

**OLD Reunion Hall Table for:  
LORSTA Batan**

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**On 02/05/08 CWO4 Jon 'vK' von Kessel** said:

For those of you who may care, my e-mail has changed to what is now listed. Was on beautiful Batanes during 1965. Six years after leaving I returned and married school teacher Nelly Fagar Caronilla of Mahatao. We have lived in Honolulu for the past 37 years other than a tour in New Orleans and one in Japan. We make occasional returns to Batanes. There has been a lot of progress over the years. For those of you who were stationed there and have not been back, you would be greatly amazed at all of the progress that has taken place. They even have satellite TV and cell phone service. Also, the steep incline on the road going out of Itbud by Tom Balanay's house has been made much more gradual and easy to go-up or down. By the way, Tom passed away last year in Turlock, Calif. His brother Ben died in Itbud in 1976 - I was one of the last Loran Station crewmembers to see him alive - most of you recall how jovial he always was.

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**On 12/19/07 Daryl Barnes** said:

I was stationed on Batan 62 & part of 63. Have been trying to find web site with good pictures but no luck yet. I was SN/BM & consider that year one of the best of my life.

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**On 04/09/07 Mike Griffin** said:

FLASH -- UN is considering putting BATAN LORAN on the World Sites list. We need any and all information about the station from conception till the end in 1972. Send your stuff to William M. Griffin; Itbud, Uyugan, Batanes, IS. Philippines 3903 or Buch Abud; Basco, Batanes Is. Philippines 3900

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**On 03/31/07 Phil Platter** said:

Were you ever stationed at LORSTA Carolina Beach? Checkout 'Reunion News' for 6/2/07 reunion

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**On 08/04/05 Al Ballehr Rm2** said:

Served on Batan Loran May 65 thru Apr 66, have many good memories of the men I served with, the people who live there and the times we had

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**On 02/13/05 Mike Griffin** said:

Well I have live here for about nine months and it is just as it was when I was stationed here. The main difference is I love this place and the rest of you considered it a burden to be here. If you decide to visit some day I have the large two story house in front of the church in Itbud. Stop in and see us we will be happy to see you.

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**On 02/11/05 Jerry Simpkins** said:

Served on Batan island LORAN station from Aug-53 to Oct-53...there were 8 of us...3 trailers, 2 small butler buildings and a twelve man tent...when a storm was coming we dropped the tent on top of our cots and seabags and rolled 55 gal fuel drums over the edges...one big typhoon (can't remember the name) came over us...we never knew where the butler buildings went...the concrete slab and the cook stove were still there and the tent was just as we prepared it...amazing...that small cove with the big rock sticking up out at the entrance...would spear fish around it with a native from the village down the road...the PBY from Sangley would land in the cowpasture at the top of the hill...never went to the town on the other end of the island...nice place but very isolated...so.....God bless and have a great day.

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**On 05/10/04 CWO4 Jon 'vK' von Kessel** said:

Tom Balanay and his youngest daughter came to visit my wife and I here in Waikiki three months ago. We had a great

visit. Tom's health is not as good as what it was, but he is still as much fun as always with many jokes and great stories. Also, my e-mail address has changed for those of you who are interested.

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**On 12/15/03 Bill Sewell** said:

Mike, thank you for the view of Batanes website, brought back a lot of good memories. Were you there 1968-1969?

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**On 05/06/03 Mike Griffin** said:

I have been informed that the old station did not fall down in the earthquake as reported last year. I have received pictures and a written note from someone that has just returned from the island on a trip home and they were taken to the station as a tour group. It's still there, and from what I can see in the pictures - still in fair condition considering no one lives there since '73

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**On 01/31/03 Mike Griffin** said:

If you would like to see all of the things that Jon von Kessel has mention, type in Key Word Uyugan in the search portion of your Internet Explorer. It will take you to Uyugan Batanes and all of the updates you can see.

