

CALVERTSION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MEN OF THE U.S.S. CALVERT APA 32

"The Ship and Men of Distinction"

Published and Compiled by
John L. Cole
506 Red Wing Ave.
Kenyon, Minnesota 55946
Telephone 507-789-6344

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Comments from the Commander

My how time flies, thought I just put out a newsletter and its time again. This copy is mostly devoted to the Makin Landing. In the Calvert history there are 21 lines about this landing. It really doesnt tell the true story. I received some material from Vincent Walsh who had a lot of material on the 165th (old 69th NY) Infantry Regiment, 27 (New York) Division. The USS Calvert halled these men to Makin and deposited them someplace near shore. I thought it would be nice to hear the other side of the story for a change. I couldnt get it all in the newsletter so it is condenced. I have worked on broching parties and when you are up to your neck in water its a scary feeling. I hope those of you that took part in the Makin Landing enjoy this article, and the remainder of you I am always trying to find something on the time you were on board. If you like the article send Vincent a thank you..... This past Memorial Day ,I was at our local Cemetery, taking part in the program when I happened to think that I am getting to the point in life that I know more people in the cemetery than I do in the City of Kenyon. If you look on the back page there are 10 names of Departed Shipmates and some of them are guys I served with. We are a special group of people who will never be replaced or duplicated..... As you know the National Reunion is just around the corner. If you are planning to attend get your reservation in as soon as possible. The Days Inn will hold a block of rooms for us only till two weeks before the reunion. Also use the telephone number in newsletter and not a 800 number as the 800 number will show that all the rooms are filled. If you have a problem give me a call and talk to my answering machine and I will get back to you. So far I have over 100 reservations in. There is still room for more. Give it some thought.....I have picked up about 20 new address of former Calvert men. Since it is an ongoing thing, look over your xmas list and see if there is someone that I should send a newsletter to. If your not sure send it anyway and Ill check my list.....One more thing before I close, We will need a host for the next National in 1997. If the Reunions are to continue I cant be the one to do it every time.. Im not bitching but there only so many things that a person can do in Minnesota..... You may have noticed the increased amount of notices for you to notice. Some of our notices have not been noticed. This is very noticeable! It has been Noticed that the responses to the notices have been noticeably unnoticed. This notice is to remind you to notice the notices and to respond to the notices because we do not want the notices to go unnoticed. (signed) Notice Committee For Noticing Notices..... Notice- from 11 Cav.Newsletter.....j.l.cole

"Fighting 69th N.Y."

165th Infantry

27th Inf. Division



Golden Anniversary

MAKIN

CENTRAL PACIFIC 1941-1943

INTRODUCTION:

20 November - 24 November 1943

Before dawn on 20 Nov 1943, an assemblage of American military might lay off the shore of Makin, northernmost atoll in the Gilbert Islands. A strong task force, with transports carrying men of the 165th Regimental Combat Team (Old 69th NY) was about to commence the assault of Makin. From the Hawaiian Islands and from as far away as New Zealand they came. The attack on Makin would be the first seizure of an atoll by an Army landing force. Further south off Tarawa, an even larger force of US Marines was poised to seize Betio. The attack on the Gilberts was for the Central Pacific, the counterpart of that upon the Solomons in the Southwest Pacific. Japanese held bases were to be recovered and used against the enemy in further strikes toward the heart of the Japanese Empire.

The Gilberts straddle the equator some 2,000 miles southwest of Oahu. Most are low coral atolls, rising a few feet from the sea, supporting coconut palms, breadfruit trees, mangroves and sand brush. Two genuine islands, Ocean and Nauru were included in the days of British control in the same administrative unit with the atolls, although they lie 200 to 400 miles farther west. The Japanese seized Makin on 10 Dec 41 and converted it into a seaplane base. The Gilbert and the Marshalls were the outer defenses of the conquered island Empire of Japan and for Americans they were a menace to the fundamental line of communication from Hawaii to Australia.

Preparations were initiated for an attack on the Gilbert Islands, an operation in which the 165th would receive its first test in combat. When the operation had succeeded, other campaigns would follow. The route would be Saipan and Okinawa and beyond. The Gilberts were only the first barrier to Tokyo itself.

