



# FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

[www.flamincaiman.org](http://www.flamincaiman.org)

## REUNION SPECIAL 2008

### **COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT**

WOW!!!! What a great third reunion at the Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson, Missouri. Everyone that attended had a marvelous time. The luncheon Wednesday on board the Branson Belle topped our Reunion. Variety shows, i.e., The Hughes Brothers, Jim Stafford, Mickey Gilley, The Presley's and the Baldnobbers Jamboree were enjoyed by many shipmates and their families. The banquet setting was superb and I know everyone had an excellent time. Our next reunion, which was voted on at the banquet, will be in Reno, Nevada in 2010. Reno's airport is close by all hotels and casinos and there are quite a few RV parks in the area. So start planning NOW!!!! - For May 2010. It was gratifying to see so many Shipmates attend their first CAIMAN reunion. I hope to see them and many more in Reno. For those who didn't attend –

YOU SURE MISSED AN "OUTSTANDING" reunion.  
John "Yeo" Fagereng, Commander

### **ATTENDANCE**

We had 101 CAIMAN sailors, 3 CAIMAN widows, and 102 guests attend our last reunion. I do not know of another boat that has anywhere close to this many people at a reunion. CAIMAN was a special boat and we continue to prove it. We have had 188 people that have attended our three reunions. 79 have attended one reunion, 65 have attended two, and 44 have attended all three. Circle May 17 – 20, 2010 as tentative dates for our reunion in Reno so you can be included in the next count.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

I presented the financial reports for our last two years at the Association meeting. Two comments were made. One, there was an addition error on one page; of course, it was a computer error, not mine and I know you all believe that. The other was that we, the board, are cutting it close – money wise. As I explained then, we only want to finance the reunions. We keep all prices as low as we can. If we run a little short we will charge a small registration fee. So if you see a fee on the registration form you will know why.

### **DRAWING**

We had 31 prizes at the banquet. Donated prizes were: A quilted wall hanging of the CAIMAN patch handmade by Ron Erb's cousin. Harry McGill donated a CAIMAN First Day Cover. Greg "Hawkeye" Baer donated 2 CAIMAN First Day Covers. Rose Bucher donated a huge brass ashtray with USS CAIMAN SS 323 around the top. John "Yeo" Fagereng donated a dolphin hitch cover for a pick-up. Aero Embroidery, our main ship store supplier, donated a dolphin stadium blanket and 2 "FLAMIN CAIMAN BBQ aprons. The Lodge donated 13 free nights. The other prizes were from the CAIMAN Association.

### **TOP PRIZE**

The oil painting of CAIMAN that was the main prize was won by Mike "Slick" Elliot. But that is only part of the story. Gurney "Butch" Warnberg registered for the reunion, but cancelled by having Slick tell me at the reunion. Butch donated his tickets for the drawing to Slick. It was one of the tickets that Butch donated to Slick that won the painting. The rules are that you have to be present to win. The board does not believe we should use the Associations money to ship a reunion prize to someone that does not attend the reunion. So, Butch, you should have been there. Slick says you can see the painting anytime you want – at his house.

### **COMMEMORATIVE COINS**

Your CAIMAN Association board had collectable commemorative coins made to celebrate each of our reunions. The sailors and widows that attended the last reunion received the coins for the reunions they have attended. The coins will be mailed to the rest of the reunion attendees within the next month. We are going by my records so if you need to contact me:

