

Now Hear This!

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Association Founded 1947

By Otto and Trudy Schwarz

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**Day of Remembrance 2022
Back Again in Houston!**



During the USS *Houston* (CA-30) 28th annual Memorial Service on March 5, 2022, at the site of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) monument in Houston, Texas, the Association's Executive Director John Schwarz served as Master of Ceremonies, introducing each of the excellent speakers seated around him. Attended by approximately 150 people, the service commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) at the March 1, 1942 Battle of Sunda Strait.

The 2022 Day of Remembrance

By Sue Kreutzer and Dana Charles

Association members, families, and friends gathered under blue and sunny Houston, Texas skies over the March 4-5 weekend to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the March 1, 1942 sinking of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) during the WWII Battle of Sunda Strait. As in past years, we stayed at the Doubletree Suites by Hilton Houston by the Galleria, which served as our Day of Remembrance (DOR) "headquarters."

On Friday, March 4, a bus, generously provided by the Harris County Precinct Three Transportation Department, brought most DOR

(Continued on next page)



attendees to the M.D. Anderson Library at the University of Houston where we visited the updated “Cruiser *Houston* Collection” exhibits. We were welcomed to the exhibits by the library’s **Christian D. Kelleher** and his staff. In attendance was the Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston, **the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar**, who also made some brief remarks. This was the first time in many years that we visited the collection, and the first time ever that we were invited to peruse the holdings inside the Cruiser *Houston* Collection’s “special room.”

The Friday night banquet program began with the annual year-end report presented by Association Executive Director **John K. Schwarz**, followed by a talk by **RADM Samuel J. Cox, USN (retired)**, Curator of the Navy and Director of the History and Heritage Command. RADM Cox discussed the progress made on restoring the trumpet which was found several years ago next to the remains of the *Houston*. He also presented some preliminary plans for a new US Navy Museum to be built next to the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. **The Honorable Andre Omer Siregar**, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston, presented a gift of appreciation to the Association (above, left). Author **Brent E. Jones**, then spoke about his interesting new book, Days of Steel Rain—the Epic Story of a WWII Vengeance Ship in the Year of the Kamikaze. Documents, photos, maps, and other USS *Houston* (CA-30)-related materials on display were as popular as always.



Brent E. Jones, author.



Don Kehn, Jr.

On Saturday morning, March 5th, our breakfast gathering featured a special Power Point tribute by our Association’s historian, author **Don M. Kehn, Jr.**, to the late **James D. Hornfischer**, author of Ship of Ghosts. At 12:30 p.m., a bus departed the hotel for the 28th annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service at the site of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument in Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston.

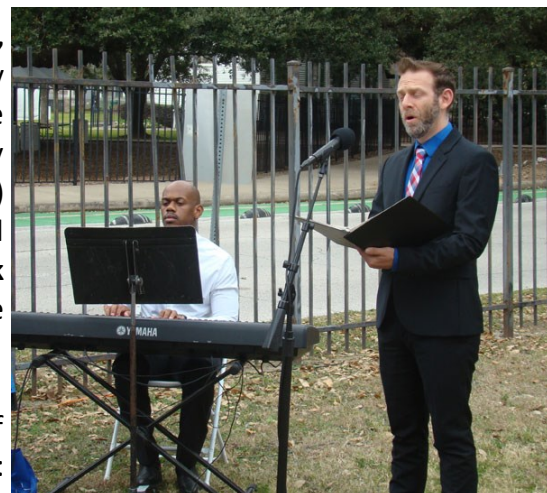
On Saturday afternoon, March 5, at 1:30 p.m., **John K. Schwarz** served as MC during the service, which marked a return to our full, annual outdoor Memorial Service agenda—our first since 2020. The Invocation and Benediction were provided by **Rev. Gilbert Raynor, MM2, SS, USN (retired)**. **Sea Cadet William Bennett, PO2** led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. The Boatswain’s Call was sounded by **Wayne R. Thompson, CW04, USCG (retired)**. A welcome by the City of Houston was provided by **Robert Dembo, III**, Director of Veterans Affairs, Mayor’s Office, and **David Robinson**, Council Member at Large, Position 2, Houston.

