



**USS HOUSTON CA-30 BLUE BONNET
"The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast"**

Editor: Val Roberts-Poss 2501 Amen Corner, Pflugerville, TX 78660

Phone 512 989-0000 Fax 512 989-3227

Email: CA30NG@AOL.COM web: www.usshouston.org

Co-Editor Lin Drees

Founder: Otto Schwarz

**USS HOUSTON CA-30 SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION
AND NEXT GENERATIONS REUNION**

March 5-7, 2009

Doubletree- Allan Center

400 Dallas St, Houston, TX 77002

Call for room reservations Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm Central Time:

713 759-0202 or 800 222-8733

Advise you are with the USS Houston group for the \$89 per night rate
ALERT – Make your reservation ASAP! You can always cancel if you must!
Have your credit card ready to provide billing information

Contact: Val Poss 512 989-0000

Email: CA30NG@aol.com

DONATIONS – Helen & Howard Estes, Audrey & HARRY KELLEY, MARVIN SIZEMORE (left off last newsletter), Jim Fisher-Film Industry Services of Houston, Laura Stevens, Johan Vanleer, Ron & Lin Drees, BASIL BUNYARD. Eileen & ROBERT HANLEY, George Duffy, John & Susan Kreutzer, June & JOHN BARTZ

MAILBAG – We received a note from Mat Brawley (remember the young, tall PBS fellow behind the camera?) saying how much he and his beautiful wife enjoyed the Friday night dinner and auction. He expressed how much working on the documentary touched & inspired him & "has never been more proud to be associated with a project & grateful to have had the chance to help tell the story of these incredibly heroic men". He enclosed a donation to the scholarship donation..."such a great way to honor the men of the Houston & we very much want to do our part to help you reach your goals for sustainability. We were VERY grateful for PBS's generosity donating DVD's of the video for me to send to our survivors that were unable to attend the reunion along with a few extras that brought another \$840 to the scholarship kitty! Johan Vanleer sent me a commemorative stamp about the battles in the Pacific in 1942....it begins with

"Singapore falls Feb. 15" then jumps to "Philippines fall to Japanese: Battan April 9, Corregidor May 6" (no mention of the ABDA Fleet battles & lives lost)...as I sit here typing this gritting my teeth...heavy sigh! June Smith has moved to 760 W. Amarillo Av, Pahump, NV 89048 & lives with her daughter. We had a nice talk on the phone & she sends her love to all. An email from Mark Leavins advised that his great uncle Everett was aboard the Houston in '34 when FDR came aboard. They have donated the pictures to Auburn University. Prof. Janis Justus of Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, GA emailed to say they have expanded from a 2 to 4 year college. In their History Dept. they will offer courses in WWII history & will include the story of the *Houston*! We've provided copies of the DVD interviews of our survivors for their research. I received an email from Audrey Kelley that she was broad sided (totaling their car) but is out of the hospital and on the mend --- thank God! Sharron Long had hip replacement surgery recently & is slowly putting around. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

BACK PAY – A number of Sailors & Marines who were held as POW's during WWII are authorized to receive promotions back pay under the provisions of the fiscal year '01 Floyd D. Spence Defense Authorization Act. IN addition, their pay will be based upon current dollars rather than in '42 dollars..... I sent a special mail out to the survivors and widows after talking to the Dept. of the Navy & was advised of mailing only 700 letters. I strongly suspect they've lost track of a few men and wanted to get the word out quickly. It's especially hard to keep track of because the Public Law & Sect. numbers change. As of this date the information is as follows: "Sec. 683. Modification of amount of back pay for members of Navy & Marine Corps selected for promotion while interned as prisoners of war during WWII to take into account changes in consumer price. (1) Modification-Section 667© of the (as enacted into law by Public Law 106-398; 114 Stat. 1654A-170)(a amended by adding at the end of the following new Paragraph: (3) The amount determined for a Person under paragraph (1) shall be increased to reflect increases in cost of living since the basic pay referred to in paragraph (1)(0) was paid to or for that person, calculated on the basis of the Consumer Price Index (all items-United States city average) published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (b) Recalculation of previous Payment in the case of any Payment of back pay made to or for a person under section 667 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall - (Editors Note-Correct quotation from amendment skips to (2) below as received). (2) If the amount of back pay, as so recalculated, exceeds the amount of back pay so paid, pay the person or the surviving spouse of the person, an amount equal to the excess." **APPLICATIONS POSTMARKED SEPT. 20 AND EARLIER WILL BE PROCESSED** & affected Navy personnel Attn: WWII POW Back Pay (PERS-62W), 520 Integrity Dr., Milington, TN 28055-6200 (800 762-8567). Marine applications should be sent to: Headquarters, USMC, 2 Navy Annex, RFL-F7, Washington, DC 20380-1775 (866 472-7139). Call the appropriate number to get your form to fill out. I sent out letters to all of the survivors and widows on my mailing list with the form & asked they spread the word so the other widows could apply. I spoke to the Navy headquarters recently – many were returned for insufficient address. I've received several calls from survivors & widows stating they've received their checks are. A couple of people have had difficulties with their banks accepting the checks; however Chief Vickie Allen (901 874-4410) will be happy to assist if you run into a problem.

