

# USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



# PIPELINE

June 2017

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## Portland Reunion Update

By Jeff Sturgis

All the contracts have been signed, deposits paid and final arrangements made for this year's reunion to be held in Portland, Oregon, Sept. 7-10, 2017. We have booked the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront at a great rate of \$150.00 per night. There are many restaurants and attractions within walking distance or a short ride from this downtown location.

A reception on Thursday afternoon will greet you as you arrive at the hotel. This will be the beginning of many opportunities during the weekend to socialize and swap sea stories.

Pat Hurton has arranged a Friday bus tour that includes a morning tour of the downtown area and a stop at the International Rose Test Garden with over 500 varieties of roses on display. The afternoon portion of the tour will take us up the Columbia River Gorge with its picturesque cliffs and waterfalls.

Saturday morning will find us at our annual business meeting at which we'll make the important decision of where to hold our reunion in 2018. Then we'll be free to enjoy the city until the banquet on Saturday evening.

In accordance with the tradition at past reunions, the JGs will perform a few numbers, but the bulk of the musical fare will be provided by a three-piece jazz band called Jazz Interlude. We have ascertained that "Anchors Aweigh" and the "Navy Hymn" are a part of the band's repertoire. We will also honor those members of the Caliente family who have passed away in the previous year with our evocative "Two Bell" ceremony.



Herb Dorsey is to port and the late Steve Hammer to starboard with views of Caliente bow.

On Sunday morning we will say our farewells at breakfast as we finish another year of carrying on the fellowship that has brought us shipmates together so many times over the years.

If you haven't sent Pat your registration, now is the time to do it. We have a little over 20 shipmates and guests already signed up, so don't delay. You will find the registration form at the end of this issue along with all the information for making the hotel reservations. The deadline for making reservations that will guarantee the low reunion rate is 5:00 PM Pacific Time on Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017. The reunion rate of \$150.00 should also be good for the two days before and after the reunion dates of Sept. 7-10, 2017.

The easiest way to make reservations to guarantee these rates is online at the internet address you will find on the "Agenda" page at the end of this issue of the Pipeline. As always, if you have any questions, you can contact me at: 207-782-8323 or by email at: [jandssturgis@roadrunner.com](mailto:jandssturgis@roadrunner.com). See you in Portland!

## **Dues reminder**

It's been a while since we reminded shipmates about our voluntary dues. While our budget isn't large, we do have some expenses. It costs a little over \$300.00 for each issue of the Pipeline to be sent out. While many of us receive our copy of the Pipeline by email, there are still many for whom we have no email address and to whom it is mailed. We are proud of the Pipeline which goes out four times a year and of the great work of Karl Seitz who volunteers his time to put out each edition. There are also expenses incurred for maintaining our website. Pat Hurton is responsible for that as well as our Facebook page. Pat also does a great job acting as the treasurer and writing the checks for association expenses.

In addition to these minimal expenses, it's nice to have a little cushion in case we slip over budget at one of our reunions. As we all get older and our members pass away, the attendance and our financial margin at the reunions dwindles. We do our best to keep the registration fee as low and affordable as possible while still covering our expenses. Reunion hotel arrangements are made about 10 months in advance. A deposit is required when the contract with the hotel is signed, usually before Jan. 1. These arrangements are made with the stipulation that we are responsible for a minimum charge even if we don't hit our targeted attendance. So if attendance falls off so that we can't cover our expenses from the registration income, we still have to make up the difference.

Karl and Pat have done a great job keeping our expenses to a minimum. You can help keep us solvent by sending in your dues. The suggested dues amount is \$10 per year. Dues are voluntary and no one is excluded if he is unable to send them in. However, your dues payment does enable us to continue to send out the Pipeline, maintain the website and to help us guard against the inevitable day when our reunion attendance becomes unsustainable.

Please help keep the USS Caliente Association afloat by sending your dues to:

USS Caliente Association

c/o Pat Hurton

156 Greenfield Drive

Chico, CA 95973-0185

## Taps

Josephine Benziger passed away 20 March 2017 in Jackson Township, NJ, at age 93. Jo was the wife of Joe Benziger one of the founding fathers of the USS Caliente Association. Although small in stature, Jo was large in life. She and Joe (deceased in 2014) attended all Caliente reunions and at our banquets was great entertainment. Ann Murphy, Joe and John Creedon always ended our banquets singing as a trio. Jo had a kind word for everybody and was always in a great mood. Unfortunately, Jo was unable to attend our 2014 Chicago reunion and see her husband Joe and John Creedon honored, at a Chicago Cubs baseball game, as members of the USS Caliente crew and WWII veterans.



