



FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

www.flamincaiman.org

JANUARY 2017

I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas and wish all of you a Happy New Year. Since our reunion will be in Little Rock, Arkansas all our shipmates that live east of the Mississippi will not have an excuse for not attending. I can promise you that you will have a great time and will enjoy seeing your former shipmates. I have moved to the other coast, but I will still attend all the reunions because of the reasons I mentioned. The comradery is still there and nothing can replace that feeling. See you in Little Rock.

John "Yeo" Fagereng, (67/68) Commander

REUNION LOCATION

As most of you have either heard or figured out, in the last newsletter I put Arkansas on the wrong side of the Mississippi river. A couple of Quartermasters sent me emails first, then several shipmates jumped in with comments. I threatened that the next person that made a comment would become the newsletter editor. That stopped the comments. Now everyone knows why I did NOT navigate aboard CAIMAN. I would have had us in the wrong river and in the wrong state. An item that is scary is the "new Navy" has combined Quartermasters and Electronic Techs into the same rating. Since I have trouble navigating, imagine a Quartermaster repairing the radar. I would be in trouble in the "new Navy", in more ways than just navigation.

MODEST COLA INCREASE

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently announced a modest 0.3 percent increase in the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for calendar year 2017 for military and federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients. The new COLA rate will be effective December 1, 2016 and the adjustment will appear in the December 30, 2016 payment.

By law, COLA is based upon the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), a broad measure of consumer prices generated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from the third quarter of the previous year to the third quarter of the current year. It measures price changes for food, housing, clothing, transportation, energy, medical care, recreation, and education. Since 2008, the annual COLA has been above 2 percent only once and has been zero three times.

COMMANDER MOVING

Our CAIMAN Association commander is moving. Yeo and his adult supervisor, Judy, are moving from California to North Carolina. He is tired of the drought so he decided to live where the rains come more often. He promised to make all the reunions and will continue performing all his duties as the commander of the CAIMAN Assn. I know all of you wish him the best in his new home. I am sure many of our shipmates will make the appropriate comments at the next reunion.

CAIMAN'S ADDRESS

Since Yeo is moving and we want to keep CAIMAN'S home address close to where the rest of the board lives, we are shifting to Bob "Dings" Dengel (64/68) address in Idaho. This will not matter to most of you, but all of you have a right to know where the Association's home address is located. We want an address out of Washington state so we can avoid Washington's sales tax. We have a huge amount of printing done here and this saves CAIMAN a lot of money.

SUBMARINE DOMINANCE

Adm. Harry Harris, commander of Pacific Command, has described U.S. submarine capability as the "biggest asymmetric" advantage America has over any competitor in the world.

"The submarine gives us an advantage over any other adversary we might face," he told a House committee this year. "Unfortunately, those adversaries recognize that and they are improving and increasing their own undersea warfare capabilities."

The number of Russian and Chinese submarines is a "matter of concern," Harris said. "I think the Russian submarine force never took a hiatus at the end of the Cold War, and we're seeing some very impressive platforms come out of Russia."

China is believed to have between 64 and 70 submarines, said Mohan Malik, a China expert and professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. In the last decade, the Chinese added one or two submarines to the fleet every year and are projected to have 90 submarines by 2025, Malik said. By contrast, Pacific Fleet has 40 submarines, with that number expected to increase by only one by 2020. Asian countries are expected to buy 120 new submarines by 2025, Malik said. Many of them will belong to American allies and partners and will contribute to maintaining the status quo in the Pacific. But Harris has said Pacific Command must maintain the advantage of undersea warfare and needs weapons that are faster, farther reaching and more lethal. "If funding uncertainties continue, the U.S. will experience reduced warfighting capabilities," he said.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

We have shipmates that change email addresses and do not tell us and others that put filters on their received emails but don't included CAIMAN's addresses. In either case, the newsletter will not be delivered and the emails sent out on shipmate's health and eternal patrol orders will not be received. Also, I spend a lot of time trying to determine why the emails bounce back. We also get newsletters back when shipmates move and do not inform us. This costs CAIMAN more money, when we locate a correct address. We have some shipmates that have moved and we have not located a new address. Please inform us of any change in any of your addresses and/or phone number. Thank You.

WHITE HOUSE TO PETITIONERS: NAVY CAN DITCH RATINGS SYSTEM

Military.com | Nov 16, 2016 | by Hope Hodge Seck
Those hoping for a Hail-Mary reprieve to the Navy's decision to ditch its historic ratings system in favor of new job codes got a dose of disappointment this week. In response to a WhiteHouse.gov petition asking for the decision to be reversed, an executive branch official wrote in a Tuesday post that the petition was here to stay and praised the Navy for a move that was set to improve sailors' job prospects as they transitioned to civilian life.