BATTLE OF BADOENG STRAIT – I realize I refer you readers to a lot of internet sites however, the information at the site is informative & I don't have room in the newsletter to cover it in its entirety. This is 7 ½ pages long---another battle forgotten by historians & omitted from history books! Go to: http://www.historynet.com/magazines/world_war_2/3788187.html

FROM DOWN UNDER – Major General Paul Stevens, AO (Retd), Director of the Australian Government Department of Veteran's Affairs (Office of Australian War Graves) wrote to report the new walkway project at Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum has been approved by the Thai Authorities & expect installation to be complete by Anzac Day '08. After the walkway is completed the Office of Australian War Graves plans to request permission to remove the old concrete staircase.

USS HOUSTON'S FATE QUESTIONED by RAdm. Clarence A. Hill Jr. USN (Ret)-

"I have some privileged information regarding the lost of *Houston* (CA-30) to supplement the article submitted by that ship's "Survivor Association" in your excellent July 1933 issue. It came about as a result of an exchange of correspondence with the late Adm. Page Smith whose last active duty assignment was as Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic & Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet.

I had written to Adm. Smith to seek his comments on a book review I had done on "Visions of Infamy", the work by author William Honan on the forecast of Pearl Harbor and WWII Pacific Campaigns as seen by newsman Hector Bywater as far back as 1921. In his reply the Admiral wrote, *inter alia*, as follows: 'The retirement of Admiral J.O. Richardson for over-criticism of Pearl Harbor – (as a death trap) – was repeated on Admiral Hart on 15 February 1942 when he demanded that his "fleet" retire to Australia to save valuable sailors (as) the ships weren't worth much. "When I was ordered to take charge of *Parrott* (DD-218) and *Pillsbury* (DD-227) in Surabaya, Java and proceed at night west through Sunda Strait to Tjilatjap, Java, I was told to then proceed to Bandoeng, Java (our headquarters). When I reached Vice Admiral Glassford, I said, 'Admiral, before I tell my story you must know that last night I passed *Houston* (in company with a royal Navy unit) coming into the Java Sea. If you don't order them out you will never see them again.' "He said, "Skipper, my hands are tied. The President has ordered me to stay with the Dutch (VADM Helfrich) until he releases us."

Admiral Smith was the epitome of the disciplined officer (in the Nimitz tradition) & would never submit to an oral history for fear of damaging someone else's reputation. I tell this story now of how *Houston* and the allied cruiser sailed into the midst of overwhelming odds for little gain and the loss of most of her crew, only to make the point that despite diplomatic considerations when it came to naval strategy and tactics the true professionals like Admirals J.O. Richardson and Thomas C. Hart knew what they were doing, it was the politicians who did not."

VETERAN'S DAY-HAWAII – The Veteran's Day Sunset Ceremony aboard the USS Missouri in Honolulu, HI is being dedicated to **YOU** - the survivors – the crew – the USS Houston CA-30.... **PLEASE** plan to attend! The CO of the current USS Houston SSN-713 will have the sub in port for the occasion and our very own Jim Hornfischer will be the keynote speaker! I've arranged a breakfast Veteran's Day morning at the Hale Koa. I've arranged for transportation for the survivors, wives, widows, elders, etc. Right now I have more people than the donated bus but I'm working on that.

Although I advised that the folks at the USS Missouri would have information about flights and rooms by the end of May, 1/2 of the folks wanted information right away BUT couldn't commit to the travel agent providing their information as to their travel time. It's impossible to arrange group travel rates when the group can't decide when they will travel as a group (did you keep up?)..... by the time we'd get decisions and at the rate the gas prices were going up, I suggested folks chose their own flights. Then – 2/3 were eligible to stay at the Hale Koa & the other 1/3 needed discounted rates. HOWEVER, to get group rates, I needed specific dates and committed numbers --- same song, 2nd verse. Most people who aren't staying at the Hale Koa are registering at The Iliki Hotel (800 949-3811) just 2 doors (.3 mi) away. SEE REGISTRATION FORM ON LAST PAGE.

ITEM OFF THE HOUSTON – An email was received referring to a picture taken of David Faltot during the 60th anniversary dive with them holding a wheel (valve or hatch?). After Jerry's fiasco with the Dept. of the Navy, I'd promised to report any items removed from the site and what museum that item was placed. I never heard of such an item. I contacted the person that had the picture posted on his web site & he claimed no knowledge of the wheel's whereabouts. We hadn't heard from David in several years, I tracked him down in Colorado & mailed a letter inquiring. Susan Kruezer also called his home several times without any luck. We've never heard back & referred the situation to Jerry Ranger to contact the folks he deals at the Dept. of the Navy when arranging for his dives since we promised to report items we knew of being removed from the site. To say the least, we are VERY disappointed we couldn't clear this up with David.

WEB SITES OF INTEREST: The following web sites provide interesting information about WWII in the Pacific: <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/USN-CN-Raids/index.html>, <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/USN-Chron/USN-Chron-1941.html> & <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/USN-Chron/USN-Chron-1942.html>

PURPLE HEART THOSE WHO DIED AS POW'S – (thank you Jane Matthews for checking this out) The Bill (Honor Our Fallen Prisoners of War Act) finally was accepted, and will be incorporated into the Manual of Military Decorations and Awards, DoD Directive 1348.33-M come June 2008. The bill that has been in the making for the past 4 years stipulates that the men who died while a POW since December 7, 1941 to the present would be awarded a Purple Heart Medal regardless of the cause of death. There are some exceptions and that would be that those men who were shot while a POW etc who were awarded a Purple Heart Medal for that would not get another one. The death of some men who were shot was reported to our people when they were freed. But a man who was wounded at capture and lived and who received a Purple Heart for that wound and who died from another cause later on in captivity would get another PH. Those who have survived captivity can apply for a Purple Heart and should get statements from other men who were there and who witnessed the beating etc. POWs who were beaten are now eligible for the PH but should have buddy letters to support their claim. There are RUMORS that all survivors of Bataan & Corregidor will receive Purple Hearts however, it's unsubstantiated.