The attack on the Gilberts was an early experience in amphibious operations and the first atoll operation in the Central Pacific Area. The whole operation was given the code name GALVANIC and the Army portion was designated KOURBASH. Tarawa, Nauru and Apamama were first selected as objectives. The Army mission was to be Nauru. For two months, the 27th Division planning centered on Nauru. The decision to confine the operation to the central Gilberts was made known to 27th Division on 28 September. Abruptly its planning was transferred to Makin. Only six weeks remained to get ready.

The new mission required redefinitions of the force necessary and the 165th was selected as the main attacking force. The mission of the Regiment was to step in make a swift conquest of the island and then withdraw while garrison forces moved in to construct airfields and man them.

Makin is a small coral atoll . It principal island is Butaritari or Horse Island as it became known to the members of the expedition. It contained a large lagoon triangular in shape. The northern side is a reef 17 miles long, running east and west between the islands. The western side, about 14 miles long, consists of small islands, a reef broken by several channels into the lagoon and the western end of Butaritari. The remainder of Butaritari and the island of Kuma northeast of it, stretch some 13 miles to the eastern corner of the atoll. None of the islands were as important as Butaritari, which is shaped liked a long bending ribbon. Its western end resembles the armrest of a crutch.

During the planning stages the Operations Officers centered all their attention on Butaritari. It is rarely more than 500 yards wide at any point except the extreme western end, where the armrest stretches out. One main highway served the entire island, running from Ukiangong Village in the southwest corner along the lagoon to the very eastern tip. Several small secondary roads branched out from the main artery to cross the island to the ocean shore and one paralleled the latter shore for a short distance. Over 1700 natives lived in the three vilages, Ukiangong, Butaritari and Tanimaiiki. The coconut palm flourished in every section. Tropical undergrowth, swamps and small ponds covered the terrain benaeth them. For food the natives raise bobai plants, which they grow in pits. Bobai pits were known to be more numerous near the villages. With soft banks and mucky botoms from which the vegetation rose several feet approximating the growth around them these pits were recognized as substantial obstacles to infantry and armor. Their exact loactions were unknown. The terrain seemed likely to limit vehicles more than infantry.

Aerial photographs were taken during the period of Japanese occupation, indicated that the enemy had concentrated his defenses around three of the four piers that stretched into the lagoon from the west center section of the island. From west to east they were identified as On Chong's Wharf, King's Wharf and Stone Pier resepectively. Study of the photos revealed that the Japanese has constructed their seaplane ramps at the end of King's Wharf and had scattered their maintenance buildings and dumps between that structure and On Chong's Wharf.

Some four hundred yards west of On Chong's Wharf lay a large clearing, down the middle of which ran a zigzag trench. Photo-intelligence was able to mark several pillboxes and gun emplacements of this West Tank Barrier System.

About 250 yards east of the Stone pier were similar defensive positions. The whole area was so strong it was named the "Citadel."

Intelligence estimates showed a total of approximately eight hundred enemy on the island. Three hundred were first line troops of the Special Naval Landing Force; the remaining five hundred were civilian and military construction personnel and air force maintenance crews.

Makin is only a short distance from the Marshall Islands, the main forward bastion of Japanese air strength in the Centraal Pacific Area. Air attacks from the Marshalls would be determined and relatively strong. The main Japanese fleet was at Truk and there was a possibility that it might venture forth to meet the American thrust or to support the landing of reinforcements.

Final plans for the invasion were drawn on 28 Sep 1943 with MG Ralph Smith in command of the Landing Force. The landings were to made over the Red (western) Beaches by the 1st and ~~3rd~~ Battalion Landing Teams (BLT), which were to be preceded by two Special Landing Groups from the 3rd Bn 105th Inf. If Red Beach went well, they were to be followed by the 2nd BLT of the 165th Inf. on Yellow Beach. Like the first assault this one would be spearheaded by a Special Landing Group of the 105th

Inf. Light. Tanks of 193rd Tank Bn would accompany the 1st and 3rd Battalions ashore, while a company of mediums from the same unit would move ashore on Yellow Beach. Shortly after the landings, the 3rd Bn would be drawn from the line and the 1st and 2nd Bns. would advance on the West Tank barrier System from opposite directions, wiping out its defenders and breaching the Citadel from the supposedly more suitable Red Beaches. In order to eliminate any interference with double envelopment, Special Landing Force X was to move out along Red Beach 1 to the left extension of the crutch area, known as Fink's Point. Special Landing Force Y accompanied by 'L' Co. 165th Inf was to perform the same mission on Ukiangong point, the right extension of the island. The 105th Field Artillery Bn was to set up next to Ukiangong Village and begin normal support operations for the landing forces.

