

CALVERTSION

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

"The Ship and Men of Distinction"

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Kenyon, Minnesota 55946
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Comments from the Commander

The other day I had a nice phone call from one of the former Commanders of the U.S.S. Calvert. Edward R Hunt of California who served as C.O. in 1963-1964 found out about our group. I got to thinking that it would be nice to do an issue about these guys and what they have done since serving on the ship. I have the address of eight of them, Harry B. Stark, Walter L. Phaier, William M. Kaufman, Harold D. Durham, David A. Merrill, Edward R. Hunt, Jack S. Kenyon, and John G. Ward. I will probably write them and in a future issue will be devoted to them, so Captains think of what you are going to say..... Been talking to Reunion Host, James T. "Pete" Berry about the upcoming reunion. Everything is ready and all Pete needs is your form sent to him which is in this newsletter. There are some dates of cut-off which are listed. See you in Myrtle Beach in October.....The wife and I and two friends are flying to Baultimore Md. next week to spend 6 hours on the liberty ship John W. Brown. Besides a tour of the complete ship, live 40's music, meals (SOS?) and the ships armed guard manning the guns to fight off attacking Japanese planes. The wife is thrilled (I hope) and so am I. Will give report ia a future issue.....Yvonne Hyser wrote me just after Edward passed away with, " We always put it off. Ed would tell his visitors, Go while you can, Dont put it off.".....Be glad you dont live in Ventura County V.H. Stewart said. El Nino has washed out roads and houses and mud slides blocked others..... R.W.Duncan, 1st Div. 1945 wants to contact shipmates of that period. Address, 16317 Parliament Ave. Tinley Park, Ill. 60477-1469.....The list of people who donated money to the newsletter did not make it this time as I didnt have room. Most of this issue is devoted to Sicily, a day in July, fifty five years ago. Who says time dosen't fly. Thats it for now. Type me a letter and it might make the newsletter, who know. All for now.....j.l.cole



mail call



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



I am enclosing excerpts from a history I did for my family. This covers the Sicilian invasion. After serving in India and China later I ran into Lt. Marks in Hawaii on my way home. He told me that I had missed some 17 landings in the Pacific. I think back on how I had argued with Captain Thackrey not to send me to Amphib Training as an instructor. We get so soon old and so late smart.
M.J. "Mike" Latimer

On June 8th, 1943 our ship the U.S.S. Calvert APA 32 left the states in convoy across the Atlantic. We had several submarine scares with destroyer escorts dropping depth charges. No ships were torpedoed. By June 21st we cleared Gibraltar into the Mediterranean and docked the next day at Mes El Kiber a town about 6 miles from Oran, Morocco. After several practice landings one near Tripoli we proceeded to Sicily and about 3 a.m. on the morning of July 15th we made the landing near the town of Scoglitti. Conditions for the landing were very poor. The sea had huge swells. Loading the landing craft alongside the ship was risky with the boats bouncing up and down as much as 12 to 15 feet. As boat group commander I took the first wave in. When we left the ship we were 8 miles from the beach. As boats were loaded with troops they circled off the stern of the ship, each wave keeping their own circle. Then we followed a larger pilot boat to within 4 miles as a line of departure. Here we formed into seven lines abreast. There were a total of 54 boats containing about 35 army infantrymen each from the 45th Thunderbird Division. Our Red Beach II attack group consisted of three APA (Attack Personnel Amphibious) ships and two AKA ships which had supplies and equipment.

Our first knowledge of the enemy was when they suddenly put searchlights on the ships. They were immediately shelled by the destroyers and cruisers and put out. The beach area was shelled for about an hour while we were on our way in. During the last two miles in German planes came over at high altitude and dropped star flares. This lit up the area for a while. We hit the beach without opposition and in the right place. By daylight I made several other trips and could see that there were two machine gun nests bracketing our landing area. The Italian troops had abandoned them during the shelling. Inside there were 7mm machine guns and boxes of hand grenades. While the army went inland fairly rapidly they were pushed back by German tanks by mid afternoon. For a while our troops held only a small strip of the beach.

Destroyers and cruisers finally were called on to knock out the German tanks and the situation cleared up. Some of the native Sicilians, mostly old men and children showed up on the beach with

bottles of dago red wine. We gave them some of our C rations. Aerial dogfights were going on overhead with an occasional plane going down. One German fighter pilot was being interrogated on the beach by Army officers. He told them Germany was going to bomb New York.

