

# USS Caliente (AO-53) Association



# PIPELINE

March 2014

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## Acting President's message

By Pat Hurton

I hope everyone had a good holiday season. I know the eastern part of the country and even into the South the weather has been horrific. As I look out my window today, the temperatures here in Northern California are going to be around 75 degrees this week. I have an uncle who lives in upstate New York and I've heard nothing but horror stories about the cold and the snow that the East has suffered this winter. I hope you all weren't significantly affected by the snow and cold and can now look forward to a lovely (hopefully) spring.

No matter what one thinks it is a result of, weather patterns are certainly changing. In California we have one of the driest winters in the past 20 years. Our rain fall totals are less than 30 percent of normal and the reservoirs are only about 40 percent of capacity — they should be over 60 percent at this point in the year. There is also very little snow in the Cascade's and Sierra Nevada's therefore Spring runoff will be minimal. Quite a contrast between the West Coast and the rest of the country, of course many people believe that is true regardless of the weather.

Unfortunately we have had no success in getting a sufficient number of shipmates to attend a reunion in New Orleans.. As a result we are going to try a "last ditch" effort and see if we can get enough interested persons so that we can commit to 30 rooms for a Chicago reunion. If we get enough positive responses by the end of March we will try and secure the dates of 4-7 September for the reunion. If sufficient positive responses are not received by that date then the reunion dates, if at all, could change depending on hotel availability.

We have a very short amount of time to commit to a hotel. If we can get enough positive responses, in a very short time, we may be able to commit to the Hyatt in Chicago that will run about \$160.00 per night. This rate is significantly less than any other hotel in the area but only extends until the last part of March or maybe early April.

Please let Norm or me know of your interest. My e-mail address is [gigandpat26@att.net](mailto:gigandpat26@att.net). Norm's e-mail address is [normstreet@sbcglobal.net](mailto:normstreet@sbcglobal.net). For those who don't use e-mail, please send your answers to me at 156



Greenfield Drive, Chico, CA 95973-0185. Please respond as quickly as possible.

We sincerely hope that we are able to get enough interest in a Chicago reunion. If we don't, then the Albuquerque reunion will be the last reunion sponsored by the USS Caliente Association.

It is sad that we are at this point as Norm Street and I were hoping we could last another ten years. We were hoping that shipmates, on the Caliente during the late '60s and early '70s, would be interested enough to carry on the Association until we all are physically unable to attend reunions or mentally too old to remember the Cal and the good times we had.

If we are unable to carry on reunions then the Association could continue to produce a Pipeline. Of course, Karl would have to be willing and able and he must be provided material for the Pipeline. I would be happy to continue to receive dues and donations from Association members but I am not willing to organize another reunion.

From a personal standpoint, I will be out of the country from mid-April until mid-May so I need responses from all wanting to attend a reunion in Chicago immediately. If I don't receive enough responses within two weeks there is probably not enough time to secure the rate at the Hyatt and, because the other hotels are significantly higher in price, will lose the opportunity that we have.

I am sorry for the late notice about the reunion but Norm Street and Bob Ecker have been working feverishly to try and find a reasonably priced hotel to try and hold the reunion at. I want to thank Norm and Bob for undertaking this herculean effort and for trying to keep the Association going.

If things don't work out for the reunion we will publish another Pipeline in June and let you know our thoughts on continuing the Pipeline etc...

Have a great spring and hope you all have happy memories of the USS Caliente.

## Agent Orange

The USS Caliente has been added to the list of ships that were potentially exposed to Agent Orange. If you were aboard the Cal in June of 1970 and were in An Thoi or Vun Tau you could potentially be eligible for benefits from the VA.

The subject of who is eligible is not a simple one to cover and I know virtually nothing about the eligibility requirements. If you think you are potentially eligible you could receive a free health exam from the VA.

There is a lot of information available on the web. I suggest you go to [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/index.asp) to start yourself on the trail of potential benefits. For a non-governmental perspective, visit the website of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association at [www.bluewaternavy.org](http://www.bluewaternavy.org)

## Taps

Howard D. "Joe" Stratton of Irving, Texas, died 17 Sept. 2013. He served on the Cal from 1953 to 1954 as a SK2. Born 26 Feb 1931 in Newton, Iowa, Joe joined the Navy in 1951 and was discharged in 1954. After he left the Navy, he co-owned a clothing store with his parents and in 1971 opened his own store before working for 25 years at Harvey-Daco where he retired as

senior vice president in 1996. He was inducted into the Promotional Products Association Hall of Fame and in retirement worked as a certified Bob Ross art instructor. His wife, Carol, predeceased him. He is survived by daughter Jolie (Dru) Milligan of Irving and son Dave (Kimberly) Stratton of Bastrop, Texas. He is buried at Dallas Fort Worth National Cemetery.