The petition was created Sept. 29 and reached its goal of 100,000 signatures Oct. 28, just inside the 30-day timeline. According to the rules for White House online petitions, this guaranteed a direct response from a White House official, though it does not mean that the request in the petition will be granted.

In the brief 243-word unsigned response, an official acknowledged the angst felt by many who stood to lose beloved job titles like corpsman or boatswain's mate in the overhaul.

"Organizational changes that require a **cultural shift** can cause friction during transition periods, but the President has confidence in the decisions made by U.S. Navy leaders and agrees that the benefits in future years will outweigh growing pains in the next several months," the official wrote.

"Whether one's Navy career occurred under the former rating structure or today's modernized system, the President maintains his steadfast pride in Sailors who have sacrificed and worked hard to serve with distinction," the official added.

The change would make the Navy's job classification system similar to that used by the other armed services and would create increased flexibility in assignments and training while more closely aligning Navy jobs with civilian equivalents, according to the statement.

These are the chief selling points promoted by Vice Adm. Robert Burke, chief of naval personnel, who has been promoting the radical plan, most recently with a trip to the Middle East that allowed him to conduct town hall-style meetings with some 9,000 sailors stationed in the region.

On Oct. 31, Burke told Military.com in a phone interview from the carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Middle East that he was aware of the online petition and the pending response from the White House, but did not expect an order to change course.

"The White House, I'm confident they'll consult Navy leadership, including the secretary of the Navy, on how to respond to that petition, just like they do to the multiple petitions they get all the time," he said. "So, I'm continuing down the path that was set out."

The author of the petition, however, has not given up hope. Robert D. Weeks, a former Navy operations specialist who said he treasured his rating as part of his military identity, told Military.com Wednesday that he would like to re-file the petition sometime after the new year.

"The consensus in my Operations Specialist Facebook group is to wait until a new president and [Secretary of the Navy] are in office and bring it up again."

WWII SUBMARINE VETERANS HONORED AT KINGS BAY

The Brunswick News, Ga. | Nov 05, 2016 | by Gordon Jackson

ST. MARYS, Ga. – A capacity crowd stood spontaneously when 15 WWII submarine veterans entered an outdoor pavilion Friday at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay for an annual ceremony in their honor. They are among a dwindling number of submarine veterans who served during the war who make the trip to Kings Bay every year to remember the 52 American submarines lost and the more than 3,400 crewmen killed during the war.

"I stand in awe of each and every one of you," said Capt. Brian Lepine, commanding officer at Kings Bay.

He praised the WWII submarine vets for their courage and tenacity in what was the most dangerous duty in the military during the war. One in five submarines was lost during the war, most with no survivors.

"The report, 'submarine overdue, presumed lost,' was the epitaph of the sub and crew," he said.

The submarine force comprised two percent of the Navy, but was responsible for sinking more than half the Japanese vessels sunk during the war, including 30 percent of the Japanese navy and eight aircraft carriers. Lepine said those men set the standards today's sailors try to achieve.

"May we live up to what you have done," he said.

Adm. Bill Moran, vice chief of naval operations, described his invitation to be keynote speaker a "tremendous honor."

He said the veterans honored have left a lasting legacy.

"It is what we all hope to have someday," he said.

Moran met with some of the veterans prior to the ceremony who told their stories about why they enlisted. He met one veteran who lied about his age to enlist when he was 15 years old.

"You weren't supposed to do that," he said, as the audience burst into laughter.

Sailors serving aboard submarines knew their duty was dangerous but they were willing to take the risk because of the high stakes.

"It's difficult to comprehend what they went through," Moran said. "They never gave in, even when the prospect of success was unlikely."

He told the veterans that today's sailors strive to reach the high standards they set.

"You should feel good, very good, about the people who have picked up the torch," he said. "They want to live up to your example. They want to be part of your legacy." Moran said the submarine force's role continues to be important.

"The mission the U.S. Navy has provided has never gone away," he said. "There are those who would challenge us on the high seas but don't because of our sailors."

The audience stood for the Tolling of the Bell, when the bell rang once for each American submarine lost during the war (52), as well as nine sunk in accidents prior to the war, three lost after the war and the 83 submarines lost by the British navy during the war. *Ed note: We made them pay dearly for sinking our ships and submarines.*

COLD WAR RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE

The 1998 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to award Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States any time during the Cold War era, Sept. 2, 1945, through Dec. 26, 1991. Applicants must certify their service was "faithful and honorable," and must provide a copy of any supporting document that proves they served during the Cold War era. The certificate may be awarded posthumously to those whose relatives apply on their behalf. There is no charge for a Cold War Recognition Certificate.