The excellent speakers representing the WWII ABDA Command included: **The Honorable Benson Saulo**, Consul-General of Australia in Houston and **Chris Emonson, Commander, RAN** represented Australia. Representing Britain: **Derek Powles, CEng CMarEng MIMechE, Royal Navy**, Assistant Naval Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.; Representing the Kingdom of the Netherlands: **Jos Wellink**, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and **Jarst de Jong, Colonel, Netherlands Marine Corps**. Representing the U.S.A. was **Rear Admiral Samuel J. Cox, USN (retired)**, Curator of the Navy and Director of the



RADM Samuel J. Cox, USN (retired)

History and Heritage Command, and **Michael J. Yeager, Captain, U.S. Marine Corps.** **Dana Charles** recited the lyrics to “The Navy Hymn.” The McLemore Detachment, Marine Corps League provided the Rifle Salute. Echo Taps was beautifully provided by the Community Band of Southeast Texas. **Wes Landry** (Baritone) and **Kevin Miller** (Keyboard Accompanist) of the Houston Grand Opera Company beautifully performed “I Am a Soldier” by **Mark Buller** (photo at right). **Matt Rejmaniak** led us in singing the National Anthem and “God Bless America.”



We greatly appreciate all those who laid wreaths at the base of the Monument during the wreath-laying ceremony, including: **Eunell Weissinger, Donna Mae Flynn, and Theresa Reilly; Don Rooks**, grandson of USS *Houston* (CA-30)’s Captain, Albert Rooks; **Hadyan Tamimi**, Vice Consul for Information and Social Culture Affairs, Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston; **the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar**, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston, and his wife; all aforementioned representatives of ABDA; **Laura and Brandie Flynn; Robert Dembo, III and David Robinson** of the City of Houston; **Steve Cutrer** of the U.S. Marine Corps Coordinating Council; **Scott Mosely** of the McLemore Detachment, Marine Corps League; and **Amy Conacher**, Executive Director, Australian-American Chamber of Commerce.



Hadyan Tamimi (Left); the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston (Center); and his wife (Right) presented a wreath during the wreath-laying ceremony.

We wish to thank **the Gideon family** for providing refreshments, the City of Houston, and The Heritage Society for their gracious support for the annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service.

At 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 5th, DOR attendees gathered for dinner back at our hotel’s “USS *Houston* (CA-30) meeting room.” The evening included a very interesting roundtable discussion on virtually anything and everything related to the USS *Houston* (CA-30) and her crew. Many thanks to all who attended and/or participated in DOR 2022! We have already begun planning for the 2023 Day of Remembrance gathering!