Heywood "Red" Threatt, 82, died 27 Oct 2013 at Memorial Hospital in Lufkin, Texas. He served on the Cal from 1952 to 1953 as a SN in Second Division. He was a native of Lancaster, S.C. After 20 years working at various locations around the country as a high voltage electrician, Red retired from the I.B.E.W. and moved to Brookeland, Texas, where he was a very active Mason. He is survived by his wife, Betty; four sons Jerry Lee (Lee Ann) of Manassas, VA, Bobby Ray (Paula) of Easley, S.C., Richard Dennis (Kathleen) of Sumter, S.C., and Ronald Wayne (Linda) of Bridge City, Texas; brother Malin (Boone) Threatt of Bamberg, S.C., five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

### Did You Know . . .

Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot in World War II. You were either an ace or a target.

For example, Japanese ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa shot down more than 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.



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 [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.

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

## Shipmate Spotlight

LTJG Herb Dorsey (1963-1965)

### What influenced your decision to join the military?

My brother was a Navy pilot and my Dad was chief radioman on a WWI battleship. Since I had lived at home while commuting a few miles to Johns Hopkins, the Navy looked like a great place to go after graduation.

Travel! Adventure! Sunny Climes! Super Sea Scouts with Girls in every port!

Anyhow, since I already knew from failing a pre-Naval Academy eye test that I was color blind, the Supply Corps was the only entry point available to me. Four months at OCS Newport in the summer of 1962 ended with a very patriotic graduation ceremony in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

Following six months in Athens, GA, at Supply Corps School, I arrived on AO-53 in June of 1963 in Yokuska Japan.

I had asked for a West Coast Oiler and I wound up about as far West as one could be!

### What was your service career path? Which ship created the fondest memories?

Caliente duty started with disbursing and Robert Morrow, DK2, was a tremendous asset in learning what was not taught at Supply School. Of course, having Pat Hurton and Karl Seitz as shipmates made WestPac and Caliente a "no drama" experience on my two WestPac cruises.

After the ship's fall of 1963 return to the States, it was off to Willamette Shipbuilding and Dry Dock for four months of cold and rain in Portland, OR, in January 1964. Watching one's car dangling in mid-air while being hoisted on to the Cal's deck for the trip from San Pedro to Portland was a memorable sight.

My overall "fondest" memory was my first and only "collision at sea" (excluding Sea scouts with the Battleship Iowa off Annapolis in 1954). A destroyer tender, which only went to sea once a year, came down our starboard side and wiped out the aft starboard gun mount with her anchor. General quarters and roll call ensued. Ships Store operator Hays was missing! Rumor was he had taken a nap in a gun mount! Fortunately, like most rumors, not accurate and all was well.



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.

My second fondest memory is from our Westpac cruise in August 1964, which found us in Pearl Harbor for inspection in the same time frame as the Gulf of Tonkin “incident.” Needless to say, the staff had better things to do; so we were declared “ready for sea” and off we went to unrep the Ranger which was the “ready carrier” steaming from Alameda with less than a full crew/food/supplies.

While being the only ship in Subic Bay was great for liberty (one shipmate dated the mayor's daughter!), our readiness was affected by faulty generators that compromised our ability to steer. After numerous attempts to fix us, we reluctantly returned to the States by Christmas time.

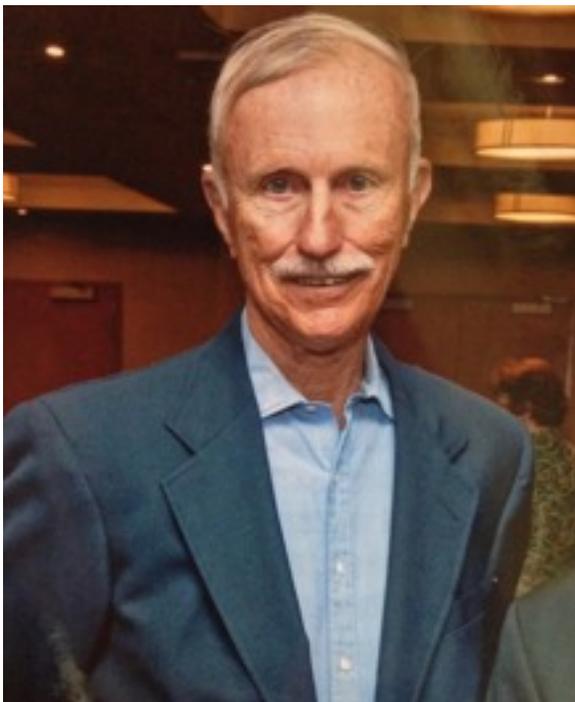
The following June of 1965, I was off to Lorain Ohio as contract and material officer of BuShips' Oiler "Jumboization" program. The concept was to take a big fat hull (made in Japan, of course) and put it amidships in an old oiler that had been sliced in half. Of course, the oiler(s) had to come from the West Coast, through the Panama Canal, up the East Coast and down the St.Lawrence Seaway!

I am sure the fact that the American Shipbuilding shipyards in Toledo and Lorain were owned by the politically astute George Steinbrenner (NY Yankees owner too!) had nothing to do with the award decision.

Of course, the contract change orders totaled three times the award price and the Lorain oiler had to be towed to Boston Naval Shipyard before the Seaway froze in order to be completed.

