

USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



PIPELINE

September 2009

President's message

By Pat Hurton

Our editor and publisher Karl Seitz has agreed to accelerate publication of this Pipeline to give you a chance to still sign up for the Minneapolis reunion. Plans are now fully made and only the final count on attendees is pending.

We hope that your summer is going well. It seems that the entire country is experiencing different weather than would be expected. The Northeast has been cooler than usual and the Northwest has been significantly hotter. Those persons in the states of Washington and Oregon that were told, by their Realtor, that they don't need air conditioning probably suffered a bit. Here in Chico, Calif. it seems like we had fewer days in July that were over one hundred degrees but the middle part of August may make up for it. It seems that no matter where you live we are all looking for rain.

The planning for the Minneapolis reunion reinforces my opinion that the job could be a lot easier if it were handled by a committee. The basic parts of a reunion are the hotel, the tours, the photographer and the disc jockey. If a different person takes on each of these four tasks, the entire reunion could be accomplished with a very minimum of effort by any one individual.

One of the decisions that will be made at the Minneapolis reunion is the site of the next reunion. In my opinion four sites should be considered: Boston, MA, and Norfolk, VA on the East Coast, and San Francisco and San Diego, CA, on the West Coast. If we follow our pattern of rotating sites around the country, thereby giving all our members a chance to come to a reunion, we would pick the West Coast.

There are pluses and minuses to each site.

Boston – We haven't been to the Northeast since Philadelphia in 2005 and we have approximately 15 percent of our membership in the northeast area. Great place to visit with a lot of historical sites to tour. It would probably be expensive and there is no Navy in the area unless you count Old Ironsides. The reunion would have to be held in the spring or fall due to the weather (too hot and humid or too cold). Boston has a fairly good public transportation system depending on where the hotel is.



Last Call

Join your shipmates in
Minneapolis Oct. 1-4 for
the USS Caliente Reunion.
The registration form
can be found
on page 10

Norfolk – Could probably arrange something on the naval base. This is likely the least expensive location to choose. On the downside we had a reunion in Charleston, SC in 2007 and this would not follow our plan to rotate reunions in various parts of the country. The reunion could not be held in the middle of the summer due to the heat and humidity. Don't know anything about public transportation in Norfolk, if it has a downtown area similar to Boston or San Francisco or what, other than the navy base is there.

The last West Coast reunion was in Seattle, WA, in 2006. If we want to go to the West Coast the two suggestions are in California, where we haven't been since the 2003 reunion in San Francisco. A little less than 50 percent of our members are from the West Coast.

San Francisco – This is probably the most expensive choice, but a great place to visit. No Navy unless you count the USS Hornet in Alameda (just across the bay) or the USS Potomac (Roosevelt's yacht) in approximately the same location. The best weather in San Francisco is the last two weeks of September and the first week of October. If it is desirable to hold a spring reunion in San Francisco the weather could be very nice or downright cold. San Francisco has a good public transportation system between the cable cars that get you from downtown to Fisherman's wharf or vice versa and street cars that go along the wharf and up Market Street (the cities major downtown thoroughfare).

San Diego – Could probably arrange something at the naval base. Probably the second least expensive location and the weather is usually very acceptable any time of the year. A reunion was held in Long Beach (about 90 miles north of San Diego) in 1995. The down side of San Diego is that we would probably stay on the outskirts of the town (cost issue) and there is no public transportation. To get to downtown you would have to take a taxi or have a car. The zoo and aquarium are not very accessible by public transportation from any outlying area.

We would like to get opinions from each one of you regarding the location of the next reunion. If you desire your ideas to be considered at the Minneapolis business meeting please submit them to either myself or Norm Street by email or snail mail by Sept. 15, 2009. If you have other ideas about the reunions we would also like to hear them. The reunions are for you, not the persons that set them up.

I would also like to hear if you could assist in one of the tasks it takes to run the reunion. Getting more people involved can result in a better reunion as more options can be explored and put together in the most cost effective manner.

For those of you who attended the San Antonio reunion and went on the trip to Fredericksburg, TX, you should remember The National Museum of the Pacific War run by the Admiral Nimitz Foundation. I would propose that the USS Caliente sponsor a plaque on their Memorial Wall. There are two choices. A 5" x 7" plaque may be sponsored for \$350 or a 20" x 20" plaque may be sponsored for \$2,500. I would like to see the Cal have a 20" x 20" plaque. I would like to see it sponsored by donations from our membership rather than ask for permission to use the general fund. There is an option of having an annual floral tribute placed on the plaque for a one time donation of \$1,000. Every Memorial Day the floral tribute is placed on the ship's plaque with the name of the USS Caliente Association prominently displayed on a ribbon across the wreath.

