

USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



PIPELINE

Sep. Oct. Nov. 2013

Hughes resigns as president

By Jack Hughes

Hello, once again, everyone. I trust that everyone had a wonderful summer. Ours, weather wise, was fairly cool and very rainy. More so than they usually are along the eastern seaboard. We had very few 90F+ days, which is really unusual.

Getting to the business at hand ... I must inform you that this will be my last entry in the Pipeline as your President. For personal reasons I have resigned my position as president effectively immediately. Unfortunately, things have not gone well during my tenure. The biggest problem we had was the Baltimore Reunion fiasco. Because of the lack of attendees we had to cancel out on what would have been a wonderful 70th anniversary reunion for the Caliente. We incurred a lot of expenses as a result of the cancelation and I'm sorry for that.

Unfortunately, these are the kind of things that organizations and associations suffer. It's called old age. Just as us humans age and eventually die, so do organizations and associations as well. The Caliente Association is at the point of no return, so to speak. There is little or no hope for any new members in the future and the remaining members will die off. Morbid, but true, my friends. From here on, our roster will start thinning out. Every month we see more of our members passing away.

All I can say is bear with us and try to make the last years as good as we can. We will certainly try to have some more reunions, if it is in the cards for us. At any rate, I'm sure there are others that will help carry the torch for the remaining years that the Association has left.

I would like to personally thank Karl Seitz, who does an amazing job with the Pipeline, and also Pat Hurton as well, whose positive attitude about things and hard work is always felt. I'm sure that you will see Norm Street back again in some capacity after taking a long needed rest from everything.

But others need step up to the plate as well and try to keep the Association going. Do what you can to help. It's not easy sitting at the top and trying to make a go of it for everyone, but someone needs to do it.

Someone will also need to take over the Website duties. This also is no easy task and one needs to stay on top of things, which are changing all the time. If you are interested, please let Pat and I know and we'll fill you in on what needs to be done.

Thanks again, everyone. It's been a nice ride, but I have to go for now. Take care, everyone; it's been a pleasure working with you and for you.

Jack Hughes, President

We need people to step up

By Pat Hurton

Once again, the Association needs people to step up and keep the memories of the Caliente actively alive. As stated above by Jack Hughes, we are without a president. Jack put a lot of effort into the Baltimore reunion but it just didn't work out. We have had 18 very successful reunions including one

every year since 2005. It appears that we may have been pushing it to have one every year, but considering the age of Association members and the fact that we are spread out all over the country, we tried to offer as many reunions as possible, in as many places as possible to limit the travel and expense of going to a reunion. I appreciate those of you who have supported our reunions and hope you have had as much enjoyment from them as Charleen and I have.

While Baltimore was not in the cards, we hope to continue having reunions but it will take support from you — the members. Norm Street, after a much needed break, has volunteered to assist in helping put together a reunion planned for New Orleans in September 2014. We need persons in the area to research hotels and recommend activities etc. Herb Dorsey did a great job of researching hotels in the Baltimore area and Jack and I thank him for that effort. If we have someone “on the ground” it helps greatly. I know Norm has contacted several shipmates and I hope someone comes through.

With regard to the presidency, when the Association first started the person who volunteered to head the next reunion was elected Captain and served for the period between reunions. The President organized, with help, the reunion and was the primary interface for the Association during his term. When Bob Howard took over the presidency in 2003, he volunteered to serve for multiple reunions as did I when I took over in 2009. It may be a good idea to return to the original concept of having the President (Captain) serve for just the term between reunions. We might get more volunteers if the term is limited and they can focus on just the one reunion. We have included a survey in this Pipeline (pages 11 and 12) for which we would greatly appreciate your feedback. Both Norm and I have received indications from many members that they still desire to have reunions. With a little bit of help we can make that happen.

I will continue as Treasurer and Karl will continue to publish the Pipeline as long as he gets contributions.

As Jack has already mentioned we spent several thousand dollars in preparation, and “getting out of,” the Baltimore reunion. We had a special memento made up for attendees and a picture is on page 10 of this Pipeline. The memento displays the Caliente patch, the “Can Do” patch and the ship’s ribbons. It includes a dedication to the crew of the USS Caliente. I would like to try and recoup some of our losses by offering these to our members. I offer them to all and would appreciate donations to cover our investment and mailing costs. I would suggest \$15.00 or \$20.00 for this “one of a kind” treasure. If you can afford more, you would be making a worthy donation to the Association and help refill our treasury. If you cannot afford the \$15.00, any donation (including nothing) is acceptable as I would not want to deprive anyone of this memento. Anyone who gives generously would be helping another less fortunate shipmate.