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**On 12/30/02 Jon von Kessel, CWO4,** said:

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that for those of you who were assigned to Batan that the island has greatly improved since 1971 when the station was turned over to the Philippines. Just a few improvements: Electricity is available for about 95% of the island and will be 24-hrs within a month. Telephone calls can be made to or from the islands of the province via calling stations in each major town. Satellite downlink TV is provided in most towns via a cable TV distribution system. Most people have TVs, refrigerators, gas stoves, motor cycles abound as do dozens of jeepneys covering most of the island all day long. The roads are essentially no better than back in the 60s, but the steep hill by Tom Balanay's house on the Song Song side of Itbud is not as steep as it was - a much better slope has been provided. PAL stopped flying to the island in June 1998 - my wife & I were on that last flight. Now there are other 'airlines' in the PI and one just crashed in Manila Bay en route to Basco, but a new one, Asian Spirit, is to start trips to Basco from Manila around Jan 2003. By the way, on 3/16/02 Cliff Dohr asked about Mt Iraya (not Oria) and erupting. Known eruptions were in ~1401 and ~600 A.D. and about 1 B.C. - one would conclude that it is time for another one. Batanes is on a fault line and most of the Taiwan earthquakes are felt in Itbayat with some on Batan island. A massive quake took place two years ago with an epic center only 30 miles southeast of Itbud in the ocean.

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**On 06/30/02 Lenny Hastings** said:

I loved it . I was there 69-70. Great memories, good buddies, young girlfriend.

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**On 03/16/02 Cliff Dohrer** said:

I was a seaman/a on the island in 1970-71. Yes, it was a great time. Anyone remember when Oria was going to blow? Or do you think we could find our way to our swimming hole on top of the hill? I think of the Island often. I don't think I'll ever try to tie up a chicken lizard again. Well, no more glass balls, native wine, comoties, or 5 line San Meguel beers out of the frig, but the memories will remain forever. Hello to: Zicardi, Shoe, Webster, the chief and all the rest

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**On 09/10/01 Michael O'Connor, LTJG** said:

I served a year on the island in 1967-1968 and it was the best year of my life. I remember the typhoons, the mud slides, the decrepit air port, but most of all I remember the wonderful people who lived there. Anyone know what happened to Gabino (Beeno) or Tom Belinay? My sea shells got donated to the Field Museum in Chicago (big tax write off). I miss the cock fights and the extended poker parties. We had a seaman called 'Swampy' who never lost a bet and an ET named Charlie Pream, who was great to have on the station. There was a school teacher named Ronnie and a native mechanic

named Johnny, who lived in Imnabu. When my ex-wife visited she stayed with them. These people are so innocent and charming. Even just remembering, after so many years, is still awesome. I promised to return (like MacArthur) but so far I haven't. Anyone wanting to remember those times can e-mail me.

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**On 01/01/01 Jon** said:

Served on Batan 1965. Great station. Too bad it is a shambles now. After being turned over to the Philippines in 1971 to 1976 the station went down hill all the way. The station closed for all practical purposes when the USCG turned it over to the PI. Visited the old station in June 1998. Only goats there now.

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**On 08/07/00 Mike Griffin** said:

Sorry to report that the station has fallen. And, I mean down! On July 11, 2000 at 1130 AM local time on Batanes, a 7.1 earthquake hit the island. Most of the damage has been confined to the southeast corner of the island. The town of Itbud has suffered over 70% destruction and the town of Imnbau has at least six homes with severe cracking. The station has been reported to be destroyed, by falling down and landslides from above. The accuracy of these reports are questionable, but it can be assumed that there is some truth in them.

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**On 01/26/00 LARRY POLITO RMCS(RET)** said:

REMEMBER HEARING THE SHELLS LANDING ON QUEMOY ISLAND WHEN THE NATIONALISTS RETREATED TO TAIWAN AND THE COMMUNISTS WERE BOMBING THEM ON THE LITTLE ISLAND. AT THAT TIME THERE WAS THE BIG WALL GOING UP TO PREVENT THE REST OF THE STATION BEING WASHED INTO THE OCEAN AND THEN CAME THE SWIMMING POOL. IT WAS QUITE AN EXPERIENCE AND THEN THEY CLOSED THE PLACE DOWN AND FROM WHAT I UNDERSTOOD THEY TURNED THE STATION OVER TO THE FILIPINOS. SOUNDS LIKE THE WHOLE PLACE IS A DISASTER AT THE END OF THE ISLAND. CAN'T BELIEVE ANYONE WOULD WANT TO VACATION ON BATANES WITH HOTELS AND ELECTRICITY! SOUNDS TOO CIVILIZED.

