

**Now Hear This!**

**Association Address:**

c/o John K. Schwarz,  
Executive Director  
2400 Clarendon Blvd., Apt. 211  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Association Phone Number:**

703-867-0142

**Address for Tax Deductible**

**Contributions:**

USS Houston Survivors'  
Association

c/o Pam Moura, Treasurer  
2065 Sutter View Lane,  
Lincoln, CA 95648  
(Please specify which fund:  
General or Scholarship)

**Association Email Contact:**

[Contact@USSHouston.org](mailto:Contact@USSHouston.org)

**Association Founded 1947**

By Otto and Trudy Schwarz

**USS Houston (CA-30) Remembered on  
Memorial Day 2020 Despite Pandemic**



On Saturday, May 23, 2020, the flags of the United States, Great Britain, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Australia were posted at the USS *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* Marker at Arlington National Cemetery in honor of the crews of both WWII warships. (Photo by John K. Schwarz)

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**MEMORIAL DAY 2020**

By John K. Schwarz

It was such a beautiful day on Saturday, May 23, 2020 of Memorial Day weekend at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) in Arlington, VA. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ANC has been closed to the general public through this Memorial Day weekend. But, access has continued for those with family passes, which has included me. (Continued on page 2)



(Continued from previous page)

I arrived early to the cemetery on this Saturday. There were very few people there, which helped create an atmosphere like I have never experienced before. All the gravestones, lined up, all clearly visible, all adorned with American flags, as if standing at attention awaiting family and friends who would normally visit on this solemn day. It was an honor to be there, truly an honor to be amongst our nation's heroes.

In the recent past, naval representatives of the WWII allied nations of ABDA have gathered on Memorial Day at the ANC to honor and hand salute the small American, British, Dutch and Australian flags posted next to the USS *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* marker located on McLellan Drive. This year, due to the cemetery closure and COVID-19 concerns, I placed the flags at the marker and rather than invite the ABDA representatives to participate in the salute ritual, I asked them to provide statements which we would publish in this issue of the Blue Bonnet.

The ABDA representatives provided the following statements:

#### **United States of America**

Samuel J. Cox RADM, USN (retired),  
Director of Naval History  
Curator for the Navy  
Director, Naval History and Heritage Command

"On this day, the United States Navy salutes the gallant men of USS *Houston* (CA30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29), who did their duty to the utmost, even in the face of overwhelming odds. They never gave up on their country or their honor. Their valor and sacrifice deserves to be remembered and will continue to serve as an inspiration to those who defend our nation at sea today and in the future."

#### **Great Britain**

Jim Morley, Commander, CEng FIMechE, Royal Navy  
Assistant Naval Attaché  
The British Embassy  
Washington D.C.

"Today the Royal Navy remembers the brave and gallant sailors of the ABDA force, and especially those of USS *Houston* (CA30) and HMAS *Perth*. They were in harm's way, with no safe haven and scarce resources, yet they continued to take the fight to the enemy. They laid the foundations for the successful alliances and partnerships that sustain us today. We truly are maritime partners, stronger together, building on their legacy. We must not waste the peace they fought so hard to gain for us; their sacrifice, and that of their families, will not be forgotten."

#### **The Kingdom of the Netherlands**

H.L.J. (Hugo) Ammerlaan, Captain (N), RNLN  
Naval and Assistant Defence Attaché USA and Mexico  
Office of the Defence Attaché  
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Washington, D.C.

"On this day, the Kingdom of the Netherlands salutes the men of USS *Houston* (CA30) and HMAS *Perth* as well as their families. They fought and often gave their lives in order to allow others to live in freedom. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten and will serve as an inspiration to all who defend their nations at sea and often beyond the horizon, today and in the future."

#### **Australia**

Mat Hudson, Commodore, RAN  
Naval Attaché, Embassy of Australia  
Washington, D.C.

"Today Australia commemorates the valiant men of USS *Houston* (CA30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) who fought with steel and determination against overwhelming odds. They took to fight and not to flight. Their gift to us is their example of courage and dedication in the defence of freedom that strengthens our own resolve to continue their good deeds."



*From the desk of the Executive Director*  
**John K. Schwarz**

My report comes to you with the hope that it finds each member of our group well and free of the COVID-19 infection. For anyone who may have contracted it, we wish you the best in your recovery. Everyone: please be careful and follow the guidelines!

The pandemic has delayed our normal planning cycle which would have begun immediately after this year's "Day of Remembrance" gathering (7 March 2020). We've maintained contact with our Houston hotel in the Galleria area but have not finalized anything yet for 2021 as Houston has had an 'up-tick' in reported COVID-19 cases. However, we remain optimistic that our traditional gathering will not be interrupted (**26** consecutive memorial services with hopes for **Number 27** in **March 2021**). We will continue to keep everyone posted through our normal communication channels.

