



FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

JUNE 2006 (REUNION SPECIAL)

COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

Our second USS CAIMAN (SS-323) reunion was held May 15-19 at the Radisson Woodlands Hotel in Flagstaff, AZ. It was an outstanding success. What an event. Personally, I don't think it could have been improved upon. The rooms, the breakfasts, the luncheon and banquet were outstanding. The Grand Canyon Tour, lunch and the IMAX viewing was superb. These CAIMAN reunions get better and better. At the banquet, CAIMAN shipmates voted to have our next reunion in Branson, Missouri. This one should be a real blast. Branson is in the middle of the U.S. and should bring more shipmates and their families from the East Coast area to our next reunion. Association dues are due - \$10.00 for 08 or \$75.00 Lifetime membership. The ship's store is on the Web Site www.flamincaiman.org. If you see something you desire, i.e., jackets, shirts, hats, or cups let us know. If you can think of something you may want and it is not in the Ship's store, we will get IT for you. The Association Board will write the Navy for help in locating our shipmates on our loss list that made a career out of the Navy. We have approximately 210 shipmates on our "lifer" list. Hopefully, we can find a large number of them still kickin'. The Navy asks \$3.50 per name for this service and thanks to Captain Bob Hyde and Master Chief Bob Mehrling we have the money to proceed. Each donated \$500 toward this effort. A final check in the amount of \$635.00 was forwarded to Bent Christiansen making a total contribution from CAIMAN Shipmates at \$6,210.00 for the restoration of his home in Metairie, Louisiana. We are better than FEMA don't you think?

John "Yeo" Fagereng
USS CAIMAN Association Commander

REUNION

The 2008 reunion will be in Branson, MO. That is located just South of Springfield, MO, (for the direction challenged, that is down on the map) and just North (up) of the Arkansas border. Now all you East Coasters do not have the excuse it is too far. Also the altitude is only 700 ft.

CAIMAN LADIES

The CAIMAN Ladies held a drawing for a quilt that was hand stitched and donated by Laura Luce, (Big John Luce's adult supervisor). They raised over \$1100.00 for the USS CAIMAN Association. Nicky McMurphy, Ivan "Whit" Whitwell's granddaughter won that drawing. Laura would not let Big John buy any tickets. After 150 hours of hand stitching, she told Big John, if that quilt came back in the house he was leaving.

DRAWINGS

We held drawings for several prizes. Jim Cooney donated four items for the drawing, a coin honoring John Holland, the father of submarines, a model of a fleet boat, and two large sets of dolphins. The Radisson hotel donated 12 free nights to be deducted from the 12 winner's current bills. Rose Bucher donated three prints of paintings by Lloyd "Pete" Bucher. The CAIMAN Association had two black and white prints of the CAIMAN, a CAIMAN Trilogy (three sail configurations), and a large color print of CAIMAN with a full sail. The grand prize, the large color print, was won by George Taney. We had to find and throw away all of Pat Aiello's tickets so he couldn't win two reunions in a row. Next reunion we will do the same for George.

RE-ELECTION

The CAIMAN Association's Vice Commander term of office expired at this reunion. The board searched the country high and low to find a suitable replacement. We found several CAIMANITES that were qualified to fill the position, but everyone believed Chris was performing his duties in such an outstanding manner that no one wanted to replace him. So, Chris ran unopposed. He won the election by a narrow margin. Seriously, the vote was 100% for Chris.

ADULT SUPERVISION

Our Vice Commander (newly re-elected) now has adult supervision. He somehow convinced a woman to marry him. The amazing part is she is a nice intelligent lady, tho she is a blonde. Of course nothing was said or done at the reunion to embarrass Chris. If you believe that we have some ocean front property in Arizona that we want to sell you.

DUES

Don't forget your association dues are due. We only ask \$10.00 for two years (a reunion cycle) or \$75.00 for lifetime. If everyone sent in \$75.00 I could make my motorcycle payment, - just kidding. But, I could quit typing this reminder.

CAIMAN LADIES II

Our Vice Commander's bride is organizing the CAIMAN Ladies. I believe the main purpose was to have something for the ladies while we held our Association meeting. Carol will be contributing to the newsletter later. They are on their honeymoon now and we can not reach them by phone. Maybe Chris is using the "helper device" we gave him at the reunion.