Please!! Offer us your suggestions via the survey at the end of this Pipeline. Mail them to me at 156 Greenfield Drive, Chico, CA 95973-0185 or scan them in pdf format and email them to me at gigandpat26@att.net.

With your assistance the Association should be able to survive at least another ten years before the last crew members forget what the Cal was. Your interest and a small donation of time would enhance those of us who desire to see the Association continue to be strong for the next decade.

Taps

William J. Fuller of Lee’s Summit, Mo. died July 10, 2013 at age 76. William served on the Cal from 1960 to 1962 as EM3. He is survived by his wife, Mina.

Franklin Dale Hunt, born April 1, 1940, died Oct 10, 2012 at age 72 at his home in Guntersville, Ala. Dale served on the Cal from 1959 to 1962 as SM2. He was retired from Coca Cola where he worked as a sales supervisor at the Huntsville, Ala., plant. Dale is survived by his wife, Nancy, children, Rodney Dale (Michelle) Hunt of Arab, Ala., Matthew (Wendi) Hunt of Guntersville, April (Craig) McConnell of Madison, Ala. brothers Buren (Irene) Hunt and Mickey (Gail) Hunt, all of Arab and five grandchildren.

Charles D. Loftus, a long time resident of Galt, Calif, and recent resident of Covington, Ohio, died July 21, 2013 at a Dayton, Ohio, hospital, one day short of his 92nd birthday. Chuck served in the U.S. Navy from 1940 to 1961 and was on the Cal from 1958 to 1959 as GM1. After his naval career and other jobs, he worked for the city of Lodi, Calif., for 17 years, retiring in 1982. Chuck is survived by his children, Russel Loftus of Planview, Minn., Ron (Blair) Loftus of Montague, Calif., Beverly DeVol of Woodbridge, Calif and Jane (Jim) Dickey of Covington, Ohio; nine grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, sister, Ada Hildenbrand of Oxnard, Calif., brother Bill Loftus of Waseca, Minn. and numerous nieces and nephews.

Brady C. Martin, born Oct. 23, 1939 died July 30, 2013. A resident of Bruceville-Eddy, Texas, he served on the Cal from 1958 to 1962 as RD3. He is survived by his wife, Irene.



USS Caliente Association
President: Vacant
Vice President: vacant
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 seitza053@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.

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

Shipmate Spotlight

PN2 Karl Seitz (1961-1964)

What influenced your decision to join the military?

Like most young men of my generation, I expected to serve in the military as either a draftee or as a volunteer. The only questions were when and was it worth volunteering? When I graduated from high school in Troy, AL, my father, a naval aviator in World War II who had remained in the reserves, helped me enroll in the local Naval Reserve unit. Since it was clear I could not afford to go directly to college, at least to any of the schools I was most interested in attending, I decided to take care of my active duty obligation first. I later extended that two-year term of active duty to three years.



What was your service career path?

My active duty began in the summer of 1961 with a bus trip from Troy to Birmingham, AL, where I, along with a bunch of other recruits, was given an assembly-line physical in the basement of what was then the city's main U.S. Post Office and sent on my way to San Diego via airplane. The four-engine prop plane from Birmingham stopped in Jackson, MS, and New Orleans before landing in Dallas where I was supposed to transfer to another prop plane for the trip to California. Instead I was bumped and ended up in first class on what was then a relatively new-fangled Boeing 707 jetliner that arrived in San Diego before my original flight. I had to wait for my baggage. Although I had traveled frequently while growing up, these were my first plane rides. I was too young to enjoy some of the perks of first class.

When I was nearing the end of boot camp, I was told that I would be assigned to an LSD homeported in San Diego. However, before I finished, I came down with phlebitis, which sent me to sick bay for bed rest and caused me to miss my company's graduation ceremony. By the time I was taken off the sick list, the Navy had decided to send me to Long Beach for duty on the USS Caliente.

The Cal was in dry dock at Long Beach Naval Shipyard when I reported aboard 16 Nov 1961. I was assigned to 2nd Division and was soon hard at work as a deck hand. I stayed in 2nd Division until near the end of our 1962 deployment to WestPac.