Speaking of communication channels, our President Sue Kreutzer has been leading the Board of Managers through an exercise to update our roster which will result in an accurate distribution list of members, friends and associates. Maintenance and usage of the roster, resulting in email communications, is time consuming and requires valuable volunteer administrative hours which is among the reasons why the roster is limited to the privilege that comes with membership. In that light, please remember that only Association membership entitles you to be included in the roster. Please let us know if your contact information changes; email all notifications to:  
[contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org).

- A Reminder: This year's scholarship program application deadline is fast approaching (**November 1, 2020**).
- Our Association's finances remain healthy. A reminder: In all probability we all deal with Amazon.com to one extent or another. We ask for your consideration in signing in to, and shopping through, AmazonSmile. It offers you, the consumer, the same product access and pricing while at the same time the Association receives a modest contribution for every dollar spent. This is an additional way to contribute to our Association's financial well-being. If you need any further guidance on this, please contact our Treasurer, Pam Moura, at [Pam@usshouston.org](mailto:Pam@usshouston.org).
- The pandemic lock-down affords a great time to catch up on a lot of things including reading. This edition and last has offered great recommendations for books relative to WWII containing perspective on the terribly ill-prepared/un-protected situation in which our men were placed. Also note the availability of Don Kehn Jr.'s latest, brilliant book, ***In the Highest Degree Tragic*** and U.S. Marine survivor H. Robert Charles' book, ***Last Man Out*** (via Kindle). Both include storylines directly related to the USS *Houston* CA-30 and her brave men.

Please be careful and stay safe and healthy.

John K. Schwarz

## ***"LEST WE FORGET"***

By Don Kehn, Jr.

Historian, USS Houston (CA-30) Survivors' Association and Next Generations®

These are some biographical notes on some men of USS *Houston* (CA-30) as recollected by CA-30 survivor John A. Harrell, Y3/c in interviews with Samuel Milner. Harrell gave Sam remarks on officers, enlisted men, several Chinese mess attendants, and a trio of Australian sailors from HMAS *Perth* also captured on Java. Some of his memories are quite detailed, while others are rudimentary or merely physical. He recalled one sailor in particular whose identity elicited a personnel mystery. I've not attempted to verify spellings of the Chinese mess attendants' names, but in general they seem to agree with the 1983 roster created by the late CA-30 Survivor Bill Weissinger, which appears in the book ***The Ghost That Died in Sunda Strait***. A few details on the *Perth* sailors came from Mike Carlton's fine 2010 book, ***Cruiser: The Life and Loss of HMAS Perth and Her Crew***, while others are from my own personal interactions with men I knew. Harrell was a Yeoman 3/c in the Communications Division (C Div.) under LT E. D. Hodge, *Houston's* Communications Officer.

**LT Ernest D. Hodge.** About 5'10-1/2", ~160 lbs. Knew his men by name, understood their capabilities, helped men in their studies. Very intelligent officer--the Navy had sent him to college for a post-graduate course in mathematics and communications. Ruddy complexion, with black hair. Was lost in the Battle of Sunda Strait.

**F. A. Gilet, CWO.** Described by Harrell as a "*small man, [who] carried himself erect, good posture.*" Rather dark-haired with a weather-beaten complexion. Was a very proficient communications man. Made Harrell feel WO's were the men to talk to for any questions. Lost at Sunda Strait.

**Eugene A. Huebler, Jr., Bugler 1/c.** Said to have been a slender youngster about 18 years of age, dark-haired, maybe 5'9". An unsophisticated country-boy type; after being shown what to do, though, he was a good helper, & showed no fear. Captured after Sunda Strait, POW, and survived the war.

**Jack Burge, S1/c.** (Unrelated to J. O. Burge.) Had no middle name; slender, and tall--maybe 6' or 6'1" tall --and extroverted, with dirty-blond hair. Survived the war as POW.

**LT(jg) Francis B. Weiler, USNA 1939.** A slender man, about 5'8" tall, 145 lbs., light skin, dark hair, with the bearing of an Academy man, but very democratic type, who did not pull rank on others. Suffered great pain after being wounded in Battle of Sunda Strait, yet still assisted with dressing his wounds, when changing bandages. Never let the wound get him down. Harrell only knew him briefly--for about 12 days--prior to Weiler's going to Pandeglang hospital on Java...Weiler is reported to have completely refused to eat rice, however. Died in Pandeglang hospital on March 26 from his wounds.