**Which individual from your service stands out as having the biggest impact on you and why?**

Captain Mel Etheridge (see December 2013 Pipeline) had a very quiet but competent leadership style. When we had trouble getting parts released from Philippine Customs, he and I strapped on unloaded 45s, flew from Cubi Point to Manila and drove to the Customs Officers house high on the hill above the maddening crowd and “negotiated” expedited release.



Later in 1969, I was in China Lake for a job interview and called him as a courtesy. He took the time to chat and even offered to give me a contributory support billet to continue my active Reserve commitment since China Lake had no drill site.

**Which profession did you follow after the service?**

By November 1965, it was time to rejoin civilian life and the Naval Reserve. I had a great office overlooking Annapolis Harbor supervising 100 telephone operators and a great Reserve billet as an Inshore Undersea Warfare Division Officer every Monday night in Baltimore. After various consulting jobs and three years as IT manager of George Washington University Hospital and Medical School, by 1972 my Reserve billet had become executive officer of a Ship's Supply Officer Division in DC.

I really loved the Reserves , so I applied to return to active duty as a "TAR" (Training and Administration Reserves). Because of my civilian experience in the health care field, I also applied to the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

When USPHS offered a job across the street from my house in Bethesda in March 1973 and the Navy said I could still return within three years, the decision was a “no brainer.” From 1973 through 1999, I had a rewarding career as a PHS officer with the Center for Biologics, which regulates and does research with blood banks, vaccines and the new biotechnology drugs.

I did get to see Bob Hope when he came to Bethesda Naval Hospital “between wars,” when my son was a patient.

Because I lived within walking distance to Bethesda Naval Hospital, in some ways I never “missed” being in the Navy, even though I wore a uniform with different buttons and devices.

**How has military service influenced the way you have approached life?**

Certainly, the valuable experience with contracts and logistics while on active duty gave me a significant background for both my Navy Reserve and PHS Careers. Also, I find that military service does create a sense of responsibility to “give back,” whether at church, officiating tennis, or volunteering in the community.

## Memories

Robert George Bateman, BT2, 1964-1967, and Jed Stone, BT3, 1964-1966, have provided the following Caliente-related pictures from 1966.



Minesweeper believed by the editor to be USS Inflict (MSO-456) moves away from Caliente off the coast of Vietnam, where Inflict spent most of 1966.



USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) takes unrep station alongside the Caliente in 1966.



On left are unknown crew member, Robert George Bateman, Robert Elias Munoz (FN, 1965) and Kenneth A. Walsh (FN, 1963-65). On right are Joe Walton (BT2, 1965-67), Lloyd J. Humphrey (BT3, 1965-67), and Jed Stone.

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

Tuesday, 29 June 1955

At Sea enroute KAOHSIUNG, FORMOSA

PLAN OF THE DAY

ALL HANDS ARE REQUIRED TO KNOW THE CONTENTS OF THE PLAN OF THE DAY

Carry out the routine at sea Plan of the Day with the following exceptions:

0400 Call duty cocks  
0600 Reveille  
0615 Air all bedding  
0645 Mess gear  
0700 Breakfast. Reveille for the mid watch  
0750 Master at quarters  
0800 Turn to. Commence ship's work  
0805 Sick call  
1030 Master mess cocks for inspection  
1130 Mess gear. Knock off ship's work  
1145 Dinner for the crew  
1200 Relieve the watch  
1300 Turn to. Commence ship's work. ALL PERSONNEL NOT RECEIVING SHOTS  
PRIOR TO ARRIVAL AT SASEBO, REPORT TO SICK BAY BY DIVISIONS.  
FINAL SHOTS OF THIS SERIES.  
1600 Knock off ship's work  
1630 Sweepers  
1700 Mess gear  
1715 Supper for the crew  
1730 Relieve the watch  
1920 Eight o'clock reports  
At dark--movies.  
2200 Taps

NOTES:

1. Ship expects to arrive at KAOHSIUNG, FORMOSA about 2030. We will anchor out. If we arrive in time, before dark, we will enter port.
2. Tomorrow the ship will turn over with the PLATTE.
3. The information given to the crew yesterday via the announcing system was for the information of the crew only, and is not to be divulged to any one outside the confines of the ship. It is for YOUR information and should not be discussed verbally outside or written in letters. Due to the still "sensitive" Far East situation, all movements of ships are still considered in a classified category.
4. The Petty Officer Examinations are now on board, and the first of these (PO3) will be given on 9 August; the second (PO2) 16 August and (PO1) 23 August.
5. All officers make certain that all competitive and non competitive exercises that have been completed this quarter be in to Mr. MOORE by 1600 this date.
6. Quarterly and monthly reports are due no later than the 10th of next month.
7. All hands desiring checks for Pay Day report to the Dispensing Officer prior to 1600, 30 June 1955.

T. W. DAVIS, LCDR., USN  
Executive Officer

Andy Santoriello, FT3, 1953-56, provided this plan for a day in 1955