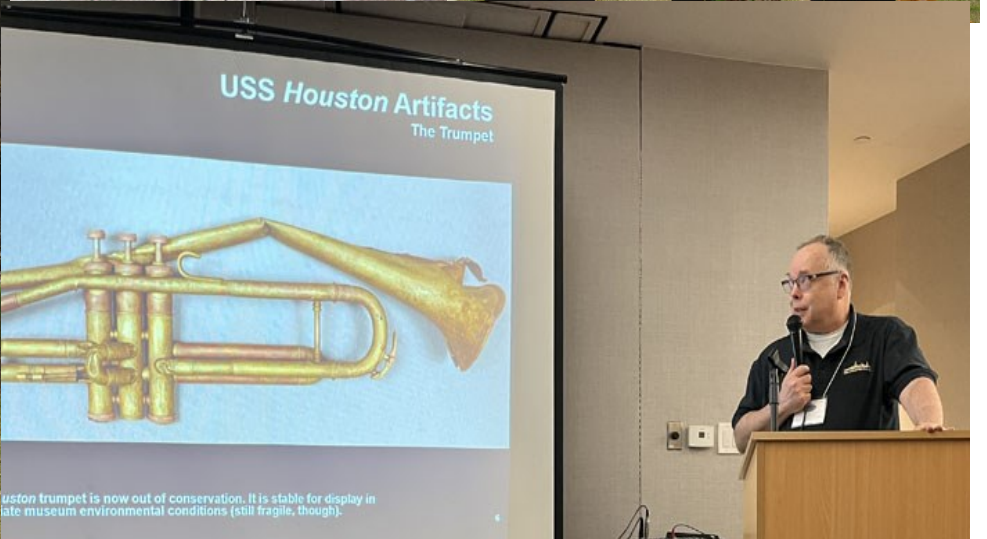


DOR 2022 Snapshots





Photos by Dennis Flynn and Dana Charles





From the desk of the Executive Director

John K. Schwarz

In addition to being the great honor that it always is, it was even more gratifying than usual to stand before the wonderful crowd that assembled on Saturday, March 5th, 2022, at the USS *Houston* (CA-30) monument for our annual memorial service where we commemorated the 80th anniversary of the loss of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) and conducted the 28th consecutive annual service. It was just wonderful to see the turn out and as the weather held up beautifully, the service was conducted in the most appropriate manner in honor of the brave servicemen whom we so cherish. I would like to particularly thank on behalf of our Board of Managers, the more than 49 contributors that came together to implement the agenda of this service, truly making it what it is. A Job Well Done!

We had the great pleasure this year of welcoming the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia in Houston, TX, his wife, and his staff to various “Day of Remembrance” weekend activities. On March 1, 2022, Mr. Siregar and his staff conducted their very own, private ceremony at the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument, honoring USS *Houston* CA-30 and HMAS *Perth* D-29. On March 4th they visited the Cruiser *Houston* CA-30 Collection at the University of Houston library with us. During our Friday night dinner Mr. Siregar spoke wonderful words of mutual respect and friendship, and on Saturday, March 5th Mr. Siregar, his wife, and Hadyan Tamimi, Vice Consul for Information and Social Culture Affairs, Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston laid a beautiful wreath at the base of the monument during the wreath-laying ceremony portion of the 2022 Memorial Service. The time spent with Mr. Siregar and his staff was a wonderful experience in many ways. We got to meet a gracious group of caring individuals who, in turn, fully experienced how important all the brave American, British, Dutch, and Australian servicemen who fought and sacrificed together in ABDA are to us. We could not have asked for a more enriching meeting and sharing for which our Association thanks the Consul-General very much. Mr. Siregar's response to the same experience is warmly expressed in a letter he wrote which is included on Page 8 in this edition of the Blue Bonnet.

- A Reminder that June 1 marks the commencement of the next scholarship application period which extends to November 1, 2022.
- From the ‘Ship’s Store’ we currently offer USS *Houston* (CA-30) hats and challenge coins. Each is pictured on our website: [Ship's Store \(usshouston.org\)](http://Ship's Store (usshouston.org)) All other merchandise is temporarily sold out. Clothing remains by special order only. [Polo shirts & jackets with USS *Houston* (CA-30) logo].
- If you are not yet an Association member, please consider signing up! Among the benefits of membership: direct email messaging on key USS *Houston* (CA-30)-related happenings.

We are looking forward to another good fiscal year. We are already planning for next year’s “Day of Remembrance” (two-day) gathering which will take place, as usual, on a Friday and Saturday close to March 1, 2023. We wish you all good health and prosperity.



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

10900 Richmond Avenue Houston, TX 77042

Tel: (713) 785-1691 | Fax: (713) 780-9644 | Email: info@indonesiahouston.net

March 23, 2022

Dear Mr. John K. Schwarz,

It was a privilege to be able to participate in the 80th Anniversary of the USS Houston (CA- 30) "Day of Remembrance." It was especially memorable to meet not only with the families of the survivors but also to learn of their experiences and see them rejoice their family's paths.

It is my hope that the gathering was not only an opportunity to commemorate but also to symbolize the strong bonds that Indonesia and the United States has always shared. I am also grateful to my fellow Indonesians in the Houston area who have participated and found a deep interest in the remembrance. To reach out further, I have shared the events to Jakarta to introduce an initiative to use this momentum to bring our countries even closer.

It is my honor to inform that the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Houston has now established a special corner in our gallery dedicated to the USS Houston CA-30. We aim to expand this corner further with many more collections. Additionally, we will coordinate with Indonesia to find the missing pieces of the ship. It is my hope that Indonesia will continue to preserve the USS Houston CA-30.

I convey my utmost appreciation for the collaborations we have successfully accomplished. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Andre Omer Siregar
Consul-General of Indonesia
Houston



The Kwai River Bridge

In Fact and Fiction

By

Joseph L. McCain

In 1952, the French author Pierre Boulle, published his famous novel, The Bridge Over the River Kwai. Later made into a movie, Boulle's portrayal of an incident on the infamous Burma-Thailand Death Railway during the spring of 1943, won seven Oscars and a Best Actor Award for Alec Guinness in 1957.