I then applied for and was transferred to the newly open position of Operations Yeoman (my



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.

parents' insistence that I take a typing course in high school paid off). The Operations Yeoman was an unusual position. While he was assigned to X Division, the province of the Executive Officer, he actually worked for the Operations Officer — then Lt. George Fitzgibbons, now deceased.

When I started my new duties, I had thoughts that I had avoided the tank-mucking jobs that were about to start. No such luck. As the junior non-petty officer in X Division, I was put on mucking duty. Fortunately from my perspective, I was assigned to an AvGas tank, not one for bunker oil.

The regular duties of the Operations Yeoman were not nearly so physically demanding. My primary job was to type up the Caliente's deck logs. During replenishments, I was a phone-talker (actually more of a listener) on the bridge keeping the log. I also served as a more active bridge phone-talker during sea-and-anchor detail.

As the months passed, I had to make a decision on what rating I should strike for. There were two choices, yeoman and personnelman. The differences in required skills were slight with one exception. A yeoman was required to know shorthand (even though I never saw it used on the Cal). A personnelman was not. I decided to go for the latter. After the required year in grade as SN and having passed the advancement test, I became a PN3 on 16 May 1963.

The new rating meant new duties as I moved into the Ship's Office. I was replaced as operations yeoman by Tom Glenn, who transferred from deck force.

My move temporarily crowded the office, but the late John Breon, a newly promoted YN2, left for recruiting duty shortly after our promotions and the late Paul Kerivan, a newly promoted PN2, left for the Naval Training Center in San Diego at the beginning of September. The other PN3 in the office, the late Richard Bisbing, left for the Naval Station in Norfolk at the end of September. That left me as the only personnelman on the Caliente for the next five months. The late Harold Green, YN1, was the other petty officer in the office during that period.

By the time two replacements arrived, we were well into the Caliente's overhaul in Portland, Ore., and we were living and working on the World War II vintage APL or barracks barge that Pat Hurton mentioned in last month's spotlight.

We were still in the barge when the Navy's spring 1964 advancement test results were released. I found out I was on the promotion list for PN2 while on liberty when I walked into a Portland restaurant that several crew members frequented and was immediately congratulated. However, I didn't get the second chevron as quickly as normal. The Defense Department was short of money that year and it delayed all promotions. Instead of being promoted on 16 May 1964, I had to wait until 25 June, by which time we were back in Long Beach. Less than three weeks later, I was transferred to the Naval Station at Long Beach to be released from active duty.

I fulfilled my active reserve obligation by joining a unit in Birmingham, but the combined pressures of college and working fulltime caused me to not extend that commitment.

What profession did you follow after the service and what are you doing now?

I started attending Birmingham-Southern College, a small, but well respected liberal arts college associated with the United Methodist Church, in September 1964. With limited

opportunities for part time jobs, I dropped out six months later and took a job as a manifest and billing clerk for a trucking company. In September 1965, I returned to Birmingham-Southern while continuing to work full-time for the trucking company. Most academic quarters I would take slightly less than a full load of courses, making up the difference in summer school.

In August 1967, my job disappeared when the trucking company was purchased by a larger company. That was actually a lucky break for me, because my next job was the beginning of a 38-year career.

I had not planned to make newspapers my career when I became a copy editor at the Birmingham Post-Herald, then Alabama's (and Birmingham's) second largest newspaper. The job was to help get me through college. Little did I know I would not only like the work, but that others would think I was good at it.

I completed my college courses in the summer of 1969, although the bachelor's degree was not awarded until the following spring. Between those two events, I was named assistant news editor, which meant I decided which stories would appear in parts of the newspaper and was responsible for the design of many of those pages.

Shortly before the 1972 elections, the editor asked me to become the newspaper's chief editorial writer, a job he had been handling himself. After consulting with my wife of just over two years, I accepted, knowing I was now fully committed to the newspaper business. I didn't actually become a full-time editorial writer until after the elections because we were also in the transition to a computerized production system and I was the staff member who then had the best understanding of how the system would work.

During the next few years, my job evolved into editorial page editor as I took over duties formerly performed by the editor and managing editor. I held the job under five editors. I also picked up various auxiliary duties over the years, including serving as vice president of the Goodfellows Fund, a Christmas charity for needy children.

