

CALVERTSION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MEN OF THE U.S.S. CALVERT APA 32
"The Ship and Men of Distinction"



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Comments from the Commander

I have patiently been waiting for our reunion host William Smyrl to send me the information on the Philly Reunion. As soon as it arrives I will get this newsletter to the printer. My office is not the most modern place. I don't have a computer. I have a typewriter, fax machine, and a copy machine. Oh yes, they still make typewriters as I had to buy one last fall. The salesman said that they sell two or three a year. My grandkids think I'm behind in the times till I told them I have a "web site". I noticed it last week when I was in my office. There it was up in the corner. I don't know how long its been there but it can stay there cause its not bothering me.....I got a package from Steve Straka of Parma, Ohio. He found out that I didn't have a CD player. He got a good deal on one and sent it to me. Not that I couldn't gotten one but my neighbor was just to close. Every time he had to get out the instruction sheet to get it to play. I,m glad there was instructions in mine. Thanks again Steve.....Since I sent out notices in veterans magazines (14) Ive heard from three men who rode on the Calvert and one on the Harry Lea. I asked them what they thought of the accomanditons, and they all said "crowded". They liked the food and said the crew was always friendly. Its always nice to hear good things about our ships.

Notice*****Notice*****Notice*****Notice*****Notice*****

The reunion of the U.S.S. Calvert in Philadelphia, Pa. on October 10-13, 2012 has been canceled. Our next reunion will be in the city of DesMoine, Iowa in 2013. Watch for the January newsletter for more information on it.

I am sorry for the delay in getting out the July newsletter on time. I appricate the phone calls I received from people who thought that their copy got lost. Its really nice to know that some people really wait for it to come. I enjoy putting it out. It takes a good week. J.L.Cole

mail call



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



Regrettably, I am not able to attend the September 2011 reunion so this letter will share my news with you all. I have been living at the Wisconsin Veterans' Home in King, WI for many years due to some health problems I have experienced. I now travel around in a wheelchair and have some assistance with my activities of daily living.

I enjoy the beautiful campus on which the Veterans' Home is located.....we are on a chain of lakes that enables the 680 veterans and their spouses to go fishing and boating every week. We have a lovely travel coach for off grounds activities so I go out for meals and bus rides occasionally. I would enjoy hearing from U.S.S. Calvert sailors - my address is included in this letter.

Lt. Commander, James Hart
422 Bell Avenue
King, WI 54946

I have made a copy on a CD of the 1954 Far East Cruise book, If you would like to enjoy living that year, I will send you a FREE copy of it. To receive you CD contact...

Rod McNall
unitra@earthlink.net
(650) 298-0505

Reporter at Large: I thought you might be interested in reading about Calvert's invasion of Sicily at Scoglitti, July 10, 1943. When our skipper told ship's company over the squawk box (after the ship had been sealed at Mers-el-Kebir, Africa) that we were heading for Scoglitti on the southern coast of Sicily, sailors all around the ship used that name for a greeting as we passed each other on the weather decks or below decks. The *high-fives* hadn't been invented yet. Maybe you could pass it on to someone who was aboard for that invasion. Are there any early 1940s shipmates still among us?

Well, the sun is over, way over, the yardarm so I'm heading for the oasis. Hope all is well with you and yours.

Scoglitti! Hal Winter

Editors Note....The next two pages are the article that Hal Winter was referring to in the above article. It is well written and it will give you an idea of what went on prior and during a landing.
j.l.cole

A REPORTER AT LARGE

BEACHHEAD

JULY 10 (DELAYED)

OUR ship, an American amphibious transport, is lying off Scoglitti, Sicily. Last night, as we approached the coast of Sicily, most of us on this ship, which I am aboard as a correspondent, were gloomily waiting for the beginning of the invasion. Though the whole expeditionary force, until almost the last minute, had been full of confidence, many of its members began to feel last night that the attack didn't have a chance of succeeding. The sole reason for this sudden change of sentiment was that the wind was blowing a gale and this was to be an amphibious attack. Some men thought that we might be taking part in one of the greatest military disasters of the war. Seas were breaking over the forecastles of the transports, drenching the shivering troops on deck. For a while we hoped that there might be a last-minute postponement. We figured that in the prevailing conditions at least half of our landing boats and half of our supplies would be lost. But no postponement came. Instead, our armada, the largest the world had ever seen, passed Malta and plowed on northwestward as if nothing, not even the almost certain probability of its own destruction, could stop it. Nobody bothered much any longer about whatever Axis opposition would be met. The Germans and Italians were the secondary enemy. The weather was our first.