BYLAW CHANGES

The Board proposed changes to the USS CAIMAN Association Bylaws. The attendees approved all changes. A summary of the changes are:

Members of the USS CAIMAN Association have to have served aboard the USS CAIMAN for duty and be qualified in submarines.

Members of the Commissioning Crew of the USS CAIMAN are Honorary Life Members with all privileges.

The Web Master was made a board officer. His term of office is at the behest of the Commander.

We removed the requirement for a nominating committee. The Board will perform that function.

The revised bylaws are posted on the web site www.flamincaiman.org or contact the Secretary and he will send you a copy.

Doug "Smitty" Smith
360-377-4763

REUNION ATTENDEES

We had shipmates attend the reunion from Commissioning to Decommissioning. We had two Plank owners attend with some interesting stories and there is not a doubt in our minds that every word was gospel. Speaking of gospel, we were also graced with the presence of John Scofield and Goat Sanderlin. By the time these two Old Salts were finished with the stories of liberty, loves, shipmates, and time at sea, we knew they had 75 years in the Navy – each. Doc Ziner said it quite well. Everyone has a Goat story, rather they met him or not. Several of John's shipmates said the same thing, but Doc used words we could print.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Our very own "Legal Counsel" – Randy "Mr. C" Christison, attended. He helped us with the IRS paperwork to make the USS CAIMAN Association tax exempt. Anyone that can understand IRS instructions desires much more than we could ever give him. At the banquet we presented Mr. C. a "FLAMIN CAIMAN" ball cap with "LEGAL COUNSEL" on the back. He offered a legal clinic to all that attended. Mr. C's claim to fame, besides that he served on the FLAMIN' CAIMAN, is that he was the last OOD of the USS Archerfish SS311. This was the boat nicknamed the "PLAYBOY OF THE PACIFIC". The A Fish had an all single crew and visited many out of the way ports. Captain Dick Meaux and the Goat were also crewmembers of the A Fish. Mr. C. and the Goat are mentioned in the book GALLANT LADY, the USS Archerfish story.

IF YOU DON'T ATTEND

Many of you may remember that I warned you if you did not attend the reunion we would talk about you. JK Bain did not attend the first reunion and discovered that there were many stories flowing about him. He swore, very loudly, that they were untrue. Now, who would you believe - several upstanding ex bluejackets or an After Engine Room Ironhead?

ANNIVERSARY

At the banquet, Suzy Stahl, Norm Stahl's adult supervisor, asked to make an announcement. She told us this was not only their first reunion but it was their 10th wedding anniversary. She thanked us for becoming their new family and friends and also to join them in celebrating their anniversary. We came to a reunion and also celebrated a wedding and a 10th anniversary. We did not take the next step, but we did have a lawyer present.

CAIMAN WIDOWS

It would be nice if this term was never used, but life does not always go the way we want. We were honored by the presence of Rose Bucher, Lloyd "Pete" Bucher's widow. As I mentioned earlier, Rose donated three prints of Pete's paintings. It was the luck of the draw, but all three were won by shipmates of Pete's. We hope to have other CAIMAN widows attend future reunions so we can honor their husband's memory.

MIXING

Several of the attendees noticed that this reunion we had the different eras of CAIMAN shipmates mixing more. This did allow a comparison of sea stories. If any of you have forgotten – the only difference between a sea story and a fairy tale is how they start. Either - Once Upon A Time - or - This Ain't No Shit. So we had sea stories from the 40's and 50's being told to the shipmates from the 60's and the 70's. John Scofield and the Goat were in their prime, as mentioned earlier.

SAILING LIST

Thanks too many of you for your inputs to the sailing list. We have located 2 live souls and 8 on Eternal Patrol. Also I owe Captain Dick Meaux a big thank you. A NQP was on our sailing list. As I just said WAS. I am waiting for an answer from one of the live and kickin' shipmates so I can enter his information. Here is the latest count.

SAILING LIST - 794

SHOULD ATTEND THE NEXT REUNION - 541

UNLOCATED - 656