



# FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

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

## 2012 REUNION SPECIAL

### COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

We are giving Yeo some time off as he and Judy are on the east coast visiting his grandson, who is an Army medic. Yeo must not have been a big influence.

### RUNION 2012

A great time was had by all. The Holiday Inn River Walk is centrally located to many restaurants and several of the attractions in San Antonio. This allowed many of our shipmates and guests to walk to restaurants and attractions. We did have many sea story sessions in the hospitality suite. With several CAIMAN first timers at the reunion we heard many new "true" sea stories. The hotel bar was located next to our hospitality suite. The bartenders at the Holiday Inn really like CAIMAN sailors.

### REUNION 2014

Start saving your pennies, we are going to Coeur d'Alene, ID, May 12 – 15, 2014. The Coeur d'Alene resort on Coeur d'Alene Lake wants us. The location is unique. The town is next to one side of the resort and the lake is on the other. By the time we have the 2014 reunion I hope to learn how to spell Coeur d'Alene. Now I am very happy computers have cut and paste. I called the sales manager at the resort and delivered the good news. She was very happy. They are offering us some good room rates. This will all be published in a later newsletter once we have a contract.

### MUSEUM DONATIONS

Jim "Buckets" Hunnicutt took three items to the Submarine Museum in St. Marys, Georgia, that our shipmates brought to the reunion. Marvin "Mo" Smith brought a torpedo gyro and Warren "Pops" Pospisil gave us a short lesson on torpedo gyros. Craig Kurath brought a compartment bill holder minus the bills. A retired CAIMAN sailor in San Diego called me about five old style brass mounted submarine plaques he had. One was a CAIMAN plaque. He decided he didn't need them anymore and offered them to us. The closest CAIMAN sailor to his home was Ray Ferbrache, so I called Ray. Ray was happy to pick them up and bring them to the reunion. The CAIMAN plaque went into our drawing and one CAIMAN sailor asked for another. The other three were donated to the museum.

### REUNION LOCATIONS

Yeo and I, to assist our reunion committee, called or emailed several states and cities tourist bureaus for information. I have learned that CAIMAN reunions are a known money maker for hotels and, unlike earlier days, we leave the place intact. Our reunions are huge compared to other submarines and many surface ships. Few ship reunions normally have over 200 attendees. The smallest hotel bill that the CAIMAN Assn has had was over \$10,500.00, plus all the rooms we rent and the food and drinks we buy. When CAIMAN has a reunion the cities appreciate us.

## DONATIONS

We have very generous shipmates. Carolyn Whelan, W. W. Fender's daughter, donated \$300.00 to the cash bar that we hold before the final dinner. She and her husband couldn't make it because their daughter was graduating from college. Harry McGill donated \$100.00 toward the reunion. Harry and his wife couldn't make it because of medical problems. Mason "Hog" Harden had a medical problem and couldn't make it after sending in his registration so he donated his fees to the reunion. Mike "Slick" Elliott had a torn ligament and spent the reunion in a San Antonio hospital and he also donated his fees to the reunion. All plan to make the next reunion but requested more beer be available.

## RIVER WALK

As all of us discovered, the river walk has restaurants that serve outstanding food. Food of every type was available. Everyone I talked to swore that they gained weight because of all the great food.

## DRAWING PRIZES

Ray and Pat Ferbrache donated the CAIMAN throw or tapestry they won in Reno with the restriction that whoever wins it only gets it for two years and has to bring it back to the next reunion for a new drawing. George "Crunch" Fore won the throw. See you in Coeur d'Alene, Crunch. Robert Johnson's son donated 30 handmade cups with the US Navy Seal and a set of dolphins on each, plus each cup had different pictures taken from our web site on them so each cup was unique. The cups are made by a friend of Robert's son who is an Iraq War Veteran. He has made thousands of these cups and donates them to organizations. He will not sell any. CAIMAN was lucky to get this donation and I am sure everyone that won them is very pleased. We drew for them in pairs. We had 16 nights and eight parking spots from the hotel. Also donated was a First Cover of CAIMAN's commissioning from the Association. Don Nielson donated a framed First Cover of CAIMAN's keel laying. We had a klaxon door bell from the Association that every wife will want installed in her home. Bill Lowe donated two blue dolphin candle stick holders complete with candles. Pat Ferbrache donated a silver necklace & two pins. Tom "Big Stone" and Nancy Scoblic donated three cribbage boards with the CAIMAN gator engraved in them, made by Big Stone's brother. They also donated a two and a half foot metal wall hanging that is an outline of CAIMAN. And a two and a half foot metal wall hanging that is an outline of a set of dolphins. The family of Willard Petrat donated a set of dolphins on a wooden plaque. Phil McGaughey donated two bottles of wine that he had bottled (I hope he took a shower before he stomped the grapes). Greg "Hawkeye" Baer got us a Lone Sailor Statue during a trip to the East Coast. Tom "Big Stone" Scoblic won the grand prize of CAIMAN in a crystal block with a lighted base.

