



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

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

March 4-6, 2010

Doubletree- Allan Center

400 Dallas St, Houston, TX 77002

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS** - group rate of \$89 per night

**To be assured of obtaining the discounted rate of \$89, please make your hotel reservations by February 10, 2010; after this date, the rate may vary.**

#1 - During office hours, you may call Lindsey Sheffield, our personal representative, the Doubletree group coordinator, to make your reservations - her direct line, (713) 351-5757.

Also call her if you have problems w/ one of the below alternate methods to make your reservations: the 800 number or the website. Be sure to tell Lindsey that you are w/ the USS *HOUSTON* group.

#2 - You may dial 1-800-222-TREE and give the group name of USS *HOUSTON* before requesting your dates of stay.

#3 - [www.houstondowntown.doubletree.com](http://www.houstondowntown.doubletree.com) and enter the group code, USS.

**PURPLE HEART FOR POW'S** – First, you MUST inquire via submitting a request via a Congressional inquiry (contact your senator or house representative). If your military records do not indicate you earned a Purple Heart, you will be required to provide proof. We have records kept by OTTO SCHWARZ that may be of help. At this time our information does not include Navy, only Army in Battan or Corregidore. Our information only indicates Purple Hearts will be awarded to only those POW's that died in captivity. Both statements could be (and hopefully are) in error. That is why it is so very important for you to gather your information and contact your government official to assist you.

**DID YOU KNOW?** – The meaning of the Marine expression "HUA" means "heard, understood, acknowledged"?

**MAILBAG** – Years ago, Trudy & OTTO SCHWARZ hosted *HMAS Perth* survivor ARTHUR BANCROFT & wife Mirna during our Bicentennial celebrations in 1976. Every July 4<sup>th</sup> since, the Bancrofts have sent a “Happy Birthday USA” card to Trudy & Otto. What a fine and touching remembrance. Geneva King, widow of “PINKY” KING reports she has recurring breast cancer & into the lungs. She’s been on different treatments the last couple of years & now on a new Chemo pill. “Life is good & everyone keep me in your prayers”. I’m sad to report that BILL STEWART’S wife, Mary, died July 14<sup>th</sup> of complications from dementia. I received a message that both Eileen and ROBERT HANLEY have severe arthritis and are unable to travel any longer. To our surprise, they attended the Lost Battalion reunion and danced like teenagers putting the rest of us to shame. JACK FELIZ fell on their lanai at their condo in Honolulu. He broke his back but is already back on his feet! I received a picture of a group celebrating Anzac Day in Sydney Australia dated April 25, however there was no return address or notation who sent it. Thank you for the thought, whoever you are! Harry Mee died in Geelong Australia on August 27<sup>th</sup>. Harry swam to Sangieng Island in the Sunda Strait when Perth was sunk and he was one of the ten men who tried to sail back to Australia in a rigged life boat. Eventually, after 17 days, they surrendered in Tjilatjap. Silvia reports that HOWARD (BROOKS) had a wonderful time celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday October 30<sup>th</sup> with about 60 guests. Pat Cleary, nephew of VINCENT POLIDORO writes to say his son PO3cC Ryan Cleary joined the Navy last year out of high school. He’s just graduated from Nuclear Power Training Command in Charleston & is MM Nuke. He is off to Baliston Spa, NY for prototype training, then he wants to go to Norfolk. Wouldn’t it be fantastic if he’d be able to serve aboard the current *Houston*?

**NOW HEAR THIS!** GOOD IDEA! NG, Andrea Young came up with the idea to sign up with her payroll office to have a donation sent *as a direct deposit* to the USS Houston kitty. This was very easy to accomplish. Please contact me if you would like to do the same!