Later that day I was put aboard a LST a fifty foot tanklighter to guide them to Red Beach II. We had quite a time trying to get across a series of sandbars. German Messerschmitt fighter planes would strafe the beach area and drop 50 pound bombs but they didn't seem interested in our vessel. We finally threw over cases of food, gasoline, and everything except the 155 mm ammunition. This lightened the boat and we backed off the sandbar. The Calvert had moved and we couldn't find her. We tried to tie up alongside other ships for the night but when they found out we had 155mm ammo aboard they told us to get the hell away. About this time a lot of twin engine planes came over at low altitude. Every ship shot at them not knowing they were our own 81st airborne. Quite a few were downed. Orders were to shoot at any planes approaching under 1200 yards.

The next day a boat approached us and Captain Thackeray my CO was in it. He took me aboard and back to the Calvert. The following day we sailed back to Oran. Here we saw a lot of German soldiers from Rommels Afrika Corps being processed for shipment to the US as prisoners. They were tanned and healthy and looked like boy scouts. On return to the states the captain selected me and several boat crews for transfer to the Little Creek amphibious base as instructors. For the next eleven months I trained new groups at both Little Creek and Ft. Pierce Florida.

Editors Note. This issue is mostly on the Sicilian Landing with different views on what happened. In the Calvert history many of the Calvert Crew were Promoted to a higher rate because of their outstanding performance of duty in the Sicilian operation. It was also noted by Admiral Kirk that the Calvert performed its mission in a most satisfactory manner and is deserving of commendation. Another citation was presented to Ensign Glennon which I think is noteworthy. John Cole

One other award was presented, this by the Commander United States Naval Forces, Northwest African Waters, in the name of the President of the United States to Ensign Thomas J. GLENNON, USNR. The citation reads as follows:

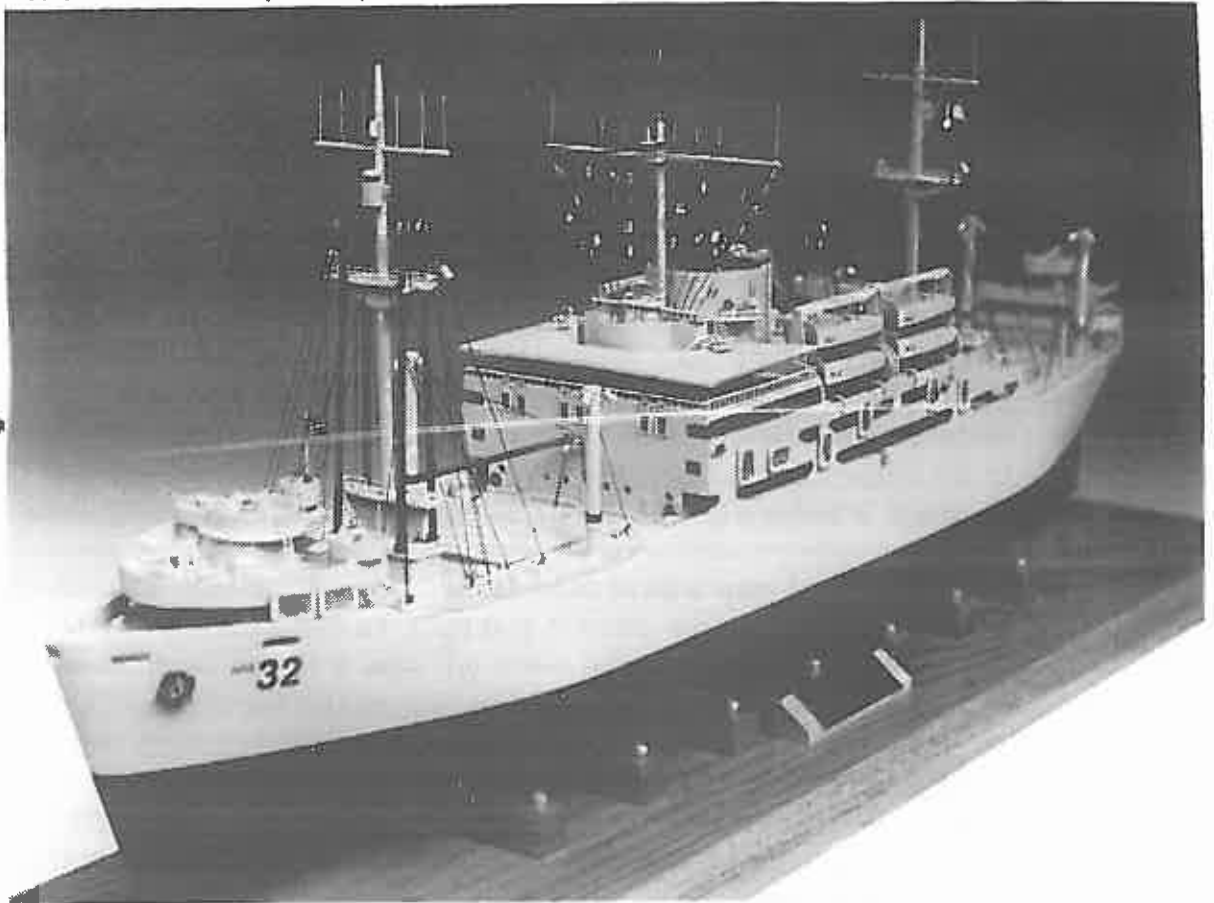
For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action as a scout boat officer in the assault of the island of Sicily.