**LT Russell Roosevelt Ross, USNA 1930.** Approximately 5'9" tall, medium/chunky build, dark hair and dark complexion. Was more of a disciplinarian than many of the other officers--he was also known as "*the Old Lieutenant*"--but was not a success when running things for the CA-30 men at the POW camp at Batavia initially. LT Ross was considered an aloof individual. Did not have the personality of Harold Hamlin, it was said; made it difficult for men to talk to him directly. They had to go through Hamlin first, etc. Set up no administrative procedures in camp at first. He died of dysentery in POW camp at Batavia in the first week of May, 1942 and Hamlin assumed many of his responsibilities. Harrell suggested that LT Ross could have also been suffering from the after-effects [ "*shock*" ] of the combat he had been through in the naval campaign.

**LT (jg) Leon Rogers, USNA 1938.** As many others have attested, Lee "Buck" Rogers was regarded as a fine officer, and a "*very inventive type*", meaning mechanically clever. Good ruddy complexion; at one time had a full Van Dyke beard in camp. Men thought of him as much like the chaplain—an officer they could take their troubles to, even when Rogers himself was ill later (from his serious tropical ulcer infections) and in hospital. And even when sick he was felt to be a good organizer.

LT(jg) Rogers survived the war as POW, but had to undergo lengthy & gruesome skin transplant procedures to deal with his tropical ulcers.

**Virgil N. Jones.** This sailor was KIA on Feb 4, 1942, as a member of *Houston's* After Damage Control Party under Bosun Joe Beinert. However, there is no such person listed in any muster rolls of *Houston*. It appears Harrell had misremembered the last name: it was in fact Virgil N. King, S2/c. Harrell recalled him as a small ("*...about 5'3" ...schoolboyish*"), chubby blonde youngster, fresh-faced and smooth-skinned, roughly 18-19 years of age. Official muster rolls show that King was part of the Flag Allowance for ADM Hart & staff on *Houston*.

**Ah Chie, M.Att.1/c.** One of the Chinese mess attendants on the cruiser, and noted as "*...a source of amusement usually, as his adjectives were always blasphemous.*" Despite his colorful language, he could make himself understood and "*...convey his meaning.*" Described as "*skinny*" and dark for a Chinese, but with "*good, clean-cut features*", he was "*trustworthy*" and had a "*passionate*" hatred of the Japanese.

**Yu Kun, M.Att.1/c.** An older Chinese mess attendant, said to be about 5'8" tall, round-faced and inclined to heaviness, with "*a heart of gold.*" His English was poor, but his spirit unflagging, "*...he never gave up hope.*" He would slip food at times to Harrell. Said to have been a great cook with anything that was at hand.

**Chu Li Tsao, M.Att.1/c.** Harrell recalled Tsao as a large man (maybe 6'1" tall and about 225 lbs) from North China, educated and highly intelligent. Spoke excellent English, and was the leader of five (5) Chinese survivors who were with Harrell's group. They were said to have looked up to Tsao. A heavy smoker, at night he often slept next to Harrell, and ground his teeth and grunted so loudly in sleep that John frequently had to wake him up.

**Gavin Campbell, Sub-LT.** Officer (Paymaster & also Captain Waller's Secretary) from HMAS *Perth*, who had been wounded in the sinking. (His leg was broken by one of the torpedo hits.) A big, handsome man with good, straight features, said to have been large-boned, about 6'2" and 200-225 lbs., and no fat. He had a "*bright outlook on life*" according to Harrell, and was appreciative of anything done for him.

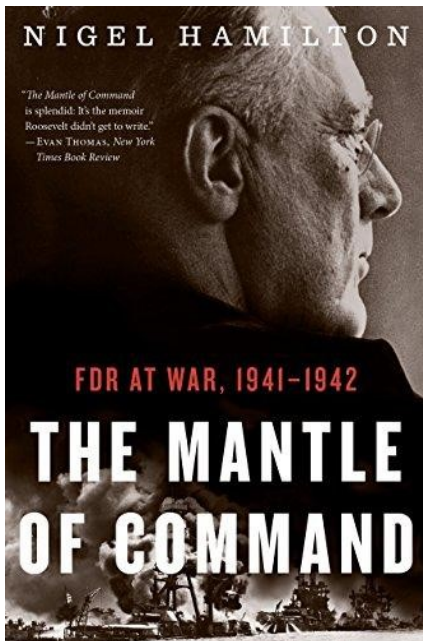
**Dennis Maher, AB.** Came ashore on Java with Campbell and Webster, apparently. Also wounded in *Perth's* final engagement. Died as a POW in December 1944. Harrell remembered him as being about 5'10" and 180 lbs., with dark hair and a round face, and "*eyes crinkled from laughing.*" He had a "*happy disposition*" and wanted to do his share even when ill. John thought he was the kind of man you wanted "*...to have behind you in a barroom brawl.*"