Jo worked at the Pentagon during World War II then took a position at General Electric in New York City where she met and married Joe. She retired as a bookkeeper at the John L. Montgomery Medical Home in Fremont Township, NJ. Jo is survived by son Douglas, daughter



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](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 [jandssturgis@roadrunner.com](mailto: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.

Nancy, son Richard, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Richard brought Joe to his last reunion in 2014 and arranged for the ceremony at the Cubs game.

Jo was missed at the last several reunions, but those who knew her knew she was there in heart.

Robert E. Buckingham of Milbrae, CA, died 16 May 2016 at age 85. Buck served on the Caliente in 1949 as a WT. In addition, he served on the USS Wharton (AP-7), USS LST-859, USS Currier (DE-700) and USS Hailey (DD-556) in a Navy career that began in May 1943 when he turned 17 and concluded in July 1952. His medals included the American and Asiatic Pacific Area Campaign Victory Medal, the China Service Medal and the Navy Occupation Medal. After leaving the Navy, Buck worked for the Port of San Francisco for 38 years as a marine fireman. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Frances, daughters Christine and Corey Jean, son Robin, son-in-law Donald Drause and beloved cat Sinbad.

Lon Ryan Smith of Russellville, KY, died 18 Oct 2016 at age 84 in the Hospice House of Southern Kentucky. Lon was born 28 Mar 1932. He served on the Caliente from 1954 to 1955 as an SN. Lon is survived by his wife Dorothy. He is buried in the Whippoorwill Cemetery in Russellville.

Thomas V. Strain of Missouri City, Texas, died 29 Jun 2016 in Sugar Land, Texas, at age 85. Thomas was born 19 May 1931 in Houston. He served on the Caliente from 1950 to 1952 as an FN. Thomas owned and operated Delta Alloy Co., a metal services business in Houston, for about 30 years.

Donald R Tobie, 74, died 13 May 2017 in Rochester, MN, after a long battle with Lewy Body Dementia. Don served on the Caliente from 1964 to 1965 as an ETR2. He was born 23 Aug 1942 in Hastings, PA. During three tours to Vietnam, Don earned three bronze stars. He worked for IBM after leaving the Navy, securing two patents. He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Pat, daughters Cathy (Jeff) Haas, Diane (Steven) Wonchoba and Melinda (Chad) Sullens; seven grandchildren, brother Joe (Edith) Tobie. Don donated his brain for dementia research. He will be interred at Fort Snelling.

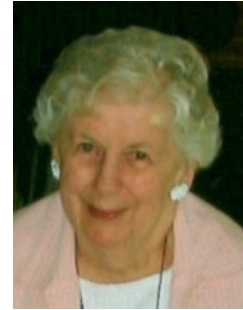


Ruth Ann Duncan Whittaker, widow of Robert J. Whittaker, died 28 Aug. 2016 in New Holland, PA, at age 91. Robert served on the Caliente in 1943 as a LT. Ruth was born 10 Oct. 1924 in Johnstown, PA. During her years as a student at Butler University, Ruth often sang in



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.

her beautiful soprano voice at weddings, theatricals and social events. Ruth and Robert were married in 1950. She was a member of two quilter organizations and for many years worked part-time for the Sinkler Needlepoint Studio in Bryn Mawr, PA, and later for Edie & Ginger’s Studio in Wayne, PA, as a needlecraft assembler. She was also a volunteer with Mainline Meals on Wheels as a delivery driver for many years. Ruth is survived by daughters Jane (Michael X Delli Carpini) Whittaker, Susan Whittaker, Ann (Enrico) Ciabattoni, one granddaughter and longtime friends and neighbors Peter and Bernadette Heaton. She is buried in the cemetery of Baptist Church in the Great Valley, Devon. PA.



### Editor’s message

By Karl Seitz

Notice anything missing from this issue of the Pipeline?

