

USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



PIPELINE

March 2021

Next Reunion

By Jeff Sturgis

We are living in unprecedented times. Not since the so-called Spanish Flu spread in 1918-19 has our country, and the world, been affected by such a widespread pandemic. While an estimated 675,000 Americans died in that pandemic, we have already passed the 500,000 mark with this version. However, comparison between these pandemics, that are almost exactly 100 years apart, is imperfect due to the increased world population and the vastly improved world transportation system that exists today. In addition, medical science is much more advanced now than it was in the early 1900s.

Be that as it may, this pandemic has posed many challenges to all of us both in our personal and public lives. The biggest effect it has had on the USS Caliente Association is that it has postponed our annual reunions. Our last reunion, which was scheduled to be held in our old home port of Long Beach last September has been put on hold. We have held off rescheduling the reunion due to the uncertainties about travel and the hazards of assembling numbers of people in indoor settings. Now that there are vaccines being administered, the picture is clearing somewhat, but the future is still quite cloudy.

After discussion among the members of your association's leadership group, the decision has been made to tentatively plan to reschedule the reunion in Long Beach for the spring of 2022. Planning for the reunions needs to start about 6 months prior to the reunion date. The Executive Committee feels that the picture concerning the virus will be much clearer this summer as the vaccination of our



Soviet oilers Pevek and Polyarnik steam in Phillipine Sea near USS Caliente April 1970 during worldwide Soviet naval exercise "Okean." (National Archives photo)

population takes hold and herd immunity is closer to being achieved. If the picture is clearer by this summer, it will give us time to plan the best reunion that we can. Our reunion will not be successful unless our members feel confident that they can safely travel and that local prohibitions on indoor gatherings allow our reunion activities to be held.

At this time we really don't feel confident that those conditions will be conducive to the reunion until next spring. So, we all need to hang on just a little bit longer. Just like it was at the end of a long Westpac deployment, it's easy to let your guard down the closer you get to the finish line. We urge everyone to continue your safeguards against getting and spreading the virus and to get vaccinated when your turn comes. We will get through this and we look forward to gathering again safely a year from now. As always, if you have any comments or concerns, you can reach me at jeffreysturgis54@gmail.com. In the meantime, please stay the course and stay safe. We look forward to seeing you in Long Beach in the spring of 2022.

Guess What's Due – Your Dues

By Pat Hurton

For those of you who have already sent in your 2021 dues the Association thanks you. For those who have not you will receive a notice (either email or snail mail) asking you to submit your dues. Association dues have remained the same \$10.00 per year since 2003.

Other than an occasional donation, the only source of income for the Association is your dues. The major expense the Association incurs is the Pipeline. While emailing is free we have a substantial number of members who rely on snail mail. We know our shipmates; some widows or relatives enjoy getting the Pipeline, so it is imperative that you continue to send in your dues allowing the Pipeline to be distributed to all who enjoy it.

As our shipmates leave us our revenue dwindles. The USS Caliente name will stay alive as we have a plaque that hangs in the US Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., and a plaque that is on a wall at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. Emplacement of these plaques were possible due to having some excess funds in the treasury and donations from shipmates.

Several years ago, we approved funds to put a Caliente plaque at the Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial in LaJolla, CA, just north of San Diego. Unfortunately, we were unable to raise sufficient funds to emplace a Caliente plaque at that time. The cost for the largest plaque (16"x 9") is \$1,800, the next size down is 12"x 8" costs \$1,200 and the smallest (8" x 8") is \$950. Having the ship memorialized in these places provides future generations with a physical object that they can view on-line or in person and remember past relatives.

If all shipmates bring their dues current, I think we can raise about one half the cost. The other funds would have to come from donations or out of our funds at hand. We *do not* want to deplete our funds on hand because, if the time comes that we do not receive sufficient funds to cover the cost of a reunion and have to cancel it, we want to maintain sufficient funds on hand to pay those obligations. At the present time we have funds to cover any potential liabilities we may incur from a cancellation. If possible, and funds on hand remain as is, we would like to have the planned "last reunion" and only ask for funds as necessary.