Ensign GLENNON, attached to the USS CALVERT, was assigned as Assistant Boat Officer with the task of locating the correct landing beach for assaulting troops. During the assault on the southeast coast of Sicily on the night of July 9-10, 1943, he coolly, skillfully, and although under fire and illuminated by enemy searchlights, without thought of personal safety, found and maintained his position in advance of the leading boat waves. This gallant and intrepid action on his part materially contributed to the success of the initial assault.

Ensign GLENNON's courage, determination, and outstanding devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.

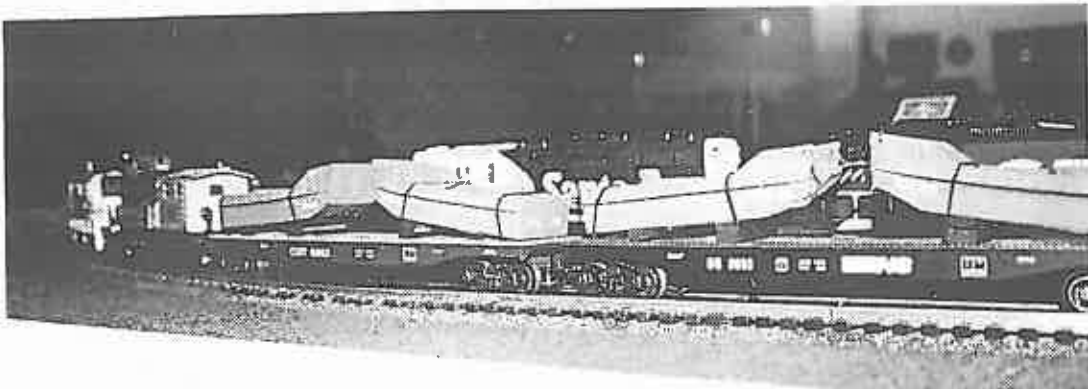
the old crew

U. S. S. CALVERT (APA-32)



At the time they formed what they called the " Magic Carpet" that's when I went aboard the Calvert and served my last years in the Navy. I was also aboard when we brought her home from Subic Bay, PI on her final voyage back to Norfolk, Va.

I've had a hobby ever since I was a little boy and that continues on today. I thought you might like to see a picture of the Calvert which I built from memory. This is the best that I could remember. I hope that it reminds the boys a little bit of what the Calvert looked like. Virgil Jay Nelson