**SICK BAY** – After having chest & left arm pains, Audrey Kelley (HARRY KELLEY) spent two days (mid-September) in the hospital for observation and tests. Thank goodness it wasn’t a heart attack! Mirna Bancroft (wife of PERTH survivor, Arthur) spent almost 2 weeks in the hospital due to complications from an autoimmune disorder – first fighting a skin ulcer then painful large blisters developing around the site. This condition only affects 2 out of 1 million!! MARVIN SIZEMORE reported he got his new pacemaker Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> & just after 12 days of recovery is planning when he can get back to his golf game. Geneva King (widow of PINKIE KING) sends a note on occasion that she’s still dealing with breast cancer. Jimmie Pryor (widow of CHARLEY PRYOR) has been diagnosed with pre-Alzheimer’s. Our John Schwarz suddenly had chest pains and had to have a stent to off set a blockage. Pam Foster, NG, is having heart issues. Jerry Ranger had knee surgery that didn’t take & is going back again. I just KNOW I’ve overlooked someone and I apologize in advance.

## **DONATIONS**

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Organization previous balance: 4715.56 + 1801.27 (donations & sales) – expenses 1682.32 = 4834.51 total.

Donors to kitty this quarter: – Laura Stevens, BASIL BUNYARD, Frankie Gordon, Carol Pullen, Bette Fowler, Audie Lynch, Fred Viskovich, Andrea Young, Rosemary Adlong, Audrey & HARRY KELLEY & family, Howard & Helen Estes, Carolyn Raz, Henry & Jane Matthews, Bruce Dewald

Note – if I omitted your name, feel free to remind me

- Note – Tax ID # 74-2814051 for your tax deductions
- Gentle reminder-- some folks won’t be receiving complimentary newsletters in the future.

SCHOLARSHIP FINANCIAL REPORT - \$9232.89

## **LINE FROM LIN**

PLEASE START MAKING YOUR PLANS FOR MARCH, 2010 - Elsewhere Val will give you details as to what is happening when, plus see the attached registration form - fill in, write out your check, mail in, arrive in Houston. You will find a very gracious hospitality room, filled with USS *HOUSTON* family/ friends, books, brochures, personal albums (bring your own album, relating to the USS *HOUSTON* or WW II), and snacks. Added will be a very educational trip to The University of Houston to view the USS *HOUSTON* display of Special Collections, plus a reception in the Library. The Memorial Service Saturday will be awe-inspiring.

The reunion will be Friday and Saturday, but early birds are encouraged to start arriving Wednesday or Thursday. Thursday is a nice, easy, leisurely day, no crowds make it easier to browse the book collection - have time to walk around Houston downtown. The trip to UH will be shortly after lunch, Friday, so please arrive Thursday or very early Friday. All are encouraged to stay until Sunday. The hospitality suite will be set-up and be open until Saturday night. Please consider volunteering to help with set-up, nightly clean-up, or final take-down of the hospitality suite, and be sure to visit each day.

Friday night will be dinner, Scholarship recipients announcement, and the annual auction. Our Saturday night dinner speaker will be our own Don Kehn who recently authored *A BLUE SEA OF BLOOD: DECIPHERING THE MYSTERIOUS FATE OF THE USS EDSALL*. In our USS *HOUSTON* family, we have a family who had two brothers in the Navy, one on the *HOUSTON*, the second brother was on the *EDSALL*.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS & INFO and MEAL INFO - During office hours, you may call Lindsey Sheffield, our personal representative, the Doubletree group coordinator, to make your reservations - her direct line, (713) 351-5757. Also call her if you have problems w/ one of the below alternate methods to make your reservations: the 800 number or the website. Be sure to tell Lindsey that you are w/ the USS *HOUSTON* group. Or secondly, you may dial 1-800-222-TREE and give the group name of USS *HOUSTON* before requesting your dates of stay. Third method of making your reservation - [www.houstondowntown.doubletree.com](http://www.houstondowntown.doubletree.com) and enter the group code, USS. The group rate of \$89 will be in effect into the early part of the week after the Memorial Service if you wish to stay over a few days.

When making your hotel reservations, be sure to mention that you are with the USS *HOUSTON* group - and be sure to mention anything special that you wish, e.g., handicapped room or close to an elevator. Please do **not** make your reservations with a discount Internet site as we need all reservations to be made with the hotel in order to meet our contracted quotas. Please make your room reservations early to make certain that you do have a room as the hotel always has other events.