I hope you all consider bringing your dues status up to date and potentially funding the additional plaque. Not only would I like you to “consider” but to act positively and have another plaque. For those of you who have not seen our memorials, I have included a picture of our plaque that is emplaced at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas,

If you want to know when the last time you paid dues email me at patrick.hurton@gmail.com or phone (530)343-4060



Taps

Former head of Association, Ron Hengl, dies

By Pat Hurton

During the 1999 Association reunion in New York everyone was wondering who would be brave enough to step up to the task of being captain of the Association and plan the next reunion. The New York reunion, run by our late President Emeritus John Creedon, was such a success it would take a brave shipmate to follow. During the business meeting a lot of discussion was held



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.

as to where and when the next reunion would be held. There was more talk regarding the where and when than who.

Finally, after every city in the U.S. was mentioned, Ron Hengl came forward and said if we could agree on Chicago, he would volunteer to be captain and run it. Without further discussion there was a nomination, a second and vote for Ron. I do not think he managed to get another sip of his drink and the election was over.

From the time of arrival at the Omni Hotel, on Chicago's Magnificent Mile, until we said our goodbyes the reunion was a great success. At the Chicago Business Meeting on Saturday, as I recall, Ron was a little late to the meeting and had been nominated, seconded, and voted to remain captain. When Ron arrived at the Business Meeting, he was greeted with a reception analogous to the crew of the HMS Pinafore greeting the Captain when he arrived on deck.

Naturally, there was the appropriate toast and Ron was, while not allowed to decline the election, allowed a moment to speak. Apparently, the scuttlebutt had got around and Ron was prepared. He immediately told the crew that the next reunion would be at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas. It was also a great success. Ron was the first person at the Las Vegas Business meeting and already has a list of potential Association captains. As anyone who has ever run a reunion knows, two is enough and everyone agreed that Ron could pass the captain's bars along.

When Ron undertook the role of captain it was long before computers and the Internet made all things much easier to accomplish. He and his wife Barbara did most of the work by phone and snail mail. Ron and Barbara were frequent attendees at our reunions until their health would not allow their attendance. They were, and will be, missed at future reunions.

* * *

Ronald Mac Hengl died on his 86th birthday, 20 Dec 2020, in Fort Collins, CO. Ron served on the Cal from 1954 to 1957 as an MM3. He was born 20 Dec 1934 in Chicago to Albert and Helen Neuman Hengl and grew up in the Chicago area, graduating from Arlington Heights High School in 1953.

Ron married Barbara Cooper Freeman on 2 May 1959. She survives him. Other survivors include granddaughter Danielle Marie Freeman.



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.

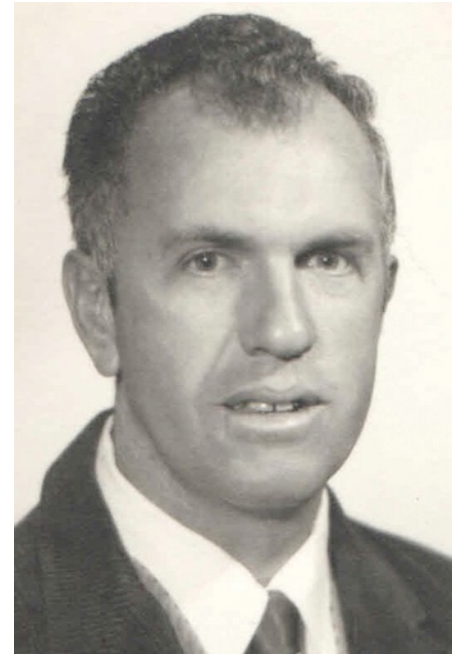
Clyde Goodhue, compiler of Cal rosters, dies

By Pat Hurton

I was saddened to hear about the death of our shipmate Clyde Goodhue. Although I never met Clyde, in person, I knew he and his wife Lori very well.

Around 2004, when Association membership was in decline, Vice President Norm Street, undertook the massive task of tracking down and contacting past shipmates and getting them to join the Association. As part of that effort Clyde and his wife volunteered to obtain Caliente ships rosters from its launch until its decommissioning.

The records were all on Microfiche and needed to be put in a more readable format. Clyde and his wife accomplished this massive task and created a DVD with all the records they had managed to obtain. This effort was, of course, crucial to trying to contact shipmates. Every time I look at the ships roster, I think of Clyde and his wife and how critical they were to more than doubling our membership over the period 2004-2009.



Editor's note: Clyde's and Lori's DVD is still used as a reference in the production of the Pipeline.