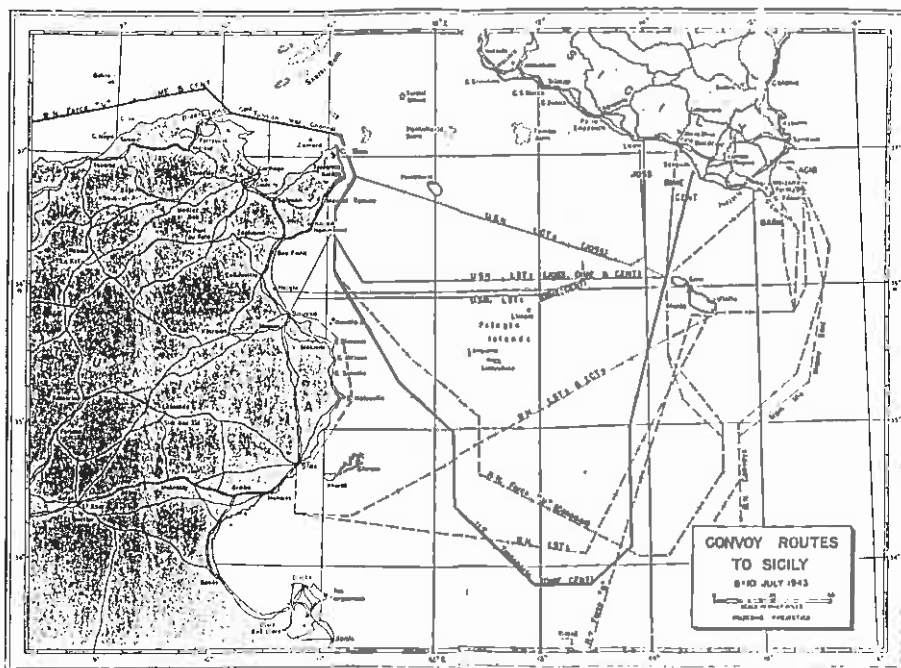


I'm sending you a snapshot of a couple of cars from my Navy train. I belong to a train club and we have a layout at the Model R.R. Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, Ca. Of all the navy items that make up my loads, I always get the most compliments on the landing craft. I'm happy to point out the APA 32 on them. Claude T. Baker



Sicily

July 1943



The Navy Department, recognizing that it possessed no formally designated amphibious force and that amphibious operations were and would play a major role in the war, decided to classify ships accordingly based on a general ship nomenclature jointly developed with the British. The new hull numbering system became effective on 1 February 1943. On that date CALVERT became APA-32.

CALVERT was then assigned to Task Group 85.1, Attack Group One of the Scoglitti (CENT) Attack Force for the forthcoming assault on Sicily. TG-85.1, commanded by Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk, USN (who would later command the Western Task Force during Operation OVERLORD) was composed of TRANSDIVs (Transport Division) ONE and SEVEN. The group was assigned to the "Wood's Hole" sector of the objective area. CALVERT's specific assignment was the landing of the 1st Battalion, 180th Regimental Combat Team, 45th Infantry Division, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William H. Schaefer, USA.

CALVERT received a newly formed boat group that had just completed training at the recently established Section Base at Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia, and open ocean training at the Amphibious Force Training Base (AFTB), Fort Pierce, Florida. Then with troops embarked, the CENT Force commenced intensified training at AFTB, Solomons, Maryland, on the training beaches near Cove Point in Calvert County. The training included the development of tactics for the employment of Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP) which was replacing the original Higgins Boats and Landing Craft, Vehicle (LCV), a forerunner of the Landing Craft, Medium (LCM).

On 9 April 1943, Captain Lyman A. Thackery, USN, relieved Captain Allen P. Mullinix, USN, as CALVERT's commanding officer.

In early June 1943, TF-85 crossed the Atlantic in two convoys for its Algerian staging ports. CALVERT's group arrived at Mers-el-Kabir on 22 June, and immediately started the many last minute checks and routines required for an operation of this size.

On 2 July while at Mers-el-Kabir, a fire was discovered in Number One Hold, a troop ammunition space. Donald E. Brotherton, BM1, USN, descended into the hold and managed to carry topside a smoldering case of chemical grenades. For this heroic deed Brotherton was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. Marshall W. Lee, SF1, USNR, who led the firefighting effort received a meritorious promotion to chief petty officer.

TG 85.1 sortied from its respective ports on 5 July, traveled along the Algerian coast, then took a northerly course passing west of Malta, and arrived off the objective area early in the morning of D-Day, 10 July 1943.

Upon arrival, CALVERT and the other attack transports stood by to debark their troops covered by support boats using high explosives and 3-inch rockets. The waves of troops hitting Red Beach were supported by salvos from those craft. The Boat Group Commander credited the rocket bombardment with wiping out a pillbox which had fired on Wave One with machine guns.