As protection for the Yellow Beach landings, where parts of the 2nd Bn. would be turning their backs to the Citadel, 'E' Co. 165th supported on their left flanks by Special landing Force Z was to establish a line across the island, facing the East Tank Barrier System, near the base of King's Wharf. Before joining 'E' Co., Group Z was to clean out both On Chong's and King's Wharves.

To fulfill the mission of capturing Makin and eliminating the Japanese required : first, an attack on Butaritari and then control of Kuma and the other small islands on which outposts might be placed; and finally pursuit of the enemy to all lesser points of refuge to which he might flee. As a precautionary measure it also involved early air reconnaissance over Little Makin and the possible dispatch of a small force.

Although the 27th Division had anticipated taking part in aggressive operations in the Central Pacific Area and had trained for beach landings and jungle fighting since coming to Hawaii, the immediate arrival of combat, intensified training for Makin. Jungle woodcraft. jungle lore and tropical hygiene were now studied. Weapons training and practice with live hand grenades were emphasized for all combat troops. The Field Artillery, Tank Bn and the Infantry each conducted range firing of all their weapons. Small unit fighting, battalion and regimental exercises were held and the troops reviewed what was involved in daylight attack in close terrain, hasty and prepared defenses, night operations, perimeter defense, day and night withdrawal, the attack on a fortified position in jungle terrain and the elimination of snipers.

Amphibious training with floating equipment, practice in swimming and staying afloat fully clothed and carrying a full infantry pack, unloading and loading supplies and finally ship to shore rehearsals under naval gunfire and air bombing, controlled by shore fire control parties, completed the realistic exercises.

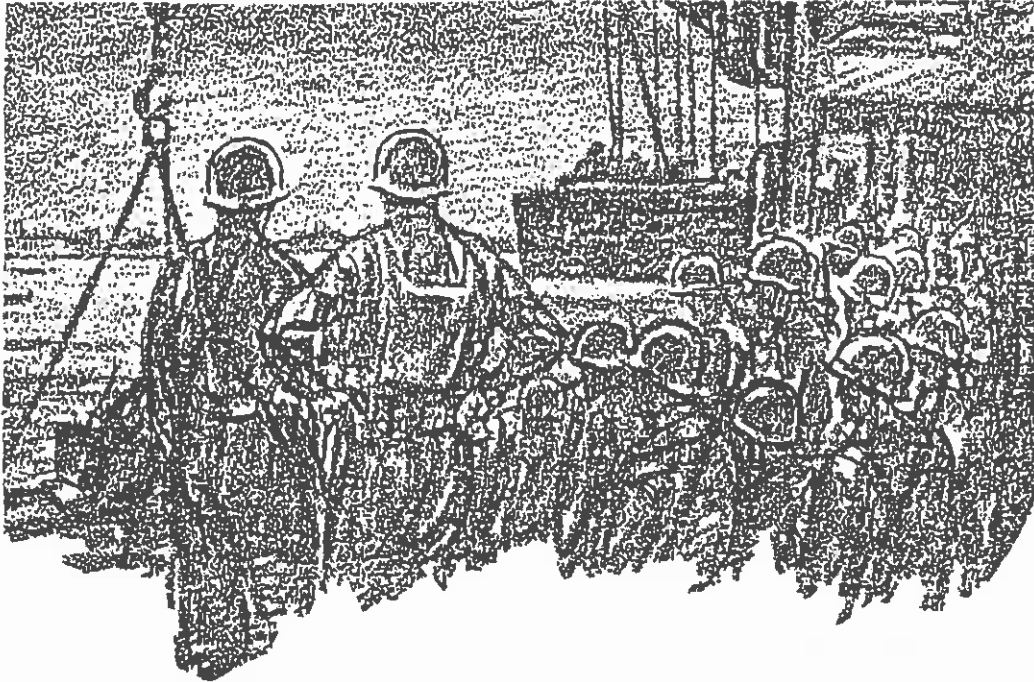
Time was insufficient for infantry and tank crews to achieve adequate effectiveness in cooperation before the actual operation began. Communication between crews inside and the infantry outside was an unsolved problem; another was the method by which infantry could bring tanks directly into support.

