

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 CA-30
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

Association Founded 1947

By Otto and Trudy Schwarz

**Day of Remembrance
To be Held Again in Houston!**



The *USS Houston* (CA-30) Monument in Houston, Texas has been the site of *USS Houston* (CA-30) annual Memorial Services every year since it was dedicated in 1995—even despite the current pandemic. On March 5, 2022, the public is invited to gather at the monument to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the loss of *USS Houston* (CA-30) and *HMAS Perth* (D-29).

The 2022 Day of Remembrance

By Dana Charles

The Association's Board of Managers has been busy planning the 2022 Day of Remembrance (DOR) to be held in Houston, Texas on March 4—5, 2022. The gathering will mark the 80th anniversary of the March 1, 1942 loss of *USS Houston* (CA-30) and *HMAS Perth* (D-29) at the WWII Battle of Sunda Strait. The DOR 2022 will

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also mark a return to our live, full, annual Memorial Service agenda which we are looking forward to conducting again.

As in past years, a special block of hotel rooms and a meeting room have been reserved for us at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel & Suites Houston by the Galleria (pictured at left), which will again serve as our DOR “headquarters.” Free bus transportation, generously provided by the Harris County Precinct Three Transportation Department, will be available to and from all DOR events.

On Friday, March 4, a bus will depart the hotel at 1:30 p.m. for a visit to the “Cruiser *Houston* Collection” at the M.D. Anderson Library, University of Houston. This is the first time in many years we will visit the collection, and we are looking forward to seeing the updated exhibits. The Friday night banquet will feature keynote speaker Brent E. Jones, who is the author of the new book, Days of Steel Rain—the Epic Story of a WWII Vengeance Ship in the Year of the Kamikaze. (See a review of this book on page 5). The evening will also include a roundtable discussion on virtually anything and everything related to the USS *Houston* (CA-30) story. Documents, Ships Logs, Maps, and other USS *Houston* (CA-30)-related materials will be available for perusing. CA-30 Merchandise will also be available at sale prices!

On Saturday, March 5th, our 9:00 am breakfast gathering will feature a special tribute by our Association’s historian, author Don M. Kehn, Jr. to the late James D. Hornfischer, the author of one of the best books written about USS *Houston* (CA-30)—Ship of Ghosts. At 12:30 p.m., buses will depart the hotel for the 28th annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. Among the speakers will be the Curator of the Navy and Director of the History and Heritage Command, RADM Samuel Cox, USN (retired). At 7:00 p.m. we will gather together for dinner back at our hotel’s “USS *Houston* (CA-30) meeting room.” See the complete Tentative Schedule of Events on page 18.

To Register for the Day of Remembrance 2022, either:

1. Print out the **Registration Form** on page 19. Fill out the form, and mail it in with your check, as indicated at the bottom of the Form, as soon as possible, or...
2. Download and print out the **Registration Form** which is available on the Association’s website (Click on the following link): [News \(usshouston.org\)](http://News(usshouston.org)). Fill out the form, and mail it in with your check, as indicated at the bottom of the Form, as soon as possible.

To reserve a hotel room at the special USS *Houston* CA-30 block rate, either:

1. Go to our Association’s website (Click on the following link): [News \(usshouston.org\)](http://News(usshouston.org)) then click on the link at the website marked: “**Click here for reservations online,**” or:
2. Call the hotel’s reservation number at: **1-(866)568-0896**, mention you want the USS *Houston* CA-30 rate at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel & Suites Houston by the Galleria, and that the **Reservation code is: U30**.

Questions? Email: sue@usshouston.org. See you at the Day Of Remembrance 2022...!

Rachel Nelson's "Living with an Ex-Prisoner of War"

By Dana Charles

In December 1986, psychologist Rachel Nelson, the wife of Gordon Nelson, a former POW who was captured in the Philippines by the Japanese during WWII, delivered a speech at the "Former Prisoner of War Educational Conference: Medical and Psychological Issues" at the Northeast Regional Medical Center, Northport, New York. The speech was entitled "Living with an Ex-Prisoner of War."

Nelson's remarks reflected both her professional observations and her own experience as a wife of a former prisoner of war and stepmother to his son. When I discovered the speech sometime during the early 2000s, I wondered what my mother, Marti Charles, would make of it. I showed the speech to her and she read it. As the wife of a Marine survivor of USS *Houston* (CA-30) who was a POW of the Japanese for 3.5 years during WWII, would she believe Nelson's words were as insightful as they seemed? Would my mother think any part of the speech applied to her and our own family?