The arrival of the CENT Force at Scoglitti was not a surprise to the enemy. The previous day one of the assault groups had been sighted by enemy reconnaissance aircraft. Super Aero, the Italian Air Force Command (the Italians then commanded all Axis forces in the region), had correctly estimated the situation and for nearly an hour after boating operations had commenced, by flare light, a squadron of torpedo bombers and a group of high level bombers harassed the transport area. All ships and many of their boats joined in an effort to repel this attack. Fortunately, all the transports came through unscathed, although a few screening ships suffered near misses. About ten miles up the coast the ships of DIME Force were not as fortunate. A German JU-87 "Stuka" dropped a bomb on USS MADDOX DD-622 which detonated the after magazine group, sinking the ship in three minutes.

Francis Carpenter, S1/c (Seaman first-class, today's SN), USNR, one of CALVERT's crew had been a house guest in the Scoglitti objective area before the war. In view of that, and after consultation with Colonel Schaefer, Carpenter was given permission to leave his station as the bow hook of a landing craft in Wave One to reconnoiter the hinterland in order to confirm certain terrain features not clearly evident in the aerial reconnaissance photos.

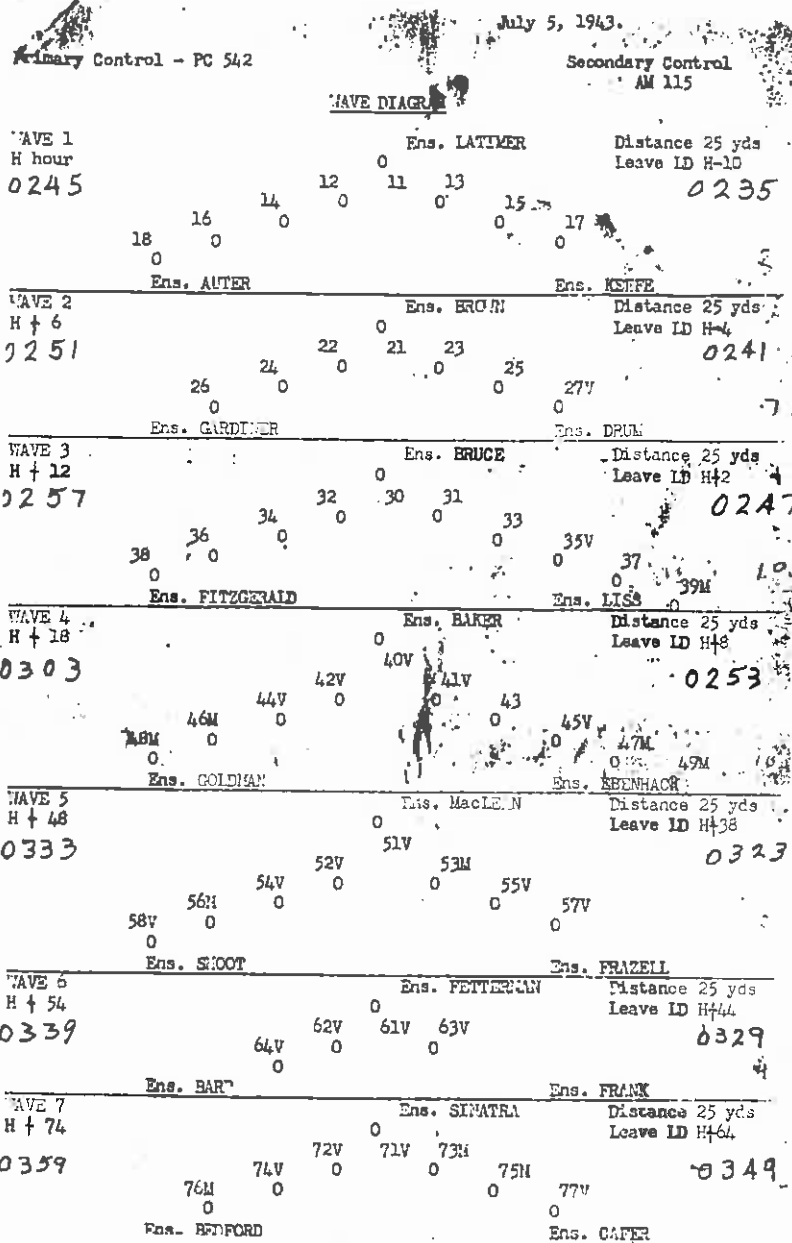
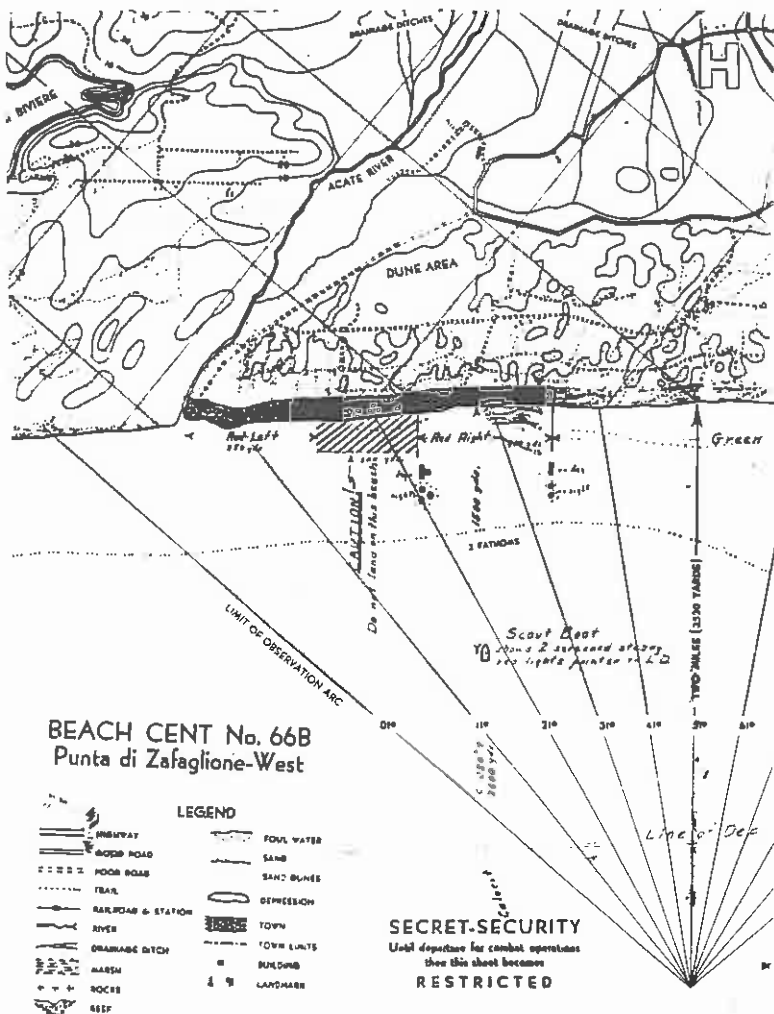
Completing his mission, Carpenter encountered a group of Italian civilians whom he reassured and offered safe conduct. Later he encountered and accepted the surrender of 22 Italian infantrymen who apparently were ready to surrender to the first Allied trooper they met. For his actions that day, Francis Carpenter was awarded the Silver Star.

