Banquet



Diane and John Creedon



Maria and Dan Martinez



June Niquette, Beth and Dan Keller



Dennis and Penny Murphy, Pat and Pete Werner



Dillard and Judy Givens



Ida and Larry Baker



Gary and Jennifer Griffith Cowgill and Frederick Griffith

Attendees

Larry and Ida Baker, LTJG, 1957-60
John and Zelda Coleman, MM3, 1960-64
Mike Copeland, SK3, 1971-1973
John and Diane Creedon, QM1, 1943-45
plus family, QM1
Ed Fordyce, PN3, 1960-62
Dillard and Judy Givens, EN3, 1958-59
Frederick Giffith QM3, 1943-48
with Gary and Jenniffer Griffith Cowgill
Pat and Charleen Hurton, SK2, 1964-66
with Patrick and D'Lorah Hurton
Dan and Beth Keller, SN, 1971-73

Dave and Martha Ludeman, SK3, 1969-73
Dan and Marie Martinez, SH3, 1970-72
Chris and Barbara Mueller, BM2, 1968-72
Dennis and Penny Murphy, LT, 1972-73
Jim and Jane Niquette, BM3, 1950-54
Tom and Jean Rawlinson, CS3, 1970-73
Skip and Barbara Schembari, BM3, 1968-72
Karl and Pat Seitz, PN2, 1961-64
Steve and Linda Selzer, CS3, 1971-73
Jeff and Sue Sturgis, LTJG, 1970-72
Pete and Pat Werner, LTJG, 1966-69
Phil Zimmerman, QM2, 1969-74



Jean and Tom Rawlinson



Zelda and John Coleman



Mike Copland and Dave and Martha Ludeman



John Creedon with aide Michael Korang and Frederick Griffith with son-in-law Gary Cowgill prepare to depart through a double line of saluting shipmates.



Shipmates



Wives

Pictures in this issue were chosen from photos submitted by Gary Cowgill, Ed Fordyce, Charleen Hurton, Dan Keller, Chris Mueller, Jean Rawlinson, Skip Schembari, Karl and Pat Seitz, Linda Selzer and Pete Wenger.

A Caliente Christmas from the past

The Caliente Supply Division did something different for Christmas 1953. It created a menu/booklet that could be mailed home. The booklet was designed by L.B. Blackwell, SK1. The cover, with art by L.J. Falcone, SH3, is at right. The Christmas menu, with more illustrations from Falcone, is below. Other pages included a holiday message from Capt. H.M. Maples, lists of the Caliente crew with two pages devoted to the Caliente chain of command from the captain to the ship's commissarymen and others associated with the mess deck. A copy of the booklet was at the reunion thanks to Ida Marshall, wife of the late Kenneth Marshall, BM3, 1951-1955, who sent it to the editor.



Some of the memorabilia brought to the reunion