By sponsoring a plaque the USS Caliente would forever remain in people's minds and the floral tribute would provide our veterans, who so gallantly gave their lives, to remain perpetually remembered. Hopefully, those who follow us will want to know something about our lives and experiences and I can't think of a better way than a perpetual plaque and service for our members. We do have a ship's name plate at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC, and this would provide another way to remember the Caliente, its and our service.

If each person was able to donate \$10 we could get the plaque and have the memorial wreath each

year. If you are able to donate more than \$10 it would help cover those not in a position to donate. You can view the plaques and other information at www.nimitz-museum.org.

Please let myself or Norm Street now of your desires so we can discuss this at the Minneapolis business meeting.

Hope to see you all in Minneapolis. I thank those of you who indicated that is not possible to attend this year and look forward to seeing you at the next reunion.

The choices for the meal at the banquet are New York Strip Steak, Cranberry Chicken and Roasted Halibut. If you have already sent in your reunion sign up sheet and wish to change your choice please let me know ASAP. I have to finalize the quantities, by choice, by the second week of September.

Welcome aboard to our new members:

In the June Pipeline, your president inadvertently omitted to welcome aboard Norman Brown. Norm lives in Escondido, CA, and served on the Cal from 1961 until 1962 as an EN3. I apologize for this oversight and welcome Norm aboard.

We now welcome aboard:

Robert Goodreau, who lives with his wife Carol in Attleboro, MA, was a DK2 when he served aboard the Cal from 1960 to 1961.

Richard Heaton, who lives in Weirton, WV, was a QM3 when he served aboard the Cal from 1945 to 1948.

Ira Payne, who lives with his wife Fay in Turlock, CA, was a DK2 when he served aboard the Cal



USS Caliente Association
President: Pat Hurton
Vice President: Norm Street
Secretary: Red Ward
Pipeline Editor: Karl Seitz



The Pipeline is the official quarterly newsletter of the USS Caliente Association. It is a place to share your memories. 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.

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

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 Pat Hurton, 14075 Kelsey Drive, Chico, CA 95973-9262.

Visit Norm Street's Caliente Website at www.usscalienteao-53.com/index.htm

from 1957 to 1960.

Charles Ray, who lives with his wife Bonnie in Sarasota, FL, was an MM2 when he served aboard the Cal from 1958 to 1961.

Dave Sehorn, who lives with his wife Sharon in Michigan City, IN, was an SA when he served aboard the Cal from 1959 to 1960.

Ed Seibel, who lives with his wife Rosita in McMinnville, OR., was an SA when he served aboard the Cal from 1969 to 1971.

In memoriam:

We are sad to note the recent passing of our shipmate, at age 87, Robert (Bob) D. Cooper of Glen Burnie, MD. Bob passed away on Aug. 12, 2009. He is survived by his wife, June, son Ronald H. Cooper and wife Janice of Millersville, MD, daughters Cyndi J. Cooper of Wilmington, DE and Wendy C. Mulligan and husband of Darien, CT, four grandchildren, one great-granddaughter and a sister, Anne Whitaker of Audubon, NJ. Bob served as an EM1 on the Caliente from 1943 to 1946. After World War II, he was employed by both Sikorsky Aircraft and Boeing Vertol in their Experimental Flight Test Divisions. His shipmates from World War II particularly express their deepest condolences.

Jim Peeler sent the following obituary he wrote for his father, Walter Edward Peeler, a proud plank holder of AO-53:

Walter Edward Peeler, Jr. age 85, died on Jan. 9, 2009. A recent resident of Marietta, GA, he spent most of his life and business career in Jacksonville, FL.

Born in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Mr. Peeler was a veteran of WW II. His service in the US Navy included participation in Pacific Fleet campaigns in the Marshalls and Hollandia operations, Eniwetok, Western Carolines, along with Leyte and Luzon landings in the Philippines.

Ed's business career spanned 42 years of service with what is today the CSX Railroad. His responsibilities included assistant superintendent labor relations and general superintendent Dining Car Department.