I have worked diligently with the hotel to keep down food and room costs. In order to maintain this past year's room rate of \$89.00, Val and I agreed that the Association would pay more for the hospitality suite. The first dinner rates that I was given was over forty dollars - I could not ask any of you to pay that much - and I was able to get the Friday and Saturday dinner rates down to \$30 (which is comparable; meals were \$30 and \$28 this past year) and the Saturday lunch rate down to \$23. Each meal includes entrée, salad, veggies, bread, dessert, and tea/coffee, plus gratuity. The entrées are listed on the registration form; if you cannot find anything to eat among the listings, please let me know. I personally like fish for the taste and the healthy benefit of fish - but remember the reunion is during Lent, so also please order fish for your Friday meal if that is your preference. Changes at dinner cannot be accommodated. Most hotels do not allow any outside food or drink to be brought into the hospitality suite. We have been lucky to have had that waived for us in the past. Due to liquor laws, we will be unable to bring in any liquor to be served in the hospitality suite, but the hotel will provide \$1 coupons to be used - one per purchased drink at the hotel bar - the purchased drink may then be brought

back into the hospitality suite. We have also been asked to only bring light snacks, no hot foods; we can not use hot plates nor crockpots. We will again have chests of ice and soft drinks.

VOLUNTEERING AND DONATIONS - Please consider volunteering - we have many volunteers and can always use more. Also please consider donating toward the expense of the reunion - or adopt a portion of the reunion. Several people have donated toward our expenses - and several have asked about suggestions for donating. For example, we spend money each year on flags to display around the Monument and smaller ones to hand out during the Service, we order chairs for your seating during the Service, we prepare and pay for printing the Memorial Service programs. Last year we had a tent for the Band since they always sit in the sun. With Hurricane Ike, the large tree was trimmed by the heavy winds and there is not as much shade, so we are considering getting a tent for our Survivors, Spouses, and Surviving Spouses. Following Otto's lead, we treat our Memorial Service dignitaries to lunch on Saturday, the cost for each is \$23. On your registration form, please consider checking that you will volunteer - or consider a special donation or special adoption.

REUNION REGISTRATION - As always, we will have buses to provide transportation to the UH Library for the reception and to view the USS *HOUSTON* collection on display. One bus will have a lift - please write on your registration form if you would like to be on the bus w/ the lift - or have special needs in regards to transportation on the bus, e.g., wheelchair access.

INDIVIDUAL WREATHS OR SPECIAL BOUQUETS FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE - In years past some families have brought a wreath or flowers to leave at the Monument after the Service. You are welcome to bring a wreath, bouquets, or even single flowers to leave at the Memorial Monument after the Memorial Service, .

PLEASE COME IN 2010 - Please mark March 5-6 on your 2010 calendar, and plan to come. Make plans to be an early bird and arrive on March 3 or 4. This past year (as every year) we had MANY new faces - please join us in 2010.

ANNAPOLIS - A change of subject! Val and I were invited to attend a dinner, honoring the Athletic Director and other staff from Annapolis who were in Houston for the Navy/Rice football game - which, incidentally, Navy won! The Athletic Director explained and gave examples of how participating in sports helps with leadership skills, also learning to cooperate later in Navy life and at battle, and of course, life in general. We were invited because John passed our names to Annapolis - John was originally invited because of his association with the USS *HOUSTON* Scholarship at Annapolis. Val and I had a wonderful time - were able to tell the *HOUSTON* story - and were able to invite the local alumni to our reunion/Memorial Service. Several expressed interest in participating at our next reunion and Memorial Service. We are hoping that some of them will be able to be with us, March, 2010.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, 2009 - AND HAPPY NEW YEAR, 2010 - We wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a very healthy New Year. Ron and Lin Drees - [lindrees.ca30@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lindrees.ca30@sbcglobal.net) - 14219 Wickersham, Houston, TX 77077, phone and fax, 281.493.5171.

