



FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

www.flamincaiman.org

JANUARY 2016

COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!!! It is going to be a great year, because it will be our 7th reunion during April in Tucson, Arizona. I hope all had a Merry Christmas and that each one of you received good tidings and health. Doug Smith and Bob Dengel did an outstanding job putting together an interesting and enjoyable event during our 4 days in Tucson. I will guarantee it, you show up in April, you will have one heck of a time. Remember, we are not getting any younger (except me). You should attend and reminisce with your old shipmates. Also, if you are interested where we should hold our next reunion – attend and make your opinion known and cast your vote. Please get your reunion applications in as soon as possible, so name tags and menu selections for the luncheon and dinner can be finalized. Make sure your hotel reservations have been made. SEE YOU IN APRIL 2016 IN TUCSON!!!!
John "Yeo" Fagereng, Commander

NEWSLETTERS

Every four months we send out a newsletter. Each time we have emails bounce back and newsletters returned in the mail. We ask again to please inform us when your information changes. Another problem that happens regularly is when we attempt to connect a shipmate to get the correct address, we find the phone number we have is no longer valid. Many people are going to only cell phones. There is no way for me to find a cell number unless you give it to us. Also some of our shipmates install spam blockers on their email and do not include #flamincaiman@comcast.net (delete first character) as an acceptable address. If you want to continue to receive information about the USS CAIMAN Assn. and your shipmates, please keep your information up to date. I can be contacted by telephone, (Cell 360-731-5233) email #dbfrider@comcast.net (delete first character) or snail mail – the address on the registration form.

REGISTRATION FORM

A registration form is required from all attendees. This is how we determine the numbers we need for the meals, the tour, and the golf tournament. We have to submit these numbers to the hotel, bus company, and Old Tucson. Also, we have the name tags printed from the information on the registration form. We need the form by March 15, 2016. The Radisson Hotel has a special menu just for us. This kept the price down. We have two choices for both meals. Please list a number for each choice on each meal. The price for the trip to Old Tucson includes: bus transportation, free time to look at the exhibits and buildings from over 300 movies and TV shows, a wild west show, a talk from the director about Old Tucson, and lunch. Lunch menu is: BBQ brisket and chicken, coleslaw, cowboy beans, honey butter biscuits, brownies, and drinks.

WINTER WEATHER

The prediction for winter 2015/2016 is the same as last winter but seems to be a lot colder to me here in the Pacific Northwest. The rest of the county seems to be getting snow so, this makes for a great reason to attend CAIMAN's April reunion in sunny Tucson, Arizona. So, make your plans now to attend. Start by calling the Radisson Hotel and make your reservation. Phone number is at the top of the registration form that is attached. Don't forget to mention that you are a member of the USS Caiman to get our price.

HOSPITALITY ROOM STICKY BUNS

Since we have a buffet breakfast included with the room your board has decided to not have sticky buns in the hospitality room during this reunion. The good news is the beer, soft drinks, water, and coffee will still be available for the same price as always (free). Of course, all the stories, great memories, and greeting former shipmates is also free.

MUSEUM ITEMS

Jim "Buckets" Hunnicutt will not be able to make the reunion in Tucson. Buckets is in great health but he has a conflict with another obligation he made. He did tell me he would rather be with us in Tucson. Unless someone else contacts me we don't have anyone to transport items to a submarine museum. I will get the word out before the reunion if someone offers to transport any items. Until then, save any items you have to donate until the reunion in 2018.

VIDEO CAMERA

I am sure many of you have noticed the problems with audio that we have had with the videos on our web site. The donated video camera we have been using does not have an external mike so the audio portion of our videos have suffered. Hawkeye recently found a replacement video camera with an external mike hook-up. We purchased the camera and mike. Our videos will be better and easier to hear, including the roast. I know the honoree will be glad to hear that.

RETIREE COLA SET FOR 2016

2016 will be the first year since 2011 that Military and federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients do not receive a cost of living adjustment (COLA). In 2010 and 2011 there was also no COLA. The reason why federal retirees will not receive a COLA in 2016 is that consumer prices have declined over the past year. The annual retiree COLA is calculated as the change in the average Consumer Price Index for Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), from the third quarter of the previous year to the third quarter of the current year. BLS reported that the (CPI-W) actually decreased from the third quarter of 2014 to the same quarter of 2015.

