



FLAMIN' CAIMAN TALES

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SEPT 2009

COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY! Register now for our Fourth reunion at the Circus Circus Hotel in the "Biggest Little City in America" – RENO, Nevada. Smitty and I have arranged for an exciting time next May 17-22, 2010. On Wednesday, May 19th at 9:00 a.m. tour buses will take us from the hotel through Nevada's Capitol, Carson City and on to Virginia City. Once we arrive our personal guide will escort us through the downtown telling many legends of "rags to riches" and "riches to rags." We will have time to stroll down the wooden sidewalks and explore the many original saloons, gambling halls, antique shops or visit old Victorian Mansions, museums and churches. We will have the opportunity to ride in your choice of open cars or in the caboose for a 35 minute narrated train tour from Virginia City to Gold Hill and back, going through the most famous of the bonanza Comstock mines. Lunch will be provided at the Palace Club restaurant. The tour will last about 5 to 6 hours. So, start planning immediately and make your reservations NOW for our 2010 reunion. I will personally guarantee a good time for all.

John "Yeo" Fagereng, Commander

REUNION

As I am sure everyone is aware, our reunion is only 8 months away. The time has come to start saving your shekels so you can spend them at the ships store. We believe we booked a good deal at the Circus Circus this year. They are giving us rooms at \$39.00 a night plus tax for a total of \$44.27. This rate is good 2 days before the reunion and 2 days after. You can show up early to look around and stay late so you can finally get some sleep. The hotel's phone number is 800-648-5010 and we want option 1. Our special room rate ends on April 15, so **make your reservation now**. They will request you pay early for the first night. I just paid when I made my reservation or you can pay later as long as it is by May 1st. Yes, if you cancel it will be refunded. The hotel is right downtown and is connected to two other hotels, Silver Legacy and El Dorado, thru enclosed walkways or sky bridges, whichever term you prefer. There are about 20 restaurants without leaving the 3 hotel complex so you will not have to walk far for something other than beer. Remember, roughage is required from time to time. Bring your adult supervisors as there will be many items of interest for all.

ELECTION

The Vice Commander position will be voted on this upcoming reunion. Chris "Hoofs" Field is going to campaign for re-election. He will be buying the beer in the hospitality suite Monday, from 1200 till 1600. So show up with a thirst. Anyone else that desires to run for Vice Commander, contact me. Also be prepared to buy the beer Monday, from 1600 to 2000.

SHIPMATES

We are still looking for the shipmates on the lost list. It is getting more difficult as the list gets smaller. We have discovered that most sailors return to the area they lived when they joined Uncle Sam's Canoe Club. There are always exceptions. We have one shipmate that was born, raised, and joined the Navy in Nebraska, retired in California, and then moved to Georgia. If you haven't guessed - he is/was an iron-head. Back to the topic, if you can remember any After Battery conversations when a shipmate was talking about his sweetie back home, let me know. Even an area helps – Northwest, South, or Northeast, etc. Also, once again will the person that told me he knows the location of Donald Roberts please call me @ 360-377-4763. There are too many Don Roberts in the US for me to find him. That is almost as bad as looking for a Smith

ADDRESSES

We are asking everyone to please keep your address updated for us. The post office will only forward mail for a year and then we get it back. This costs CAIMAN more money as we have to put your newsletter into a new envelope, new address label, and new stamp. This does not sound like much, but it adds up as we have over 600 people on our mail list. Our mailing list includes CAIMANITES, CAIMAN widows, and CAIMAN sons and daughters. If your newsletter comes back and we are unable to locate a new address for you we add ADDRESS UNKNOWN to your address on the sailing list and remove your name and address from our mailing list. Also, please keep me informed as to your email address. I use email to inform CAIMANITES of shipmate's conditions/problems, such as medical problems and Eternal Patrol orders. I wish these orders never arrived, but it will happen to all of us.