"The overriding characteristic of POW families is a constant level of stress," Nelson said. "The men's physical problems are numerous and become more pronounced as they grow older. They suffer the delayed aftereffects of injuries, beatings, malnutrition, pneumonia, frozen feet and hands, and tropical diseases...Some of the men suffer from chronic exhaustion, tiring easily and having no reserve strength. They sleep poorly, have nightmares which awaken them, and they pace the floor for hours... As family members, we worry about our men and their strange illnesses, which are so poorly understood and inadequately treated. One wife said it for us all: 'When someone you love is in pain, you hurt...' Many wives go to the doctor with their husbands to explain symptoms and to try to get them help," Nelson added.

"Mental stress affects the families even more," Nelson continued. "Our men seem to have two personalities. As their normal selves, they are as diverse as the general population, except that as survivors, they had to be tough, lucky, and smart. They acquired a set of characteristics, formed by the hardships, deprivation, fear and brutality which they endured." Nelson went on to explain that their reactions to situations—often lifesaving in wartime—are no longer called for. "Clinically, it is known as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder," she said. "These traits, while not present in all [former POWS], are so common that when a wife mentions one in a [Ex-POW wives'] group, most of the other wives nod and offer examples of their own."

According to Nelson, chronic deep anxiety is the most prevalent trait. "In prison everyone and everything could be life-threatening, and they had to be constantly on guard to survive. Now, they worry excessively, imagining and preparing for the worst. They are unable to let go of a problem. They find it hard to just relax and have fun."

The second characteristic is hostility, Nelson said. "Having been treated so brutally, they unconsciously expect mistreatment and overreact to minor incidents. Wives and children, because of proximity, are the most frequent targets of this pervasive hostility. A lapse of attention to their needs or children's carelessness may trigger the kind of rage reaction which they felt but were unable to express to their captors. Sometimes they brood until they erupt into explosive hostile outbursts, after which they are often remorseful. Other men, or the same men at other times, are so afraid of their anger that they repress it and become overly submissive. Some ex-POWS have great difficulty with their bosses, reacting to them as guards to be outwitted and evaded."

Another frequent characteristic is depression, which is not surprising considering what they went through, Nelson explained. "The wanton cruelty shown them in captivity gave them a negative view of human nature. They frequently feel as if nothing is worthwhile and some just give up while others struggle on..."

"Ex-POWS resist close inter-personal relationships," Nelson said. "Having lost so many buddies so painfully, they protect themselves by not becoming close. They feel that no one who has not been through their experiences can understand them...This puts a strain on those of us who want closeness, socially and with the family group," she said.

Nelson also explained that ex-POWS have a low frustration tolerance. "After enduring so much that was irrational and frustrating, they seem to have used up their life's supply of patience," she said. Meanwhile, they are frequently preoccupied, withdrawn, and uncommunicative. "There are times when it is hard to tell if they are angry, depressed, or living in the past...Physicians dealing with them may have great difficulty getting the men to talk."

Some ex-POWS experience frequent mood swings, Nelson said. "They can go from happy to sad, or from talkative to withdrawn for no reason which is apparent to others. One of my friends says that when her husband walks down the hall, she never knows what mood he will be in when he returns."

Not all former POWS have all these traits, Nelson added. "Most of those who do have these traits have periods when their normal selves emerge from the Ex-POW Syndrome. Their families enjoy and treasure these times but there is always the nagging knowledge that it probably will not last. As wives we walk a tightrope, trying to keep relationships as normal as possible, suggesting that the maladaptive reactions are no longer needed, while trying to say or do nothing which will trigger the anxiety, anger, or depression."

"Those women who stay with their husbands have a high tolerance for stress," Nelson said. "These enduring marriages have strong bonds of love, understanding, and mutual respect, despite the frustrations."

Ms. Nelson also discussed children of Ex-POWS. "There are studies of children of concentration camp survivors and Vietnam veterans, but I am not aware of any studies of Ex-POW's children," she said. "From our group discussions, it seems that Ex-POW fathers found it hard to relax and enjoy their children. They were excessively worried about their offspring, as they were about everything else, being both over-demanding and over-protective. They lacked patience with childlike behavior and the kids could not understand that they were not the basic cause of their father's anger. Wives were often a buffer between husband and children. The children usually respect their fathers because these men have strong personalities. Later, when old enough to understand, the children admire them for having survived."

"However, with most Ex-POW fathers, real emotional closeness was not there, with the kids afraid that they could not live up to their fathers' expectations," Nelson said. "Many wished to leave home as soon as possible to get away from the stress. Some relationships remain tense, while others improved when the children became adults. Most kids of Ex-POWS did not have a carefree childhood and some suffered more than others. A few may have benefitted from the strong role model, for being forced to mature at a young age, and from learning early how to deal with adult stress."