The expedition was equipped with jeeps and trucks, but ~~was~~ in numbers deeply cut from the Table of Basic Allowances in order to save both their room and that of fuel to operate them.

Another logistics problem was met by pallet loading, a practice, which had been tried at Attu with mixed results. To make possible the unloading and removal of supplies with a minimum of delay under enemy fire and to achieve some other lesser advantages, the 27th Division adopted the pallet system for the Makin Operation.

On the the afternoon of 10 Nov., the convoy bearing the the men of the 27th Division Task Force left Pearl Harbor for Makin. The transports included the LEONARD WOOD, the NEVILLE, the CALVERT, the PIERCE and the ALCYONE. the LEONARD WOOD served as the command ship.

The assault opened with air strikes from the carriers at 0617. Enemy anti-aircraft was weak. Dive bombers bombed and strafed the beaches while glide bombers worked over clearing the West Tank Barrier. They dropped 74 tons of half-ton and 1 ton demolition bombs and 1 ton "daisy-cutters." The transports moved to their allotted area 6,000 yards from the beach and lowered small boats. The warships took their stations and after the aerial mission was completed and opened at 0640 a systematic bombardment of the entire area of the day's assigned ground operations. It was to continue for almost four hours.



The Island lies in forbidding silence—the first shot thunders into the dawn.

"FAUGH A BALLAGH - CLEAR THE WAY!" The ancient spine-tingling battle cry of Gaelic warriors set the furious tempo of the epic story of the 165th Infantry Regiment "The Fighting Sixty-Ninth" amid the blood, the courage and the dying to come in the Battle of Makin.

The night before the battle on a blacked out transport moving in on Makin Atoll, the flag lay over the table in LTC Kelley's quarters and about it the Colonel and his staff stood grimly and solemnly. CPT (Chaplain) Stephen J. Meany blessed the colors of the 1st Bn 165th, which were going into action again for the first time since the Argonne.

"Gentle When Stroked - Fierce When Provoked." The Regiment was ready and prepared to destroy a determined enemy.
November 20

Aboard ship Reveille was 0345 hours. At 0535 condition 1-A was announced. The troops were starting to debark and at 0600 the command was given ALL LANDING BOATS AWAY! All the months and years of training were over and the assault began. At 0801 a message from MG Ralph Smith was read - To CO 165: - Hell Hells Bells 1030 hours.

At 0600 the shore parties debarked and began lowering landing craft. Soon the boats moved to the rendezvous areas. At 0758 they started breaking away from the circling group to form the first wave of each BLT at the line of departure, which was marked by destroyers 2800 yards offshore. The first waves crossed the LD at 0818. THE beach was 14 minutes away. The battle had begun.

Landings on Red Beach 1 did, not, unfortunately, proceed on schedule. The intervening reef was studded with coral boulders, rough and jagged lumps as much as two feet high, which left no passage from the edge of the reef, about 100 yards out, to the high water mark. Coming in on the rising tide, the several landing craft were unable to make the simultaneous touchdowns provided for by plans. Some slipped past the boulders and were held a boat's length (36 feet) from the water's edge., but many were broached or stranded or forced to put to sea again. The men struggled in swells breast deep, stumbling over rocks and boulders.

Red Beach 1 was very rough above the waterline and was usable for only 15 yards of width and rose sharply from the high water mark to the vegetaion. Far from taking all six craft of each wave, it could not take more than three abreast. The first barges found great difficulty in withdrawing to give room for later assault waves to land. The absence of enemy opposition to the landings at Red Beach 1 made it possible to meet the adverse conditions without sustianing casualties. MAJ JAMES MAHONEY said "The boats didn't make it to the shore for the most part. The first wave or two got in all right and the others just stacked up behind them, because there was no place to go - too much coral and rock."

The carefully prepared sequence in the arrival of various elements of the assault and shore parties was thrown into confusion by the conditions of Red Beach 1. Although the assault forces of the first got ashore and moved inland, the fifth wave, which had been scheduled to land at 0857 did not touch down until 1002

From the USS CALVERT 913 officers and men and 81 3/4 tons of equipment were dispatched on D-Day and while the men were landed with some equipment, most of the equipment was still afloat on the landing barges at nightfall.