**ITEMS FOR SALE** - We have USS Houston T shirts sizes medium to 2X, great looking Next Generation coffee cups, Monument pins, Bell pins, bumper stickers DVD's of interviews of the survivors, DVD of "The Last Stand of USS Houston (CA-30) Death Becomes The Ghost" & CD of crew pictures. Please go to <http://usshouston.org/news.htm> (bottom left) for the prices & order form or contact Val Poss for a price list.

**ASIATIC FLEET ROOM** – Report from John Schwarz August 28, 2009

Event this morning went great!; myself, Mom (Trudy), and Vic Campbell were amongst our folks in attendance along with the Asiatic Fleet/USS Marblehead contingency.

I wasn't expecting it but they asked me to speak at the actual dedication ceremony- dedicating the newly re-modeled Asiatic Fleet Room (08/28/09). So, I upped and 'winged it' figuring this was not the time to go into what I really want to say about what our organization is doing (that'll be Sunday, I hope). So I expressed essentially two sentiments; first, thanked all who made contribution to this beautiful room that too, signifies yet another example of that which 'perpetuates the memory of the Asiatic Fleet- the ships and her brave men', (more on that next). Second- I thanked each and every one of the Asiatic Fleet men in attendance for their service to our country and to their families once they were fortunate enough to come home.

Now for the room; it is totally re-done and is nothing short of fabulous. It is dressed with plenty of history, pictures, memorials, etc., and right there in front proudly sits one of the two models of our beloved CA-30.

As to the ongoing concern of visibility of this room, there will be a notice posted utilizing some nice artwork being developed in the outer, general public area of the Memorial which will alert visitors to the fact that the room is where it is. This should help promote its existence more for the casual visitor so that hopefully, this room will receive more exposure as we had desired and thus more attention yet drawn, to this part of Naval history.

That's the latest and best for now and trust me Team, it is really nice what is there now and the Asiatic Fleet group are as ours, examples of 'The Greatest Generation'.

**THAILAND-BURMA RAILWAY MUSEUM PLAQUE** –The family of BOB CHARLES donated the USS Houston CA-30 plaque designed by NG, Dana Charles to the Thailand-Burma Railway Museum. It's design is the helm (wood steering wheel) & in the center. The Lost Battalion voted to have their plaque to be connected with ours & will send both to the museum. 131<sup>st</sup> NG, Lori Buzzo is working with Houston NG, Dana Charles. At this time, the LB plaque is still in progress.

**FROM DOWN UNDER** – The Australian Dept. of Veteran's Affairs (Office of Australian War Graves) has graciously kept us informed of their project to build a new stairway at Hell Fire Pass. After a rock fall, the area has been closed. The bench locations and trestle bridge must be considered when trying to relocate the stairs. They are considering all options for safety. 8<sup>th</sup> AUSTRALIAN DIVISION SACRIFICES: nearly 2500 KIA in 5 weeks....1/3 of all Australian army battle deaths in 3 ½ years of the Pacific War.... ¼ of all army KIA (10,690) in all theatres over 6 years of war....including POW's, the total casualty list represents 66% of the total Army deaths in the War against Japan (15,161) & 53.4% of (18,713) in WWII. Digger Barrett sent a picture of himself in uniform taken in '38 at the very young age of 16. He also sent several pictures: speaking at the Yokohama Allied War Cemetery, with son at the Kanchiuburi Cemetery, & with Bill Flowers, Pres. EX POW's & Relatives Assn.....thank you! In the Rose Garden at Benalla, the same site holding the Weary Dunlop Memorial, a statue honoring Capt Hector Waller & all sailors lost at sea. The dedication date is March 14, 2010 with son, John Waller attending. John will also attend the annual regatta in Perth on 21 Feb with church service 28 Feb.