Prior to moving to Marietta, Ed and his wife of 65 years, Florence Pharis Peeler, resided in Jacksonville, where he served in leadership positions at Murray Hill Baptist Church and the Riverside Lyons Club. Since moving to Marietta he has been active as a member of Marietta First United Methodist Church and The Atherton Place active adult retirement community Resident Leadership Council.

He was preceded in death by his wife. He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law James E. and Janet B. Peeler of Woodstock, GA, granddaughter Julia P. and husband Darin L. Hardin of Adairsville, GA, grandson Charles E. and wife Melissa D. Peeler of Albany, GA, six great grandchildren and sister Mary Ruth and husband Gerry Tripp of Hemet, CA.

Snippets of memory

These snippets were collected by Pat Hurton from our shipmates original membership forms:

Frank Hanson (ETR2, 1970-1972) remembers being tied up to the dock at the Subic Bay Naval Station when a small Phillipine boat came along side and was trying to steal items from the Cal. He was part of the group that had to sink the boat and watch the perpetrators scramble to get away.

Don Chamlet (RM3, 1959-1963) remembers searching for a British airman who went down in the sea of Japan while on maneuvers.

This issue contains an article about the USS America. It will bring back memories to Art

Arachikavitz (SK3, 1965-1967) about spraying down the America when someone on the America said "commence pumping" a little prematurely. That America crew will never forget to check those couplings again.

Bill Bugg (LTJG, 1963-1965) remembers the Cal "unrep flag" that was provided by the Caliente Racetrack, Tijuana, Mexico

Bob (George) Bateman (BT2, 1963-1967) remembers a destroyer that was alongside when it lost its boilers and made the refueling hose look like a rubber band. Also remembers getting another ship's anchor caught in the starboard handrails and leaving a hole in the berthing bulkhead. We're not saying Bob was bad luck, but he also was aboard when the forward potable water tank had a hole punched into it while the Cal was at full stop waiting to anchor The culprit was a Chinese cargo ship. Bob still has his original watch cap issued to him at boot camp in San Diego.

Memories

The newspaper clippings below left and on the next page were provided by Bud Ogier SKC who served on the Caliente from 1966 to 1969. Does anybody recognize the lifeguard? The lower resolution page image below right comes from the editor's genealogical resources.



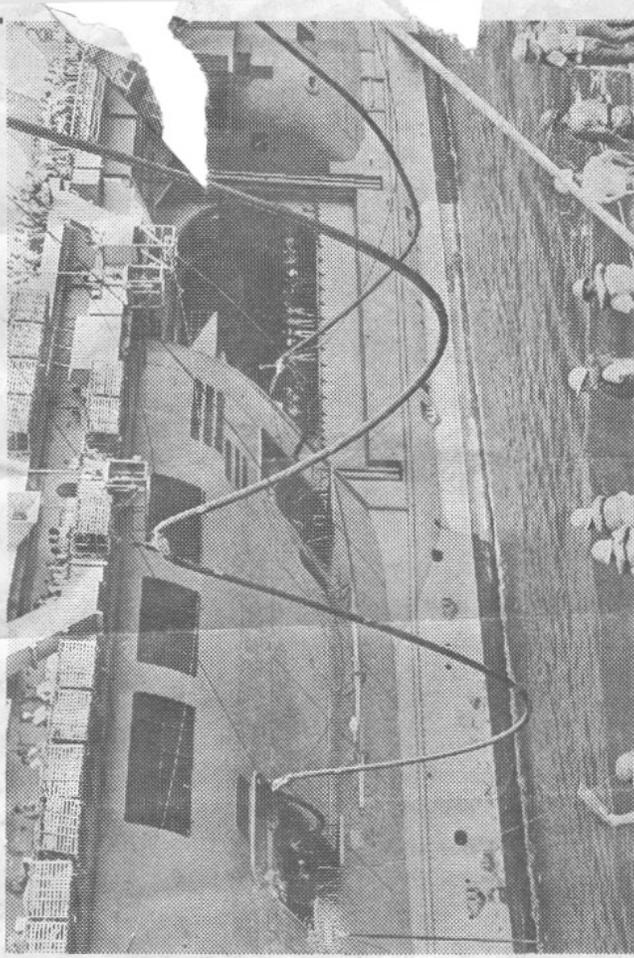
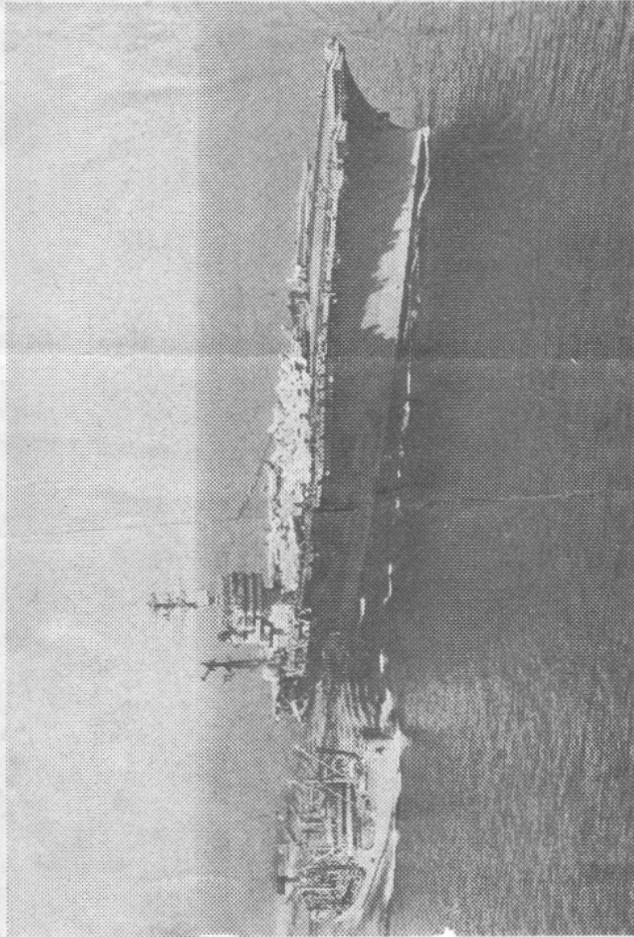
Lifeguard With Firepower