The inland advance proceeded so closely in accordance with plans, that it was conducted mainly under the direction of Company Commanders. COL CONROY and the other staff officers were chiefly concerned with supply, communications and intelligence. The major difficulties came from the terrain.

As the forces of the BLT-1 amassed, they organized and advanced upon their several missions. They met insignificant sniper fire only. The main difficulty came from the debris and watery holes resulting from the air and naval bombardments. Great masses of tough, closely matted root fibers barred their way. Working through them and other obstacles, the men found that keeping in contact required constant attention. While keeping contact, they also watched for snipers, whose fire was random and inaccurate.

Light tanks could not make headway against these obstacles and stayed mostly on the roads. Those which landed with BLT-1 were initially held up by their refusal to receive commands except through their own officers and the difficulties of the terrain. Although they landed before 0900, they were of no assistance to the infantry until 1430. A naval shell which struck the main highway held the whole tank group up til midafternoon.

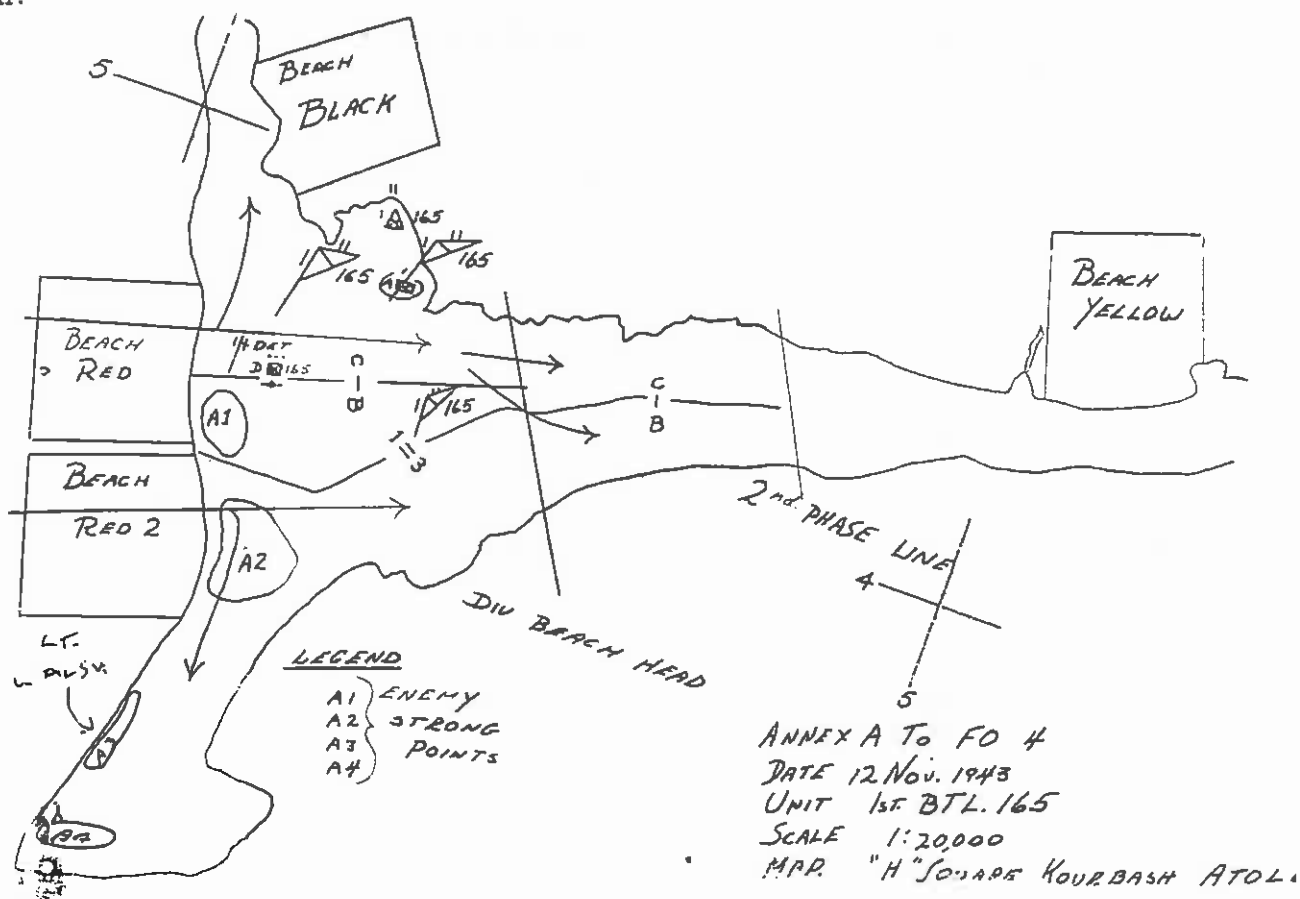
The signal to head for the beach



BLT-1 advance with three companies abreast. On the right Co 'B' and 1st Plat Co 'D' covered the widest zone; the first action was the seizure of an observation tower, which was not defended.

In the Center Co 'C' moved straight ahead. Co 'A' moved inland at 0900 to take a more advanced position from which to be available as reserve.

At the end of the 1st phase Cos. 'B' and 'C' held the left half of the beachhead line just east of Rita lake and were in contact with Co 'K' of BLT-3, just across the highway on the right flank. In fulfillment of plans BLT-1 extended its line to cross the entire island and BLT-3 went into reserve. Patrols were sent forward as far as Jill Lake to locate enemy positions for the later advance. It waited for the end of the naval bombardment on Yellow Beach; at about 1100 it started forward again.



EDITORS NOTE. The information on Makin Landing was sent to me by Vincent W. Walsh 335 Clearfield Ave. Brooksville, Fl. 34606. In order to get as much of the article as possible in the newsletter, some parts were left out. The original copy is about 20 pages long. Most of what I copied had to do with the USS Calvert. j.l.cole

Many Thanks

To the following persons who are helping with newsletter expences. Thank you very much.....

George Mackey.....20.00
Adolph Flores MD.....20.00
Ton Condom.....10.00
Mrs. John Stratton.....20.00