**THIS N THAT** - NG, Tim Klenk retired from his law firm & NG, Matt Kreutzer agreed to take over pro bono work for the organization. Shortly after Matt moved to another firm..... we filled out the paperwork and have followed him..... jus trying to stay honest!! Early this fall, I was contacted by George Hatfield, Jr, son of GEORGE HATFIELD, HMAS PERTH who was killed in action. George lives in Sydney, Australia and was traveling to San Antonio, TX. We agreed to meet for lunch & it was a lovely visit! George never met his father & was born 3 months after his dad was KIA. He

had taken his father's journals and had them published for his family members. I gave him a USS HOUSTON cap and he gave a copy of the published journal. What a wonderful legacy his father left for him!! It's such a blessing to have the privilege of meeting so many of these fine people.....just a part of the job! Ray Kester of the Asiatic Fleet reports a Memorial Commemorative Plaque for the Asiatic Fleet is now displayed inside the Naval Heritage Center opposite the gift shop behind the stairs. NG John Schwarz is still looking into getting something more visible in the public pavilion area but that involves a lot of funding. BILL INGRAM was featured in his local newspaper Veteran's Day! It was a very nice write up with his handsome mug shot of him in his uniform.

**NAVAL ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES, TEXAS COMMANDERY** – Companion Alan Lloyd was the guest speaker at the Midway Victory celebration June 4<sup>th</sup>. As a child, Alan witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He has done extensive research about WWII in the Pacific & has been a featured speaker at numerous functions. He is the National Director Emeritus of the Navy League and historian for the USS MISSOURI Memorial Association. On the National level, the Navy D-Day Monument has begun Phase II. Their appeal for funding to complete this project includes their address to send a donation to: Commander Robert Averill, USN (Ret), 3339 Lighthouse Point Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32250. Please make the check out to: The Naval Order Foundation. For more information visit: [www.normandymonument.org](http://www.normandymonument.org)

**BOOK TO READ** – Ever wonder why WWII vets came home without PTSD while the Vietnam, Persian Gulf and Iraqi vets did have problems? Simple, many combat vets had it but we just didn't hear about it because the vets were told to suck it up and live with it. Over time, the story got lost. The VA basically couldn't cope with all the problems.

Now there is a book to tell about the Greatest Generations problems, " Soldier from the War Returning; The Greatest Generation's Troubled Homecoming from World War II." In it, Thomas Childers tells about three vets who return and their problems of volatile behavior, infidelity, verbal abuse of spouse and children. What qualifies Childers to tell this story? Extensive research, interviews and correspondence with family members and the fact that one of the three vets was his father.

These are vets from Europe. One lost both legs in the Ardennes, his buddies were all killed by the same shell. One was shot down over Germany and spent over a year as a German POW, slowly starving till rescued by the Russians. Another lost a brother.

I recommend the book so that we can understand a bit better about what our people went through, before and after. Read the book and then decide about inviting Mr. Childers to a Memorial Service so we can tell him about the Pacific vets.

The ISBN number is 978-0-618-77368-8. Go to your local library and ask for an inter-library loan. It's free. The book was published this year so there may not be many copies available. Not many want to read about this topic

Thanks. Ron (Drees)

**AN ESSAY ON WORLD WAR II** - by LTC (Ret) William Brown

They walk a little slower these days, and the spring in their step is, for the most part, gone. Sometimes you have to speak louder when talking to them. Tim has taken, and is taking its toll on them. Their ranks grow thinner each day.

They probably appear to you like any ordinary group of old people, mostly retirees now, sitting on porch swings or in rocking chairs or wandering around malls. They're ordinary parents and grandparents in all respects, save one.

When they were young, they saved the world. No other generation in the history of the world can make that claim..... Not the founders of the American Revolutions, not the ancient Greeks or the Romans, not the Baby Boomers, not even the early Christians.

Granted, other generations have had great struggles, and other times have faced daunting challenges, but at best there were, here and there, saviors only of a town or a country, vanguards of unfulfilled promises, dreamers of visions.

America's World War II generation did not, as a group, achieve the heroism of Joan of Arch, nor is there any evidence their souls were "touched by fire" as the American Civil War experience was described by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. But who would deny that the actions of that generation had a much more profound effect on our world?

Yet isn't it ironically fitting that victory in the most intense, deadly and important struggle in human history should seem sort of ordinary to those who won it and to those who benefited the most from it?