CREWMEMBER SPOTLIGHT – MARVIN R. WYNN S1c

During the war my Grandparents clipped a local newspaper story about S1c Marvin A. Wynn who was a POW from the Houston. I compared the clipping and your list from the Lost Battalion and found that they had his name wrong, Winn, Marvin R. He died on the railroad at 100 kilo camp and is now buried in Plot B Row 0 Grave 1237 in Punchbowl Cemetery, Honolulu, Hawaii. He shows up on the ABMC website and the VA website. I will mail you a copy of the article and his picture from the newspaper tomorrow. He was from Ft Stockton, Texas. His family received his POW card December 28, 1943 and maintained hope for his return until the end of the war. Sadly when they received the card he had been dead for 2 months. (Unfortunately, the picture & news article were never received)

ACROSS THE POND – Tom Jowlett (son of AB aboard the *Exeter* & POW at Makassar on Celebes), emailed stating that he has taken over the responsibilities of organizing the veteran's annual reunion. He reports their '08 reunion began with a Friday afternoon social. Transportation was provided Saturday to go to Exeter where the Lord Mayor hosted a reception where the press interviewed the survivors. Canon Tom Honey, Dean at St. Andrew's Chapel welcomed the group and conducted a service including a moment of silence "announced by 'Last Post' sounded by the attending RM bugler". Steve Cairns read the FEPOW prayer and survivor Bill Guy laid the wreath. After the service, they went to the "Exeter White Ensign Club where the group enjoyed their excellent hospitality, including the ever popular 'Up-Spirits' issue of rum". That evening, 48 enjoyed dinner together including 8 survivors. "After an excellent meal, The Queen was toasted, followed by announcements, including a brief silence to remember Absent Friends & telling the group of the present *Exeter's* whereabouts & activities. After breakfast Sunday, they held a short service in the hotel conducted by a local padre. Tom shared a note of interest about a commemorative window in the Exeter Cathedral dedicated 12 noon, March 1, 1948 donated by the next-of-kin. The surplus money left over was used to provide a bed for the local Children's Ward. The group voted to donate any surplus money left over from their reunion to be donated to the Children's Ward of the local hospital.

LOST BATTALION – Congratulations to the newsletter team (131st LUTHER PRUTNY's family: Gail & Mike Bialas & Marsha & David Canright) for their hard work getting a long awaited newsletter out March '08! If you have news to share write Gail & Mike at 3321 Landershire, Plano, TX 75023-2416 (972 612-6768 or email: mgbialas@verizon.net). The reunion will be held in Dallas, TX August 14-16. More information will be provided in their June issue.

NOUS (NAVAL ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES) NEWS) – The NOUS is diligently working with Dr. David Chapman, Archivist, Cushing Library, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843 to preserve Naval history. If you have documents to send, please use a cover letter and indicate the enclosures are to be included in the NOUS Collection. The NOUS now has sufficient funds to plan for the dedication of the Navy D0Day Monument at Normandy. The dedication date will be Sept. 27, 2008. If you are interested in attending, make reservations at the Historic Tours website, www.ww2tours.com or call 800 222-1170. Make reservations promptly as the tour capacity will be limited to 150 people.

HEALTH ALERT - People who've had chickenpox have a 50% chance of getting shingles by age 85. 30% of people with shingles develop an excruciating painful complication called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN). The pain commonly persists for at least a year, often much longer. 15% will develop an even more devastating condition called ophthalmic zoster, a painful & blinding disease of the eyes. More people with PHN commit suicide because of the pain than do cancer victims. The shingles vaccine is about 60% effective in reducing the severity of shingles & prevents PHN in at least 2/3's of shingles sufferers age 60 or over. Some insurance plans don't cover the shot but it is definitely worth the cost [submitted by NOUS Surgeon General Tom Snyder, MC, USN (Ret)]. Max & I got our shots – how about you?

UNKNOWN GRAVE – Ron Beattie (Kanchiniburi Museum, Thailand) knows of a grave there & suspects it may be of a USS Houston man or at best an American. He sent me his research and I have spent hour after hour researching our records. I have incomplete records (Date of Birth & where buried & final resting place) on the following: IRVING FELIX, DONALD HILL, HAROLD JOHNSON, JOE LUSK, RUSSELL ROSS, FRANCIS WEILER, LOUIS HIRSCHBERG & ROBERT HITTLE. If anyone can provide the information, **please** let me know.