After the initial landings were completed, CALVERT's boats assumed patrol stations along the boat lanes, and at dawn laid a smoke screen to help protect the beach from enemy attack.

The unloading operations continued for three days, during which, although hampered by bad weather, surf, shortages of landing craft and enemy air attacks, 22,954 troops, 13,753 long tons of cargo and 2,815 vehicles were boated ashore.

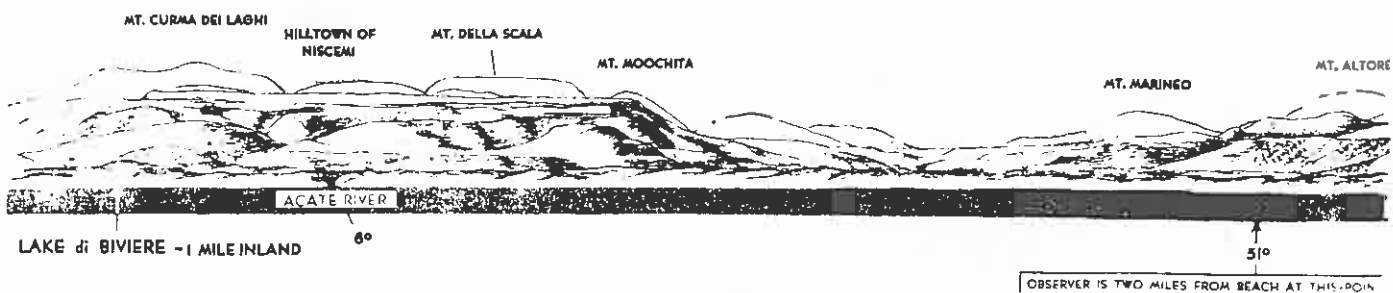
The heavy surf took its toll on a number of landing craft which broached and were not salvageable. The surviving crew members, including some from CALVERT, were stranded on Red Beach fending for themselves. Although efforts were made to get the crews back to their ships, that did not happen in all cases. Some of CALVERT's boat crews, who had watched CALVERT sail from the objective area without them, were eventually placed in USS ALCYONE AKA-7 for transportation back to Mers-el-Kabir, where they rejoined their ship.

