

# USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



# PIPELINE

Sept. 2017

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## Association retrospective

By Jeff Sturgis

By the time you read this, the Portland reunion will be only a few days away. We have about 40 shipmates, friends and family signed up to go. If you are signed up, we look forward to seeing you soon. If you are unable to attend, look for the pictures and accounts of the reunion in the next edition of the Pipeline. Since the last of us served on the Cal in 1973, the year she was decommissioned, we are getting older at a rapid pace. If you were 18 when you served on the Cal in 1973, you are now 62. You will notice that the Pipeline's content is filled with obituaries. As our members get older and pass on, the membership dwindles and fewer are able to attend far off reunions. That is why we move the reunions to different parts of the country so that members in all parts are better able to attend a "local" event.

Fortunately, we have had pretty stable attendance at our last few reunions. We consistently have between 40-45 attendees each year. An important segment of our attendance is the spouses and family members of our shipmates. The daughter of one recently deceased shipmate notified me of his passing. She attended the reunions with her Dad and she told me how important it was for him and how much she enjoyed attending with him. This year we will be pleased to have Mrs. Shirley



Lynn Denning sent Cal picture from files of late father, Merle Dion Clodé, EM3, 1951-52.

McGuinness, wife of the late Capt. Donald McGuinness, attend our reunion. CDR McGuinness was the last captain of the Cal prior to her decommissioning. We also are still inspired by the yearly attendance of WWII veteran and Caliente Association founder, John Creedon, who is always joined by his lovely wife, Diane. He is an inspiration to us all and his "sea stories" are always a highlight.

There are many people who have enabled us to carry on with these gatherings. The association was formed in 1989 thanks to the efforts of Bob LeGacy, Joe Benzinger and Benjamin Greenberg. With the exception of 2013, annual reunions have been held every year since. Early supporters and attendees included GM2 Francis X. Murphy and his wife, Ann; Captain Harry E. Phelps, a former skipper of the Cal; and BM1 R. C. Pennington. There are others to thank for the continued success of the reunions.

I'll probably miss some names from the early years, so if I do, please let me know. Early presidents of the association were Bob Legacy, Joe Benzinger and Harry Phelps. They were followed by Ron Hengle and Bob Jackson. For many years Bob Howard did an outstanding job as president organizing the reunions. When his health sidelined him, Pat Hurton took over. In addition to arranging the reunion sites, Pat was the association treasurer, a job in which he continues. Pat is also an invaluable resource for me as I continue to learn on the job. Pat also knows a lot of the history of the association. Behind the scenes Norm Street did yeoman's work finding new members, passing on news from shipmates and helping to scout out reunion sites. Karl Seitz has put his journalism background to work by editing the Pipeline for many years. I would pit this newsletter against many others in it's professional presentation. For the last few years an executive committee of Dave Ludemann, Mike Copeland, Greg Perett, Jim Rawlinson and Steve Selzer (the '72 Crew) have helped to boost attendance and organize the reunions. With their help, we hope to be able to sustain our reunions in the near future. All of these people, and many others, have enabled us to keep going even as we all age.

But, we can't do it without your help. In the next issue you will get information about our next reunion in an as yet unknown location. Please make it a priority and consider attending. We won't be able to do this forever, but with your help, we can continue to provide in the foreseeable future an opportunity for all our Caliente shipmates to gather, reminisce and renew old and new friendships. As always, you can contact me with questions, news or ideas at 207-782-8323 or [jandssturgis@roadrunner.com](mailto:jandssturgis@roadrunner.com).

As we gather in Portland to remember our days of service to our country, it is difficult to ignore the turmoil that now roils our government. However, the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and preserved by all of us who served will help us emerge from this turmoil a stronger and wiser nation. To that end, Pat Hurton sends us a quote from Father Dennis Edward O'Brien who was born in 1923 and died in 2002, and who entered the seminary in 1941 but immediately thereafter volunteered for the Marine Corps at the advent of WWII.

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the organizer, who has given us the right to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag."