MUSEUM REPORTS - After ½ dozen years of working with different museums, the project(s) are almost complete. I have contacted Annapolis, US Navy Museum in DC, US Navy Monument, National WWII Museum, Nimitz AKA National Museum of the Pacific War, National POW Museum & Lexington Museum to see if they would be interested in items we had in our archives. No! We aren't severing our ties with the University of Houston Museum!! These are like items (POW postcards from the camps, etc.) The Lexington's CA-30 room is the size of a small bedroom or large walk in closet (the cruiser ship model isn't the CA-30). When Max & I went down there several years ago, we were told of improvements that were to be made. We were delighted because thousands of people go thru there every year. Every 6 months or so I'd email to see how things were progressing but got no reply. After few emails of concern about the lack luster display – and my queries didn't do much good – I suggested to the NG's to email them about it. They responded that no one had spoken of their concerns before..... In the mean time, when visiting the Navy Museum in DC, Trudy Schwarz & I noticed a ring on display noting it was a ring from an Annapolis man that went down with the ship. After investigating, we found out there was no officer with those initials aboard the CA-30 when it sank and the ring was an "officer's ring" but not an "Annapolis ring". I've not heard back from them stating they would correct the display..... Jane & Henry Matthews spent weeks converting the video interviews to DVD's. They mailed out copies of these interviews to the above mentioned museums. U of H sent a thank you. The National POW Museum called to say they'd received them but had to re-download them to "gold DVD's" because we used silver. The Chairman at the US Navy Memorial commented in passing they had received theirs & could use a few in their kiosks - no other acknowledgements were received..... I spent days going thru our archives to pull perishable items to give to the Nimitz Museum. I hadn't had any luck getting their interest, but when I heard of their plans to expand, I pursued them again. After several phone calls and emails, we agreed on items & Max & I drove to Fredericksburg, TX to hand them over. Lin & Ron Drees have "connections" with the Nimitz & will keep the enthusiasm going to have the CA-30 recognized. When the rest of our archives are scanned down life's road, we will then send what we have left on file to the University of Houston. To say the least, I'm glad to be finished with this HUGE project that had several little projects within it. I'm glad to breath a sigh of relief that part of the

“getting the word out” is over. It’s been a LONG 6 years! The first 3 months after Pearl Harbor have no mention of naval battles in the rotunda at the US Navy Monument. Trudy & I have written and called for about 2 years without any luck. Sharron Long realized that her husband & the chairman (Rick) at the US Navy Monument were classmates at Annapolis. Even better, a good friend (Ed) from those days is head of marketing there & she approached him. Ed & Rick called me via conference call and we will begin to try to have some acknowledgement of the Asiatic Fleet. However, ANOTHER person from the USNM called & I didn’t get good vibes. As per my mode of operations, I emailed him confirming our conversation & asked a few questions - specifically about him wanting us to purchase a plaque for \$2,500. The general consensus is the question why we should pay for a plaque for their oversight (no mention made of any of the 13 Navy engagements between Pearl Harbor & the battle of the Coral Sea). He called back somewhat disgruntled to put it mildly & told me “forget about the plaque”. Long story short – we seem to be back to square one. However, he didn’t intimidate me which seemed to annoy him even more. I had to explain that we might need to agree to disagree. Ahhh, working with these curators has taken a toll on my patience. Julie Grob & Pat Bozeman at U of H have spoiled me!! I was contacted by an informed source of a potential crisis at the Texas Military Forces Museum. It seems the new curator proposed plans to update and left out all but two displays in the Lost Battalion room. I had been stonewalled by this man before he was fired by the Nimitz Museum but was able to get confirmation in writing that the Lost Battalion room would not be closed but relocated & the items would continue to be displayed. One small problem was that the majority of the donations had neither been gifted nor loaned. I went down myself and took inventory & got some forms for gifting &/or loaning. I sent them out to the Houston family members concerned and sent the rest of the list & forms to the Lost Battalion organization to take care of their items. Problem solved....

SAILOR’S CREED - I AM A United States Sailor. I will support and defend the constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me. I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and all who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world. I proudly serve my country’s Navy combat team with Honor, Courage and Commitment. I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.

MARINE’S CREED - This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. My rifle, without me, is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless. I must fire my rifle true. I must shoot straighter than my enemy who is trying to kill me. I must shoot him before he shoots me. I will... My rifle and myself know that what counts in this war is not the rounds we fire, the noise of our burst, nor the smoke we make. We know that it is the hits that count. We will hit... My rifle is human, even as I, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a brother. I will learn its weaknesses, its strength, its parts, its accessories, its sights and its barrel. I will ever guard it against the ravages of weather and damage as I will ever guard my legs, my arms, my eyes and my heart against damage. I will keep my rifle clean and ready. We will become part of each other. We will... Before God, I swear this creed. My rifle and myself are the defenders of my country. We are the masters of our enemy. We are the saviors of my life. So be it, until there is no enemy, but peace!

TO THE HOUSTON CA-30 FAMILY FROM “TRUDY” SCHWARZ (04/’08)

It is the hope of this letter to reach your concerns for the future of our Houston Family bond. I am not capable to speak the way Otto would, but I have consulted with him on helping me out here and I think he will whisper in my ear.

In ’47 he decided that what he felt had been shared with his shipmates as they lived those dark days together, should continue in spite of the passing of time. More than that, those who did not return home would be remembered as long as there was some way to do that. The U.S.S. Houston Survivors Assn. was born.

When Otto’s time came that he could no longer do that, he wisely passed the baton on to Val and Lin who willingly took on the task. Since then they have done yeoman’s work and spread the story whenever possible. So too, have so many of you.