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**On 11/20/99 William Hiller** said:

1957/58: Anybody remember 'Bee-ding', or 'Tee-kai'?? How about 'Lan-zio' the ET hut-boy? I was there when that ridiculous swimming pool was started; cover up for Black Market, it was. ET2/1, then.

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**On 11/20/99 Hiller, (then ET2/1)** said:

1957/58. Anybody remember 'Bee-ding', or 'Tee-kai' ??I was there when that absurd 'swimming pool' idea was born. Cover up for Black Market, it was. Anybody remember Lan-zio, ET hut- boy?

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**On 06/25/99 William M. Griffin MKCM Ret.** said:

I have just returned from the island and to no surprise to station is all but gone. The land is being parceled off for farm land and barns. Everyone agrees that the site should be developed for a tourist spot. Many Europeans and Americans now make Batanes their home. None are from any of the old crews, and most were shocked that we gave up such a great place. Oh well, another bad decision made by well meaning 'leaders.'

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**On 05/20/99 Tom Jahn** said:

Yea verily. I served 1960-61 with Jerry Little. Roland was CO and replaced by Weiskettel. Other lucky people there were ET1 Wiersteiner (weightlifter with weak wrists), RM1 J.J. Watson (always trying to import something to sell to the locals) and ET2 Bob Cotter (6'5" 265#) Taught me how to play Cribbage at a peso a game (I never did learn). To all that served on Batan, SMILE, we are still going strong?? after nearly 40 years.

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**On 03/26/99 CWO Bob Schweikert** said:

Batan 58/59. RM1, Taught SN/RMC Joe Hedges everything heknows! (perhaps not always the correct things)  
Interestingtour, Loved the PI!

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**On 03/21/99 joe hedges** said:

was on batan in 1958/58 was a sn/bm at the time went to rm school l fm there ret in 1977. batan was quite a place back then. i see couple of you all go back there - when i was there there was nothing to go back to except probably the best looking island it the pacific. mr tyler was co and then comdt son mr roland was the co, we are the ones that built the swimming pool btwn the sea walls - never had enough water to fill it up. somewhere arnd hr i have a list of the names that was there with me. let me kno abt reuion if it is in the states me try and make it joe hedges

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**On 01/26/99 Jerry Little BMCS RET** said:

I was on Batanes in 1960-1961, when I first got there the station was the old quosent huts. The Kukui came up and we rebuilt the station and the old huts were destroyed. It was a great year there. Don't remember many names now but EN1 Quidley and EN1 Ard and Doc Sapp do come to mind. The CGC Nettle came every couple months and restocked us. There were about 300 drums of diesel and 500 cases of beer unloaded each trip.

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**On 12/17/98 JON von KESSEL, CWO4, RET** said:

Served on Batan during 1965. Married a gal from there six years later. Have made many trips back and last one was for six weeks (June 1, 1998 to July 11, 1998). We have many stories for anyone who is interested.

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**On 11/24/98 Mike Griffin** said:

I'm leaving for Batanes in late March of 99. Hope I have some news to give to the people when I get there.

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**On 11/20/98 Mike Griffin** said:

For those of you that have been assigned to Batanes you will remember the good times. We are trying to have a reunion sometime in April or May of the year 2000. The Governer will be there and we may want to place a plaque overlooking the site of the old station. Sad to say, but it's mostly rubble now. I was originally assigned in May of 1968 and left in June of 1969. I've been back in '73, '77, and in '95. Send me your thoughts on getting everyone together. There are hotels and electricity on the island now.

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