* * *

Clyde Goodhue died 21 Nov. 2020 at his son's home in Castleton, VT at age 89. Clyde served aboard the Cal from 1952-1956 as a BM3. He was born 7 Aug. 1931 in New Haven, CT, the son of Howard and Vera Adams Goodhue. Graduating from Vermont Technical College in 1949, he drove his mother and sister to California and entered the U.S. Navy in San Diego. His first assignment after boot camp was in the Aleutian Islands cleaning up after World War II, after which he boarded the Caliente.

Clyde married Loraine Petersen 5 Aug 1961, who survives him. They began life together in Nevada but soon moved back to Vermont. Clyde was a teacher, researcher, organizer, consultant and mentor. He was a pioneer in the agricultural artificial insemination industry.

Survivors include children Malinda Fleury, Clyde "Bill" Goodhue, Don Goodhue, Sally (Rick) Ingraham and Scott Goodhue; sister Carol Conway, brother-in-law Dwayne Petersen, 11 grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and cousins and nieces and nephews.

Clyde will be interred in the VA Cemetery in Randolph VT in the spring.

Henry Nelson Britt Jr. died 17 Sep 2019 in San Diego, CA, at age 88. He served on the Caliente from 1965 to 1966 as an HMC. Henry was born 1 Nov 1930 in Honolulu, HI to Henry N. and Julia Paninui Haupū Britt. Henry served during both the Korean and Vietnam wars. During some of his naval career he was assigned to duty with the U.S. Marines.

Henry's first wife was Patricia Yvonne Delarco. He later married Lenora Lee Britt who died less than a year after he did. Unfortunately, we have been unable to determine how many children he had or whether any of them survived him. The same is true for his siblings.

Henry is buried in Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego, CA.

Martin Ross Gilliland died 31 Dec 2020. Marty served on the Cal from 1969 to 1972 as a QM3. He was born 30 Sept. 1950 in Roswell, NM to Joseph and Florance Gilliland, who preceded him in death. As a young man, Marty moved to Riverside, CA, where he enlisted in the Navy. After leaving the service he returned to Roswell where he became an EMT and caregiver.

Marty enjoyed listening to rock and roll, the LA Dodgers, reading and his cats, but most of all he loved his family. He married the love of his life and best friend, Linda Gilliland.

Survivors include sons Jessman Gilliland (Jennifer) and TJ Gilliland (Adeljta), daughter Katie Gilliland Fain (Robert), and 12 grandchildren.



We have belatedly learned of the death of World War II veteran Carl Fletcher Gordy on 1 Sept. 2013 at age 90 in Wilmington, DE. Fletcher served on the Cal from 1943 to 1944 as an YN1. He was born 27 March 1923 in Chincoteague, VA, the son of Floyd Hensley Russell and Christine B. Tarr.

After World War II, he worked at Hercules Corp. for 36 years, retiring in 1988 as product coordinator.

A devout Episcopalian, Fletcher was a parishioner of the Episcopal Church of Ss. Andrew and Matthew. He was survived by his partner of 65 years, J. Harrison Walker, who died 19 Sept. 2014 at age 101; brother Newell Stanley Gordy Jr.; sister Blanche MacDonald and friend Cindy Reed. He is interred in Silverbrook Cemetery, Wilmington.

Frank Ferriers Santos Jr. died at home surrounded by family on 25 Nov. 2020 in Pensacola, FL. He served on the Cal from 1952 to 1955 as an ME2 during his 30-year Navy career.

Frank was born 26 Oct 1929 in Honolulu, HI to Frank F. and Helen Turskie Santo. After retiring from the Navy he worked at the Naval Exchange until his second retirement.

He is survived by his wife Sandra, son Michael Santos, stepson Deane Stripling, sister Gladys Wohl, grandchildren Reaghan (Byron) Saturley and Brent (Emilee) Shuler and five great grandchildren. Frank donated his body to science research, which has been completed. His cremated remains were interred at Barrancas National Cemetery on 10 Feb. 2021.

North to Alaska and gateway to the top of the world

By Miguel F. Ronquillo Sr.

RD2, 1957-1961

The September Pipeline has jarred my memory about several incidents that I witnessed during my tenure on board the old rust bucket known as the USS Caliente. I remember good times with

shipmates on shore leave or while working together as a team while performing duties as a Radar Crew member during General Quarters or during replenishment operations of which there were many.