**Gordon Webster, AB.** Another *Perth* survivor, he was of slight build, about 5'9" tall and perhaps 135-140 lbs., with dark eyes that appeared almost black. A sharp-featured and thoughtful individual who was moody at times, but who "*...could be talked out of it.*" Webster was recalled by Harrell as a man with "*...a great deal of courage and stamina.*"





## BOOK REVIEW



### ***The Mantle of Command, FDR at War, 1941—1942***

by Nigel Hamilton

This might be yet the best book I've obtained regarding FDR and the events of the period from 1941 through 1942. There is one chapter alone in the book which makes it well worth the investment. It is entitled, "Lessons from the Pacific." That chapter chronicles the report made in person from the just-relieved Pacific Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief in the Southwest Pacific, Admiral Thomas Hart, USN. Here he is presenting in person to the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a brutally honest, candid and truthful description of what the situation was in the Pacific Theater during this initial portion of WWII. It is an astonishing account and one that provides profound insight into the period directly affecting the USS *Houston* CA-30, HMAS *Perth* (D-29) and the entire ABDA command. The book is available at Amazon-dot-com and please don't forget to sign up in AmazonSmile for the

You may have noticed the two book reviews appearing in the last Blue Bonnet (April, 2020), and with this edition yet another is featured. What has happened is that I have been researching WWII history while I've been attempting to revitalize the visual presentations my father, Otto Schwarz, used to do regarding USS *Houston* CA-30 at schools, veterans' centers, etc. His presentation will actually be the crust of what I am planning as I have him captured on DVD. I am also adding a predicate portion and some more up-to-date information such as what the Survivors' Association continues to do. Hence, the ramping up of research to be better able to deal with questions that may arise from a Q & A segment after the base content is delivered, if time permits. Our ship model case builder Michael Aufiero plans to join me in this effort.

So given that and the fact that I occasionally shop at 'Dollar Tree' stores, I have been able to get lucky with the purchase of books that reflect history leading up to the *Houston's* participation in WWII and the study of FDR in particular. Doing so is key to us next generationers; it helps us greatly to understand and put into perspective the situation in which our beloved men of the *Houston* found themselves, resulting in the horrendous experiences they encountered. — John K. Schwarz



Japanese Postcard; Artist—unknown

## CREW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



### COMMANDER GEORGE S. RENTZ, USN CHAPLAIN, USS *Houston* (CA-30)

By Joseph L. and Marlene Morris McCain

George Snavely Rentz was born in 1882 at Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He earned a degree from Gettysburg College in 1903 and then went on to Princeton Theological Seminary. He was ordained in 1909. He joined the U.S. Navy during World War I and was assigned as a chaplain to the 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment in France. By 1924, he had attained the rank of Commander and continued his service aboard various Navy ships. In 1940, he was transferred from the USS *Augusta* to the USS *Houston* when *Houston* became the flagship of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet.

Chaplain Rentz was a great favorite with the enlisted men. Even when under fire from enemy forces, he could be seen walking the decks among the gun crews, offering encouragement and a cold drink of water or a candy bar. Sometimes, regardless of Navy regulations, he was known to dispense a small nip of alcoholic spirits to the exhausted sailors. They were always grateful for it.

Let us now back up to a time in Chaplain Rentz's life just before the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. In July 1941, Chaplain Rentz became rightfully concerned that the *Houston's* band was overpowering the choir during church services. A young sailor, MUS2C Edgar Morris, was a member of the band and the pianist for the *Houston's* orchestra. The Chaplain asked him if he could play an organ if one could be obtained. Morris's answer was that he would "do my best". A day or so later, Chaplain Rentz summoned Morris to his cabin and there sat a military issue portable folding organ (designed to be carried by one or two people when folded). Morris was asked to have a few numbers ready by afternoon for a demonstration to see if Captain Oldendorf would approve. Captain Oldendorf did approve, and Musician Morris was assigned to play for church services "from now on." The little organ also was transported to the USS *Marblehead* for their services and often used to entertain the *Houston* crew before Saturday night movies.



By late October, the *Houston* had a new bandmaster and it was decided that young Morris was to be relieved of ship's orchestra duties and devote his time to the church services. After December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 it no longer mattered as the orchestra members had no time to do anything but man battle stations, although church services still were held aboard ship.

On February 4, 1942, the *Houston* was struck by a Japanese bomb adjacent to Turret Number 3 and 48 crewmen were killed. Several others were wounded. The *Houston* sailed to Tjilatjap, Java. Arriving on February 5th, a work party found enough lumber ashore to make coffins. Early on the following morning, Dutch Army trucks were lined up at dockside to transport the dead shipmates to their final resting place in a small Dutch cemetery. As the 48 coffins were carried down the gangway, the crew stood at attention while *Houston's* band played the Funeral Dirge. After the last casket was loaded, Chaplain Rentz conducted a funeral service and led the men in prayer.