We have messages from the executive committee chairman and the editor. We have obituaries for shipmates and spouses who have left us. We have information about the upcoming reunion. And we have pictures from three of our shipmates. All things found in the typical Pipeline.

What we don’t have are any written memories and thoughts from the crew of the Caliente or their family members. We don’t have any because none have been submitted recently.

I do have a reserve of pictures built up, although I can always use more because the quality of some of those on hand is less than we would like to use and/or they are too close in content to what have appeared in recent issues.

But I have no reserve of written items or photocopies of documents related to the Cal. Zilch.

Yes, I can camouflage that shortage by padding some existing articles with additional information that is hopefully interesting to at least some readers but is not essential to the article. I may even be able to write something myself. But there are limits to what I can do alone.

I need your help to make the Pipeline the best it can be. Please share your memories.

### A veteran of two services



Fashion model Bob Beeter served on the Cal from 1966 to 1968 as an SK3 and served in the Air Force from 1969 to 1989, retiring as a technical sergeant.



## You can take a train to Portland

For a city of its size located outside the Northeast Corridor, Portland has a surprising number of passenger trains making stops at its historical Union Station. Most of these Amtrak trains travel up and down the West Coast, but one comes from and returns to Chicago with stops in Milwaukee and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The Empire Builder is a daily train to and from the Midwest. East of Spokane, WA, it is a single train but west of that city it is split into sections for Seattle and Portland.

For West Coast members, the Coast Starlight travels between Vancouver, British Columbia, and Los Angeles daily in both directions. It has a connecting train to San Diego.

The remainder of the trains serving Portland are the high-speed Amtrak Cascades that travel to Portland from Vancouver and Seattle on the north and from Eugene, OR, on the south. There are five southbound Cascades arriving daily, three of which originate in Seattle and two in Vancouver. One of the five continues to Eugene. In addition, two Cascades go from Portland to Eugene. Northbound, six Cascades go to Seattle with one continuing to Vancouver. Three of them originate in Eugene.

For further information on the trains, visit [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com).

Getting from the station to our hotel should be less than \$15 by taxi. Or if you are willing to walk a short distance at the beginning and end, you can use Portland's public transit system.. The fare is \$2.50 (\$1.25 for Honored Citizens 65 or older or on Medicare or disability). The web portal for finding out more about public transit services in Portland is at <https://trimet.org>.

Want something different from car or plane travel, the train is a reasonable alternative.

## Last Chance

The September reunion in Portland is rapidly approaching. The deadline for hotel reservations is even closer. The next two pages include the Reunion agenda and a registration form. If you're going, it's time to fill out the form and send it in with your check.

Recipients of the printed Pipeline may want to use a photocopied copy of the registration form so that they will still have the agenda.

**USS CALIENTE (AO-53)  
Portland Reunion  
Sept. 7-10, 2017**



**PORTLAND MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT  
1401 SW Naito Parkway, Portland OR 97201**

Reservations may be made by calling 1-877-901-6632 and identifying yourself as a part of the USS Caliente reunion or online at <https://aws.passkey.com/go/USSCalienteAO53Reunion2017>.

The room rates are good for 2 days prior and 2 days after the reunion dates. The group rate is \$150.00 per room plus a 15.3 percent tax. The cutoff date for reservations is Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017. Valet parking is available for \$39.00 per night or you may park in one of the nearby municipal facilities.

**Reunion Agenda**

**Thursday, 7 Sept.**

- a) Hotel check-in
- b) 3:00-6:00 PM—Reception

**Friday, 8 Sept.**

- a) 7:00-9:00 AM—Breakfast
- b) 9:00 AM-4:30 PM—Tour

**Saturday, 9 Sept.**

- a) 7:00-9:00 AM—Breakfast
- b) 9:00 AM—Business Meeting
- c) 6:30 PM—Reception
- d) 7:00 PM— Banquet

**Sunday, 10 Sept.**

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

# Portland Reunion Registration Form

Shipmate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse or Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

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 receptions, three breakfasts and the banquet.

Banquet meal choices:

Roasted chicken breast \_\_\_\_\_

Braised beef short ribs \_\_\_\_\_

Pan-seared salmon \_\_\_\_\_

Farmer's Feast (vegan) \_\_\_\_\_

Friday Guided Tour \$35.00 per person x \_\_\_\_\_ persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Registrations \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus tour \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

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