Note that, no medal has been authorized or issued for Cold War Recognition. The program is scheduled to run until the supply of certificates is exhausted. This award is only issued once. No replacement certificate will be issued. The recent increase in DoD-wide computer system security no longer allows online applications for the Cold War Recognition Certificate. A new printable application form replaces the online application. The program is administered by the Army Human Resource Command (1-888-276-9472). "Cold Warriors" can download the application form, or have one of your children do it, at:

<https://www.hrc.army.mil/Default.aspx?ID=13546>.

ST MARYS MUSEUM

The St Marys submarine museum survived the hurricane. They had some water in the street and the lobby. Everything inside the museum came out of the storm in good shape. We are glad to hear the good news as CAIMAN has donated many submarine items to the museum and will probably donate more. I understand they are considering a move to higher ground. I believe that would be a good idea.

REUNION PLANNING

"Dings", myself (67/69) and our adult supervisors will be flying to Little Rock in May to pick a hotel and make all the plans for our next reunion. After the last two reunions, Dings and I have learned the ladies have great inputs so we asked them to join us in planning the reunion. We have it narrowed down to three hotels. The final choice will be made after our inspection and we talk with the hotel's representatives. We plan to have a list of places to visit other than the USS Razorback for those that know what a submarine looks like. The firm dates and all the information will be in the May 2017 newsletter and the reunion registration form will be in the January 2018 newsletter. This will allow all of you plenty of time to make your plans to attend. Remember if you don't attend, we will talk about you and all the sea stories will be told our way instead of the way you remember them.

QUEST FOR GIFTS

Greg "Hawkeye" Baer (69/71) and I will be in Las Vegas this month to attend the Presentation Products show to look for reunion gifts for CAIMANITES and the ladies. We have had good luck on previous trips and expect good results this time. We also look for a grand prize for the drawing.

REUNION PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Hawkeye is our webmaster and does an outstanding job of maintaining our website www.flamincaiman.org. He has posted the pictures and videos from all the reunion plus many pictures from CAIMAN'S history including shipmates and liberty ports. If you have any pictures from CAIMAN he will be glad to add them to our web site. The easiest way to get the picture to Hawkeye is bring them to a reunion. Hawkeye and his adult supervisor attend all the reunions. The CD's he has made for CAIMAN are always playing in our hospitality room for all to enjoy. Listening to the conversations when our shipmates are watching the videos indicates that they bring back many memories.

SAILING LIST

I once made the statement that probably most of our shipmates on the lost list have received eternal patrol orders. I recently located a shipmate on the lost list and he is still around. Jesse Vail EMCS(SS) (67/72), was COB on CAIMAN during part of his tour. He tried to hide but I found him. His wife said he will be at the next reunion, so we can expect him. All our shipmates that have been located are also on the web page www.decklog.com along with thousands of other submarine sailors, so any submarine that they served on will have the information. This is one of the methods I use to locate shipmates as do other submarines. Reunions are becoming very important to us. Of the CAIMAN shipmates, we have located only 37.5% of us are still around. Our numbers are dwindling. Attending a reunion is becoming very important, so make it a priority to attend in May of 2018 at Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sailing List:	1290
Expected at the next reunion:	484
Eternal Patrol:	806
Lost List:	140

ETERNAL PATROL

Once again, I have the sad duty to place this article into our newsletter. All shipmates will be greatly missed, but Plank Owners are a special group and we recently lost another one. We have only four Plank Owners still with us. Health problems have kept them away from many of our reunions.

Loudon, Allen J. ET3(SS) (56/57) 11 July 2016
Barnes, Louis QMC(SS) (58/61) 28 September 2016
De Caprio, Angelo TM3(SS) (45/46) 16 October 2016
Milas, Forest LCDR (44/46) 17 October 2016
Fore, Clyde E. MoMM1(SS) (46/46) 16 November 2016

"What wordy praise can one give such men as these; men who ... follow unhesitatingly when in the vicinity of minefields so long as there is the possibility of targets ... Men who flinch not with the fathometer ticking off two fathoms beneath the keel ... Men who will fight to the last bullet and then start throwing the empty shell cases. These are submariners." Eugene Fluckey, Retired Rear Admiral, in his final war patrol report aboard USS Barb (SS-220).

THE SUBMARINER

Only a submariner realizes to what great extent an entire ship depends on him as an individual. To a landsman this is not understandable, and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend, but it is so!

A submarine at sea is a different world in herself, and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of submarines, the Navy must place responsibility and trust in the hands of those who take such ships to sea.

In each submarine, there are men who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to each other. These men are ultimately responsible to themselves and each to the other for all aspects of operation of their submarine. They are the crew. They are the ship

This is perhaps the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as a submariner that he can escape the grasp of responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are almost ludicrously small, nevertheless, it is the spur which has given the Navy its greatest mariners – the men of the Submarine Service.

It is a duty which most richly deserves the proud and time honored title - **SUBMARINER**