Those who have seen this movie are led to believe that British officers willingly collaborated with their Japanese captors to construct the bridge in record time as a demonstration of British superior skill and efficiency. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those prisoners who worked on the bridge did so under threat of death and endured terrible conditions and abuse. Whenever they had opportunity, however, they risked their lives to sabotage the construction.

The bridge was built by primitive labor methods. It is several hundred yards in length and stands about three stories above the river. Construction was completed in two months. Unlike the movie version, the real bridge is not a wooden and bamboo structure. It rests on concrete pilings and is spanned with steel salvaged by the Japanese from a river crossing in Java.

The movie gives the impression that the bridge was built in the middle of a jungle but it actually crosses from a point at Kanchanaburi (Kanburi) Prison Camp on the north shore to Tamarkan Prison Camp on the south side. It does not cross the Kwai Noi (River Kwai) but instead spans the Mae Klong River. Kanchanaburi, Thailand is an ancient city and trading outpost adjacent to the camp. The area was utilized as a Japanese headquarters and base camp. The Japanese headquarters was used to direct the railway construction and was known as the Southern Army Railway Corps. The British who were forced to build the railway bridge were housed in nearby Chungkai POW Camp.

The movie ends with the bridge being blown up by a special commando group. This never actually happened. The bridge is still used today although much of the middle section had to be rebuilt after RAF and USAAF bombing attacks in 1944 and 1945. It is now a famous tourist attraction due to the movie's popularity. It is even possible to take a short train trip across the bridge and there are numerous museums and memorials. There is also the Kanchanaburi, Thailand War Cemetery. It provides the final resting place for hundreds of British, Australian, and Dutch prisoners who died on the Burma-Thailand Death Railway. We should never



The Bridge on the River Kwai, Kanchanaburi, Thailand

forget those approximately 16,000 Allied prisoners who lost their lives, as did tens of thousands of conscripted Asians, while forced to labor on this inhumane Japanese railway project.

The Burma-Thailand Death Railway was somewhere between 258 to 265 miles in length through a disease-ridden inhospitable jungle. There were a great many bridges along its length but only one is generally known by today's public. Sadly, this is because of a great work of fiction; the truth is a much sadder story.

Sources for this article:

Through the Valley of the Kwai, by Ernest Gordon, 1962. A member of the 93rd Highland Battalion. After the war, he became Dean of the Chapel at Princeton University.

Building the Death Railway, edited by Robert S. La Forte and Ronald E. Marcello, 1993.

A Thousand Cups of Rice, by Kyle Thompson, 1994. A member of the 131st Field Artillery, also known as "The Lost Battalion".

Death Railway, by Clifford Kinvig, 1973. Ballantine Book Series.

Notes for this article:

French author Pierre Boulle served his country during World War II but was not a prisoner on the railway. He also wrote the novel, Planet of the Apes (1963) which later became a highly successful movie.

[Editor's notes]: In the film "The Bridge on the River Kwai," U.S. Actor William Holden played the part of a USS *Houston* enlisted survivor who was pretending to be a Navy Commander. Holden's character explains he is a USS *Houston* survivor early on in the film. In reality, most all surviving USS *Houston* (CA-30) officers above the rank of Lieutenant were separated from the enlisted men and transported from Java to Japan early on in their captivity. Also in real life, most USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivors who worked on the railway labored on the Burma side of the line.

In 1957, Pierre Boulle, the author of the novel The Bridge Over the River Kwai, received the Academy Award for Best Screenplay. However, the real authors of the screenplay, Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson, were blacklisted writers in Hollywood and at the time they received no screen credit.

Although the movie has some inaccuracies, it is a work of fiction; it is not intended to be a documentary. Not only has the film drawn world-wide attention to the railway and USS *Houston* (CA-30), but it is also considered to be one of the best war movies ever made. The film provides an invaluable reference point with folks for describing the true experiences of those USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivors who were forced to work on the Burma-Thailand Death Railway.

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>.

SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to:



Madison Ferguson
2022 Recipient of the
U.S. Naval Academy Foundation
USS Houston (CA-30) Memorial Scholarship

We are proud to announce our **9th** U.S. Naval Academy Foundation “USS Houston (CA-30) Memorial Scholarship” designee, Madison Ferguson.

Midshipman Ferguson hails from St. Petersburg, FL. Funded by the scholarship, Madison attended the Marion Military Institute in Marion, AL prior to entering her first year at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. Madison's impressive resume includes Student Congress Speech and Debate Team; Student Government Association class Treasurer and Executive Council member; Co-founder of Sanderlin Tutoring Program for middle schoolers; Summa Cum Laude, Rho Kappa History Honor Society, and two-time regional finalist for National High School Ethics Bowl, among many other accomplishments.

In her letter to the Association thanking us for her support she wrote: “It means a lot to those of us navigating the prep school year to know that there are organizations such as yours walking beside us and helping young men and women like me realize their dream of service to this great nation.”

Our U.S. Naval Academy Foundation scholarship has, since its original purchase, helped graduate **six** U.S. Navy Officers and **1** Marine Officer. We wish Madison all the best in her endeavor to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy as a military Officer with the class of 2025. —John K. Schwarz, Scholarship Chairman

Wreaths Across America 2021

By John K. Schwarz



2021 Team Houston: (L to R): Sara Peffley, Christina Suh, Peter Bota, Marta Bota, John K. Schwarz, Jessica Rennert, Malou Rennert, Jordan Rennert.

With the waning of the pandemic and the resumption of the volunteer “Wreaths Across America” program, “Team Houston” once again assembled, coordinated by Marta Bota, to perform volunteer work for wreath placement at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA. We were blessed with an unseasonably rather warm Saturday, December 18th, 2021, to place a Christmas wreath at each gravesite in this cemetery where our nation’s military service heroes rest in peace.

The 2021 “Team Houston” included its host/coordinator, Marta Bota, along with husband Peter Bota, Survivors’ Association Executive Director John K. Schwarz, volunteers Sara Peffley and Christina Suh, and finally a wonderful “family affair” consisting of Mom Malou Rennert, her daughter Jessica Rennert, and son Jordan Rennert.

The Team commenced work and concentrated on section 12 where we placed wreaths on the USS *Houston* (CA-30)/HMAS *Perth* (D-29) marker, as well as the gravesites of Association founders Otto & Trudy Schwarz, and USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivors and spouses, including Joe and Isabelle Gans, Irma and John Stefanek, David Flynn and William Batchelor.

As the cemetery appeared quite “saturated” with wreaths placed as far as one could see, you can rest assured that a wreath was placed at the gravesite of all other USS *Houston* CA-30 crewmen buried at Arlington National Cemetery in honor of the sacrifice they made to the United States of America.

The Team also visited the gravesite of the parents of Marta Bota as they, too, lie at rest in Arlington National Cemetery because of Mr. Gallo's service to America.

At each gravesite, the name of the deceased serviceman/servicewoman was recited aloud—a new step added this year to each placement ceremony.

God Bless our veteran heroes and the opportunity to honor them facilitated by the national “Wreaths Across America” program.

80th Anniversary Overseas Commemorations



The Kingdom of the Netherlands

On Sunday, 27 February 2022, Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix, former Queen, was Guest of Honor at the Battle of the Java Sea Commemoration in the Hague. A speech was delivered by Louise Doorman, granddaughter of RADM Karel Doorman, RNN, who was KIA 80 years ago while in command of ABDA naval forces during the Battle of the Java Sea. (L to R): HRH princess Beatrix; Commander of the RNLN Vice-Admiral Tas; Chairman KDF Vice-Admiral (retired) Ben Bekkering; and Mr. Martijn Manders, Department of Maritime Cultural Heritage.

Great Britain

The loss on March 1, 1942 of the British heavy cruiser HMS *Exeter* was commemorated on February 26, 2022 at the Exeter Cathedral.



Australia

On March 1, 2022, the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia was the site of a 2022 HMAS *Perth* (D-29) Memorial Service. This service was one of several memorial services held in Australia.