The Navy's version of a lifeguard packs a lot of weight, but its function is not simply one of watching for troubled swimmers. The rifle adds security for sailors swimming where sharks are likely to visit. Perhaps the most popular announcement, equal at least to pay call, is "swim call" on board Navy ships at sea. Sailor with M-1 guarding swimmers is stationed on the Navy Fleet Oiler Caliente. (USN)



**Pacific Stars and Stripes
June 23, 1968
page 7**

Oiler Caliente Welcomes Carrier to Pacific



USS Caliente (AO 53), and USS America, attack carrier, steam side-by-side as the carrier takes on fuel enroute to Philippines. (USN)

By J03 Dave Friesen
SUBIC BAY NAVAL BASE,
R.P. (Special) — "Now set con-
dition one-alpha."

No matter if you're in the shower, eating chow or grabbing shut-eye at midnight, when the boatswain's mates sound this word, everything stops so the crew of a fleet oiler can set the rigs and transfer the fuel, cargo, mail and personnel to a 7th Fleet ship.

This is an everyday occurrence as the 7th Fleet is replenished on station off the coast of Vietnam.

Recently, however, the crewmen of the fleet oiler USS

Caliente (AO 53) fulfilled a replenishment assignment which they will long remember.

The Caliente, one of the Navy's oldest oilers, refueled the Navy's newest attack carrier, the USS America. It was also the America's first replenishment in the Western Pacific on the huge carrier's first Far East voyage. The carrier came around the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa from its homeport of Norfolk, Va.

The rendezvous was several hundred miles southeast of Singapore. The America arrived via the Strait of Malacca, while

Caliente pulled out from Singapore.

The big carrier steaming over the horizon in early morning, was a thrilling sight for the Caliente's crew. The Caliente couldn't have appeared as impressive to the America's crew, but she was certainly welcome for she had oil for the America's turbines, and, best of all, some 158 bags of mail for the crew. This was the first mail call in three weeks for America's sailors.

As the America steamed alongside of the Caliente, shots sent lines over to the oiler. The shot lines were tied to heavier pieces of line on the oiler and

were hauled back to the carrier. The ships swapped progressively larger pieces of line until lengths of huge black hose stretched across the churning waters.

Wheels spun on Caliente to open the fuel line valves and hundreds of gallons of oil flowed to America's tanks. The carrier took some 45,000 barrels of fuel before signaling her tanks were loaded.

A "high line chair" was rigged to transfer 19 officers and men with orders to the America. The chair was laboriously pulled by hand for each transfer — a machine could break down, sending men plum-

meting into the surging waters.

Cargo nets highlined, but hauled by winches, changed 12,000 pounds of cargo from the Caliente to America.