You see, America's World War II generation saved the world, not for glory or for honor, not for lasting tribute on the printed page, but simply because it HAD to be done. No one else was available to do it.

It isn't that the British or the French or the Chinese or the Russians or any other freedom-loving peoples of the world didn't contribute mightily. They did. They suffered unutterably severe hardships, death and destruction. And that is precisely the point. With most of Europe in chains, Asia teetering on the edge of collapse, the Pacific in flames and the incredibly brave British hanging on by their fingernails, it fell to the Americans to save the world from the unspeakable horror or global fascist domination.

And who were these valiant warriors who secured the blessings of freedom and liberty for the world back in those dark days? Supermen? Millions of Davids or King Richards or equally well-known historical figures? Hardly. Certainly that war had its share of legends. But legends don't win wars. Men and women win wars. Ordinary people like my brother, two uncles and five cousins; people like your Uncle Roy; or maybe even your mother and father.

We need to take a long, loving look at these people now, while we have a chance. If you know any, give them a hug and say "Thanks". No individuals or groups have ever matched their achievements. God willing, no one will ever have to again.  
(Taken from Ex-OW Bulletin, February 2009)

**NOW HEAR THIS!**

**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 to: John Keith Schwarz, 2500 Clarendon Blvd., Apt 121, Arlington, VA 22201

*\*\* Please remember that donations are appreciated - 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. Mail Donations to: Mrs. Pam Foster, 370 Lilac Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648  
2010 Scholarship Award= **\$2500.00!**

### **SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE FROM CHAIRMAN JOHN SCHWARZ –**

\*Although this entry will appear in the December Bluebonnet, it is being written just days before the close of our current interval scholarship program window. The application end date is Nov. 1, this is written Oct. 28, 2009. It is hoped an announcement can be made on this element of our scholarship program in March 2010 at the annual reunion.

\*It is anticipated that there will be an announcement concerning our bi-annual permanent U.S. Naval Academy scholarship again at the March 2010 annual reunion in Houston, TX.

\*Our current internal scholarship fund balance will be posted here, or elsewhere in this newsletter. That fund fuels our program. Without it we cannot attempt to maintain safely, a yearly award of \$2500.00. As the NOW HEAR THIS box indicates, please consider donation as we ask for this consideration annually as in our program. For those who have already donated this year, THANK YOU! Also please remember if you have any "leads" that you would like myself or another committee member to follow up on for possible donation, like a company or trust fund source or something, please let me know. Also let me know if you would like to appropriate literature give to you to follow up on a lead, I'd be glad to get that to you.

\*Scholarship "AUCTION" – We will be running our annual reunion scholarship auction at the March 2010 reunion. This year's version will feature the much anticipated/enjoyed "live" version and a "silent auction" element that will show-case some selected items for longer viewing periods. This should be real fun and help significantly with our scholarship fund balance.

Remember - What funds this program are your generous donations of items to be auctioned and your checkbooks and bids on those items.

See you all in March – God Bless

John Keith Schwarz, Scholarship Program Chairman

**THE HOUSTON STORY CONTINUES TO BE TOLD** - Vic Campbell has just donated a large supply of books, videos, scripts and research data ( - much of it duplicates of materials held by the Next Generation or the Cruiser Houston Collection ) to The Institute of WWII and the Human Experience at Florida State, University. The collection includes materials and scripts that were written to produce the film "Last Stand of USS Houston" (Death Becomes the Ghost). The DVD is available on Amazon.com. Written oral histories and and memorial information supplied by the association were also included.

The materials are in their own index of USS Houston and Accession # 09.0157.

As time permits, old interviews made at reunions and provided as copies from other sources - are copied to DVD and will also be sent to the Institute. Copies of the raw and finished video materials remain with Vic Campbell in DVD format and will be indexed for access to the association or researchers in the future.

A filmmaker in Australia is working up production support for a film on the Battle of Sunda Strait. Vic Campbell's raw interviews with veterans from the Houston will be made available to this production at only a small charge to cover expenses. There is hope some of these find their way to the film .