## Taps

Walter Joseph Bigos died 19 Jun 2017 at age 91 in North Smithfield, RI. He served on the Caliente from 1943 to 1945 as a GM2. Walt was born 22 Oct 1925 to Joseph and Frances (Dombrowski) Bigos. He was married to Jeanette E. (Peloquin) Bigos and Theresa (Theroux) Bigos, both of whom predeceased him. Walter was a master silversmith, receiving training through the GI Bill. He worked at several companies before buying Pilz Co. in Providence RI. In 1975, he was asked to create the gold Kentucky Derby Winners Cup. He continued to create the annual trophy until 2007 when he retired from New England Copperworks. He is survived by daughter Lisa Duclos, sister Elaine Brasher, niece Fran Archetto, nephew Russel Golombiewski and several other family members. He is buried at Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, RI



Cesidio "Joe" Coia died 18 June 2017 at age 83 in Rochester, NY. Joe served on the Cal from 1951 to 1952 as a CS3. He was born 9 June 1934 in Rochester to Lazzaro and Carmina Coia. Joe was a regular attendee, and delightful company, at Caliente Reunions with his daughter Connie. Joe was



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.

predeceased by his wife Jeanne in 2007. He is survived by daughters Connie and Beth; son Mark (Gail) Coia and granddaughters Amber, Montana and Tabitha Coia. Joe was buried in the Veteran Section of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery with full military honors.

We have belatedly learned of the death of Edward G Everett 24 Sept. 2015 at age 86 at the home of his sister, Dawn MacTaggart, in Amarillo, Texas. Ed served on the Cal from 1967 to 1968 as a BMC. Ed was born 3 May 1929 to Gerald and Elizabeth Everett in Dalhart, Texas. Enlisting in the Navy in 1948, he retired in November 1969. For several years, he worked for several school systems in San Diego. In 1981, after earning a business administration degree, he became director of maintenance for the International Schools in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. In 1989, he and his wife, Vivian, returned to San Diego and a year later they moved to Prescott Valley, AZ. From that base, they traveled the world. Ed was predeceased by his wife and son Richard. He is survived by daughter Karen (Dave) Hall; son Keith (Linda) Everett; sisters Dawn MacTaggart and Marilyn McAlister; brothers Richard (Walli) and David (Pam) Everett and niece Pam Wiggins.



William Francis Hatzel died 4 May 2016 in Colorado Springs, CO. William served on the Cal from 1965 to 1968 as a CS2. He was born in Pennsylvania 20 June 1946. William was a retired Navy cook and longtime resident of Colorado Springs. He is survived by his wife, Brenda Hatzel; son Matthew Hatzel; stepson Eric Rivera; brothers Herbert and Ernest Hatzel and sister Carol Frey. William was buried in Fort Logan National Cemetery.



We have belatedly learned of the 8 May 2011 death of Thomas R. Hightower Sr. at age 94 in Hot Springs, AR. Tom served on the Cal from 1945 to 1946 as a RM3. He was born 17 Sept. 1926 in Arcadia, AR to Reginald and Eula Maud Hightower. Tom began a career in hospital administration in 1952 after graduating from Louisiana Tech University. From 1969 to retirement in 1990, he was CEO of Woman’s Hospital in Baton Rouge, LA. Before and after retirement, Tom served in various capacities for a variety of governmental and civic boards and organizations. He was predeceased by his wife and mother of his children, Mary Eleanor McCarty Hightower, and wife Mary Elizabeth Baker Hightower. Tom is survived by wife Patricia Hightower; daughters Rebecca Elizabeth Hightower and Mary Jane (John Wesley) Durrett; son Thomas R. (Ann Marie) Hightower Jr.; stepsons Keith Nordyke, Reed Nordyke and



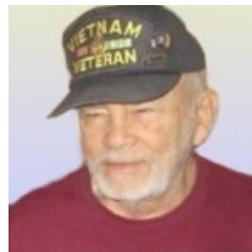
A reminder if you are on Facebook, Jack Hughes has created a Facebook group for former crew members of the USS Caliente (AO-53) and their families.

Jeffrey Gammon; stepdaughter Heidi G. (C.T. III) Terrell; sister Clara Jane Walker; 10 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Tom's body was donated for medical education and research and later interred in the Hightower family plot in Arcadia Cemetery.