With the replenishment completed, the two ships separated with signals of "thanks" from the America and "smooth sailing" from the Caliente. The Caliente was bound for the waters off Vietnam where she will continue to refuel ships of the 7th Fleet. The America headed for Subic Bay in the Philippines before taking station off Vietnam.

From the corner of his eye, the helmsman saw an orange object

By Miguel F. Ronquillo, RD2
1958-1961

I do not remember the date, but the day was bright and sunny, late in the morning. The Caliente was steaming 180 degrees between the West Coast and the Channel Islands, about four hours out from Long Beach Harbor. The sea was rough with 15- to 20-foot swells.

On the helm was Rito Hernandez, Second Division seaman. Out of the corner of his eye, through an open hatch, he saw what appeared to be an overturned boat and an orange object about 100 yards to port. He immediately called out to the officer of the deck, and reported what he had seen. It was soon verified by the OD and the port side lookout that it was a capsized boat with a man wearing an orange lifejacket holding on.

The OD immediately ordered the helm full to port and the quartermaster to sound the GQ alarm and order the "Man Overboard Detail" to their stations. The Caliente then made a complete circle and returned to the spot where the capsized boat had last been seen.

By the time the Caliente was near the capsized boat, all personnel who were not on the man overboard detail were on the port side decks. When about quarter-mile from the capsized boat, the Caliente lifeboat was lowered into the rough sea. As it approached the overturned boat, the lifeboat looked like a cork in a bath tub, going up and down and sideway in the rough sea.

When close to the capsized boat, the man in the orange jacket, swam away from it and towards the Caliente lifeboat. He was soon pulled into the lifeboat, which then turned and headed back to the Caliente. When alongside, the lifeboat was hoisted up to the first deck and the rescued man transferred immediately to sick bay.

Soon thereafter the Caliente resumed its southerly heading for Long Beach. It was learned later that the rescued man had been in the water about 15 hours, but we were never told if there were others in the boat with him. Upon arrival at Long Beach Harbor, a boat from the Naval Base came alongside and picked up the rescued man and took him to the base hospital.

Rito Hernandez, was granted a 72-hour pass. The event was celebrated at the Los Amigos on Beacon Street in San Pedro, by Pancho Carbajal BM1 from 1st Division, Enrique Nava and Louis Gomez from S Division, and Miguel Ronquillo from Operations Division.

About a week later, Rito was awarded a commendation by the captain. The port bridge lookout on watch on the day of incident, was written up. It is unknown if he received any punishment for not being more attentive to his duties.

More on the fate of the USS Caliente

By Larry Baker, LTJG
1957-1960

In the June Pipeline was an article on the fate of Caliente after decommissioning. I have a short narrative that may add to the story.

Sometime in 1974, an acquaintance in the insurance business (I was California Chief Deputy insurance commissioner at the time) asked several people in the industry and their spouses to go on a boat tour of Los Angeles/Long Beach harbor on a Sunday afternoon. It was a beautiful, clear day and everyone was enjoying themselves on deck watching the sights of the harbor go by.

As we were cruising along down the back channel behind Terminal Island, we passed a scrap yard. When I looked up at it, I saw the grey bow of a ship. Only about 50 or 60 feet of the bow remained. The rest of the ship was a pile of steel fragments. But clearly painted on the bow in bold white was O

53. When I saw that, it was as though I had suddenly seen the dead body of an old friend. I will never forget that image. It certainly ruined that afternoon.

I don't know what happened to change the destiny of the Caliente. Maybe the Argentines changed their minds and didn't complete the purchase. But there is no doubt that she wound up being cut into scrap in that Terminal Island yard.



John (Jack) Beatrice sent this picture of S Division in the mid 1940s. Left to right, back row: Les Donaldson, Al Markey, Mike Ditusa, Charley Kornprobst, Lonnie Gibbons, unknown, John Marge, Chief Rob Patker, Pere Malley, Ensign W. E. Giles. Front row: unknown, unknown, Frank Young, unknown, unknown, Jack Beatrice SK2.

If anyone knows the names of the unknowns please forward them to Karl Seitz, Pat Hurton or Jack Beatrice. It would be great to have everyone identified.

Beatrice was on the Cal from 1943 to 1946 as an SK2. He operated the ship's store located in the forward part of the ship. He remembers making ice cream using a powdered mix as a treat at every evening meal. The cost per serving was 5 cents. Cigarettes were 50 cents per carton or 5 cents per pack. Florsheim shoes were just \$5. He would be interested in hearing about members' memories of ship's store items.