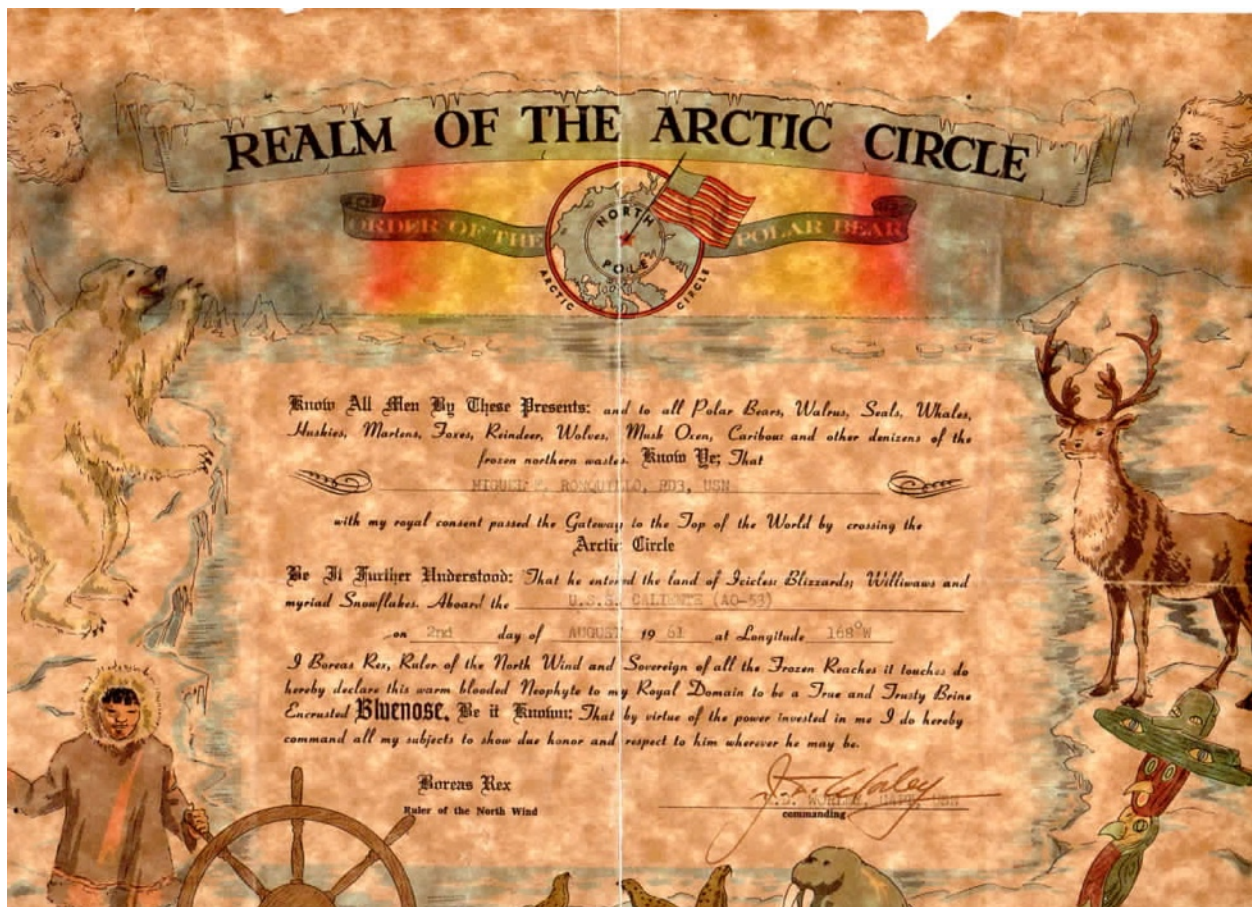
The article by Allen Pierce in the September issue reminded me that more than 20 years ago, I submitted to the then editor an article entitled “North to Alaska,” which was printed.

Allen Pierce’s article is in regards to his father’s Shellback Certificate and initiation while on board the Caliente in February 1944. It must be a great memory for him of his father’s experiences.

It is a common experience for U.S. Navy sailors who served on ships operating at sea that when they venture across geographical lines such as the Equator or the International Date Line that the event is marked by initiations, photos and certificates.