The trucks then moved slowly to the burial site with several hundred of the crew following, enlisted men behind the trucks and the ship's officers at the rear of the procession. At the cemetery, Chaplain Rentz led the company in prayer. After a gun salute and taps, the service was concluded. The following day, the *Marblehead* arrived in port with 13 dead. *Houston* once again provided escort to the burial site.

**5 February 1942: USS *Houston* (CA-30) docked at the port city of Tjilatjap, Java after suffering the loss of 48 crewmen in an air attack on 4 February 1942 in which Turret #3 was destroyed. (Note: The U.S. Flag at half-mast).**

The Sunda Strait battle during the night of February 28 - March 1, 1942, resulted in the loss of both HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston* to an overwhelming enemy invasion force. Chaplain Rentz managed to get into the water and, with about twenty *Houston* sailors, was clinging to a detached float from one of the ship's Curtiss Seagull scout planes. Many of these men were burned or wounded and Chaplain Rentz was doing his best to encourage those in need. The pontoon was slowly becoming less buoyant, and Chaplain Rentz tried several times to swim away and leave it for those who needed it most. Each time, someone would bring him back. Eventually, he swam away unnoticed and left his life jacket behind for a young sailor, S1C Walter Beeson. That was the last time that Chaplain Rentz was seen. S1C Beeson survived the war and lived until 1998.

For this selfless heroism, Chaplain Rentz was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross – the only U.S. Navy Chaplain to be so honored in World War 2.

In a personal letter, dated May 1943, to Mrs. W.E. Morris (mother of the Chaplain's "last organist", MUS2C Edgar Morris), Mrs. Rebekah Rentz, the Chaplain's wife, wrote that the Chaplain "was wrapped up in his devotion to the boys of that ship, so that I know that if all the men did not get off, he stayed with them."

She was correct; he is still with them and standing eternal watch in the Sunda Strait.

#### Sources and notes:

1. Ship of Ghosts by James D. Hornfischer, 2006.
2. The Last Battle Station by Duane Schultz, 1985.
3. Ghost of the Java Coast by Walter G. Winslow, 1974.
4. Correspondence with Mrs. Rebekah Rentz in the authors' collection.
5. MUS2C Edgar Morris survived the sinking and subsequent Japanese captivity. He passed away in 1993.
6. Special note: We asked Howard Brooks at a USS *Houston* Reunion if he remembered Edgar Morris but he thought the only band member he recalled by name was Walter Schneck. Later, after looking through our book of photos, letters and keepsakes, he suddenly said, "I DO remember!" (He had seen our picture of the Navy portable organ.) He told us that he often volunteered to go along and help carry it to other ships, such as USS *Marblehead*, for their church services before the war started!



Notes on news received via email at [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) and via regular mail...