R.W. Glasco.....25.00
Joe Pribula.....20.00

Bob Upton.....25.00
R. Donald Thoos.....15.00
Marietta Holmes.....20.00
Darrel Gerard.....15.00
Thomas Dawning.....25.00
Donald Shanks.....20.00
Edward Pease.....25.00
Leslie Knight.....15.00
John T. Carlson.....5.00
Ralph Baynton.....20.00
Pete Steicher.....20.00

Mel Waite.....25.00
Warren Shaddock.....25.00
Charles Speranza.....10.00
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Warren Nowell.....25.00
Ronald Murphy.....10.00
Erich Sopp.....25.00
Elizebeth Maxwell.....20.00
Charles Skillman.....20.00
Joe Moffett.....10.00
Harley Wenninger.....20.00

mail call



U. S. S. CALVERT (APA-32)
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



Thank you for the issue of *Calversion*. Enjoyed it very much, however, the only name that I recognized was Mark Galloway. If I am not mistaken, he was our division officer, a Lieutenant I believe. Hope that I have not demoted him. From his note I find that he and I were aboard at the same time. The day we put the Calvert back in commission we weighed anchor and headed for the west coast via the Panama canal. We both left the ship in 1952. I left in San Diego before she got underway for Pearl Harbor. Finally had enough *points* to be discharged. I had to flip a coin with another Boatswain's Mate, the winner leaving the ship, the other going to Pearl. They said that they could not let us both go. I think that they did anyway.

During WW2 I was aboard the U.S.S. Uvalde, AKA 88 and I do get the crews mixed up. I do have an old memo book that I kept on the Calvert with many names from my work section. Our division Boatswain was Swords. Some of the others were Murphy, BM2, Boyer, Biele, Casper, GM3 and John Fecteau the BM2 that I cut cards with. The only other officer I remember was Mr. Tracy, probably because he was from NY and a detective.

Do you have a list of crew members that you could send. I am considering a trip to the reunion but it wouldn't be worthwhile if I didn't know anyone. Possibly I will get together with John Lemish and fly out. Maybe we will get lucky and the wives will let us go.

Congratulations on your Citizen of the Year award and your long service as Mayor. I know how much work goes into that job because my oldest son is Chief of Staff for the Mayor of Rochester, New York. Hard work but he loves it!

I have enclosed a copy of the Calvert's 1951 Christmas menu. The ship was in San Diego and my wife still talks about having to walk up that gangway. We were anchored out. Again, I do not remember any of the officers whose names are listed on the brochure. We were in our own little world in the Deck division.