“In conclusion, although my husband endured lengthy captivity and extreme horrors, he came through it in better shape than many,” Nelson said. “He rebuilt a productive life and tried hard to be a good husband and father. I respect the struggle that it has been for him and I am grateful that we are now learning how to deal with some of our problems so that we can enjoy life more. I am luckier than most Ex-POW wives, many of whom have been so affected that they could not stand there and tell you about it. But all families live in the shadow of the POW experience forever,” she said.

Rachel Nelson passed away in 2008.

After reading this speech, my mother (now deceased) told me that most of it rang true—at least for her. I wonder what other wives of Ex-POWS might feel/have felt about Nelson’s words? Comments about Rachel Nelson’s speech are welcome! Send email to: Dana@usshouston.org.

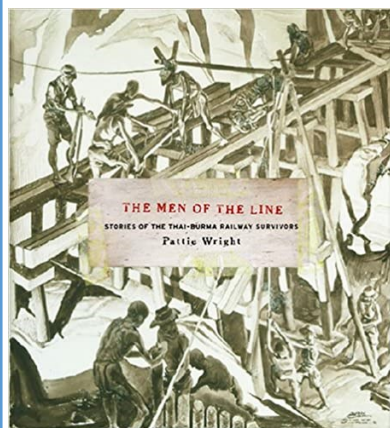
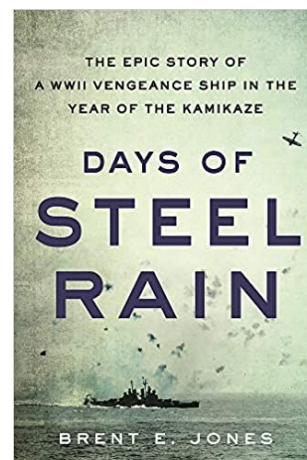
Book Reviews

Days of Steel Rain, The Epic Story of a WWII Vengeance Ship in the Year of the Kamikaze

By Brent E. Jones

Launched in 1944 as a “vengeance ship,” named for a U.S. warship sunk earlier in WWII, the light cruiser USS *Astoria* endured a typhoon, saw action at the Battle of Iwo Jima, and fought furiously against relentless Kamikaze attacks at the Battle of Okinawa. This well-written and comprehensively researched book reveals the challenges faced by USS *Astoria*’s Navy Captain George Dyer and her crew during the final year of the Pacific War. Published: May, 2021. Highly recommended.

— Dana Charles



The Men of the Line, Stories of the Thai-Burma Railway Survivors

by Pattie Wright

In this important 2008 book, Australian author and Association member Pattie Wright has compiled accounts from each of the POW labor camps along the entire 258-mile length of the Burma-Thailand Death Railway as told by actual Australian prisoners of war who toiled as POW slave laborers during the railway’s construction. Each account provides poignant details of each man’s individual experiences. The book clearly paints the picture of this disastrous saga in WWII POW history, which should never be forgotten. It validates what many have said, which is how unbelievably harsh human beings can be to other human beings in wartime. Ms. Wright’s book contains many valuable pictures as well as very detailed maps of the railway line. This book is available through Amazon.com.

Highly Recommended. — John K. Schwarz

Notes on news received via email at contact@ussHouston.org and via regular mail...