The attack was to come at two forty-five next morning. The practically impossible task of loading and launching the landing boats would, of course, begin earlier. At a quarter to ten, when a number of morose Navy men were sitting in the wardroom of the transport silently drinking coffee, Commander C. W. Hickernell, our ship's executive officer, brought in the news that in the past half hour the wind had dropped from twenty-eight knots to eighteen. The ship was still wallowing in the rollers, but now there was hope of a letup. He also reported that a message from our task-group commander had said that the landing craft would be launched closer inshore than planned. The closer inshore, the better the chance for smoother water. Also, our schedule was moved

back an hour, making our landing time three forty-five.

AS eleven o'clock drew near, I got into a pair of green coveralls lent to me by the Army, made a date with Harry Beucler, the young ensign in whose boat I was to hit the beach, to meet him in the wardroom at twelve-thirty, and went up on the signal bridge for a look around. By now we were only fifteen or so miles off Sicily, approaching Scoglitti, our debarkation point. Almost at once the sky began to fill with flares and the thunder and lightning of falling bombs. Ahead of us we saw fires starting and thought that Axis planes were dropping the flares and bombs. The answering ack-ack was apparently that of our twenty-millimetre guns, lacing the night with red and green necklaces of tracer bullets. The fast-spreading fires appeared to be aboard ships. We thought it providential that none of this bombardment was directed at our section of the convoy until we realized that the blasts were not over the water at all but ashore and that our planes and perhaps our parachutists were doing the damage.

At twelve-thirty I met Harry and we went aft to stand by until it was time to go over the side into a tank lighter after it was put into the water. When we got there we found that the lighter next to ours was already being hoisted. Before it could be swung out and lowered, it had to be hoisted off the vessel. Those things weigh a good many tons. As we watched, the ship gave a lurch, the steadying lines attached to the lighter were wrenched out of the grasp of the seamen who held them, and the elephantine ob-

ject went berserk overhead. We tried to retreat aft but had to stop and crouch against a bulkhead, because just aft of us a bulldozer was also in the air and its steadying lines had likewise broken loose. So we huddled beneath these two huge flying things, which, with a great grinding and crashing noise, were knocking steel and fire from everything they struck as the ship wallowed. This was not bad seamanship on the part of the crew. It was merely an example of how difficult it is to meet



the demands of amphibious warfare in bad weather.

Finally order was restored, our lighter was lowered away, and the two of us boarded it. Then, while the lighter pounded and crashed against the flaring stern of the ship, which kept trying to rise up and sit down on us, a fifty-seven-millimetre anti-tank gun was lowered at us. We were also to carry a half-track truck, which was loaded with ammunition for the gun. There was some difficulty about getting the half-track over the side of the ship. While the crew was still wrestling with it, the enemy ashore turned on a searchlight with the most incredibly powerful beam I have ever seen. Had it ever come to rest on our ship, men on shore with binoculars would certainly have been able to make out individuals on our decks. While the half-track was still in the air, the barrage of our naval vessels began.

To the right of us, British warships were shooting star and fragmentation shells. In our own sector some destroyers moved in toward the shore and started laying down their fire. From a distance that seemed three times as great, cruisers began sending red and green triplets of shells racing, with an astonishingly flat trajectory, across the night to the beach. Anything that flashed back, gun or searchlight, was quickly extinguished. Meanwhile, we continued to pound against the stern of our ship and swear at the innocent loading master. Other small craft were darting around in the night; fewer of them got lost, we later learned, than our rehearsal landing maneuvers had led us to anticipate. In those maneuvers the only guides for the men in the lighters were the various dim shapes of our constantly shifting, darkened vessels. Here there was a burning town to help us get oriented and, better still, there were the paths that the tracer shells were making on their way to the beach. Just as the half-track finally started swinging down toward us, some enemy planes flew overhead and dropped flares. After that, the whole scene was at least as bright as day, which was a help to us in finishing our loading.

SOON we cast off and were on our way to join a battalion from a nearby ship, which, just as we approached her, was barely missed by a big bomb whose explosion shook us up, too. We went alongside the ship and were directed to the place where our waves of landing boats were to form. There were supposed to be six other boats in our sec-

tion, but we could find only one. With this one, we headed for the beach, which I now began to see was almost exactly like the North African beach on which we had held our maneuvers a couple of weeks earlier. The portion of the shore we were to hit had a convex shoreline, forming a cove. Our objective was in the centre. As we churned toward it, mortar shells were being fired at us from both sides of the cove. Two pairs of little escort boats moved up to where we were and started toward the shore on either side of us, laying down a smoke screen. Through the corridor in between, we made for the beach. None of the enemy shells came close. We touched shore and unloaded, then started back to our ship for another cargo. On our strip of beach there was no hand-to-hand combat at all.