There is a passage that reads something like; 'there is a time for everything, and everything has a time'. So, please think a moment about where we are, in time.....

When the Houston Assn. grew to the NG, and now to the NG's, it was the first and probably the ONLY organization coming out of WWII that could make that statement. With growth comes added responsibility, and of course added work. Today's world is so much different than in Otto's, and the other men's day. The more we do the more has to be done; from tax forms to fund raising letters to research in many areas, and so on. Sixty years and still going strong has seen our group blessed in so many ways. All of this takes much effort. Even now, the unbelievable goal of an annual scholarship in the name of the ship and Assn. is within view of attaining the needed amount to assure that it will continue on in perpetuity!

All that having happened, surely we can do something to assure that the Houston CA-30 did not die at Sunda. It takes more than a skeleton crew to run a large ship. We do not feel we believe that the Sunda Battle alone won WWII; or that it deserves any more focus than any other effort of WWII that brought back our peace. But it does need its full complement aboard and we must remain focused on perpetuating the memory in whatever way we can. Much has been given, and is being given by our contributing members. So please express just how you feel about the future of our 'family'. What was begun back in '47 should continue on beyond the NG and that will take all of us chipping in, don't you think?

With many blessings, Trudy

NOW HEAR THIS!

All *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivors Association and Next Generations family:
Spread the word to all blood relations of the ship's crew, descendants, those associated through marriage, or any known persons with a keen interest in the *USS Houston*....

Scholarship Program - Applications are accepted beginning June 1 with the deadline for submission extending to November 1. Applications and specific information about applying may be obtained anytime by visiting our website or writing a request to:

John Keith Schwarz
2500 Clarendon Blvd Apt 121
Arlington, VA 22201

Applications are now available via the USS HOUSTON website (www.usshouston.org)

Those eligible to apply include students entering the final year of high school with anticipation of going to college, as well as all college under-graduates up through the final year of study. Previous applicants and winners can re-apply.

Applicants are required to present grades or evidence of progress in school and may present outside work experience, extra-curricular activities, etc. Applications must also present an essay.

The '08 -'09 scholarship will be in the amount of \$ 2,500.00

**** Please remember that donations are appreciated** – It would be an extraordinarily loving act to donate in honor of or in memory of a loved one. You can *remember the USS Houston Scholarship Fund in your will, estate planning, or beneficiary designations. All donations are tax deductible.*

Donations should be made out to: USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association & Next Generations.

Mail Donations to: Mrs. Pam Foster, 370 Lilac Ln., Lincoln, CA 95648

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE TO THE 'HOUSTON FAMILY': *NOW HEAR THIS;**

Your Scholarship Committee has re-affirmed its commitment to continue both external and internal fund raising to accumulate a benchmark one level of \$50,000.00. This is of the utmost importance; it would ensure that someone can receive an annual scholarship in the name of, because of and in memory of the men of the USS Houston CA-30 literally, forever. It makes the scholarship one additional element that forever can contribute to the perpetuation of the memory of men, and ship. The \$50,000.00 level insures that capital funds can be 'frozen' and

will never go below that amount as the scholarship award can be offered off interest earned. From that point on- additional capital obtained beyond the \$50,000.00 means a larger scholarship award (more capital- more interest earned).

To achieve this goal, your Committee will continue targeted external fund raising.

*To achieve this goal, we are asking all of our 'Houston Family' to consider making a \$100.00 donation during this year, but preferably within the next three months (by June 1). By so doing, we would make our goal ourselves.

*Please consider acting on this internal plea. One hundred dollars, a great way to defer a piece of the forthcoming U.S. recovery plan check.

*Remember- all donations are completely tax deductible.

*You may also supply leads of any prospective donors to anyone on the Committee who will follow through to make a formal plea to that person/business/organization/etc.

Scholarship fund balance as of May 12, 2008, \$40,254.48. Please write with an enclosed self addressed stamped envelope to Val Poss for a detailed report & she'll send you.

FROM DOWN UNDER – Bill Leeke took time to write “I am not a PERTH survivor. I was a Leading Stoker & a member of the Commissioning Ships Company of HMAS PERTH in July '39 at Portsmouth, Eng. The ship was christened by the then H.R.H. Princess Marina, and I was a member of the Guard. When war began in Sept of that year PERTH was stationed in the Caribbean & took several convoys to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

When PERTH returned to the Australian station, I was sent to the 20th Minesweepers flotilla & then later, to Darwin aboard HMAS MELVILLE. One of my duties in Darwin was accounting for oil fuels then stored in Naval oil tanks. During the Japanese advance southward HOUSTON was under attack more than once. HOUSTON entered Darwin harbor for fuel & I was responsible for the operation & the associated paperwork. I was impressed with the HOUSTON's stainless steel desks & fittings in her Engineers office & the use of a small calculating device, whereas PERTH's Engineers office was fitted with polished timber desks & brass work in the old style & our calculations were done longhand on paper.

Having agreed on a tonnage, and signatures obtained we were given hot rolls fresh from HOUSTON's ovens & good coffee & entertained by a cook/steward with a fine Texan drawl as he described his feelings during one sustained air attack some days before – He said, “Boy, when ah seen them bombs commin' down, Boy, did ah...ah...s***! At the time we cracked up but in retrospect it wasn't funny.”