Doug Smith  
3835 B Maple Ave  
Bremerton, WA 98310  
360-377-4763

### **ROASTIN'**

As many of you know, at the 2006 reunion we "honored" Chris "Hoofs" Field or helped him celebrate his wedding on the way to the reunion. You can use which ever reason you like. Some people call it "Roasting". We presented Hoofs with a little something to help him on his honeymoon – a Popsicle stick and a rubber band. We heard that after the 2006 reunion, Carol took custody of Hoofs' gift and he does not see it very often. So we felt sorry for Hoofs and had a beer stein made so he will have something to show that CAIMAN cares. The beer stein has the CAIMAN patch on one side with 'ROASTED BY THE FLAMIN' CAIMAN 2006 REUNION' on the opposite side. At this reunion we presented a beer stein to Ken "D'Goat" Sanderlin when he was "honored" by the FLAMIN' CAIMAN. His beer stein is the same except it has 2008 REUNION on it. We recorded this one and it will be on the web shortly. I tried to explain to D'Goat that I only read the roast, our beloved Commander, John "Yeo" Fagereng, and our retired treasurer Ivan "Whit" Whitwell wrote it. He didn't believe me and is getting even. His first stab is on the TOPSIDE LOG on the web site. There will be a roast every reunion so you have to attend to see who gets the next beer stein. I warned the residents of the Forward Battery that since they do not control my liberty card now, they are also fair game. I have enough stories that it could be anyone. Also I am sure Hoofs and D'Goat will be very happy to help me find the needed material. If I know D'Goat he is already plotting.

## **ANOTHER TICKET STORY**

Bryon "Big Mac" McDonald's guest was his daughter, Laura Lance. Her story is he refused to buy her tickets for the drawings. Anyway, Jim "JK" Bain felt sorry for her and offered her one of his tickets. She picked one and won a free night. Do you think she gave it to her Dad?

---

## **MOVIE STARS**

Wednesday we had lunch on the Branson Belle, a paddle wheeler that steams around a huge lake at Branson. After the meal and a chance to go on deck and watch the water stream by (something none of us had seen before), a show was presented. First was a song and dance troupe that was very good. Next was a comedy act that used members of the audience. Two of our people were selected, Laura Lance, Big Mac's daughter, and Richard "RC" Thompson. Laura is not a blonde, but she had us wondering and RC's attention span appeared to be a little short. It was all in fun and we have the DVD of the show. This will also be on the web site shortly.

---

## **HOLLAND CLUB**

The Holland Club is a part of U. S. Submarine Veterans Inc (USSVI or Sub Vets). To become a member of this esteemed group, a qualified submarine sailor needs to be a member in good standing of Sub Vets and qualified for 50 years. The board has decided to also honor the CAIMAN sailors that meet the requirements with a letter from the CAIMAN Association. At the luncheon, Tuesday, we presented letters to:

Robert "Arkey" Bowlin  
George Helm  
Ronald "Lefty" Hnatovic

George "Crunch" Fore had to cancel at the last minute so we sent his letter to him. The year that CAIMAN sailors become eligible for the Holland Club, we send the letters from the CAIMAN Association to the appropriate base commander or to the person's home depending on how close they live to their base.

---

## **OPEN MIKE**

The open mike idea seems to be losing interest at the banquet on the last night of the reunions. So the board has discussed a different format. We will continue to try and keep you guys entertained and have fun doing it. You will have to attend the reunion to learn what our latest brilliant idea will be.

---

## **SUPPLIERS AND SUCH**

Yeo and I are getting better at this association and reunion stuff; we are willing to offer some advice to other boats on their reunions, ship store suppliers, and locating ship mates. We also have some good sources for reunion gifts. Also this is another way that we can support the suppliers that help us. A few of them give us good prices on the condition that we help advertise their wares among other boats. This will also help CAIMAN on later reunions. Please be sure that the other boats understand we are only offering advice. One boat is enough. Yeo and I do want another life.

## **SAILING LIST**

Sailing List:	1124
Expected at the next reunion:	543
Eternal Patrol:	581
Lost List:	289

---

## **ETERNAL PATROL**

We have had shipmates depart on Eternal Patrol since the last newsletter. They will be missed.

AUBREY, Norbert CAPT 52/54 May 2008  
SKAHAN, Paul RMCM(SS) 51/53 April 2008  
TEATER, Robert D. CS1(SS) 59/62 August 2007  
WHITE, Bennie EMC(SS) 44/45 Plank Owner April 2008

Sailor, rest your oars.