Fred Robert Lanker died 4 March 2017 at age 84 at his home in Pollock Pines, CA. Fred served on the Cal from 1953 to 1955 as a SN. He was born 29 Jan 1933 in San Francisco. After leaving the Navy in 1955, Fred lived in the Bay Area, managing many Safeway stores and becoming the owner/operator of Fred's Liquors in Gilroy. In 1979, he moved to Pollock Pines and became the bartender at 50 Grand Restaurant for more than 30 years. He was predeceased by sons Steve Lanker and Richard McKeever. Fred is survived by wife Nelda Lanker; son David (Eva) Lanker; step-daughters Diane (Albert) Cook and Kelly (Larry) Kelly; stepson Jonathan McGowan; nephews Barris (Sondra) Evulich and Roy (Angie) Evulich; 15 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



Larry L. McClintick of Collinsville, IL, died 20 July 2015 at age 75 at Memorial Hospital in Belleville, IL. Larry served on the Cal from 1962 to 1964 as an EMC. He was born 19 Aug. 1939 to Lewis E. and Joyce Cron McClintick. Larry served 20 years in the Navy, which included three tours in Vietnam. He was a sales manager at General Electric and a general manager for Eastern Electric. Larry was predeceased by wife Juanita McClintick. He is survived by wife Marilyn Kuper McClintick; sons Larry McClintick Jr., Michael (Elida) Chuck (Ginger) and Patrick McClintick; stepchildren Ryan (Courtney) Loepker and Chelsie (Ryan) McWhorter; brother Jim (Cheri) Moehle; sisters Jo (Bob) Beyer and Betty Davis and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is interred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.



Raymond A Nutter of Burbank, IL, and Naples, FL, died 18 Nov 2016 at age 75 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. Ray was on the Cal from 1960 to 1962 as an SN. Ray was among the shipmates who attended an independently organized regional reunion in Springfield, IL when the 2013 national reunion was cancelled. He is survived by his wife Marilou Casey.



Paul M. Tague of Tama, Iowa, died 3 March 2017 at age 76 at Sunny Hill Care Center in Clutier, Iowa. Paul served on the Cal from 1959 to 1960 as an SN. After his naval service, he lived and worked in southern California until retiring in 1998. He and his brother, Tom, then returned to Iowa. Paul is survived by his children Theresa and Joey Tague; sister Nancy Boies; special



friends Mary and Jim Pashby; and numerous nieces and nephews.

John M Treiber of Plymouth, MN died 16 July 2017 at age 77 in St. Louis Park, MN. John served on the Cal from 1959 to 1962 as an SN. He was born 16 Jun 1940, in San Fernando, CA, to Raymond and Dorothy Treiber and grew up in South Mound and St. Paul, MN.. Returning to Minnesota after his naval service, he earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Minnesota as well as a master's in psychology, specializing in substance abuse rehabilitation. In 1982, John founded the nonprofit People Serving People, which became the largest family shelter in Minnesota. In 1991, he married Sara "Sary" Aguilar, a Peruvian social worker. Soon after the birth of their son Josua in 1997, they chose early retirement. In addition to Sara and Joshua, John is survived by siblings Carl (Donna), Mike (Brenda), Pat (Cindy), Bill (Annette), Don (Kathy), Tim (Jennifer), Peggy (Jerry) Winter, Mary Greenough, Alice (Lyn) Heflin and Theresa Thomas.



Margaret E. Urling died 24 Feb 2016 in Mt. Vernon, WA. She is the wife of Red Urling who served on the Cal from 1955 to 1958 as a BT3. Margaret was born 7 April 1937 to John T. and Winnifred Standing. She loved motorcycling with Hill and Gully Club, gardening, antiques and crafting. In addition to her husband, Margaret is survived by son Jeffery Lilljord, daughters Barb Miller, Catherine Fell and Pamela Hayden, 10 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. Son Edwin Urling predeceased her.