- 5/6/2020: "I am the **Rev. Alan Wood**, Vicar of All Saints' Anglican Church, Jakarta. Last Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, I participated in the joint Australian and US Memorial Services, held in memory of the service personnel who lost their lives in battle on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1942, in the Sunda Straits, off Java. As an Australian and son of a Chief Petty Officer who served in the Royal Australian Navy 1940-1953, I was privileged to be asked to participate. I composed a prayer to read at the site of the USS *Houston* and acted as Chaplain for both services on the day. Below is the prayer which was said: 'Almighty and Eternal God, creator and ruler of all things, we pray for all those who serve and have served in the US Navy, who responded to conflict and tyranny with courage and resolve, to protect and foster peace and justice. We pray and give thanks for those who gave their lives in battle on and beneath the seas, many whose mortal remains rest eternally in the sea. We pray and give thanks for all who served on the USS *Houston* that was sunk at this location 1st March 1942. We pray for comfort and solace for those families and friends who have been greatly affected by their loss. You are our refuge and strength, an everlasting help in times of trouble. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.' I was also honoured to receive a USS *Houston* commemorative pin, given on behalf of your Association. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this way and I pray your various activities this weekend are a significant blessing to all who participate."
- 5/24/2020: Received the following email: "**James E Watt** was my grandfather's youngest brother. He could not talk about his brother without getting upset even into his last days. If there is anything or anyone who knew James I would be grateful to hear about him."
- 5/24/2020: I replied to this unsigned email as follows: "Hello, Thank you for your email regarding USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewman **James E. Watt, F1/c, USN** who perished along with approximately 700 of his shipmates during the Battle of Sunda Strait on 1 March 1942. I am the son of a U.S. Marine survivor who passed away in 2009, and vice president of our association and it is my honor to answer your email. I am very sorry for your loss. Unfortunately, we have no information on Mr. Watt due to the fact that the ship's records were destroyed when the ship was sunk in battle on 1 March 1942. You may be interested to know that the crew of USS *Houston* (CA-30) is remembered and honored each year during our Association's "Day of Remembrance" (DOR) in Houston, Texas. The next DOR will take place in early March 2021 in Houston. We hold an annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service during the DOR each year at the site of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument located in downtown Houston, which is open to the public. You are certainly welcome to attend. Details on the 2021 event will be published in the "News Section" of our website ([www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org)) in the months prior to the DOR. If you have any questions, please let me know... Again, thank you for your email and your interest in USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewman James E. Watt."
- 6/27/2020: Received the following email: "Afternoon. [I] am enquiring if there are any plans to commemorate in 2022..my uncle was killed on HMAS *Perth* 1...There are no living seamen from the original *Perth*... last friend of my father's passed away over recent years... I am in touch with Secretary from HMAS *Perth* Association here in Australia. Any information your Association may have planned... I would appreciate any information. God Bless you all in your homeland at present.. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. May you all find strength to rise above the Covid crisis. Thanks, **Desleigh Lane**, Queensland Australia."
- 6/28/2020: Replied with the following email: "Dear Mr. Lane, Thank you for your email. I am sorry for the loss of your uncle aboard HMAS *Perth* (D-29)... Under "normal" circumstances our Association hosts a "Day of Remembrance" (DOR) weekend in Houston, Texas on a date as close as possible to the anniversary of the loss of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29), which was on 1 March (1942). During this weekend, we hold an annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service at the site of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial in downtown Houston, TX.... We currently have preliminary plans to hold our 2021 DOR in Houston but due to the pandemic we are uncertain whether such an event will even be possible. We will make our plans known via our website ([www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org)) as we move closer to March 2021, and I would suggest that you check out our website's "News" section for details around 1 December 2020. By then we should have solidified our plans. In regards to a Memorial Service in 2022: We will begin planning for that DOR weekend soon after we have held our DOR in 2021. We hope that by then the Pandemic will have passed...! Are you planning to attend our Day of Remembrance in 2022...? I hope you stay safe and well..."

## USS HOUSTON CA-30 MERCHANDISE UPDATE

***Now Hear This!***

**We have...**

- Received a new shipment of USS *Houston* (CA-30) hats so orders can be placed and filled; \$15.00 ea. plus shipping.
- Two new men's Polo shirts available due to our most recent special order, both in men's medium, one dark grey and the other red. Both are embroidered with the USS *Houston* (CA-30) logo; \$23.00 ea. plus shipping.
- Plenty of USS *Houston* (CA-30) challenge coins available; \$9.50 ea. plus shipping.
- Also been considering placing an order of newly designed USS *Houston* (CA-30) T-shirts which would have the logo in some form or fashion on them. In order to avoid an inventory situation, we are asking you to email us if you would be interested in this proposed shirt.

Contact: [johnk.schwarz@yahoo.com](mailto:johnk.schwarz@yahoo.com) for all merchandise questions and information.

Wear your USS *Houston* (CA-30) apparel proudly and  
help keep the memory of the ship alive!



USS *Houston* (CA-30) hat  
(Navy Blue)



USS *Houston* (CA-30) Polo Shirt  
(Dark grey)



USS *Houston* (CA-30) Polo Shirt  
(Red)

## USS HOUSTON (CA-30) SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATION AND NEXT GENERATIONS®

The USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association & Next Generations® sponsors two scholarship programs:

### USS HOUSTON (CA-30) ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

This is an “internal program” in that it is administered by the Association’s Scholarship Committee. It is funded through the generosity of our group’s constituency and other associated donors and is targeted to be awarded annually given sufficient funding and applications from eligible candidates. The program’s window to apply extends from **June 1** through **November 1**. Candidates are then evaluated and a deserving applicant is awarded the scholarship based on a documented grading system. Funding comes through donations to our Association’s Treasurer, Pam Moura, 2065 Sutter View Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648. For any donations please annotate that it is for the scholarship program. You can also remember the USS *Houston* CA-30 scholarship fund in your will, estate planning or beneficiary designations. All donations are tax deductible. Since its inception in the year 2000, **16 scholarships** have been awarded totaling **\$37,250.00** dedicated to the further educational pursuits of winning candidates. For a complete listing of all scholarship winners and applications visit our Association’s website, <http://www.usshouston.org/scholarships.html> (scholarship page). Applications can also be obtained by making request to the Association’s Executive Director at the address for the Association listed on page one of this **Blue Bonnet** newsletter. Award amount for 2021 will be \$3,000.00. REMINDER: The Internal Scholarship application deadline—**November 1, 2020**—is rapidly approaching!