ELECTIONS

A reminder that elections for Commander and Secretary/Treasurer will be held at the next reunion. Yeo and I are running, actually just walking sort of, again. Connect me if you would like to be on the ballot. Do not nominate someone without their permission. Also Mickey Mouse and Bud Weiser are not eligible. They are not qualified in submarines. Bud Weiser could be, he spent a lot of time aboard inside many of our shipmates.

PHONE CALLS

Yeo and I have received phone calls from some shipmates that have been unable to attend our last few reunions and they plan to attend Tucson. It is always good to see shipmates we haven't visited with for a while, which is another outstanding reason to be in Tucson. Several of the regular attendees have confirmed that they will be attending. We expect a good attendance so here is your opportunity to ensure all sea stories are totally correct - definably the ones that you star in. Now is also a good time to call your former shipmates and urge them to attend.

VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

An independent report on the Department of Veterans Affairs health care program (Veterans Health Administration-VHA) concludes that the system needs a complete overhaul. This report was mandated by Congress last year. It shows that the system suffering from bureaucracy and leadership challenges, and is on an "unsustainable trajectory of capital costs." Many veterans have complained that the VHA is difficult to navigate and that the quality of care varies from location to location. This report confirms that observation. The report notes a lack of leadership at VA, a staffing shortage, and a demoralized workforce. VA Secretary Bob McDonald agreed with many of the findings of the report and noted "VA is undergoing a radical transformation." The report noted that VA outpatient care outperforms other health care systems.

DEAL LIFTS DEFENSE SPENDING, EXTENDS DEBT CEILING AND STOPS MEDICARE PREMIUM INCREASE

House leadership and White House staff reached an agreement on the FY 2016 and FY 2017 budget limits that would, for a two-year period, exclude Defense from sequestration cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. In addition, the agreement lifts the debt ceiling for the federal government until March 31, 2017. The agreement also prevents a 52-percent increase in Medicare premiums for 30 percent of Medicare recipients. The premium increase would fall on 30 percent of beneficiaries. This includes more than eight million low-income seniors enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid, new Medicare enrollees, and higher-income beneficiaries.

The agreement would also avoid across-the-board Social Security Disability Insurance benefit reductions. The measure (H.R. 1314) had to pass by Monday, November 2, to avoid a first-ever government default on the debt payment.

VA OFFICIALS REFUSE TO TALK

The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) finally got the five Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) witnesses they demanded last month. However, the witnesses did not provide any new information on the VA's relocation bonus scandal.

The controversy centers around two officials who refused to answer any committee questions on their alleged schemes to game the bonus program for personal gain, instead they invoked their Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination. Three other VA officials also subpoenaed by HVAC described a flawed employee reassignment process but not a corrupt system, which several lawmakers have accused top VA officials of allowing to fester.

"If I could go back in time, I still would have made all the moves," said VA's acting Undersecretary for Benefits Danny Pummill. He blamed the "second and third order" problems of the bonus program on the VA moving too quickly to get the right people in posts that needed immediate improvements, to better help veterans. The VA Office of the Inspector General investigation discovered that some senior VA executives misused interoffice moves to bump up their pay while reducing their job responsibilities, at a significant cost to taxpayers. The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) spent more than \$1.5 million on 21 questionable senior executive reassignments over the past three fiscal years. The investigation was spurred by two specific cases. Philadelphia VA Regional Office Director Diana Rubens is blamed for receiving more than \$288,000 in moving expense compensation to switch from a job in nearby Washington, D.C. and St. Paul, Minnesota, VA Regional Office Director Kimberly Graves received nearly \$130,000 in a similar job switch scheme. Both officials were required to appear before HVAC, and both refused to answer any questions on the advice of their lawyers.

ETERNAL PATROL

It is a sad duty to include this in our newsletter. But this is the best way to inform all CAIMANITES about their shipmates.

Bernal, Felipe R. EMC(SS) (60/66) 13 March 2014
McClure, Alvin R. LCDR (52/52) 7 January 2015
Chapman, Wayne EN2(SS) (51/51) 15 May 2015
Love, James R. YN1(SS) (60/61) 27 July 2015
Serena, Ernest L. ET1(SS) (45/46) 23 November 2015
Sailor, rest your oars.