HOSPITALITY SUITE

Our hospitality suite will be open from 0800 till midnight with two exceptions. The hospitality suite will be closed on Tuesday during the luncheon and Thursday during the banquet as both meals will be in a different room. Good news is that the short walk will help you build up an appetite. As long as someone stays at the hotel during the Virginia City tour, the hospitality suite will be open. As usual we will have free beer, soft drinks, water, and coffee. Sticky buns will also be available in the mornings for those who do not want to go to breakfast. Also don't forget the ship store. Remember the money you spend at the CAIMAN ship store supports our newsletters and reunions.

GAMBLING

If you have forgotten, Nevada allows gambling and as I mentioned earlier our host hotel is connected to 2 others complete with casinos and shows. So CAIMANITES will not be the only entertainment available. This just means we will have some competition but they will not be as good as us.

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter one of our shipmates has suggested we have a reunion every year. He mentioned something about advancing age. I don't understand what he is talking about. Since we are an open association, all suggestions will be presented to the attendees at the business meeting. This time we will ask all the guests to stay for the meeting. According to our bylaws, only CAIMAN Association members (CAIMANITES) can vote on Association business. However, this is a suggestion that the board believes wives/girl friends/significant others need to be heard from or to make suggestions to their CAIMAN sailor how to vote. As "Indian" Reeves put it last reunion – "My wife told me how to vote". How often we have reunions will directly involve our adult supervisors as much as us.

FUTURE REUNIONS

For those who have not attended a reunion, we select our next reunion location at each reunion. After our luncheon on Tuesday we ask for volunteers for a reunion committee. This is the time for a shipmate to campaign for a location or simply make a suggestion. The reunion committee selects 4 or 5 locations and then all the CAIMAN sailors at the reunion will vote on the next location. As for the vote, I refer you back to the Association Business article. Yeo and I have been contacting many of the convention/tourist bureaus in the states west of the Mississippi. We picked these states as most of the CAIMAN sailors live west of the Big Muddy. We will have several suggestions and information for the reunion committee. If anyone has a suggestion or would like to recommend a location for a reunion, please call me and I will gladly explain our requirements. If you prefer, I will contact the suggested location and get the desired information for the reunion committee.

DUES & REGISTRATION

Some of our shipmates are confused about the dues. CAIMAN Association dues are \$10.00 for a reunion cycle or about 2 years. Dues expire at the reunion unless you are a life member. Your mailing label will indicate the year your dues will expire. Plank Owners and CAIMAN Widows are honorary life members. CAIMANITES and their guests with their dues current do not pay a reunion registration fee. The registration fee, including your guests, is \$20.00. Do the math. As long as the ship store, our main money maker, keeps turning a profit we will not have to change a registration fee to CAIMANITES with their dues current. So bring your checkbook to the reunion.

ETERNAL PATROL

We recently received a copy of a shipmate's orders. Bradley, Dale QMC(SS) (45/50) July 2006
Other orders have been issued
Ryden, Herbert RM3(SS) (45/45) May 2009
Bain, James (JK) ENC(SS) (60/66) July 2009
JK Bain will always be remembered aboard CAIMAN as an outstanding shipmate but also as the sailor that stopped the flooding in the Forward Engine Room at 350 feet and saved two shipmates from an explosion in the Forward Engine Room.
Sailors, rest your oars.

SHIPS STORE

As most of you know, we do not have a storeroom to stock CAIMAN ship store items except for a few coffee cups stored at Yeo's. We use suppliers and have to place orders when you tell us you want an item or items. Since we are at the mercy of these suppliers, sometimes items do not always get delivered in a short time period. We recently had a problem with an order. I was told twice it went out but the information was incorrect. Both times I was told the order had been shipped, I called to check if the shipmate had received his order and attempted to explain the problem. I was assured that the order went out this time and I informed the shipmate by email. Prior to the shipment, the shipmate sent an email to all the board members through the website that threatened to have our ship store closed by the attorney general and accused me of "ripping off CAIMAN sailors". Closing the ship store would only hurt CAIMAN sailors as many of the items are only available from us and our prices are very low. I can guarantee all hands that neither I nor any member of your board will ever "rip off a CAIMAN sailor". We are attempting to resolve the problem with the supplier. I am also working to keep our main supplier as he does outstanding work and gives us very good prices. The board will not be the target for something we cannot control.