**LITTLE KNOWN BENEFITS FOR VETERANS** - Online How to apply:

**[WWW.VeteranAid.org](http://WWW.VeteranAid.org)** OR **[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)** Call for help at Operation Veteran Aid at 405 703-3849 **(the following is taken from the internet)**

The Special Pension for Veterans' Aid and Attendance pays up to \$1,644 a month, \$19,736 annually, toward assisted living, nursing homes or in-home care for veterans 65 and older who served at least 90 days and one day during wartime — stateside or overseas. Veterans and their spouses can receive up to \$23,396 annually and spouses of deceased veterans, \$12,681. Yet, an estimated \$22 billion a year goes unclaimed, said Don Soard, a volunteer with Operation Veteran Aid in Oklahoma City. In 2007, only 134,000 seniors nationwide received the benefit, which was established in 1952.

"Literally hundreds of thousands don't even know about it," Soard said. "Due to incomplete information, many disqualify themselves on income or assets or find the paperwork too



burdensome."

Streamlined process Soard helps families complete the necessary forms, so that approval comes in four to six months. The process is streamlined for vets who are blind or have memory issues and widows with medical needs, he said. Most applicants qualify and payments are retroactive, Soard said. **The few who are denied on excessive liquid assets can seek financial advice to qualify**, he said.

Soard started his volunteer mission two years ago, following the deaths of two family members who served in WWII.

"If they'd known about this benefit, they'd have a much better quality of life in later years," he said. "Without it, many vets are forced to go on Medicaid."

Oklahoma is one of nine states where the welfare program doesn't cover assisted living costs. Assisted living often can be an alternative to a nursing home when 24-hour skilled care is not an absolute need, said Willie Ferguson, executive director of Legend at Rivendell in Oklahoma City. "But if someone just has Social Security and a small pension, it's not enough to live here," Ferguson said.

According to a 2008 MetLife survey, assisted living in Oklahoma averages \$2,346 a month, while nursing homes cost \$153 a day for a private room.

Of 73 Legend residents, nine receive the veterans' special pension, including Tom Bowen, 77, of Moore.

"Until I toured this operation, I had no idea the benefit was available," said Bowen, a retired engineer technician from the Federal Aviation Administration who served stateside during the Korean Conflict.

Bowen recently moved into the Legend facility following several mini strokes and a diagnosis of short-term memory loss.

<http://newsok.com/little-known-benefit-aids-veterans-of-wars/article/3344150#ixzz0XRrItcQh>

*Note: After speaking to the local VA here in Austin, TX, I found that the \$22 BILLION unclaimed is due to a little loophole.....most veterans are deemed to have too much money. It was suggested to have your assets put in a trust. Max & I are checking this out with our CPA. Please check with your tax man or attorney. I understand that Mr. Soard can be reached at 405 703-3849 & can also assist with your questions.*

**IN SEARCH OF** – S3c Theodore R. Duszynski: served aboard the CA-30 in the late 1930's. His niece, Dianna Rickard will accept your collect call at 330 332-8482 or email her at [zubi520@att.net](mailto:zubi520@att.net).

**IN CLOSING** – We are going full steam ahead! I'm proud to report we have a growing number of NG's that are actively participating to ensure the story of the *Houston* & her crew will be remembered. We are dedicated to the memory of the crew and our survivors to accomplish this goal. One last thought.... your email address is sincerely appreciated – I share breaking news immediately with those that have provided your email address (for instance BILL INGRAM's story with his picture) & the Veteran's Benefits news story..... Most of all, we need to give Lin Drees a huge thank you for negotiating rooms, meals, hospitality room with the hotel AND her putting together the Memorial Service. It's a huge headache with all of the details to take care of!!!

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

## AGENDA FOR 2010 REUNION

### WEDNESDAY – 3 PM

Set up hospitality room (Nautila-ground floor)

**THURSDAY – 8 AM – 10 PM** registration & hospitality room (Nautila-ground floor)

### FRIDAY

Hospitality & registration 8 AM – 10 PM

\*\* Hospitality room is closed during the University of Houston reception & dinner

Scholarship meeting 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM in Val's suite  
(room number not known until she checks into the hotel)

Bob Ivy's USS Houston ship model display (possibly – not confirmed) 9 AM – 11 AM

(Lunch on your own – List of local eateries available in the hospitality room. List of eateries nearby & those that are deliver available at concierge desk. **Please** double check when the restaurants will be open!