THE rest of the day was, for us small-boat people, simply one of strain and work and the peculiar daze that strange sights produce in the human brain after a sleepless night. By eight o'clock in the morning, convoys of LCT (landing-craft tanks) and LCI (landing-craft infantry) ships were arriving. The LCT's were charging ashore and laying pontoon runways onto the sand. The others simply lowered their ramps as they approached the shore and amphibious trucks drove out into the water and chugged their way through the sea toward dry land. The drivers, sitting calmly and somewhat proudly at their steering wheels, looked as though they should have been wearing dusters, stiff straw hats, and goggles. Meanwhile, destroyers and cruisers were shelling points along the shore where resistance was being met. An occasional enemy plane came by and dropped a bomb. Once two Messerschmitts darted overhead and shot down one of our naval aircraft that had been acting as a target spotter for our men-of-war.

The surf was building up again and our personnel-landing craft were beginning to broach to on the beach. Not so the tank lighters. They backed their way off the sandy shore like so many scared hogs. After each round trip it was necessary to take a half bucket of sand out of the sand traps in their water-circulating systems, but they kept running, doing their jobs, and threatening the life of every man who had to climb down into them. The technique for boarding one from a ship is to climb down the vessel's debarkation net to a point just above the peak of the hucks the lighter is making. Then, if you can

manage it, you jump into the lighter. Getting back aboard ship is worse still. Even though you grab the ship's ladder at the peak of the buck, the lighter has only to take a lurch to break your back.

AROUND noon I debarked for a longer stay at the beach, where the men from our ship (troops and a Naval beach detail) had set up in business. Hearing that there were some Italian prisoners inland a way, I walked up a road to where an Italian-speaking seaman and a private had four under guard. One of them looked exactly like Ernest Hemingway—dark mustache, apple cheeks, and all. This fellow, through our interpreter, did most of the talking. He said there had been forty men and a lieutenant in his group and that when the shooting started the men had given the lieutenant the slip and gone toward the beach to surrender. When he was asked if he thought that the two nations would have much trouble patching things up after the war, he said that his side was sure we would give them a square deal. He added that he was sick of fighting (he'd been at it for five years) and of the Germans, for whom one never seemed to be able to do enough to please them. When asked if that was the general feeling, he reflectively doodled a foot in the loose, hot sand and then said, "At least as far north as Naples." These men were clad in uniforms which weren't worth more than a dollar when they were new and had been housed in a little stone barracks on a nearby hill. Their beds consisted of a rectangular stone at the head, another such stone at

the foot, lengths of cane from stone to stone, and a pad of sorts over the cane. The men said that there was nothing much to eat any more except bread, that the Germans had taken everything else.

As I left the prisoners, a rifle cracked nearby and I ducked. A moment later I walked on, but soon I heard another report and this time a bullet whined near my head. I had been warned that one of our own men might take a shot at me because I was in green coveralls and the Army was wearing wool OD uniforms. I yelled to the soldier who was guarding the prisoners and asked to be convoyed back to the beach. There, happily, I met a shipmate and was his guest at a luncheon of field rations and canteen water.

BACK at the ship, to which I have now returned, tired men are still unloading cargo into whatever smaller craft are available. The only break in the work comes when a plane flies over. Everybody eases his nervous strain by hollering a curse or two. As I finish writing this, a momentary lull has fallen over the ship. There are no lighters alongside to take on cargo. Men are sleeping in almost every conceivable position, not excluding standing up. In this open-sea anchorage there is danger of submarine attack, but we all feel fairly safe. Twenty-four hours ago there seemed to be nothing but disaster ahead of us. Now, this beachhead of Sicily, which is in effect the beachhead of Europe, is secure in Allied hands.

—GEORGE SESSONS PERRY



WE MOURN THE PASSING OF THESE SHIPMATES

Peter Beckett LTJG 52-54 10-10-11

Hebert E. Dalton SGS1 1997

William B. Hammond 50 11-16-09

Ted Imel CS3 6-2011

Ray W. Glasco 43-46 8-2011

Steve Rayos S1/c 43-44 2012

Angelo Varalli EM2 2011

Bob E. Dumas BMSN 52-55 6-15-11

Jim Hagans LT 60-62 2-3-12

Arnold Wiley MM3 43 12-2011

It stays forever in your heart



Thank You.....

