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FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

JANUARY 2020

COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

Greetings shipmates, wives and friends. Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and a Joyous Christmas. Hope to see all who can possibly make it at our April reunion. Have you ever wondered why it's called "The Silent Service"? Wonder no more, here's the answer: On my submarine, we actually did some of the stuff we did. We didn't do the other stuff we did because if we did do it, it was a secret. So, we didn't do it. Even though we did, but not really. The ribbons my shipmates and I didn't earn for doing what we didn't do, we did receive, except we didn't, because we never went where we were and weren't there when we were, but we did the stuff we didn't do while we weren't there not doing it. As far as what boat I was on, we didn't do where we went and didn't do what we did while not doing it. So, the bottom line, we weren't on a boat that I won't mention, not doing what we did, where we weren't. I hope that clarified all things!!!!

John "Yeo" Fagereng, Commander

RESURRECTION

Two submariners told me that Shipmate Francisco "Frank" Espana had received Eternal Patrol orders. Then another shipmate told me he had lunch with Frank. Well, as you can guess, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the first report was fake news. They must have got it from Facebook. So, the good news is Frank is still with us and he plans to make the next reunion. He promises to inform me the next time he moves to keep his name out of our newsletter. A lesson learned for all.

NEW NAVAL MUSEUM IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Louisville is starting a naval museum which will include a WWII, Balao-class submarine, USS Ling (SS-297). They plan to acquire the submarine from an association in New Jersey. The museum is also working on acquiring a 1913 tugboat and a WWII minesweeper. The USS Ling was vandalized twice and needs major repairs from neglect at its present home. The museum is a 501(c)(3) and needs help with donations. To donate to the restoration of the USS Ling, send donations to 2312 S. Preston St., PO Box 17027, Louisville, KY 40217 and write "FOR USS LING" in the memo box.

COLA INCREASE ANNOUNCED FOR 2020

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) announced a 3.1 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for active duty military and a 1.6 percent increase for military retirees, federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients. The new COLA rate is effective Dec. 1, 2019 and the adjustment will appear in the Dec. 30, 2019 payment. This is the largest active duty raise in 10 years.

ELECTIONS

The Association Commander and Secretary/Treasurer are up for election this reunion. Yeo and I are running. Contact me with any nominations. Yeo is campaigning by buying the beer Monday. I am buying it Tuesday.

ASSOCIATION FINANCES

Another name for this article is "how we spend your money". The newsletters printings and printing for the reunions, (name tags, sailing lists, and plan of the day) are paid by the association. On reunion planning trips the only expense CAIMAN pays for are the plane fares for Dings and me. Our adult supervisors are on Dings and my dime. The hotel rooms and a few meals for the planning trip are normally complementary. Other meals Dings and I pay for. We add a small amount to all the ships store items, but board members only pay cost. All drinks in the hospitality room that are not donated are paid for by the association. Our goal is to have approximately \$5000.00 when we start planning a reunion. This will cover any deposits for the hotel, tours (transportation entrance fees, and tips), ships store items, drawing prizes, reunion gifts, and any other expenses. Dings and I pay our own expenses to attend the reunions. Dues, donations, and the markup of ships store items are our only source of income. We are a non-profit association, so all donations are tax deductible. Thanks to the IRS it costs the association \$39.95 a year to report that we are a non-profit and made less than \$50,000.00 each year.

USS GRAYBACK SS-208 FOUND

The World War II Navy submarine that went missing 75 years ago has been found off the coast of Okinawa, Japan. The USS Grayback was sunk in February 1944, when the Japanese attacked it during a mission in the East China Sea. Ocean explorers had searched for the shipwreck for years without any luck. It wasn't until an engineer compared the original Japanese military documents to the Navy's translation did they realize that the coordinates had been translated wrong. They were off by one digit. That one digit was equal to 100 miles. Private explorers from the Lost 52 Project used the new latitude and longitude and located the wreck of the USS Grayback under 1,427 feet of water. Tim Taylor, who heads the project, told USA Today he was "elated". But it's also sobering, because we just found 80 men," he said. The USS Grayback had eighty American sailors on board the submarine at the time of its sinking.

REUNION TIMING

We planned the reunion in April (the 20th) as many do not like the hot weather New Mexico has in May. This also moves the cutoff date to March. I would like all registrations in my hands by March 15. I need to inform the hotel and tour company of the count of attendees for the meals and the tour. The registration form is attached to this newsletter. Remember, if you don't come to the reunion, we will talk about you. The sea stories may not be told correctly, especially the ones you were in.

ACOMA TOUR

The buses will leave the hotel spaced 20 – 30 minutes apart. This is because Acoma pueblo's ability to handle tours is limited to the size of each group. Each bus will have a tour guide to describe the area the buses pass through on the way to Acoma and on the return trip. There will be guides at Acoma to describe the life at the pueblo and answer questions. On the return trip, we will stop at the casino, and you are on your own to eat lunch, try your luck, or both. Those with computers can use Google Earth to look at Acoma pueblo, NM and get a small preview of the tour.