---

## **THANKS**

I would like to thank all the people that helped with this reunion. I do not remember all that helped but here are the names of a few. Phil McGaughey, Ron "Lefty" Hnatovic, and Lloyd "Willie" Willette transported items to Branson for us. Phil and his wife, Tom "Big Stone" Scoblic and his wife, Jack Pitts, Bob "Dings" Dengel and his wife and several others helped fill the bags and sell items for the ships store. Without these people, the reunion would not have been as much fun or as successful. Thanks again.

---

## **UNIQUE**

A wife at the reunion made an interesting observation. She said that submarine sailors are different - I prefer unique. She went on to state that we say things to each other that would cause a normal person to go to fist city or cause a duel at dawn, then we laugh about it. This was after we roasted D'Goat and we did say a few things about his past. I would have to agree with her - we are unique.

---

## **TEES**

Several of the CAIMANITES have mentioned that they like tee shirts but are tired of white. At the present time the only color in the micro-fiber is white. Our supplier believes in two years time we will have other colors. I hope he is correct because I noticed I have an abundance of white tees also. We can get colored tees in cotton only now. Any suggestions on other items for the ship store will be appreciated.

---

## **ELECTIONS**

At the Association meeting on Tuesday we had an election of the Commander and Secretary/Treasurer. The bad news is you guys are stuck with Yeo and me for another four years. Next reunion is the election for Vice Commander. Yeo and I submitted bylaw changes that a member of the association suggested. The people present approved the changes. The new bylaws are on the web site. If you do not have internet access and would like a copy of the bylaws, please contact me and I will send you a copy.

---

***"Submariners are a bunch of intelligent misfits that somehow seem to get along, understand each other, and work well together."***

**I received the following email from Marion "Scotty" Plumlee, MMCM(SS)(SW) 68/71. I am showing the complete email, but you can ignore the opening sentence.**

Last month in Branson you gave a brief talk at our Memorial Service (well done by the way). As you left the podium you commented that you should have had the Master Chief speak. You made me think about what I would have said had I been able to overcome my fear of public speaking. How does one say with out sounding stuffy and false that the service of such a crowd of men and the women who stood behind them is appreciated?

God, Family, and Country first come to mind. That may not be what got us started down the road to self sacrifice though. For many of us it was an adventure, a voyage into manhood with visions of Peter Pan and swashbucklers floating in our miniscule brains. *But we did protect our right to worship God as we choose; we did protect our families from the dark specter of evil; we did serve our Country in its hour of need.*

From what well came enough courage to send that many people to sea in ragged old boats and ships to go in harms way? For many of us it was probably ignorance or a misguided belief in our own indestructibility coupled with a misplaced sense of adventure. Yet when we made that first dive and the cold dark waters closed over our puny vessel how did we remain calm and able to perform? I can not answer for others but for me it was easy. As I looked around me others stood calmly by to do what needed done with out fear nor did any shirk their duty. A crusty 2<sup>nd</sup> class engineman named Zahler asked me why I wasn't worried (it was a dive to test depth after a repair to the hull and the after engine room hatch was leaking) my reply was "I'll worry when you guys do." I was aware that there was danger but my new shipmates put it aside and went to work (some fighting serious hangovers).

My ability to react as needed came from my shipmates. That idea, the idea that I must be as able as those with whom I serve, stayed with me through twenty-three years of naval service. Then as in Branson, I stood among men that that did their job, played hard when they weren't doing that job and gave little thought to being brave or heroic. Then as in Branson they were and are the people I look up to, my *Shipmates*.

To those men, those living and those no longer here, and their families I offer my thanks for your service to God, Family, and Country and for serving as an emulative example for a young Fireman Apprentice.

I don't know that I could have gotten all that said with out stumbling over my tongue but that is what takes me to *Caiman* reunions rather than those of the other seven ships I served aboard.

Don't put me on your podium Smitty but if you ever need an overly verbose speech let me know.  
Scotty