## ROAST

We roasted Gerald "GT" Shafer this reunion. He was quite surprised so it worked well. It was interesting that a submarine sailor will blush. If I can make a submarine sailor blush, you know the stories were good. He was a Fire Control Tech aboard CAIMAN and was commissioned later in his Navy career. The best stories were before he was commissioned and picked up an adult supervisor. I doubt the wardroom would have condoned his activities as a white hat. The video will be on the web site soon along with pictures of the tee shirt we presented him. He also wore the tee shirt for the group photos. I noticed that, with the exception of one officer, we have roasted only "Black Shoes" (Seaman Ratings). It is time for a Snipe. Send me all your stories about Snipes. Remember, like I continually tell Goat, there are ladies present so the stories must be audience appropriate. We did push the envelope a bit with some of the tales about GT but his wife approved. She always enjoys anytime GT is embarrassed and she enjoyed his roast. Remember, if you have a story I will have two years to embellish it - just a tad bit of course.

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## SUBMARINE MEMORABILIA

Any submarine memorabilia that is no longer wanted or desired, we, the CAIMAN Assn, will ensure that it is kept in the submarine community. (This would be a good thing to let your kids, relatives, and friends know about) Anything that is given to the CAIMAN Assn will go to another submarine sailor or to a submarine museum as was mentioned earlier. Submariners are the only group that attempts to keep all our memorabilia within the community. We do not want to lose anything from our past and will do anything in our power to keep it for future generations to enjoy. Call me, email me, write me and I will have a CAIMAN sailor pick it up. If necessary, I will come and get it. We have CAIMAN sailors in every state except five and they are small so we can get someone to pick it up. We have been fortunate to have received a few phone calls and have had the material picked up. Here is my information:

Doug Smith  
3835 B Maple Ave  
Bremerton, WA 98310  
H 360-377-77  
C 360-731-5233  
[#DBFrider@comcast.net](mailto:#DBFrider@comcast.net)  
(Drop the first character)

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## PULL MY FINGER FRED

Ron Erb picked Lloyd "Willie" Willette as the "lucky winner" of the Pull My Finger Fred doll. We know that Donna, Willie's wife, will find an appropriate place for the award. No doubt it will have its own place on the mantle. As much as Willie and Donna will want to keep Fred, I am sure he will pass it to the next lucky person at the reunion in Coeur d'Alene. You will have to attend the 2014 reunion to ensure your chances to be the next winner of Fred. This is an honor that all our shipmates will be trying to receive and all wives will be looking forward to having this award in their living rooms. (As Ron so eloquently said, it can't be called the "Couth Award". If it was, he and Goat would pass it back and forth.)

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## ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM

Everyone I talked to enjoyed the tour of the Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg. There are more exhibits than we could see in a day. The museum would make a good two day visit. We did have a little problem coming back. According to the bus drivers count we lost two people. We waited an extra 15 minutes than I took a vote on rather to leave or not. It was unanimous in both busses to leave who ever "they" were. I didn't hear from anyone walking back to San Antonio from Fredericksburg so I assume the drivers count was incorrect. There is no doubt in my mind that if a CAIMAN sailor was behind, I would have heard about it.

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## CAIMAN VIDEO

Greg "Hawkeye" Baer, our webmaster, made a CAIMAN video and posted it on YOUTUBE. Go to YouTube and search on FlaminCaiman and look for USS Caiman SS-323 DBF. I am sure you will enjoy seeing the old girl again. Hawkeye did an outstanding job. He has received awards for the CAIMAN website. Check it out and you will see why. [www.flamincaiman.org](http://www.flamincaiman.org). We are lucky that Alice lets us have that much of Hawkeye's time.