I have had my share of crossings in the five cruises I made on board the Caliente. But I also possess one which is not very common, crossing the Arctic Circle and passing on through the “gateway to the top of the world.” We crossed the Circle 2 Aug. 1961 at Latitude 168.

It was my fifth cruise to Westpac. We had one more assignment before returning stateside. Early in the morning mooring lines were pulled in and the ship started to pull away from the fuel pier at Yokuska, Japan. Once we began to gain headway out of the narrow channel, the song “North to Alaska” started playing on the PA system. It was loud and I am sure that everyone



within a half mile of the ship could hear it and surmise where we were headed. I presume our captain disregarded the common expression taught in boot camp, “Loose lips sink ships.”

Once on the open sea, The Caliente turned north, through the Bering Sea and strait, into the Arctic Ocean, dropping anchor a mile off shore from Point Hope, Alaska. We fueled several U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey ships that came alongside. We never did see Alaska, for we did not go ashore, and the entire time we were shrouded in a very thick fog bank.

One incident marred the return trip back south. While bringing in the Captain’s Gig, prior to lifting anchor, a First Division seaman was caught between the liberty boats and the gig as it was being set down on the boat cradles, squashing his head. There being no medical facilities at Point Hope, the Caliente immediately headed south, anchoring at St. Paul Island of the Pribilof group, where a Coast Guard helicopter airlifted the sailor for transport to the mainland.

After that, we headed south, through the Aleutian Islands into the open sea, mucking tanks until we arrived in Bremerton WA for a few days of liberty. Once our tanks were empty of all fuel we headed south, mucking more tanks along the way to our home port of Long Beach, ending my final cruise to Westpac.

Pandemic Pastimes

By Jeff Sturgis
LTJG, 1970-1972

Like all of us, I have spent an inordinate amount of time at home over the last year due to the pandemic. I like to read, but most of my reading takes place over the summer months when I’m up at camp. (For those of you not from New England, a camp is a cabin in the woods or on a lake where we go to recreate and be closer to nature.) Since our camp is off the grid, there are no electronic distractions and I have spent many a summer evening engrossed in a book. At home I never seem to have enough time to read, but this pandemic has definitely improved that situation. I thought that, at this time, I might tell you about some of the books that I’ve read with the intent that they may be a resource for those of you who share my interests in history.

My tastes run towards nonfiction, mostly history and military history. Some of my favorite authors have been Jared Diamond, Jeff Shaara, Barbara Tuchman and Doris Kearns Goodwin. However, my favorite historian is Steven Ambrose, who’s a prolific author writing at least 25 histories.

Those of you who were at the New Orleans reunion may remember our visits to the impressive World War II museum that was a few blocks from our hotel. A professor at New Orleans University, Ambrose was one of the founders of the museum as well as a prolific author. His main focus was WW II with books on various aspects of the war as well as several on Eisenhower. His best known book was Band of Brothers, which followed the 101st Airborne’s Easy Company from D-Day to the end of the war at Hitler’s Eagles Nest. You may remember that Band of Brothers was made into a popular six-part television series. (Ambrose’s son, Hugh, after his father died, completed the series by writing its companion book, Pacific, which had similar success on video.) Not restricting his writing to WW II, Ambrose also wrote wonderful histories of American events such as Undaunted Courage, an account of the Lewis and Clark expedition and Nothing Like It in the World, the story of the transcontinental railroad. If you’re a history buff, you need to check out Ambrose.

However, these were all authors who I was able to read before the pandemic. When the pandemic began, I decided to get into Winston Churchill's prolific works to get a view of the world from another national point of view. I started with his History of the English Speaking Peoples, then went on to his many volumes that chronicle WW I and WW II and the 20 years between the wars. These volumes can be a little dry because they contain verbatim his many correspondences with various military and civilian leaders of the time. His relationship with Franklin Roosevelt was particularly interesting. However, they are a good sequential diary of the events that maintained freedom in our world.