- 10/7/2021: Received an email from **retired U.S. Navy Captain Dan Sloss**, who is living in Australia, regarding the planning of a musical concert in Canberra, Australia in October 2022. Mr. Sloss wrote: "The Flowers of Peace (formerly The Flowers of War) is an organization that has produced large works celebrating lost music and art from WWI, WWII, and last year, "The Vietnam Requiem." In addition to the October concert, we anticipate that there may be commemorative activities in the region for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Sunda Strait and would be prepared to share some of the music being prepared for the October concert with musicians who might like to perform pieces in March... I am a retired USN Captain living in Canberra and was US Naval Attaché here from 2000-2004. Many thanks in advance for your dedication and work... Sincerely, **Dan Sloss, Captain, USN, Retired**, on behalf of 'The Flowers of Peace.'"
- 10/9/2021: Replied in an email to CAPT Sloss that as a musician I would be interested in hearing the music and even receiving a copy of any sheet music he would be kind enough to provide. I also mentioned that our Association will be hosting a Day of Remembrance in March 2022, which will include the participation of the Community Band of SE Texas.
- 11/3/2021: Received an email from Australian musician **Chris Latham** as follows: "Dear Families and Friends of the crew of the USS *Houston*, My colleague, US Navy Captain (ret) **Dan Sloss**, has written forecasting that we are creating a **POW Requiem** for 2022. I direct this project as part of my role as musical Artist-in-Residence at the Australian War Memorial (AWM). I'm half-way through making 7 Requiems for the wars Australians have been involved in. The **POW Requiem** is the 4th of these... Here in Australia, we are now shifting to remembering our POWs. We have 14 left from around 25,000 POWs of the Japanese, one of whom is an HMAS *Perth* survivor. When we premiere the **POW Requiem** in Canberra on Oct. 29, 2022, we'll accompany the music with projections from the AWM's image collection plus texts telling the story of the battle, the sinking of both ships, the survivors' experiences in the water and subsequent capture, their experiences in Java, Singapore, on the Thai-Burma Railway, and their trips on hell ships, either being sunk, or sent to Japan and other locations to work in mines, on the docks etc... In these projects, I often have to choose between two different approaches – the first is to describe the events exactly, as a film might do. The other approach is to commemorate the past, as if we are gathered on the shore, looking out to sea where these events occurred, but from the perspective of the present day. I have increasingly chosen the second approach as I have done these events, as I believe more reflective pieces can be more useful. Descriptive pieces can also be really hard to get right – if it sounds too Hollywood, it can feel cringe-worthy. Australian traditions around commemoration are also understated, and with the context of being part of a Requiem for the Dead, it is also an occasion for reflection and remembrance... The piece about the USS *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* is Chapter 3 in the 2nd half of the forthcoming **POW Requiem**. I've created a **first draft** to tell the story of these two ships. The duration is 8 mins; the first half reflecting the naval battle which reaches its height at 3 mins, then both ships sink and the survivors are left in the water to be captured by the Japanese. After 4 minutes the same material is played but on wooden instruments, depicting the surviving crews working in the jungle on the Railway. Towards the end, it depicts the hell ships, the sound becoming more dominated by the brass, before ending again quietly. The music is accompanied by projections with text along with photos and artworks... I have adapted a piece from an obscure **Prelude** by Cesar Franck (originally for piano and harmonium), which I have arranged for orchestra for this purpose." [NOTE: If you would like to hear this piece, email me at: contact@ussHouston.org to receive an mp3 copy.—Dana Charles].
- 11/5/2021: Our **Association's Historian Donald M. Kehn, Jr.** emailed a follow-up message regarding his article "CA-30 and the Enigmysterious ECM," which was published in the August 2021 issue of the *Blue Bonnet*. Don wrote: "I've now confirmed my original suspicions about the reasons for American submarines operating in Sunda Strait [during WWII]. It's in this message from the papers of ADM Nimitz's PacFleet Intelligence officer, CDR Edwin Layton, dated 10 May 1942:

CINCPAC to COMSOWESPAC, COMINCH, OPNAV: "DUE PROBABILITY HOUSTON SUNK IN DIVEABLE WATERS VICINITY BATAM [sic] BAY SUGGEST YOUR SUBMARINES PERIODICALLY OBSERVE PROBABLE AREA TO DISCOVER AND PREVENT SALVAGE X COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PARTICULARLY IN MIND."

While doing his research, our Association's historian Don M. Kehn, Jr. found the following pre-WWII report written by ADM Thomas Hart, USN, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, which turned out to be the final assessment of USS *Houston* (CA-30)'s readiness for war. *[Note that the war started, and Houston left Manila, Philippines, before all planned improvements could be made.]*

**Annual Report of the
Commander in Chief, U.S. ASIATIC FLEET
for the Period: July 1, 1940 to June 30, 1941**

PART V -- MATERIAL

A. MATERIAL CONDITION OF VESSELS.

1. Present material condition of vessels with outstanding defects and deficiencies.

(a) Engineering.

HOUSTON -- The material condition of the Engineering Department is very good and there are no known deficiencies that will prevent operating at maximum speed for prolonged periods. The maximum speed has been reduced from 32.5 knots to 31.5 knots as a result of an increase in displacement incident to the additional guns, splinter protection, etc., installed in the last navy yard overhaul. The plastic bottom paint applied in Mare Island in October 1940 appears to have greatly reduced in fouling of the ship's bottom with consequent little reduction in speed due to this cause. The method of running vital electric cables (power, light and fire control) without adequate protection, is considered unsatisfactory as reported in CO HOUSTON confidential letter CA30/S62(1302) of 30 October 1939. Comments are made by BuShips to ComCruScoFor...9 April 1941. The temporary degaussing girdle is installed on the outside of the skin of the ship just below the weather deck edge. This location is unsatisfactory as it is easily damaged, having been damaged twice since installation, once due to heavy seas and once while going alongside a tanker.