In his action report, Captain Thackery stated: "...the officers and men in ship's company conducted themselves in an exemplary manner throughout the landing. their spirit was gratifying. The winchmen and hatchmen deserve special credit for their excellent exhibition of skill and industry. Three hundred eighty-one LCVP, 28 LCM and 31½ LCT loads were necessary to unload the ship of personnel and cargo..."



With Operation HUSKY progressing well on the beach, CENT Force retired to Algeria where they landed some 300 prisoners of war. This would be the first of several POW movements CALVERT would become involved with. On 1 August, the CENT Force departed Africa for the United States. CALVERT's destination was New York for a brief overhaul, where on 21 August 1943, Lieutenant Commander Edward J. Sweeney, USNR, the executive officer, relieved Captain Thackery as commanding officer.

Compiled by Captain Thomas W. Glickman, United States Navy, Retired



Remember that final reservation date is August 17, 1998.

U.S.S. CALVERT REUNION

MYRTLE BEACH

OCT. 15-17 1998

The dates for the U.S.S. Calvert Reunion in 1998 at Myrtle Beach, S.C. have been set for October 15 to 17, 1998. The hotel will be the Myrtle Beach Martinique Resort Hotel, 7100 North Ocean Blvd, Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29578. Telephone 1-800-449-4441. The room rate is \$61.00 plus tax (9.5%) per night for ocean front room with two queen beds. We are reserving 35 such rooms. Dave Cullen and wife will be assisting me. Any questions I can be reached by writing, James T. Berry 503 Country Club Rd. Blackville, S.C. 29817-1425. My phone number is 803-284-1856. Make your plans now.

MYRTLE BEACH MARTINIQUE

RESORT HOTEL

RESERVATION REQUEST

Group Name USS Calvert APA 32 Associates
Your Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____

Arrival Date _____ (Estimated time _____ p.m.)
Departure Date _____ (Estimated time _____ a.m.)
No. of Adults (over 17 years of age) _____
No. of Children _____ Crib needed _____
Efficiency _____ (\$10 Extra Charge) Rollaway _____ (\$10 Extra charge)
Non-Smoking Room (upon availability) _____ Smoker _____

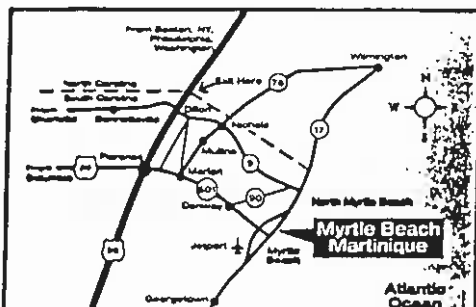
PLEASE ENCLOSE DEPOSIT CHECK. CREDIT CARDS NOT ACCEPTED FOR ADVANCE DEPOSIT.
(See Reverse side of card for additional information)

Group Name: USS CALVERT APA 32 ASSOCIATES	Reservations # 800-542-0048.
Major Arrival Date: Thursday, 10/15/98	Major Departure Date: Sunday, 10/18/98

CHECK-IN TIME 3:00 P.M. OR LATER
CHECK-OUT TIME 11:00 A.M. OR EARLIER

Reservations must be cancelled 72-hours prior to arrival to insure advance deposit refund. More than two adults per room (including children over 17) will be charged \$10 per person per night above the nightly rate.