One last thought; My wife bought a coffee pot for our gear locker. Our Div.P.O., Swords, liked *strong* coffee. I remember his words: "Get away from that coffee, it ain't done yet" repeated to anyone that reached for the pot. When it was *done*, it could be cut with a knife. When my wife came aboard for the Christmas dinner saw the coffee pot she couldn't believe it was the same one. We washed it once a month, needed or not. But, the coffee was *strong*! JOHN T. CARLSON

I especially enjoyed the note from Howard Lanyon and John Paul Jones. I ~~to~~served with the fine men of the Calvert from June of 1953 to 1955. (I wonder if there would be women if the Calvert were in today's Navy) The great guys of the L division manned the main battery of the ship. I did 2 WesPac cruises including a landing at Iwo Jima with the Marines on the 8 or 9th anniversary of the raising of the flag at Mt. Surabachi. Last month was the 50th anniversary.
R. Donald Thoes

I read with interest the last copy of the *Calversion* that I recieved especially on page 5 under Calvert Facts From The Past where the Calvert was assigned for Magi Carpet duty. I made that last trip on May 31, 1946 from Subic Bay, Philippines to Norfolk, Virginia. After a short stay in Norfolk I was shipped to Lido Beach, Long Island and was discharged.

Last month a ship mate of mine who also made that trip, Silvio Serani, Long Island, N.Y. spent 4 days here with me (he and his wife) and I hadn't seen him in 48 years. We had a great time in Gatlinburg, Tenn. and the mountains of North Carolina where I live.

I forgot to say something about myself.. I'm a retired New Jersey State Trooper (Sgt.) and presently a Magistrate Judge here in Burke County, Morganton, N.C. Charles P. Speranza

Your Last Opportunity
to attend



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 50.00 per couple paid in advance. Balance on arrival.. You may pay the total amount
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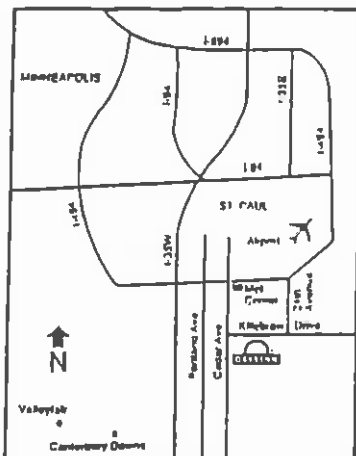
JOHN L. COLE
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Room Type: One Bed _____ Two Bed _____

Smoking _____ Non-Smoking _____

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REMEMBER--- You must make your own Motel reservation.---

MINNESOTA
We think it's high time
you got to see

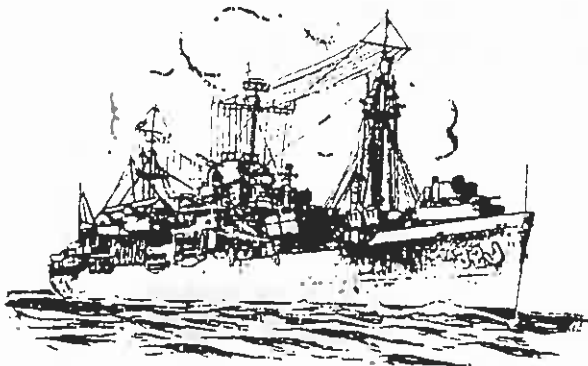


We would like to hear from you

CALVERT ASSOCIATES
506 Red Wing Ave.
Kenyon, MN 55946

3rd CLASS
 PERMIT NO.
 10

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



U. S. S. CALVERT APA-32

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 ENOLA PA 17025



In Honored Memory



WE MOURN THE PASSING OF THESE SHIPMATES

Fredrick J. Baynton SM2/c	43-46	October 1983
Louis T. Page QM	52	1994
Otis McAnulty GM	43-45	January 10 1995
Edward Carver WT2	41-45	September 1 1993
Joseph S. Costa	43-44	1995
John Love Rhea Jr. BM1	43-45	September 29 1994
Bayard E Maxwell CMOMM	42-44	January 14 1995
Charles Harsin BT3	50-51	October 17 1987
Charles LaRue BT2	50-51	May 28 1992
Clifton Girls SF3	44-45	May 12 1982