Construction and Repair.

HOUSTON -- The material condition of the C&R Department is very good and there appears to be no known deficiencies that will hinder performance of the ship other than the alteration which is of outstanding importance to the military efficiency of the ship: Cut down mainmast and relocate after main battery and A.A. directors to stub of mainmast; relocate searchlights in present A.A. director platform.

Alterations submitted and authorized are:

Installation of additional quick closing doors.

Replacement of H. P. air cylinders with those of non-shatterable type.

Installation of additional cofferdams.

Enlargement of engineering bilge drainage system.

Cruisers HOUSTON and MARBLEHEAD are both in very good to excellent state of material condition and war readiness.



ADM Thomas C. Hart, USN

(Continued on next page)

*Three new 1.1" guns and directors, remounting of electrical and fire control instruments to prevent gunfire shock, installation of new searchlights and change in the mainmast structure to provide improved conditions for main battery and anti-aircraft directors comprises the important pending alterations on the HOUSTON.** The next yard overhaul period for this vessel is scheduled for October-November, 1941, although during this time it is anticipated that only a part of this work can be completed. Plans are being made however to complete the installation of 1.1" guns whose delivery is expected about September 1941. The HOUSTON has sky lookout stations installed and splinter protection for anti-aircraft guns. Since all condensers are fitted with complete metal tubes installed during the last three years, the high degree of reliability and protection from corrosion is assured. Due to the increased amount of equipment installed on the HOUSTON the draft has been considerably increased and the maximum speed has been estimated to not exceed 31.4 knots. The general material condition of the HOUSTON is excellent.

* Note from Don M. Kehn, Jr.: Italics mine. These important alterations were not completed before the ship went to war and was eventually lost at the Battle of Sunda Strait. Only the three 1.1" guns were mounted. Neither the directors for them, remounted electrical instruments, nor the new searchlights were ever installed, and of course the mainmast remained unaltered.

You Shop, Amazon Gives

By Pam Crispi Moura, Treasurer

Many of us already shop online at [Amazon.com](https://www.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 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>.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO OF HMAS PERTH III

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

HMAS Perth
BS24081597
PER/OUT/2021/067

Mr. John K. Schwarz
USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association
2400 Clarendon Blvd, Apt. 211
ARLINGTON VA 22201
United States of America



HMAS Perth III

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the Officers and Sailors of HMAS *Perth* (III) to maintain the historical link between HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston*. Following the decommissioning of USS *Houston* SSN 713 on 26 Aug 16 (coincidentally HMAS *Perth*'s tenth birthday), HMAS *Perth* commenced an extended period in dry dock without a crew embarked. With our Ship now back in the water and our crew re-established, I thought it timely to reach out to the USS *Houston* CA-30 Survivors' Association to re-invigorate the longstanding association between HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston*, particularly in view of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Sunda Strait on 28 February - 01 March next year.

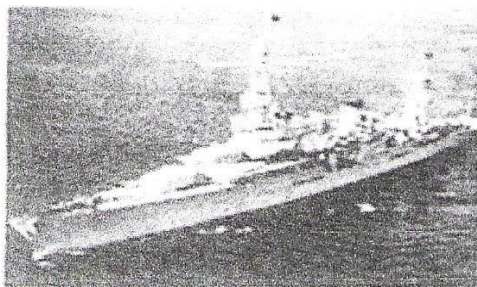
The Ship is finalising the Anzac Class Midlife Capability Assurance Program (AMCAP) upgrade, which includes significant upgrades to her radar capabilities, communication systems and crew habitability. The Ship is expected to return to the Fleet and undertake deployments with our regional partners throughout 2022.

As our Ship's company prepares to return HMAS *Perth* III to operational service, we are reminded of the bravery of the *Perth* and *Houston* crews when engaging enemy forces against impossible odds. We are proud to carry the *Perth* name and would be honoured to continue the legacy of the *Perth* and *Houston* connection through your Association. To the 'Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast' we wish you fair winds and following seas.

Sincerely,

Tony Nagle, CSC
Commander, RAN
Commanding Officer
HMAS Perth
'Fight and Flourish'
14 October 2021

THE REPLY TO THE CO OF HMAS PERTH III



U. S. S. HOUSTON CA-30 SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION AND NEXT GENERATIONS®

2400 Clarendon Blvd., Apt. 211

Arlington, Virginia 22201

(703) 867-0142

www.usshouston.org

contact@usshouston.org

October 23, 2021

Commander Nagle and crew of the HMAS Perth III;

We cannot thank you enough in these words nor express any more sincerely our appreciation for the thought by you Sir and your crew to reach out to us as the HMAS Perth III finalizes its readiness to once again engage in actively protecting the freedoms for the great country of Australia. Please know the legacy of HMAS Perth I, and the two subsequent ships bearing her name are always remembered and honored by our group, and always will be. Given that we wish you and your entire crew the best for successful operations as you commence they beginning in 2022.