SAILING LIST

Here are our latest results. The search will continue until the lost list is zero. I can guarantee that there will be several of your shipmates at the reunion. CAMAN normally has a huge turn out so we expect 150 CAIMANITES plus guests. Don't disappoint us.

Sailing List:	1210
Expected at the next reunion:	589
Eternal Patrol:	621
Lost List:	211

DRESS

This subject comes up every reunion. This is casual time so dress accordingly. Most of us are in Levis and tee shirts or polo shirts. Many wear shorts and sandals. The banquet is business casual or pants and a shirt. As long as you are dressed for the street it will be OK. We are at the reunion to enjoy ourselves so let's do it. Ladies, please dress comfortably and be prepared to enjoy yourself.

PARKING

The Circus Circus has a huge covered parking garage. There will be plenty of room for all our cars. There is one exception, there always is, RV parking is in an open lot. RV's can be parked at the hotel but Reno does not allow living in an RV other than at an RV park. This room rate just about beats an RV park anyway – well close. I will ask all the shipmates that will be arriving by motorcycle to mark their registration forms with an M/C and we will have special parking for us privileged few. I just need to give them a number.

GOLF

Phil McGaughey will be running the golf tournament again. We will have more information in the next newsletter. There will be a place on the registration form to indicate the number in your party who will play.

Those Who Sail Beneath the Swells

by Bob 'Dex' Armstrong

In every generation, the navies of the world always seem to find the necessary number of that 'special breed of man' needed to man their undersea ships... Those truly magnificent fools with the requisite pride and spirit of adventure needed to voluntarily crawl into an iron cylinder full of similar mental defectives and take the contraptions to sea.

I can't speak for the rest of the Navy. The only 'rest of the Navy' I ever met, were perpetual shore duty shore patrols. Looking back I can't remember one positive interaction I had with any sonuvabitch sporting an SP armband. The last thing they were interested in, in the old days, was spreading goodwill.

My entire short-lived naval service career was spent with like-minded jaybirds who actually liked going to sea in what closely resembled a sinkable septic tank.

I actually thought that to be a sailor, one had to go to sea. Sailing had to involve stuff like seagulls, saltwater and large metal objects that were painted gray, displaced tons of water and bounced around a lot in heavy weather.

How guys who interpreted photographs in a windowless building in Omaha, Nebraska called themselves sailors was way beyond the level of comprehension of a seventeen-year-old who cut his teeth on books about Pacific submarine action.

Lads who turned up at New London back in the 1950s weren't the kind of young men whose sense of naval adventure could be satisfied inventorying jocks and socks in some damn quonset hut in East Rat's Ass, Minnesota, or typing liberty cards at some shore station where they hot-patched weather balloons.

Submariners had no desire to belong to any organization that issued clothing designed to blend in with poison ivy plants... required you to dig holes and own a personal shovel... or any desire to eat unidentifiable food out of little green cans in the rain.

We liked hydraulic oil-laced coffee, crawling up on a pre-warmed flash pad and freely exchanging insults with men as equally ugly as ourselves. We enjoyed knowing that in any unscheduled altercation, our entire crew would show up to extract our drunken fanny and chastise those we had stirred up.

Back in the old days, (before any of you modern day techno undersea swashbucklers get a twist in your bloomers, I only know about the old days. I never rode anything that was intended to go below 412 feet or stay down for several months at a time.) So, as I started to say...

Back in the old days, the old leather-faced, hardboiled Chiefs used to say,

"Gahdam sailors belong on ships and ships belong at sea."