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## REUNION GIFTS AND PRIZES

Yeo and I are looking for something unique for a reunion gift for all the CAIMANITES that attend the reunions. Also we look for a unique grand prize. (We are willing to listen to any ideas.) So contact Yeo or myself with any suggestions.

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## SAILING LIST

Here are the latest figures. A daughter of a shipmate sent us an email informing us that her father was not listed on any of our lists. I added his information and apologized to her for missing him. The only problem was he received Eternal Patrol orders several years ago. We were recently contacted by another shipmate from 1962. I am waiting for his information hopefully we can add another soon

Sailing List:	1257
Expected at the next reunion:	558
Eternal Patrol:	699
Lost List:	169

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**"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have my memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades. .. Such good men."**

--Author Unknown--

## Brothers of the 'Phin

I chanced upon a sailor once with an emblem on his chest.  
It appeared to be two angry sharks on a trash can for a rest.

His white hat was wrinkled and dirty; his neckerchief tied too tight  
and he had only one eye open as he staggered through the night.

He was young and scrawny and wiry; with knuckles cracked and oozing.  
I could tell from the way he looked and smelled he'd spent the night whorin' and boozin'.

But as he pulled abreast, he squared his hat and said "Sir, do you have a light?  
I'm due back aboard by quarter to four or the COB will be settin' me right."

As I fumbled around for my lighter as he pulled some smokes from his sock  
"and I'll be damned lucky to make it," he muttered 'Cause I'm steamin' against the clock."

Through the flame of my well-worn Zippo I could see a smile on his face.  
"But, you know -- it was damn well worth it. That 'Bell's' is a helluva place."

He sucked the smoke deep down in his lungs and blew smoke rings up towards the moon.  
Then he rolled up his cuffs, pushed his hat to the back and said "Maybe there'll be a cab soon."

In spite of the time he was losing He was wanting to shoot the breeze  
So we sat on the curb, like two birds on a perch as he talked of his life on the seas.

I asked about the thing on his chest and he looked at me with a grin.  
Then he squared his hat, snubbed out his smoke and said "I'm a Brother of the 'Phin."

"I'm one of the boys who go under the sea where the lights from above don't shine;  
Where mermaids play and Neptune is king and life and death intertwine."

"Life on a boat goes deep in your blood and nothing on earth can compare  
to the feeling inside as she commences a dive going deep on a hope and a prayer."

"I've sailed some fearsome waters down below the raging main  
and I've heard that old boat creak and groan like the wheels of a railroad train."

"It's the one place on earth where there ain't no slack and where you don't have more than you need;  
where each man is prince of his own little space and each lives by the submarine creed."

"There ain't much I've done in this fickle life that would cause other men to take note,  
But I've walked in the steps of some mighty fine men who helped keep this country afloat."

"They slipped silently through the layers down below that raging main  
while up above enemy men-o'-war laid claim to the same domain."

"Brave sailors were they in their sleek boats of steel  
silently stalking their prey and closing in for the kill."

"They died as they lived unafraid, proud and free  
Putting all on the line to secure your liberty."

"Their bones now rest in glory down in Neptune's hallowed ground  
But their souls stand tall at the right hand of God awaiting the klaxon's next sound."

"So, it's more than a 'thing' that I wear on my chest it's a badge of the brave, proud and true.  
It's a tribute to those who have gone here before riding boats that are still overdue"

"It's the "Dolphins" of a submariner worn proudly by the few  
who've qualified at every watch and touched every bolt and screw."

"They know the boat on which they sail like they know their very soul  
and through the fires of hell or the pearly gates they're ready for each patrol."

"But when in port they take great sport standing out from all the rest.  
For deep inside they burn with pride for the dolphins on their chest."

Then he stood erect, squared his hat and pulled his neckerchief down to the 'V'  
He rolled down his cuffs, put his smokes in his sock and squinted back towards the sea.

"I can hear them diesels calling so I'd best be on my way.  
We'll be punchin' holes in the ocean when the sun peeks over the bay."

As I watched him turn and walk away I felt honored to know such men.  
for they bring life to Duty, Honor, Country these "Brothers of the 'Phin."