The bonds forged by our fathers will be carried on by their descendants exemplified by the work we do year in and year out as Next Generations to perpetuate their memory. HMAS Perth I and USS Houston CA-30 fought gallantly together. Their respective survivors endured together, the fortunate ones survived with the help of each other and many of them went on to maintain a life-long friendship filled with visits to their respective countries, phone and other written correspondences.

I am happy to inform you that we are planning full resumption of our annual memorial service that is conducted in person and at the USS Houston CA-30 monument in downtown Houston, TX. This service will take place as part of our 'Day of Remembrance', Saturday March 5, 2022 at 1:30P. At that time we pay tribute to both the USS Houston CA-30 and HMAS Perth; their Captains, crew and the legacy of Naval bravery displayed through their duty and sacrifice during World War II. This service normally carries with it a tremendous amount of Australian presence including the Houston area Australian Deputy Consul-General, the Honorary Consul Emeritus of Australia, the Washington, DC domiciled Naval Attache' and representatives both from the Houston-Perth Sister Cities Association and the Australian-American Chamber of Commerce. Please know that there is always an open invitation for you or any representation of your crew should your maneuvers allow for the possibility of attending.

We continue to work on an ongoing basis with our U.S. Navy representatives and the Naval Attache' domiciled in Jakarta, Java encouraging and supporting efforts to protect both the USS Houston CA-30 and HMAS Perth as they rest in the Sunda Strait as sacred burial grounds for their fallen and examples of bravery in war time service to their respective countries.

Commander Nagle we wish you and your entire crew safety and success in your service to Australia commencing in 2022 and for as long as the HMAS Perth III sails for Australia.

Board of Managers of the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association & Next Generations
and on behalf of our entire membership group,

President- Sue Kreutzer

Treasurer- Pam Moura

Secretary- Bernice Harapat

Vice President- Dana Charles

Executive Director- John K. Schwarz

Crewmember Spotlight

ALBERT M. “HAP” KELLEY

By Joseph & Marlene (Morris) McCain

Albert “Hap” Kelley was born in Pratt, Kansas in 1908. As a young man, he organized bands and entertainment across the country. However, the band business was not very lucrative in 1920’s America so he decided to enlist with the U.S. Navy in February 1927.

The Navy offered him an opportunity to travel and play his beloved trombone. Hap joined the USS *Houston* flagship band (Asiatic Fleet) in late March 1941. The ship’s bandmaster at that time was Sid Zeramby who had trained the band and brought them to the *Houston* when the flag was transferred from the USS *Augusta* in November 1940.



Hap had attained the rating of Mus1c by the time he went aboard the *Houston* and greatly enjoyed not only playing aboard the ship but also the performances ashore with the ship’s orchestra at the Manila Polo Club and the Army/Navy Club. But with war clouds gathering, even the band members had assigned battle stations.

Hap’s first *Houston* battle station was with the searchlight crew on the mainmast next to Turret 3 at the stern of the ship. With him was his friend, Mus2c Edgar Morris, who had joined the *Houston* crew at the same time as Hap. However, both men had been reassigned to assist gun crews forward when Japanese aircraft attacked the *Houston* and destroyed Turret 3 with a bomb on February 4, 1942. Forty-eight crewmembers lost their lives that day and many others were injured.

Hap was at his battle station on the night *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* fought their last battle in the Sunda Strait. He was helping to pass shells along to the loaders in one of the forward turrets when the “abandon ship” order was given. The *Perth* was gone and *Houston* was quickly sinking.

“You gotta swim for it,” Hap was told. When he protested to his buddies that he was, at best, a poor swimmer (he often said he couldn’t swim at all), his friends flung him overboard anyway and then helped him onto some wreckage which would serve as a makeshift raft. Hap drifted ashore alone in Java the following day. He was soon captured by the Japanese and eventually shipped to Singapore.

He was held captive at Changi POW Camp in Singapore with British, Dutch, Australian and American prisoners. Because he was a brilliant musician, he played trombone in the Changi Playhouse Orchestra. The Playhouse was allowed by the Japanese camp administration because they, too, enjoyed the entertainment.

Early in 1943, a large group of POWs (F Force) left Changi and went to northern Burma to begin construction on the infamous Burma-Siam “Death Railway”. Many would never return. Hap was left behind as he was sick in the Changi camp hospital. A short time later, a second party (H Force) was conscripted and sent to Siam (Thailand) to work on the southern part of the railway.