This reading brought me back to WW II and excellent three volume sets of the war in Europe and the Pacific. Rick Atkinson wrote a marvelous trilogy of the war in the European theater and Ian Toll's just finished trilogy on the war in the Pacific was particularly good. Toll has a deep understanding of how the US Navy operates, from the shipboard life of its sailors and the tactical decisions of its admirals to the strategic decisions of Admiral Nimitz, which I appreciated. Toll even had a brief description of the sinking of the Mississinewa at Ulithi, which we all are aware of from the tales told to us by John Creedon and Frederick Griffith about the Caliente's role in the tragedy. (In fact, I emailed the author to let him know about the Caliente's brush with disaster to the detriment of the Mississinewa.) Liking Toll's writing, I next read his book about the founding of the US Navy, Six Frigates, a great account of the fledgling Navy from the Revolution to the mid-1800's.

Leaving the printed word and moving on to videos, I resurrected the Victory at Sea series which many of you may remember running on TV when we were young in the decade of the 1950s. Also, Ken Burns' PBS series The War was pulled out of my video archives. My next video will be his documentary, Vietnam, which will hit a little closer to home.

I have worried that my focus on WW II may be a little heavy. However, my Dad and one of his brothers were US Navy WW II veterans. My uncle was XO on an LST that was at Omaha Beach on D-Day. My Dad was a member of the 71st Construction Battalion which went from Guadalcanal in 1943, to Okinawa in 1945, through Bougainville, the Admiralties, and Pitilu among others. I also had four other uncles who were WW II veterans, (one who was in the Battle of the Bulge) so I come by my interest in that war honestly. Since neither my Dad nor my uncles talked much about their war experiences, I feel that by learning more about the war, I can learn more about what they went through.

However, now that I've saturated myself with WW II history, I'm moving on to biographies of historical figures in an effort to widen my horizons. Who knows how much I'll learn before the pandemic ends, and we can all return to normal!

I hope that all of you have found similar pastimes to get you through these difficult days. It's these activities that can help keep us all sane while we are, for the most part, restricted to our homes. Hopefully, by the fall we can start returning to normal and planning our next reunion. In the meantime, stay safe, stay positive and we'll get through this.

Remembering the destruction of the Mississinewa.

By the late Frederick Griffith
QM3, 1944-1946

It was about twilight and the Caliente was about to enter into the harbor at Mog Mog. Mog Mog was one of the islands in the Carolinas. They had nets at the entrance of the harbor to keep

out any possible submarines. The harbor master had to lower the nets so we could get in, but unknown to us one of the Japanese manned torpedoes was sneaking in under or in between our ships.

For some unknown reason there was a mix up in the harbor and another ship was in the berth where we were supposed to anchor. The harbor master told us to anchor anywhere and he would straighten things out in the morning. It was a hot night as usual and most of us slept on the deck at night because it was miserable sleeping below deck. I was asleep under the stacks when early in the morning, about 6 am, I was woken up by an explosion. It was raining black oil and another ship was on fire.

It was the Mississinewa, our sister supply ship, it had taken the berth where we were supposed to be. I was surprised how fast our ship was able to get under way and get out of the harbor.

All Vietnam era deck logs back in custody of National Archives

By Karl Seitz
Pipeline Editor

A lack of space in previous Pipelines delayed reporting a major milestone in the granting of Agent Orange benefits. Last September the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it had completed the digitization of unclassified Vietnam era Deck Logs and returned them to the custody of the National Archives.

This does not mean all the Caliente logs are available on line. The last batch still must be screened by the National Archives for privacy issues. The primary privacy matter is the fact that the Navy began using Social Security numbers for service numbers on Jan. 1, 1972. Some years ago, the late Clyde Goodhue told me that he ran into this issue when he was compiling Caliente rosters from BUPERS for a DVD and couldn't get them after 1970. A second DVD using additional sources provided rosters for the entire life of the Cal.

As of this writing, the latest Caliente deck logs available online remain November 1970. And the archives search engine does not list later logs that are not available digitally. However, it might be possible to obtain at least some of the later logs through direct contact with the archives. There may be a cost involved. While logs are not absolutely required when submitting an application for Agent Orange related benefits, they do speed the process.

Meanwhile, the Blue Water Navy Association and others have been adding to the dates on which the Caliente was in the Vietnamese waters where exposure to Agent Orange is presumed. The known dates at this writing are:

1962: 24 March, 9 and 10 May

1964: 22-24 Nov

1965: 25 and 26 Nov

1966: 10 and 12 Jan, 6 Feb

1968: 5 March and 4 July

1969: 21 May

1970: several dates in June and 7 Sept.

1972: 2 Jan.

Be aware that some of these were determined from the deck logs of other ships.