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Bud Stout.....	50.00
Billie Trout, IMO Ray Glasco..	25.00
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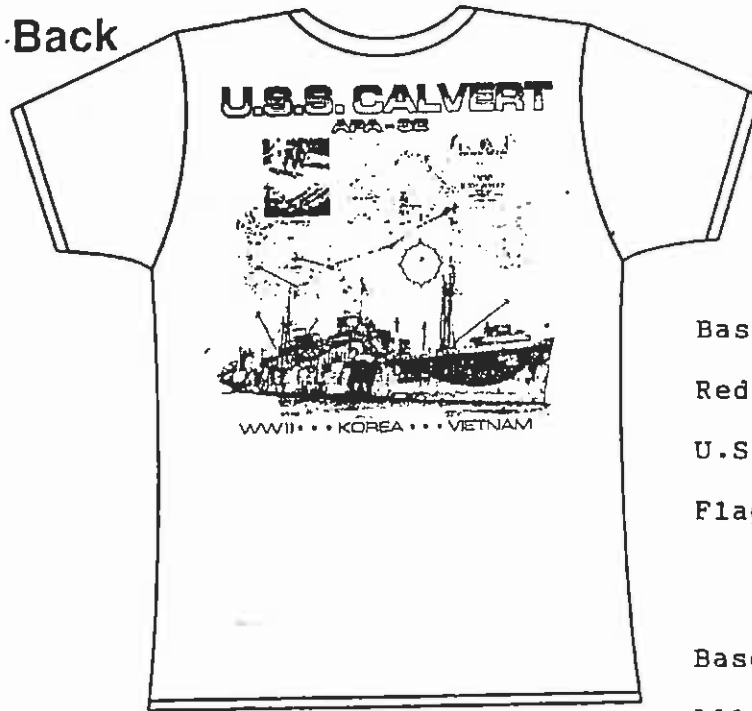
Troops aboard 1953
Photos by Stanley Edmonds





SHIP STORE

Back



T-shirts (sample shown)

M-L-XL-----\$6.00

2XL-----\$7.00

Baseball hats, soft

Red with blue brim

U.S.S. Calvert APA32, on front

Flag on back-----\$9.00

Baseball hat, hard

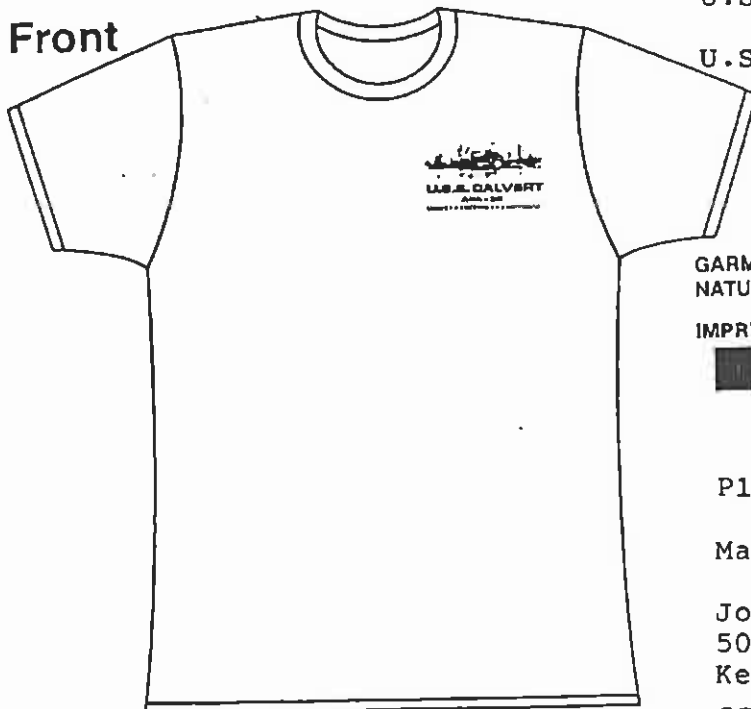
All blue

U.S. Navy insignia on front

U.S.S. Calvert APA32 on back

each-----\$12.00

Front



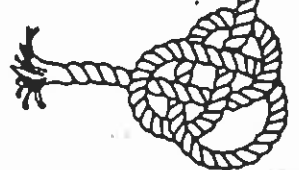
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John L. Cole
506 Red Wing ave.
Kenyon, Minnesota
55946



Since I allowed three pages for reunion information, I am scrambling for things to fill the space. I keep a lot of things I can use from time to time, but, I am running out. So if you have anything on the Calvert that you don't want, please send it to me. It will all end up at the museum in Maryland. The photos on the next pages were sent in by Carl Munson, taken on his cruse in 1956 and 57. Some great shots of a good ship.