Once again, Hap was left behind at Changi. It can be surmised that his playhouse contribution to the prisoners' morale was deemed of greater value than any skills he might have possessed in railway construction. And, as previously stated, the Japanese administration were also enjoying the performances.

When the war ended, Hap was flown to the 142nd Evacuation Hospital in Calcutta as were the other Americans held at Changi Camp. Eventually, he returned stateside where he decided that he would remain in the Navy until retirement. He became Chief Bandmaster at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, served during the Korean Conflict, and was the Bandmaster for the DESLANT (Destroyer, Atlantic Fleet) Band.

Hap retired from active service in 1953 and made his home in New Orleans. He passed away there at the age of 64 and is buried at the National Cemetery, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (Plot 109).

In closing, Hap should be remembered as an accomplished musician and arranger. He was the possessor of a great sense of humor and such an exuberant spirit that he quickly became a great favorite of the Australians, many of whom never forgot him. Some even included Hap Kelley anecdotes in later books about their POW experiences.



**USS Houston (CA-30)'s
Swing Band (date: August
24, 1941). "Hap" Kelley: in
front, to right of bass drum.**

Sources:

The Naked Island by Russell Braddon, 1953. Braddon was a close friend of Hap's and included him in his book about the campaign and subsequent loss of Malaya and POW life under the Japanese.

Notes, letters and documents from the authors' personal collection pertaining to the service of Mus2c R. Edgar Morris, *USS Houston* (CA-30) survivor. Hap was mentioned often in the letters Edgar wrote to his parents in Illinois.

FC1c Thomas Borghetti, Jr. who was featured in a previous BB Crewmember Spotlight article, remembered Hap as being the composer of a song "Tutu Bay" which was often played by the *USS Houston* band. The authors would ask that if any of our readers have the words and music for this song to please let us know.

We are greatly indebted to the Kelley family for sharing photos, news clippings and other documents.

LOST BATTALION ASSOCIATION NEWS

NEW MONUMENT DEDICATED IN TEXAS



14 August 2021: Rufus Choate (left) and Dylan Hayden at the new obelisk in Decatur, Texas, dedicated in memory of the Lost Battalion Association.

For his Eagle Scout project, Dylan Hayden, grandson of the late Lost Battalion survivor Frank Ficklin, decided to have a new monument created and dedicated in honor of his grandfather and all the men of the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, Texas National Guard (aka: The Lost Battalion) and USS *Houston* CA-30. A fund-raising campaign was successfully launched, and on Saturday, August 14, before the Lost Battalion Association's annual memorial service, the new obelisk memorial was dedicated on the front lawn of the Wise County Museum—home of the "Lost Battalion Room." Among the 200-plus guests at the dedication ceremony was Rufus Choate, the only still-living member of the 131st Field Artillery/2nd Battalion.

The men of both American military units—the 131st FA/2nd BN and survivors of USS *Houston* (CA-30)—were prisoners of war together for 42 months during WWII. After the war, the men formed the Lost Battalion Association, which to this day, has included both the survivors of the Lost Battalion and USS *Houston* (CA-30) and their families.

At Right: The plaque at the base of the new Lost Battalion Association Monument.





Report from Jakarta

Captain Stacey A. Prescott, USN

16 November 2021

Executive Director Schwarz, President Kreutzer, Vice President Charles, and esteemed members of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivors' Association and Next Generations,

Greetings from Jakarta! I hope this e-mail finds everyone still safe and healthy, and hopefully the COVID-19 pandemic will be behind us soon. I'm happy to report life in Jakarta is finally getting back to normal, so we're hopeful that we'll be able to once again commemorate the Battle of Sunda Strait on-site in Banten Bay.

Given that this year marks the 80th Anniversary of the loss of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29), myself and my Australian Counterpart are making plans to conduct this year's Commemoration at sea again to include laying wreaths over both the site of HMAS *Perth* (D-29) and USS *Houston* (CA-30). I would be more than happy to include any remarks or stories anyone in the Association would like shared, so please feel free to send anything you'd like me to share or express on your behalf.

While we have not yet been able to finalize the arrangement for the declaration of a Maritime Conservation Zone (MCZ) over the USS *Houston* (CA-30), we are finally able to conduct the in person meetings necessary to work out the details. We look forward to accompanying Ambassador Sung Kim to Banten Province early next year, and I know protection of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) will be an important part of his discussions with Provincial leadership. We do remain confident however that even without a formal MCZ being declared, local stakeholders remain committed to watching over and protecting USS *Houston* (CA-30).

Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year to all in the *Houston* family.

Lest we forget.

Very Respectfully,

Stacey

CAPT Stacey A. Prescott
U.S. Naval Attaché, Jakarta

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.
- A new men's Polo shirt is available due to our most recent special order, in men's medium, dark grey, 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.
- USS *Houston* (CA-30) ship pins—Gold or Silver trimmed; 2 for \$5.00 plus shipping.

Contact: 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
(Red)

Meet your...

Board of Managers

...here to serve you!*



Executive Director: John Schwarz
Son of USN survivor Otto Schwarz and Trudy Schwarz
Association strategy/outreach, Special Projects,
Scholarship Committee, Merchandise
Email: John@usshouston.org



President: Sue Kreutzer
Daughter of USN survivor Paul Papish
Webmaster, archives, membership,
Scholarship Committee
Email: 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



Treasurer: Pam Moura
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Financial and IRS records,
Scholarship Committee
Email: Pam@usshouston.org



Secretary: Bernice Harapat
Daughter of KNIL POW Survivor Willem Terluin
Special Projects, Scholarship Committee
Email: 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), phone, or regular mail.

Membership

Our Association continues to grow as more folks reach us—through such avenues as our websites—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, 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.
- All email correspondence for the Association is directed through: 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

July 12, - November 22, 2021

In Memory of Tommy Payne
Justin and Susan Koelle

Other Donations

Blane Amphor
Bernice Harapat

Amazon Smile Donations Received YTD - \$181.21

Financial Report

by Pam Moura, Treasurer

January 1 – November 22, 2021

General Fund

Beginning Balance	\$26,844.57
Receipts:	+2,049.02
Expenses:	<u>-1,697.13</u>
Ending Balance:	\$27,196.46



Scholarship Fund

Beginning Balance:	\$23,040.58
Receipts:	+961.61
Expenses:	<u>-3,000.00</u>
Ending Balance:	\$21,002.19



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Articles or information may be sent to:

contact@usshouston.org or 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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Happy Holidays!

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

Day of Remembrance 2022

**80th Anniversary of the loss of
USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29)**

DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Houston by the Galleria 5353 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX, 77056 (713) 961-9000

Tentative Schedule of Events March 4-5, 2022

FRIDAY (March 4)

**Visit to the University of Houston Library
hosted at the USS Houston CA-30 Exhibit**

2:00 p.m.

A Bus will leave from the DoubleTree promptly at 1:30 p.m. to take guests to the University. Please be on board by 1:15 p.m.

Registration/Hospitality	6:00 – 10:00 p.m.	Hospitality
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Dinner	6:30 p.m.	Hotel
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- Executive Director's Year-end Report Presentation
- Keynote Speaker: Mr. Brent E. Jones, author of Days of Steel Rain
- Round Table Discussion hosted by the Association's Board of Managers and Historian, Mr. Don Kehn

SATURDAY (March 5)

Breakfast	9:00 – 11 a.m.	Hotel
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- Speaker: Mr. Don Kehn- "A Tribute to the Late James D. Hornfischer"

Busses will leave from the DoubleTree promptly at 12:30 p.m. to take guests to Sam Houston Park. Please be on board by 12:15 p.m.

2022 Memorial Service	1:30 p.m.	Sam Houston Park
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Dinner	7:00 p.m.	Hotel
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REGISTRATION FORM

80th Anniversary USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association & Next Generations®

Day of Remembrance

March 4-5, 2022

DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Houston by the Galleria

5353 Westheimer Road Houston TX, 77056

(713) 961-9000

DEADLINE – MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 21, 2022

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND LIST THE NAME OF EACH PERSON INCLUDED IN THIS REGISTRATION (Use the back of this form if necessary)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name of crew member you are honoring and relationship (or state you are a friend). Please include branch of service: _____

Anticipated date and time of arrival: _____

Friday Dinner - 6:30 PM

Baked Tilapia # _____ X \$35.00 = \$ _____

Beef Lasagna # _____ X \$35.00 = \$ _____

Saturday Breakfast – 9:00 AM # _____ X \$33.00 = \$ _____

Saturday Dinner – 7:00 PM

Sonoma Chicken # _____ X \$35.00 = \$ _____

Pasta Primavera # _____ X \$35.00 = \$ _____

Registration # _____ X \$40 per person = \$ _____

Late Registration # _____ X \$15 per person = \$ _____

(Received after February 21, 2022)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please include a check for the total cost made payable to: USS Houston-Next Generations (your check is your receipt). Payment is non-refundable.

Mail registration to: Pam Moura, 2065 Sutter View Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648