### USS HOUSTON (CA-30) MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2008, and again due to the generosity of our group’s constituency and other associated donors, the Association made a one-time purchase for a permanent scholarship with the United States Naval Academy Foundation, Inc. This program, targeted for an every-other-year scholarship award, is named the **USS Houston CA-30 Memorial Scholarship**. This scholarship affords the U.S. Naval Academy candidate a year of preparatory school education prior to entering the Academy. This contributes to an improved success rate for awardees. Since it was obtained we have had **eight** awardees which has already produced **six Naval Officers** and **one Marine officer** with the remaining designee progressing satisfactorily toward graduation. For a full listing of all U.S. Naval Academy scholarship winners please visit our Association’s website: <http://www.usshouston.org/scholarships.html> (scholarship page). What a tribute to the men of the USS *Houston* CA-30!

For both programs: a huge **Thank You** to all who contribute to these important scholarships in honor of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and her crewmen. —John K. Schwarz





## Notes From Here and There



On Saturday, December 14, 2019 Genece Warren contributed a beautiful scale model of USS *Houston* (CA-30), which had been on display in her home for many years, to NG Michael Reilly, son of the late USS *Houston* survivor John Reilly. Mrs. Warren and her late husband Bob Warren, a chaplain, were friends of many survivors, including the late Otto and Trudy Schwarz.

(At right) 7 March 2020: (L to Right): Kim Gideon, Rylee Rapp, Joshua Rapp, John K. Schwarz, Jada Rapp and Jordan Rapp stand at the base of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument at the USS *Houston* (CA-30) annual Memorial Service in Houston, Texas. We are very grateful for the Gideon family which has provided coffee and cookies at the service for many years.



7 March 2020: (L to R): John Schwarz, Samuel Lamont, and Charlie Lamont standing close to the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument in Houston, Texas. For several years Charlie Lamont, a Houston Police Officer and a retired Marine, has provided security for our Association's annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service, for which we are very appreciative.





## SURVIVORS' ORAL HISTORIES

John K. Schwarz

Back in the 1970's Ronald E. Marcello of the Oral History Department at North Texas State University began to interview former POWS of the Japanese—soldiers of the 131<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery/2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and surviving crewmen of USS *Houston* (CA-30). Interviews were conducted over several decades. Excerpts of some interviews were featured in a book Marcello co-authored with Robert S. LaForte entitled **Building the Death Railway**, which was published in 1993. Mr. Marcello has since retired and all oral histories reside today in the UNT's Oral History Department's permanent collection.

Mr. Marcello interviewed my dad, Otto Schwarz, on August 7th, 1979. I refer to Otto's oral history often and it is tremendously revealing and helpful in understanding my father's experiences as a USS *Houston* CA-30 survivor.

The good news for all of us is that these oral histories are available today for purchase. No less than **20** of our CA-30 survivors conducted interviews and they **are all available**: [www.oralhistory.unt.edu](http://www.oralhistory.unt.edu) including interviews by:

Donald Brain, USN  
Jack Burge, USN  
Howard Robert (Bob) Charles, USMC  
George Detre, USN  
Griff Douglas, USN  
Jack Feliz, USN  
Melford Forsman, USN  
James Gee, USMC  
James Huffman, USN  
Albert Kennedy, USN  
Frank King, USMC  
Paul Papish, USN  
Charley L. Pryor, USMC  
John Reas, USN  
Seldon Reese, USN  
Marvin Robinson, USMC  
Otto Schwarz, USN  
William Stewart, USN  
Lloyd Willey, USMC  
John Wisecup, USMC

### You Shop, Amazon Gives

*By Pam Crispi Moura, Treasurer*

Many of us already shop online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Did you know that Amazon has a program to donate a portion of your purchase price to the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations®? There is no additional cost to you or to the association and the proceeds help to perpetuate the memory of our ship and the sacrifices made by her crew. Visit our website: [www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org) and click on the AmazonSmile link or go to the website shown below. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the **USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations®** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Support the **USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations®** by starting your shopping at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-2814051>.



## CRACKING IN THE BREEZE

To see our Colors blowing in the breeze I really like,  
But what I love is to watch my Grandspudette riding her Old Glory trike.  
She really likes the flag where the push bar used to be,  
Now she pedals away hoping her Colors everyone can see.  
Today a policeman stopped and talked to her and she talked real loud,  
The policeman got the shoving the flags in the ground story, impressed and was smilingly proud.  
But what I got today was the real treat,  
The UPS man was driving down the street.  
He stopped to look at the flags in our yard,  
He looked around and at me real hard.  
He said something about I love the red, white and blue,  
And then he heard the Pledge of Allegiance from a 2 year old so true.  
With hand over her heart she began,  
She got to "of the United States of America" line but ended loudly and in sign language with an AMEN!  
He sat there and smiled real big, waved and drove away,  
That was something special for me to see her sign and say.  
Memorial Day to me should not be a 3 day vacation and beer bash,  
The memories of our Patriots gone, should be talked about and rehashed.  
Ahh, the innocence of a child who just loves our flag,  
Happily she hasn't learned yet, the so called "adults" can be such a drag.