SAILING LIST

Our numbers are dwindling. As you can see the number of shipmates on eternal patrol has passed the number of shipmates we would like to see at our next reunion.

Sailing List:	1288
Expected at the next reunion:	497
Eternal Patrol:	791
Lost List:	141

***"They weren't just hull numbers,
they were our home addresses. Now
the old neighborhood is torn down
and gone and all that is left are
memories."***

Dick Murphy, USS Tiru SS 416



USS Caiman Biennial Reunion 2016 Menu

Plated Lunch Options

Seared Salmon Fillet topped with a Citrus Beurre Blanc
Herbed Rice Pilaf

Pan Seared Chicken Breast topped with a Champagne
Chive Beurre Blanc

Herbed Rice Pilaf

Above Entrées are served with the following:

Fresh Garden Salad with Ranch & Italian Dressings
Fresh Seasonal Vegetables
Warm Rolls with Butter
Chef's Choice of Dessert
Coffee & Iced Tea Service

Plated Dinner Options

Slow Braised Short Rib with Braising Jus & Roasted
Tomatoes
Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Grilled Chicken Breast with Tomato Balsamic Demi-Glaze
Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Above Entrées are served with the following:

Tossed Seasonal Greens with Ranch Dressing & Raspberry
Vinaigrette
Fresh Seasonal Vegetables
Warm Rolls with Butter
Chef's Choice of Dessert
Coffee & Iced Tea Service

PLAN OF THE DAY

- **Monday, April 18th**
 - **1000 Hospitality Room Open. Registration**
 - **All day - Soft drinks and beer**
 - **2400 Close Hospitality Room**
- **Tuesday, April 19th**
 - **0800 Hospitality Room open. Continue Registration**
 - **1200-1330 Welcome Luncheon**
 - **1330-1500 Roast and Other Important Business**
 - **1500 Reunion Committee Meet**
 - **2400 Close Hospitality Room**
- **Wednesday, April 20th**
 - **0800 Hospitality Room open.**
 - **0900 Meet at buses in front of hotel to Old Tucson**
 - **1500 Return from Old Tucson**
 - **2400 Close Hospitality Room**
- **Thursday, April 21th**
 - **0800 Hospitality Room Open**
 - **0900 Golf Tournament**
 - **1600 Photography session**
 - **1615-2300 Cash Bar**
 - **1800-2300 Banquet**
 - **2400 Close Hospitality Room**
- **Friday, April 22th**
 - **See you in two years!**
 - **Have a safe trip home**



U.S.S. CAIMAN (SS323)

2016 REUNION REGISTRATION



APR 18 – 21, 2016 – THE RADISSON HOTEL
6555 E SPEEDWAY BLVD, TUCSON, AZ
RESERVATIONS 520-721-7100

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST: _____

NAME DESIRED ON NAME TAG: _____

GUEST NAME _____

GUEST NAME TAG _____

GUEST NAME _____

GUEST NAME TAG _____

LIST ADDITIONAL GUESTS NAMES AND NAME TAGS ON THE BACK

CHECK ACCOMMODATIONS TO BE USED: RADISSON _____ RV PARK _____ OTHER _____

REGISTRATION FEE \$10.00 (includes GUESTS) \$ _____

WELCOME LUNCHEON (TUESDAY)
SEARED SALMON FILET # _____
PAN SEARED CHICKEN BREAST # _____
TOTAL # _____ @ \$30.00 PER PERSON \$ _____

OLD TUCSON TOUR (WEDNESDAY) # _____ @ \$50.00 PER PERSON \$ _____

BANQUET DINNER (THURSDAY)
SLOW BRAISED SHORT RIB # _____
GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST # _____
TOTAL # _____ @ \$35.00 PER PERSON \$ _____

PLEASE NOTE ANY SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

DOOR PRIZE TICKETS # _____ @ \$3.00 EA, 4 FOR \$10.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO & SEND THIS PAGE TO:

USS CAIMAN SS 323 ASSOCIATION
3835 B MAPLE AVE
BREMERTON, WA 98310

CHECK FOR A COPY OF THE SAILING LIST (DELIVERED AT THE REUNION) _____

IF PLAYING IN GOLF TOURNAMENT (THURSDAY) LIST NUMBER OF PLAYERS _____