After the war, Bill ran into HMAS PERTH stoker, Valentine “Dusty” Savage in '45. After the war, Dusty collected his back pay, allowances, etc. that amounted to a small fortune in those days – “enough to buy 3 good quality homes in suburbia Melbourne ...probably more than a million dollars in today's values”. Dusty got out of the Navy & within 7 months had spent the entire amount & ended up reenlisting! Bill wondered if “perhaps one or two HOUSTON POW survivors can equal Dusty's feat.

NEW BOOKS – Pattie Wright, film maker in Australia has written **The Men of the Line**. This story depicts the hardships of the Australians working on the Death Railway. To order go thru:

<http://www.mup.unimelb.edu.au/catalogue/0-522-85483-4.html> or Melbourne University

Publishing Ltd, 187 Grattan Street, Carlton, Victoria, Australia 3053. Phone:

+61393420300 Fax: +61393420399

Our very own USS Houston Historian, Don Kehn has written his first book! **A Blue Sea of Blood: Deciphering the Mysterious Fate of the USS Edsall**. It is due out by mid-December.

We'll keep you posted how to order!

USS RENTZ CONTACT – Commander Dave Glenister emailed to report they will be deploying to the Western Pacific in a few weeks. He & the crew has offered to accept letters from us to our loved ones and crew to be put over the side while they have a short ceremony over the **Houston** wreckage site. Get your letters to CDR Glenister before June 21st (I know – it's a rush order!) Send to CDR Dave Glenister, USN, Commanding Officer USS Rentz (FFG 46), FPO AP 76677-1500.

2008 Dive on the USS HOUSTON CA-30 By Jerry Ranger and David Phillips

On March 1, to March 10, 2008, the USS HOUSTON Dive Team dove on the USS HOUSTON CA-30 on the 66th anniversary of the sinking of the ship in Sunda Straits off the coast of Indonesia. Unlike the previous dives the dive team has done, this time the team was granted permission by the U.S. Navy to penetrate the ship with the VideoRay (ProIII GTO) ROV to survey the deterioration of the ship. The Dive Team's Mission is an effort to preserve the history of the USS HOUSTON CA-30 for the remaining WWII Survivors/Next Generations and above all, the sanctity of this ship will be respected, photographed, and sonar images being taken.

Prior to the Dive Team leaving the USA for Jakarta, we received word that the weather over the dive site had very rough seas, and the currents were very strong. They also had stopped ship movement in the straits. At this point we were committed to the expedition and there was no turning back now. Jolene Ranger Stewart, David Phillips and I (Jerry Ranger) landed in Jakarta a day later than Eunju Kim and Brad Gift. The dive team was to meet up in Merek a day before heading out to the dive site. On the way out to Merek, we got our driver to take us to Serang to check out the theater and prison where the Houston Survivors were held after making it to shore as POW's. We are glad we did, because they are remodeling the front of the building, and we got there just before they covered up the last of the sign on the original building. Photographs were taken of the construction of the building. We also got a short tour of the Prison and Photographs were taken too. The weather at this time was heavy rain off and on, with some strong winds making this a miserable day.

On March 1, 2008 my plans were to be anchored over the USS Houston on the day that it sank, but the 18-foot runabout from Ayer did not make it on time to take us out to the 70-foot government owned workboat. So we had to rent a small boat to take us out to the dive boat. Then the dive boat depth finder was broken so we could not see the Houston on the bottom when we got to it with the GPS numbers. We finally anchored the boat for the night, so that Brad, Eunju and Jolene could go back to shore, while David and I stayed on the boat for the night. During the night the current was so strong that we started moving closer to shore dragging the anchor on the bottom. So we had to re-anchor around 3AM to make sure that we stayed in one spot.

March 2, 2008 we finally found and anchored near the midsection of the Houston. We were able to make a couple dives on the Houston putting a safety line down on the stand ion that holds the gun mount at the rear of the front mast. On Jolene's first attempted dive on the Houston, the surface currents were strong and took one of her fins off her foot as she entered the water. She had to abort her dive, but I was able to make it down to take some pictures of the ship before returning to the Houston. David was trying to use the side-sonar to take a look at the Houston on the bottom. The seas were still too rough for him to get good pictures, so he stopped and got to make a dive on the Houston before we decided to call it quits for the day and headed back to shore so we could get Jolene some fins in Jakarta at the dive shop.

March 3, 2008 we arrived back at the dive site to start a new day of diving. We finally got Jolene down to the Houston to make history as the only brother and sister team to dive on the Houston. I was able to get pictures of my sister sitting on the gun support and take her to the hanger bay area before the currents changed. Called it a day headed back to shore for the night.

March 4-6, 2008 we would try to make 2 dives a day trying to get photographs of the ship if the currents would let us. David tried new stuff with the tether to combat the effects of the current by tethering to the safety line to the Houston to keep it in place, so he did not have to fight the horizontal current effects from the surface to the bottom while he ran the ROV in the turret and around the bridge area. David also tried to side scan the hull of the Houston getting some detailed images, when he was not diving or running the ROV. The weather, currents and visibility play a big part on what we could do and see of the Houston. Sometimes making for a short day on the dive boat.