Barry Barlow©  
May 22, 2020  
Memorial Day weekend

Meet your...

## Board of Managers

...here to serve you!\*

Executive Director: John Schwarz  
Son of USN survivor Otto Schwarz  
Association strategy/outreach, Special Projects,  
Scholarship Committee, Membership liaison  
Email: [John@usshouston.org](mailto:John@usshouston.org)



President: Sue Kreutzer  
Daughter of USN survivor Paul Papish  
Webmaster, archives, membership,  
Scholarship Committee  
Email: [Sue@usshouston.org](mailto:Sue@usshouston.org)



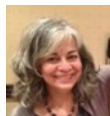
Vice President: Dana Charles  
Son of USMC survivor Bob Charles  
Crew and POW camp records,  
Blue Bonnet Editor, researcher, correspondent  
Email: [Dana@usshouston.org](mailto:Dana@usshouston.org)



Treasurer: Pam Moura  
Daughter of USN survivor Eugene Crispi  
Financial and IRS records,  
Scholarship Committee  
Email: [Pam@usshouston.org](mailto:Pam@usshouston.org)



Secretary: Bernice Harapat  
Daughter of KNIL POW Survivor Willem Terluin  
Special Projects  
Email: [Bernice@usshouston.org](mailto:Bernice@usshouston.org)



\* The Board of Managers is available to members for questions, concerns, input, or to clarify any matter regarding the Association via email (to [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org)), phone, or regular mail.

## Membership

Our Association continues to grow as more folks reach us—through such avenues as our website—and want to know more about the *Houston*, or just simply seek to contribute to the perpetuation of the memory of this gallant warship. To those interested in taking it further and joining our Association: go to [www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org), click on the “news tab,” scroll to the bottom and review the Association’s bylaws, then click on the link to membership form (<http://www.usshouston.org/memberform.pdf>). After filling out the form, send it in as directed on the form. Our Association is funded through voluntary donations rather than mandatory annual dues. To make a donation, please refer to page one of this newsletter, or review the instructions on the “news tab” of our website.

## Association Communication Channels

- Association information, including current and archived newsletter editions, is available at the Association's official website: [www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org).
- All email correspondence for the Association is directed through: [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org)
- The Association’s regular mailing address and phone number is listed on the first page of each issue of the *Blue Bonnet* newsletter.
- Our Association's only social media presence is on Facebook at: **USS Houston CA-30**.



*We would like to extend a hearty welcome to everyone who has recently joined our USS Houston (CA-30) Survivors' Association and Next Generations®!*

### Thank you...!

...on behalf of the Association to those who have made donations, as follows:

#### Donations

##### March 16 – July 15, 2020

*In Memory of David Flynn*

Donna Mae Flynn

*In Memory of Bill Ingram*

Scott Ingram

*In Memory of Edward Miles Barrett*

Steve Barrett

*In Memory of Otto Schwarz*

Dean Pops

##### **Other Donations**

Bernice Harapat

Henry & Jane Matthews

##### **Amazon Smile Donations Received**

**January – May 2020: \$78.36**

Thank you for using Amazon Smile when shopping at Amazon. As of May 20, 2020, the USS Houston (CA-30) Survivors' Association and Next Generations® has received **\$538.53** from your Amazon Smile purchases! This just goes to show that every little bit really does add up!

### Financial Report

*by Pam Moura, Treasurer*

January 1 – July 15, 2020

#### General Fund

Beginning Balance:	\$25,136.08
Receipts:	+6,286.20
Expenses:	<u>-5,587.95</u>
Ending Balance:	\$25,834.33



#### Scholarship Fund

Beginning Balance:	\$22,790.39
Receipts:	+2,351.05
Expenses:	<u>-3,000.00</u>
Ending Balance:	\$22,141.44



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**Distribution:** Dana Charles, Pam Moura

#### **Articles or information may be sent to:**

[contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) or [Bluebonnet@usshouston.org](mailto:Bluebonnet@usshouston.org).

**All articles submitted are subject to editing.**

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of this Association, its members, or its Board of Managers.

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1991: CA-30 Survivor Otto Schwarz stands next to the Memorial plaque which remembers the men of the 131st FA/2nd BN and USS Houston (CA-30) who perished as POWS during WWII. Today: the plaque stands at the national cemetery located at the Punchbowl in Oahu, Hawaii.