## **Editor's message**

By Karl Seitz

When I became editor of the Pipeline, I did not realize how much of my time would be consumed with obituaries. Oh, I knew that we are an aging population group, which means we're closer to the end of our journeys on earth than the beginnings. And before becoming editor, I had notified an organization for USS Pennsylvania sailors of the death of a friend of ours who had served aboard that battleship during World War II.

However, I was not fully prepared for the amount of time I spend tracking down information about our late shipmates. This is not a complaint. The techniques I use are very similar to those used in pursuing my hobby of genealogy. And the results are similar: great tales about human accomplishments.

Finding such stories can be easy or hard. When surviving family members or shipmates notify me of a death, I can usually find an obituary in a newspaper or at a funeral home website. But sometimes nobody notifies me. The first indication may be a returned Pipeline. A return is not proof of death. People move or change e-mail addresses. So I have to track down what happened to that person.

Usually, I succeed. But sometimes I can't find them. We have two such shipmates right now. I don't know if Norman L. Corey or Dalton Lunsford are dead or alive or where they now live. The last addresses I have are in California. If anybody knows their current addresses, I would appreciate being told.

## A wives tale

By Shirley McGuinness

Captain's wife, 1972-73

When the Caliente was on its last cruise to WestPac, the wives got together once a month to share our eight-track movies and family-grams. Most of the wives were married to young enlisted men, and were so young. As we got closer to the ship's return, they planned to make decorations. A few of them had a cake sale to have money to pay for decorations.

They made a million tissue flowers to cover an arch at the bottom of the pier. They made lots of big yellow bows to tie around the trees leading to the pier. Remember Tony Orlando and his song, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the old Oak Tree."

One mom of a young sailor would come to our meetings. The last get-together, the girls planned to make a huge poster to hang "over" the pier. Our beautiful and young mom became the model for the banner. They had to hang it over the end of the pier because of the message.

When the ship came along side, those same young wives held their babies high for the new dads to see. A sight I've never forgotten.

Those same young wives thought for sure that the Red Cross would send their husbands home for the births. We older girls told them to think — no uniforms to wash and iron, no dinners to have ready every night. And how great it is to be able to nap when baby is sleeping. That was easier than No Red Cross. Although Red Cross was a great help when two youngsters set a fire in their apartment.

These young girls accepted that their husbands would not be home for the births of their children. They are the same young ladies who raised money to decorate the pier.

I don't remember who had the idea to make the banner, but they laid it out on my kitchen floor, about 10 x 3 feet. They outlined the model and painted a tiny yellow bikini. The top said, "WELCOME HOME," the bottom, "honk if you're horny." I was pretty nervous, concerned. I didn't want anyone to get into trouble. It had to hang over the side of the pier.

The ship came along side, tooting its horn. There were a lot of folks on the pier, but only our little group knew what was going on, and yes, Don did get a talking to for sounding the horn.

Back to the two young ladies, during that long deployment, they grew from young girls into strong, responsible, military wives.

I'll never forget them and that moment.



Part of crowd waiting for Caliente (from 1973 cruise book)

U. S. S. CALIENTE (AO-53)  
% Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California

24 January 1959

Commendation

for outstanding performance of duty as a crew member of the U.S.S. CALIENTE (AO-53).

In recognition of his sincere efforts and his conscientious and diligent devotion to duty Paul M. TAGUE, SA, USN has been recommended for commendation at meritorious mast.

Because of his high standards of professional knowledge he was instrumental in preventing the sinking of the number two motor launch the night of twenty-one January 1959. TAGUE's fast action and outstanding ability in bringing the boat aboard attests to his ability and resourcefulness. His action was in keeping with the highest traditions of seamanship in the naval service.

The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. CALIENTE, takes pleasure in commending him for his outstanding efforts in carrying out this operation.

Commended at meritorious mast held on board the U.S.S. CALIENTE (AO-53) the twenty-fourth day of January 1959.

  
O. WILLIAM GOEPNER  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Commanding

This commendation was included with obituary material received for Paul Tague.

**USS CALIENTE (AO-53)  
Portland Reunion  
Sept. 7-10, 2017  
PORTLAND MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT  
1401 SW Naito Parkway, Portland OR 92701  
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