March 7, 2008 we made an early dive on the Houston getting ready to move to the aft part of the ship. We finally found the opening to the aft hatch, which was covered by fishing nets. When we came up, we had visitors of a grandson of a Perth sailor who wanted to lay a wreath on the ship. Damian and his wife Helen with the help of David and Daniel went to the Perth, while we got things ready for the move. The current on the Perth was no better and only Daniel could go down and lay the wreath. After they returned back to the dive boat, the move was made and the Rov was set up for the next day to photograph the aft section of the ship. We then all headed to shore for a dinner and saying our goodbyes to Damian and Helen.

March 8, 2008 we began work on the aft section of the Houston. David penetrated the ROV through the hatch and it became very apparent that the deeper we penetrated the Houston, the less silt, barnacles and deterioration showed. We were not disappointed; in fact this made the trip entirely worth the hard efforts of the team. As we tried to follow the blueprints and I advised David that we had entered the CPO quarters which showed debris on the bottom of this room that show the Houston's violent end, which where bed frames piled up and lockers overturned. The Rov was getting excellent and clear footage in this part of the ship. We located portholes fully intact with glass and battle covers, and room fans still on their wall mounts. Very light silt has penetrated this portion of the wreck, though seawater corrosion has taken its toll on conduit, pipes and assorted rubbish that act as snares for the ROV's tether. The images seen were great, and David stated in his webpage the following, that it was very moving to be with Petty Officer John W. Ranger's son and daughter, seeing areas of the Houston that possibly have not been seen since Jerry and Jolene's father had to abandon the Houston when it sank. After Penetration as far as we could inside the Houston on the two decks we called it a night. This would be the last day and night we would be with Brad Gift and his wife Eunju before they head back to Korea.

March 9, 2008 after saying our goodbye to Brad and Eunju on the pier, we headed out to the dive boat with only half the dive team onboard. Daniel would be coming out later to dive with us. Today we had excellent diving day, despite fairly poor visibility, with currents being minimal. After some additional interior ROV flying/recording aft, we dove to the bottom, moved the ROV to an area on the port side just behind the hanger bay. Placing the ROV into a hatch in the deck, and then finishing the dive by going through the hanger bay, then up over and back to the safety line. We then started up the ROV, It was very apparent that the Houston is rapidly deteriorating. While inside, David turned the ROV camera upward and could see the orderly line of portholes on the port side as sunlit blue light poured in from above. But also visible was a massive crack with the battle or is simply the effect of corrosion and time. It is apparent the gravity on the massive hull plates will one day cause the ship to cave upon itself, probably sooner than later. The VideoRay kicks up almost zero silt and our images are wonderful. Lockers and bunks seem to be strewn on the bottom of the ship as we make 2-3 deck penetrations. David has been attempting to penetrate some of the smaller hatch openings, and it is very possible we have seen areas of the ship not penetrated before. Sea life is tolerant of the ROV and we have images of the wildlife. Puffer fish, jacks, anemone, stars seem to be thriving on the Houston.

On my second dive, I headed over to the bottom of the ship to see if I could find the torpedo hit on the port side. I was able to find it, and try to photograph the big hole and crack in the ship. I also could see 10 to 15 large fish swimming close to me. I was able to get two photographs of them before moving up and over the hull of the ship to find out was the torpedo hit was located on the

ship. I came across just in front of the hanger bay and I then headed for the safety line. After I checking the photographs, I could see that the fish were sharks in a school around the Houston. I had not seen any big fish until now and they had to be sharks. We returned to shore for the night.

March 10, 2008 today was our last day on the Houston. We did two dives with almost zero current and fair visibility. I covered the entire length of the Houston for one last time trying to photograph it with Video, while David used the Blue view imaging sonar, which may be beneficial as a kind of survey for the final resting position of the Houston.

For our final dive, David spends time swimming with the ROV while Jolene recorded. Daniel and I recovered the Mid-section marker safety line while David took one last pass by both large port shafts and rudder, confirming her last hard turn to starboard. Rust is visible in places on the external hull sections, and steel is flaking in massive pieces due to the corrosion, making the Houston not long for this world.

The dive team is ready to come home now, but would be interested in returning to continue documenting the Houston CA-30 and other World War II wrecks. The following is from David's webpage which speaks for the whole dive team: the World War II era wrecks in this area deserve to be treated with respect for the hundreds of men that lost their lives here in the Sunda Straits and the thousands lost in the world's other war theaters. These wrecks are not corroding iron; rather, they mark a point in time where a battle was won or lost, and clues to the final action of the crew can be gleaned if time is taken to look: final wheel and rudder maneuvers, battle hatches on port secured, the sheen of bunker oil clinging to the ROV, and damage of war visible on the ships.

The 2008 dive on the Houston was hard and took a lot out of the divers and equipment, but worth it to bring home some inside video and photographs of the Houston for the Survivors and the Next Generations.

This report was written from David Phillips webpage on VideoRay.com home page and Jerry and Jolene Ranger Stewart's dive notes.

We the USS HOUSTON CA-30 Dive Team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the sponsors of this trip.

Video Ray LLC: Transportation and Equipment support~Blue View Technologies: Equipment Marine Sonic Technologies~LTD: Side Scan Sonar MBT Divers, Inc: Dive Equipment and Support

USS Houston Survivors Association and Next Generations:

Survivor Harry T. Kelly, Survivor Marvin Sizemore, Survivor David Flynn, Survivor Bill Ingram, Survivor Howard Brooks, Family of Eugene Frey, Family of Lawrence Kondzela, Family of Arlie Williams, Family of William E. Garrett, Family of John W. Ranger, Family of Dick K. Nies Robert and Sharon Long, John & Susan Kreutzer, Audrey Kelly, Harry T. Kelly Jr, Carl B. Kelly, Max and Val Poss., Trudy Schwarz, John Schwarz, Jim and Sue Pogue, Marian Royce, Martha Loggins, John Waller, Ron and Lin Raney Drees, B. Raney.