My career came to an end in September 2005, when the Post-Herald was purchased and closed by its bigger rival. So I retired a few years earlier than I had intended. Considering my doctor's reaction that may have been a good thing. He had been having me visit him every six months for years because he was convinced — with good reason given my family history — I was a heart attack waiting to happen. My first complete physical after I retired, he told me to come back in a year.

Retirement is filled with genealogical research and writing, reading, keeping up with my family and Internet social networks, exercising, chores around the house, putting out the Pipeline every three months and sometimes doing nothing. One of these months, I'm going to start building the model railroad that I've been planning in my head for years.

How has military service influenced the way you have approached your life and career?

The most obvious influence is the way I write dates. I usually put the day first, followed by the month. That's also the preferred style for genealogists, but genealogy didn't come into my life until long after the habit was established.

And the Navy was the first job I had ever held. That self-discipline has stayed with me.

However, the greatest influence of my naval service is the appreciation I gained for people from all sorts of backgrounds. Despite being well traveled for a teenager, I hadn't really interacted at length with people who didn't share my background. The military, in part because of the draft, exposed me to all sorts of people from all over the country and beyond.

That appreciation is also a characteristic of good newspaper writers and editors.

Memories



The Caliente crossed the equator 27 Oct 1966. The day before (left), the pollywogs could harass the shellbacks. Dean Goodrich, MM2, 1965-67, doesn't remember the name of the tarred-and-feathered man in the litter basket but thinks he was a shipfitter in R Division. Dean says he was a good sport. On the 27th (right), the shellbacks had great fun making shellbacks out of pollywogs.

Catching the Cal in Subic

By Jeff Sturgis, LTJG
1970-72

I was commissioned as an ensign in the US Navy Reserve on Oct. 24, 1969, in Newport, RI. After getting married on Oct. 26, my new bride and I traveled to Athens, GA for six months of school at the Navy Supply Corps School. Then in June of 1970, we headed for Long Beach, CA where the USS Caliente, my first assignment was homeported. Since the Cal was in Westpac, we had about three weeks to find an apartment and settle in before I had to leave to catch my ship.

I flew from Los Angeles to San Francisco, and then went over to Travis AFB to catch my charter for the Philippines. It was a typical government charter with every one of the approximately 250 seats occupied. The flight lasted almost exactly 24 hours with stops in Anchorage and Kadena in Okinawa with no one allowed off the plane at either stop. The main excitement on the flight was coming in view of the coast of the USSR, which was a big deal back then. We finally landed at Clark AFB in the Philippines in the morning of the second day of the flight.

After grabbing some chow, I reported to the transportation center for the trip to Subic. The

trip entailed, I was told, a long 4- or 5-hour bus ride through the mountains on narrow dirt roads. After my long flight, I was not looking forward to another ride in narrow seats in a packed bus. Shortly after noon the bus pulled into the station, and 40 or 50 U.S. Navy personnel threw our bags into the storage compartments and boarded the bus.

As I remember, I was the only officer in the depot, so I allowed all the enlisted men to board first. There was only one seat left when I boarded and it was right behind the driver. However, there was no one else in the seat, so I was looking forward to having a little extra space on the trip.

Just as the driver was about to close the door, he was ordered to wait by a loud voice coming from the door of the station. A lieutenant commander and a lieutenant proceeded from the station and had the driver stow their bags. They boarded the bus and looked for seats. Of course, the only empty seat was next to me!

This was an obvious dilemma since there were two of them and only one empty seat. Either both officers could wait for the next bus, one of the officers could go with one waiting for the next bus or they could kick one person off the bus and both go. We all knew how that would turn out! Obviously one of us already on the bus would have to go. The question was who. They could either kick off an enlisted man and tick off everybody on the bus, or kick off the only officer and make everybody but me happy!

The LCDR signaled to me that I was the unlucky one who could wait for the next bus, which wasn't scheduled until early evening. I dragged myself off the bus into the waiting room and watched dejectedly as the bus pulled out of the station.

No sooner had the bus left than two pilots in flight suits came into the waiting room. "Anybody want a ride to Subic?" one of them asked. Since I was the only person waiting for a ride, I had no competition this time. I joined them in a Navy truck and we rode over to the helicopter hangars. There was a Chinook all warmed up and ready to go.

I climbed up into the cargo bay and was strapped into a seat and even given a helmet to wear. The cargo doors were left open since it was steamy hot as it often is in the Philippines and I was seated with my back parallel to the axis of the helicopter which meant that I was directly in front of the open door looking out of the cargo bay. We lifted off and what followed was one of the thrills of a lifetime. Not only was it my only helicopter ride of my lifetime, but what a ride.