Light lunch for Survivors, spouses & surviving spouses – Lamar Room 11:30– 12:30

University of Houston Reception

1:00 Gather in Lobby to check-in prior to boarding bus

1:30 Sharp – bus departs

2:00 – 3:30 U of H reception

3:45 Sharp – bus departs for hotel

Dinner/Scholarship night 5:00 - 6:00PM - Silent Auction in hospitality room,  
6:00 – 7:00 – Dinner : Scholarship presentation & Auction in the Granger Room

### SATURDAY

Hospitality 8 AM – 9:30 AM \*\* Hospitality room closed during meals

Membership Meeting 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Lamar Room

Lunch –11:00 – 12:00PM Granger Room

Memorial set up – chairs, etc 12:00 (see Lin Drees to volunteer)

Memorial service 2 PM sharp  
(please arrive at 1:30 to enjoy the Houston Brass Band & be seated)

Board of Directors meeting 4:30 – 5:30 PM Val's suite

Dinner 6:30-8:30 PM Granger room (includes book presentation by Don Kehn)

Note: if the weather is bad, we will have the Memorial Service at the hotel.  
Live entertainment by Dana Charles tickling the ivories in the CA-30 Lounge (aka hospitality room)

If you have an urgent request, (ie: flat tire, dead battery, etc) please go to the hotel concierge desk for help.

## REGISTRATION FORM

USS HOUSTON Memorial Service/Reunion

March 3 - 6, 2010

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

DEADLINE – MUST BE POSTMARKED BY NO LATER THAN 2-13-10

**\*\*Please fill in even if you are only attending the Memorial Service - we want to include your relative in the listing for the Memorial Service when we call out names of ones who served on the HOUSTON; we can only do this if we know in advance as to who will be @ the Service. \*\***

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of crew member you are honoring and relationship (or state you are a friend) PLUS branch of service: \_\_\_\_\_

FEEL FREE TO USE BACK IF NECESSARY - **DID YOU PRINT CLEARLY?**

Anticipated date & time of arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday Dinner** 6:30PM (2 options) Lent starts Feb. 18th

Chicken Rollatini \$30.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Dill Crusted Salmon \$30.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday Lunch** 11:30AM

Linguini with Chef's Special Meatballs \$23.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday Dinner** 6:30PM (3 options)

Mahogany Steak \$30.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Ginger Soy Glazed Grilled Chicken \$30.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Smoked Pork Loin \$30.00 x # eating \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration** \$30 per person x # \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PLUS Late Registration after Feb.13, 2010** \$15 per person x # \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*I will only attend the Memorial Service - # \_\_\_\_\_ attending - I am making a donation toward the Memorial Service expenses - suggested at least \$5 per person, attending =**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*

Reception at University of Houston (Friday) \_\_\_\_\_ #

Bus seat needed to U of H \_\_\_\_\_ # Handicapped access \_\_\_\_\_ #

**I am including a donation/adoption toward 2010 expenses (tax deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**I wish to adopt (\$100) or donate to the flags ( \_\_\_\_\_ )- dignitary lunch (\$23 each) -**

**chairs, \$1.50 each - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward program printing - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward tent rental -**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_ your choice-fill in your choice \_\_\_\_\_ (place a circle around your choice)**

**GRAND TOTAL** (registration and donation) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a check for the total cost (your check is your receipt)

Make Payable to: USS Houston – Next Generation

Send to: Val Poss, 2501 Amen Corner, Pflugerville, TX 78660

I would like to volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ (choice of duty \_\_\_\_\_ or just assign me \_\_\_\_\_)

PLEASE INDICATE ALLERGIES to food (nuts, blue cheese, shellfish, eggs, etc.)