USS Houston 2008 Dive Team Members

Jerry Ranger – Dive Team Leader ~ Brad Gift – Assistant Team Leader ~ Jolene Ranger Stewart – Diver ~ Eunju Kim – Diver ~ David Phillips – Diver/ROV/Sonar ~ Daniel Tangguh – Diver

NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR – To enroll yourself or a loved one email: www.thepurpleheart.com, call 877 28HONOR (284-66670, fax: 845 569-0382 or write at PO Box 207, Vails Gate, NY 12584.

LINE FROM LIN

Announcing the 2009 Memorial Service information - perhaps Val has already announced this earlier in the newsletter: the Memorial Service will be Saturday, March 7, 2009, 2 p.m. Most of the reunion events will be Friday and Saturday, but please plan to arrive by Thursday so that you will be ready to put on your running shoes for Friday! Seriously, Thursday is a nice, easy, leisurely day, no crowds make it easier to browse the book collection - have time to walk around Houston downtown.

We would have loved to have the Memorial Service on February 28, but that is the date for the Houston Rodeo Parade. Navigating around downtown that day is impossible. Several years ago we would always have the Service the closest date to the sinking, but the City of Houston changed the dates for the rodeo - and now we have to work around the date of the Rodeo Parade.

We are already deep into plans for 2009 - let us know if you would like to take charge of any part of the week-end events - or assist! The invitation has already been extended to The Houston Brass Band to again play for us next year. The Park around the Monument has already been reserved. Sharron has worked on the contract with the hotel.

Gary White is a volunteer at The Heritage Society - and has attended our Services when he is on duty to give home tours, plus years in between. Several years ago he approached me, telling me that he now found out that he has a connection to the USS *HOUSTON* that he did not previously know. His Mother had passed away and while going through her closet, he found a box with mail addressed to his Mother before she met and married his Father. The mail had USS *HOUSTON* postmarks! He had never known that she knew a sailor on the *HOUSTON*! He donated the mail to the UH Library. But fast forward to this year, he came to me, telling me that he wanted to buy duplicates of the flags that we fly so that they could be flown all the time over the Monument. Permission had already been granted by The Heritage Society. When he has all the flags, the flags will fly year around! What a nice friend!

Margaret Wampler calls me ever so often - just to keep in touch. She recently sent a check to help with reunion expenses - and said that she appreciates us sending her the Bluebonnet - and that she feels that she has been "lax in not supporting the organization." But we would not have an organization were it not for the Survivors and their Spouses who inspire us everyday. She also said that her health is not as good as she would like, but that she tries to stay active.

Manana - have a good summer - Lin and Ron Drees, 14219 Wickersham, Houston, TX 77077; 281.493.5171; lindrees.ca30@sbcglobal.net

FINANCIAL REPORT – After reading volumes of can & can't do's with the IRS, I am allowed to note the amount of funds in the kitty with an as of date. If someone desires a copy of the breakdown, please send me a self addressed envelope to mail it to you. This will save space in the newsletter. The IRS states we can charge for the report but I think that's a little heavy handed. Make your donations to: USS Houston CA-30, 2501 Amen Corner, Pflugerville, TX 78660. Our balance is \$2,573.32 as of May 21, 2008.

UNTIL NEXT ISSUE – GOD BLESS & HAVE A GOOD SUMMER!

VETERAN'S DAY SUNSET CEREMONY
ABOARD THE USS MISSOURI
DEDICATED TO THE USS HOUSTON CA-30 & HER CREW
4:45 PM NOVEMBER 11, 2008
REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME (S) _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY CHARTER BUS FOR SURVIVORS, WIVES,
SURVIVING SPOUSES:

SEATS _____

BREAKFAST 9:30AM AT HALE KOA

@ \$16.45 PER PERSON:

TOTAL : \$ _____ (NON REFUNDABLE)

NOTE: YOUR RESERVATION AND CHECK MUST BE RECEIVED (NOT
MAILED) **NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1ST**.

AFTER THAT DATE YOU MUST PROVIDE YOUR OWN TRANSPORTATION TO
THE SERVICE AND MAKE YOUR OWN BREAKFAST ARRANGEMENTS.

HOTEL INFORMATION- YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE YOUR OWN
RESERVATION. MOST PEOPLE ARE STAYING AT THE HALE KOA (MILITARY
FACILITY) OR 2 DOORS (.3 MI) DOWN AT THE ILIKAI HOTEL (reservations via
internet are cheapest <http://www.ilikaihotel.com/contact.html>) Phone 808 949-3811-
please remember the time difference when you call).

SHUTTLE BUS INFO FOR SURVIVORS, WIVES & SURVIVING SPOUSES:

Pick up: 3:30 pm sharp from Hale Koa Hotel to Battleship Missouri

Return: 6:30 pm from Battleship Missouri to Ilikai Hotel, Hilton Hawaiian Village,
& Hale Koa Hotel

Contact Val Poss (ca30ng@aol.com) or 512 989-0000