Probably to impress the green ensign who was their passenger, the pilots flew very low through the mountains. They followed the valleys through the mountains often below the peaks and ridges on either side of us. As they banked the helicopter, one minute I'd be looking directly at the rivers and trees below us and the next straight up at the sky. There is no amusement park ride that could duplicate the thrill of the ride I had that day on the way to Subic.

However, the ride soon came to an end as we reached our destination in about 20-30 minutes. As we approached Cubi Point Naval Air Station, we flew across the bay right over the Cal as she was pulling into the fuel piers. Upon landing, I thanked the pilots and crew for a great ride and caught a ride to the fuel pier, which was halfway between the airbase and the piers at the Navy base. I was waiting for the Cal as the ship tied up and the gangway was put in position. I checked in at the personnel office, met my Captain Oberg and most of the officers and went back to the

supply office where I met LTJG Greg Perett, whom I was to relieve as he “fleeted up” to Supply Officer on the Cal. I had time to meet most of the supply personnel, get a tour of the ship and some chow before it was time to go over to the transportation center to pick up my bags, which had remained on the bus.

SK3 Dave Ludemann drove me over in the ship’s pickup in the late afternoon. The bus from Clark arrived shortly after we did, and I decided to have a little fun with the two officers who had kicked me off the bus. I positioned myself by the door of the bus as it opened. Of course, the two officers were the first to disembark and I very smartly saluted them with a loud “Welcome to Subic Bay, Sirs!”

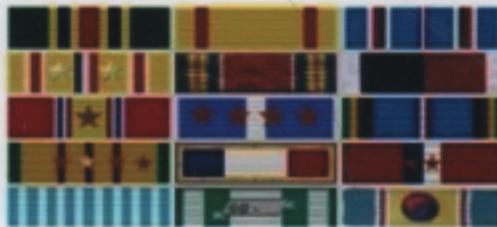
The look on their faces was priceless. I quickly picked up my bag as they stared at me. The sailors who exited the bus and who recognized me as the one who was kicked off at Clark were quite amused with the whole scene. Needless to say, I didn’t have too many opportunities in my short naval career to thumb my nose at the chain of command, but that one stands out.

I’m sure they finally figured out how I beat them to Subic, but I wonder if they ever figured out that “pulling rank” doesn’t always pay.

Still drinking buddies



John Rogers (standing), DC3, R Division, and Cal Austin, YN3, X Division, served together on the Caliente from 1964 to 1967. Both wound up retiring in Lake Havasu City, AZ. Ironically, John located Cal while doing shipmate searches for the Caliente Association. Now, along with their wives and other friends, they meet weekly for drinks. John, who sent the picture, says, “Some things never change!”



To the Crew of the USS Caliente (AO-53)

Who Served Proudly from 1943 to 1973

12 October 2013

USS Caliente Association Shipmate Survey

Please take the time to address the following survey questions. The Association must decide in what direction it will go. Answers will provide information that should be helpful in making future decisions regarding reunions and other Association matters. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to respond. Send your responses to:

Pat Hurton
156 Greenfield Drive
Chico, CA 95973-0185

or scan in pdf format and email to gigandpat26@att.net.

1) Baltimore: Why didn't you plan to attend the Baltimore reunion?

- a) Cost
 - i) Reunion itself (\$125.00 per person) _____
 - ii) Hotel _____
- b) Location _____
- c) Timing _____
- d) Other (please specify) _____
- e) No Interest _____

2) Reunions:

- a) How often do you think reunions should be held?
 - i) Annually _____
 - ii) Every 18 months _____
 - iii) Bi-annually _____
 - iv) Other (please specify) _____
 - v) No Interest _____
- b) How much money (per person) do you think is reasonable (excluding hotel)
 - i) \$100.00 _____
 - ii) \$125.00 _____
 - iii) \$150.00 _____
 - iv) Other (please specify) _____
- c) How much money (per room per night) do you think is reasonable for a hotel room
 - i) \$90.00 _____
 - ii) \$100.00 _____
 - iii) \$110.00 _____
 - iv) \$120.00 _____
 - v) Other (please specify) _____
- d) Should reunions be rotated around the country?
 - i) Yes _____
 - ii) No _____