Calvert in Naha, Okinawa





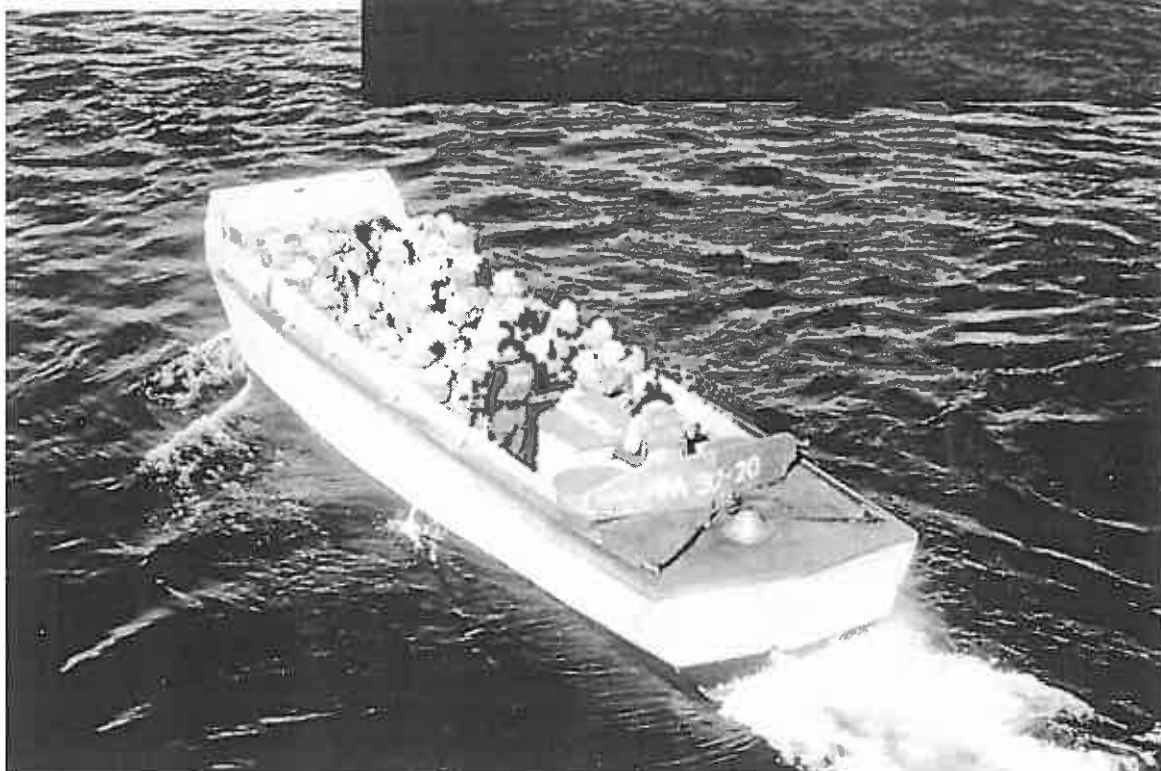
Calvert in San Diego



Calvert in Pearl



Iwo Jima
April 57 →

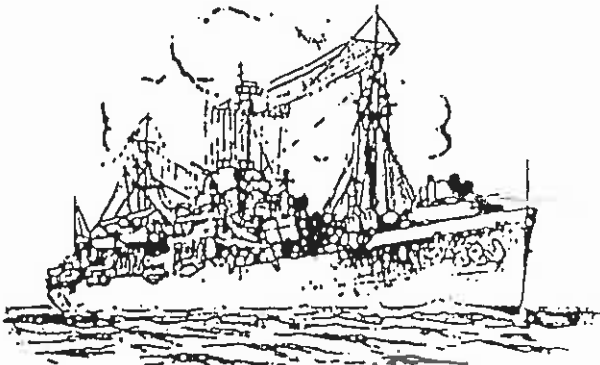


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1940s Navy Recruiting Posters

Posters from Hal Winter