New Members write The night a carrier made the boom fall

By Ira Payne, DK2
May 1957-June 1960

What has happened in my life since I left the Navy is that for the next eight years I floated from job

to job, then I found my calling. The year was 1969. I heard about a drapery installer who had passed away. I was out of work with four kids. They trained me for four weeks. I started hanging brackets the first day for eight windows in eight hours. By the end of the four weeks I was installing brackets, rods and drapes at the rate of 10 completed sets per hour. I did this for about five years. During this time, I watched and studied the business.

My wife and I opened a wholesale manufacturing business for the trade (decorators) to fabricate and furnish hardware and install their custom draperies. We started in San Jose, Calif, sold out, moved to Sacramento County and opened another business. We retired at age 55 and returned to Turlock, Calif., where we grew up.

During this 25 years, we raised our own four children. As they were reaching high school, some of their friends parents were putting their kids out of the house and ours dragged them home. We agreed to give them a roof and food but with two conditions: (1) Parents had to know where they were and (2) our house rules. We got them through high school. Two of those kids passed away at age 30 with an hereditary disease. Our youngest son was in Desert Storm as a Marine.

While on the USS Caliente, one of the carriers came alongside to refuel but very fast. When their bow reached our fantail they started their slow-down maneuver. As they did, their fantail began swinging toward our bow. There is a boom there. I wore the earphones and mouthpiece. As I saw what was happening, I hollered at the boom operators to head for the fantail, although it was at the other end of the ship. They were at the catwalk level but I was on the pipes level. They all made it to the front tower, but I tripped over a pipe and crawled all the way back to the first bulkhead before the boom fell. It fell where we had been standing as well as on the port side gun turret.

Needless to say, they didn't get served that night.

I'm currently serving my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I'm attempting to take my Christianity out of the building and into the neighborhoods to do two things: (1) to be of service physically to them or someone they might know. (2) to find out if they are saved, find out how if they are, and if not, are they willing to listen to my story of salvation.

May I have someone come by that does the same as I? If so give me a call at (209) 406-9028 (cell) or (209) 668-8231 (home). I'll be in Chattanooga, Tenn., through the end of September.

I was a boy. He was a man

By Dave Sehorn, SA

1959-1960

My Caliente memories include flying to Yokosuka, Japan to meet the Cal in November 1959, visiting Subic Bay, Philipines, and the ship's party on Grande Island and refueling at sea.

I also remember sparing with (Nick) Bullich BM1. I was a boy. He was a man. He always won. I was in First Division. He taught me how to make up my bunk — the right way. I'll never forget that guy. He was OK.

I retired after 33 years at US Steel. I have two grown boys, David and Kelly. David is a welder who lives in Missouri and Kelly is a missionary who lives in Papua, New Guina. My wife and I are retired and are born again Christians. We keep ourselves busy with the church and just everyday care around our home.

On the next page is a registration form for the Caliente Reunion. Recipients of the print edition may want to make a photocopy to use for registering.

2009 USS CALIENTE REUNION
MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL MINNESOTA
OCTOBER 1st thru OCTOBER 4th 2009

Shipmates Name: _____

Spouse: _____ or Guest: _____

Address (street): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Yrs. on Cal 19__ to 19__ Rate/Rank on Cal _____

Basic; registration fee of \$75.00 per person includes Thursday reception, rolls, coffee juice etc in hospitality room Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning and the Saturday night Banquet dinner.

Total attendees: _____ x \$75.00 per person = _____

Basic Plus; includes the above and adds a Friday Minneapolis tour and river cruise including lunch and a reunion photo book; additional \$75.00 per person (\$150.00 per person total)

Total attendees: _____ x \$150.000 per person = _____

All Inclusive; includes the above and adds a Saturday tour of Stillwater; additional \$35.00 per person (\$185.00 per person total) - lunch on your own

Total attendees: _____ x \$185.00 per person = _____

Banquet Meal Choice: (banquet dinner includes soup or salad and dessert)
Please circle your choice.

Choice A: New York Strip Steak

Choice B: Cranberry Chicken

Choice C: Roasted Halibut

Make Check Payable to USS Caliente Association and return to:
Pat Hurton, 14075 Kelsey Drive, Chico, CA 95973-9262
(phone 530-343-4060)