BLUE WATER NAVY PRESS CONFERENCE

Assistant Director of Legislative Policy Brian Condon recently participated in a press conference on Capitol Hill. The conference addressed the devastating effects that delaying Blue Water Navy claims is having on those Vietnam veterans in need of care. Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Sen. Jon Tester (Mont.) and Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Rep. Mark Takano (Calif.) both spoke about the importance of providing care to those who took care of this Nation in a time of need. They believe the VA has the resources they need, and it is time the VA start the process that has been denied to these veterans for far too long. The VA is scheduled to start processing Blue Water claims beginning January 2020, even though the landmark court decision of Procopio vs Wilkie was made months ago.

EXCHANGES, COMMISSARIES

Effective Jan. 1, 2020, the fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act expands the pool of eligible exchange and commissary shoppers. The plan is to include all service-connected disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war and primary veteran caregivers. Thanks to the legislation, these newly eligible shoppers - estimated at approximately 3 million in a recent Military Times article - will also qualify for certain Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities. Currently, active-duty, retired personnel, National Guard members, Medal of Honor recipients, honorably discharged veterans, authorized family members and any military member of foreign nations are allowed to use the Exchange. The Exchange is available on most bases and online. For more than six months, the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have been preparing for the expansion. As the new increase also includes the U.S. Coast Guard and its facilities, the Department of Homeland Security has also been involved in the expansion. One concern with the new increase is that many of the new consumers do not have access to military facilities. To facilitate new shoppers, officials have decided upon the following forms of identification: For disabled and other eligible veterans, use the veterans' health ID card. Base security forces, exchanges and commissaries are currently working to enable scanners at entry points to read these cards. For caregivers, since they're not affiliated with the DOD or Veterans Affairs except through their annual certification, the VA will post a notice to www.va.gov which can be used for access, along with a valid driver's license. The VA will eventually issue a caregiver ID card.

REUNION NAME TAGS

We are trying to cut expenses. If you still have a name tag from a previous reunion and plan to use it again, draw a line or write none in the name tag blank on the registration form. If you are like many of us, you have several name tags from previous reunions and do not want to increase your collection.

EXTRA TABLE

The hotel has agreed to set up one more table, than required at our meals. At the last reunion there was one couple that arrived late and there were not two seats vacant at any table. With an extra table ready, hopefully, we will not have this happen again.

HALF PRICE SALE

Our ships store stock has increased to a point where it has become a storage problem. At the Albuquerque reunion we are having a half-price sale. We will compute your total price and then divide by two. The price will be rounded to the nearest dollar. We are not messing with coins. You need to be present at the reunion to take advantage of the sale prices.

ETERNAL PATROL

I wish I did not have to include this article in our newsletter, but it is necessary to keep everyone informed of the status of our friends and shipmates. Hammock, Albert J. RM3(SS) (48/51) 18 March 2019
Adams, Robert D. LT (52/52) 15 January 1966
Quinto, Ernesto TMC(SS) (54/55) 4 July 2017
Johannesen, Carl USS Caiman CO (69/70) 18 Dec 2019
Sailor rest your oars.

SAILING LIST

I have located another shipmate from our lost list. His name is Robert Adams who received Eternal Patrol orders several years ago. We also have a new associate member, Mark Overby the son of Plank Owner Bill Overby. Mark and his adult supervisor have become life members of the association and plan to attend the reunion. The sailing lists shows some of our shipmates with **ADDRESS UNKNOWN**. This indicates shipmates we have lost track of and I can not find any information as to their location. This often happens when they move in with their children or into assisted living. There are twelve with **NO RESPONSE TO LTR** in the address area. I use this to indicate shipmates that I could not find a good phone number listed. I sent them a letter informing them of the CAIMAN association and they did not answer. I also show these shipmates as **NOT INT** (not interested). We have 31 shipmates that are listed as not interested. Some by choice others for not answering our letter. Here is the current status:

Located shipmates	1356
Hopefully at the next reunion:	458
Eternal Patrol:	898
Lost List:	63

SOME HEROS WEAR CAPES



MINE WEAR DOLPHINS



U.S.S. CAIMAN (SS323)



2020 REUNION REGISTRATION

April 20 - 24, 2020 – CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL
1901 UNIVERSITY BLVD, ALBUQUEQUE, NM 87102
RESERVATIONS 877 227-6963 or 505-884-2500
REGISTRATIONS CLOSE 15 MARCH 2020

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST: _____

NAME DESIRED ON NAME TAG: _____

(Please use your old tags if you can find them)

GUEST NAME _____

GUEST NAME TAG _____

GUEST NAME _____

GUEST NAME TAG _____

LIST ADDITIONAL GUESTS NAMES AND NAME TAGS ON THE BACK

CHECK ACCOMMODATIONS USED: CROWNE PLAZA ____ RV PARK ____ OTHER ____

REGISTRATION FEE

\$ 10.00

WELCOME LUNCHEON (TUESDAY)

BEEF # _____

CHICKEN # _____

TOTAL # _____ @ \$35.00 PER PERSON \$ _____

ACOMA TOUR & CASINO (WEDNESDAY) # _____ @ \$65.00 PER PERSON \$ _____

BANQUET DINNER (THURSDAY)

BEEF # _____

CHICKEN # _____

TOTAL # _____ @ \$40.00 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
2818 NE FERNWOOD CT.
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 _____