There was some kind of selection process that they put you through at New London that eliminated the fainthearted, the not totally committed, guys lacking desire to engage in intimate cohabitation with members of the opposite gender, communists, bedwetters, whiners, and anyone who entertained the slightest desire to be stationed in Omaha, Nebraska.

The system, God bless it, sorted out the true believers and packed the rest off to the surface fleet, Omaha and God knows where else.

And they put us on boats. A lot of us went to old, late in life, boats with combat histories. They were old World War II boats with racks, that once bunked our heroes... the men we wanted to be accepted by and to be exactly like.

We qualified and in so doing we joined the continuous chain that is and will always be the U.S. Submarine Force.

I don't know what the dreams and aspirations consist of for the young men of today. Ours was a far simpler time. We grew up chasing fireflies, shooting marbles, spinning tops, teaching each other yo-yo tricks, shooting each other with BB guns, playing two hands below the waist tag football, neighborhood kick the can and pick-up-game after school hardball. Nobody cried, tattle-taled or went home to pee.

Back then, you didn't have to have made all 'A's in diathermic razz-a-ma-tazz physics or have a working understanding of the components in the formulation of the universe, to ride submarines.

You had to have an understanding of honor, loyalty, faithfully performed duty, obedience to command, respect for leadership, and total and absolute faith in your ship and shipmates.

Added to these qualities, a true boatsailor had to have a wide-screen sense of adventure and the same brand of curiosity that has lived in the hearts of those in every generation who ventured beyond known limits.

And you had love dancing with the devil. Somewhere, real major-league devil dancing got shot out the garbage gun.

But some things never change. It's still pitch black dark below 150 feet, a boat is always no farther than 9 miles from land (straight down) and the skipper's word is law.

And so far, every generation has worn the same insignia and nobody ever forgets the hull number of their qual boat or the name of their first COB.

There are many common denominators among the worldwide community of undersea sailors.

When the Kursk went down, I was struck and frankly dumbfounded by the genuine outpouring of sympathy for the families and loved ones of the lost boat sailors. To me, they had always been our enemy. Up to then, I had given no thought to the similarities found in our manner of service and the commonality of the danger of operating deep within a hostile environment surrounded by potential death on all sides.

Likewise, I never cease to be surprised by the way that submariners embrace their adversarial counterparts. There appears to be a universal acceptance with implied forgiveness of all German U-boat crewmen.

You never hear the term 'Nazi' U-boatmen. The term 'German' has become substituted for the term 'Nazi'.

America has a short national memory and everybody gets out of the penalty box in one generation.

I sat in a theater rooting for the former 'bad guys' in the film DAS BOOT. What we were seeing on the screen, was a boat full of sons of Hitler sneaking around and sinking our citizens. But the fact that we, having lived a similar life inside a recognizably similar pressure hull, elicited a

sympathy and irrational forgiveness. In short, we related to both the characters and their circumstances.

I guess that in the final analysis, all submariners are brothers when you look into the depth of their souls.

That is good. In times of war, nobody who transits the surface of the world's oceans loves submarines.

Submarines and submariners are viewed as implements and practitioners of the black arts... backstabbing, bushwhacking sonuvabitches. We slip up from hiding below the waves and blow ships to pieces in a totally unfair, unsportsmanlike fashion. Any way you cut it, that's the way we made our living.

We black sheep... we predatory sharks... we saltwater sneaky Petes stick together.

We are a very small group when you consider the total world population and the percentage that never had any desire to crawl into a steel tank and sink out of sight.

Submariners, when all is said and done, are special unique people who are the only ones who truly understand each other and ever will.

The old warhorses who fought submarine wars are leaving us. These submersible sea dogs passed down the lethal reputation we carried and the awesome respect our boats were given.

I for one have been both honored and extremely proud to have been a part of this fine body of extraordinary adventurers and patriots.