Reservations must be received by 8/17/98. Each room must be guaranteed by a check payable to Myrtle Beach Martinique in the amount of \$66.80. This deposit will be applied to the first night of your reservations request. (Amount of deposit includes one night room rate and applicable tax). Please mail this card and your check as soon as possible to:



MYRTLE BEACH MARTINIQUE
RESORT HOTEL

Oceanfront at 71st Ave. N., Box 331
Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

1-800-542-0048, 803-449-4441 or FAX 803-497-3041
(Attention: Reservations Manager)

EVENT SCHEDULE

Thursday, October 15

Shopping at Broadway at the Beach

Ripley's Aquarium

Dinner at Landry's

(menu: broiled lemon pepper fish,
chicken & mushrooms, or shrimp fettucini)

\$30.00 pp

Leave 4 PM, return at 10 PM

Number
of
Persons

Price

Friday, October 16

Guided tour of Brookgreen Gardens

Lunch at the Terrace Cafe

(menu: ham & swiss or turkey & swiss, coleslaw or potato salad)

\$22.00 pp

Leave 9 AM return at 2PM
Movie and walking tour.

Friday, October 16

Big Band at the Savoy (featuring the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra)

Dinner at the Carolina Roadhouse

(choice of marinated chicken breast, slow roasted prime rib, fried shrimp, or broiled salmon)

\$40.00 pp

Dinner at 5 PM, return at 9 PM

Saturday, October 17

Shopping Shuttle to Waccamaw Pottery & MB Factory Stores

Buses will run continuously between shopping venues

\$5.00 pp

8:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Banquet and Dance. \$30.00 perperson

Reunion Fare (Reunion Expense) \$15.00 Perperson

Number going on tours must be in by September 10,98

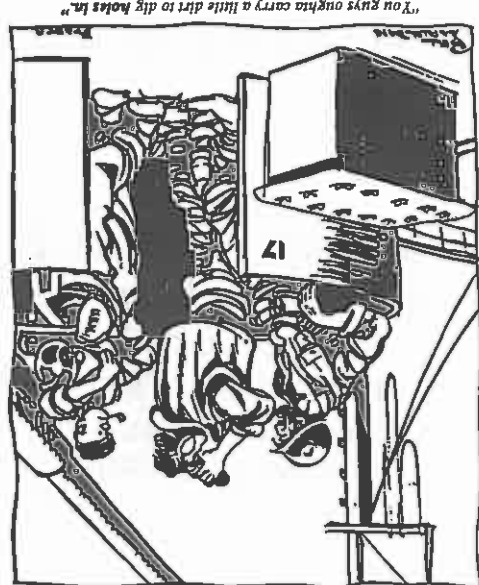
Total
Amount

Send Completed form
and check for Events to

James T. "Pete" Berry
503 Country Club Road
Blackville, S.C. Ph. 803-284-1856
29817-1425



Up Front
with Willie & Joe



Up Front
with Willie & Joe

CALVERT ASSOCIATES

506 Red Wing Ave.

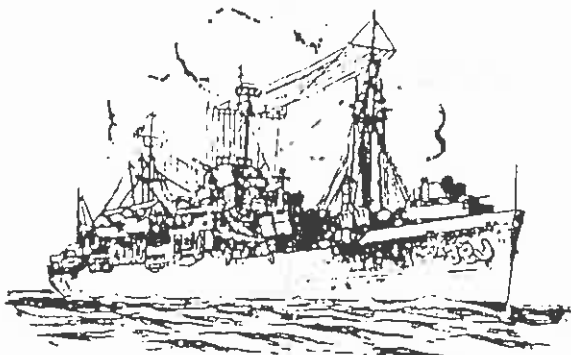
Kenyon, MN 55946

3rd CLASS

PERMIT NO.

10

"Change Service Requested"



U S S CALVERT APA-32



STERLING FUNCK BM1 42
208 N ENOLA DR
ENOLA PA 17025-2247



WE MOURN THE PASSING OF THESE SHIPMATES

Earl Trapp BM2 51-55 June 10, 1998
John Sharf BM1 42 February 14, 1997
Roland Rogers CM1 43-45 May 4, 1997
Thomas E. Sawyer BM1 42-45 December 10 1997
J.B. Hamlett 43-45 February 1969
Karl W. Parker MOMM1 43-45 November 13, 1997
Edward F. Hyser GMG2 60-62 January 13 1998