Report from Jakarta

Captain Stacey A. Prescott, USN

2 March 2022

I am happy to share that we were able to once again commemorate the Battle of Sunda Strait at sea yesterday. While the weather threatened rain most of the day, we were afforded a lovely window of calm to lay wreaths over both the USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth I*. A small group of representatives from the U.S. and Australian embassies, as well as Indonesian Navy and Banten province leadership departed the Cilegon port on the west side of Java onboard the KRI *Usman Harun* at approximately 1000, then proceeded to the site of HMAS *Perth I*.

The commemoration at sea began with an address by the Deputy Assistant for Operations to the Chief of the Indonesian Navy, First Admiral Wasis Priyano, followed by the Indonesian National Anthem. Then an overview of the Battle of Sunda Strait was provided by Captain Rod Griffiths, Australian Naval Attaché, who then turned over to the Australian Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Stephen Scott for brief remarks prior to laying a wreath over HMAS *Perth I*, and the playing of the Australian National Anthem. Frank McGovern, survivor of the HMAS *Perth I*, was also able to observe virtually via WhatsApp.

The Indonesian Navy also kindly provided a chaplain to say a prayer over each of the sites for us as part of the ceremony. We then proceeded to the site of USS *Houston* (CA-30), where I provided a brief welcome, followed by remarks from our Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Michael Kleine, who reminded the gathered guests of the brave sacrifices made by the crew in the name of freedom and democracy. We concluded the ceremony with the laying of and saluting the wreath followed by the U.S. National Anthem. Of course, any day at sea comes with the chance of foul weather, and we were afforded an extra hour or two of the Indonesian Navy's kind hospitality when the weather and winds picked up again, delaying our return to port—an all around fine Navy Day by my reckoning!

Below are some links to the photos shared on the Embassy's social media pages:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CaitN BFgUr/?utm_medium=copy_link

<https://www.facebook.com/100064719008885/posts/326891232811508/?d=n>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembassyjakarta/albums/72177720297063993>

My best wishes for always and during the Day of Remembrance in Houston this weekend.
Lest we forget.

Warmest regards,
Stacey

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

On February 4th Eighty Years Ago

By

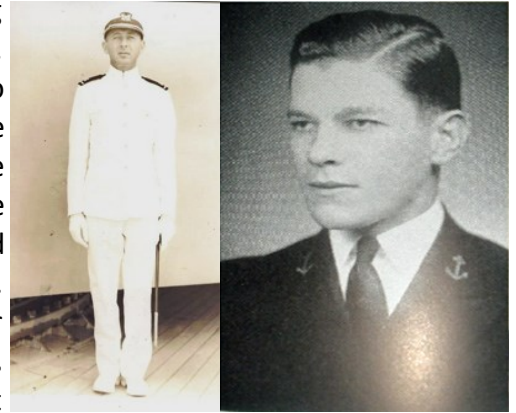
Donald M. Kehn, Jr.

ABDA's naval Striking Force under the command of RADM Karel Doorman, RNN, sortied to contest Japanese invasion convoys & support forces believed to be gathering in the area of Makassar, Celebes.

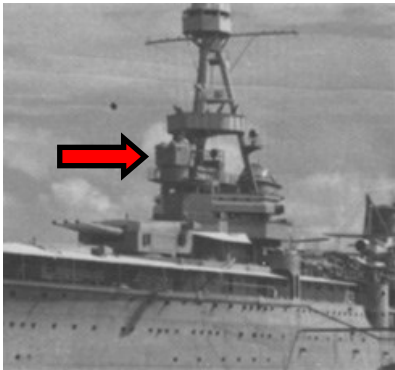
Steaming from the Genteng islands south of Madura, Java, they were attacked by some sixty Imperial Japanese Navy bombers flying out of Kendari, Celebes. The large airfield there (known as Kendari II) had been captured by IJN forces on Jan. 24, and the Japanese began operating fighters, reconnaissance, and bombing units from it almost immediately. Only the great range of IJN ground-based bombers allowed such attacks, as Kendari II was over 500 miles from the area in which Doorman's ships were intercepted.

Two of the larger ships in the force—cruisers **USS *Houston* (CA-30)** and **USS *Marblehead* (CL-12)**—were singled out for attention by the enemy bombers. Neither American ship had radar or modern AA gunnery systems. Both were eventually struck and near missed by heavy bombs which caused extensive damage and casualties.

On **CA-30** a single 250kg (551 lb.) bomb hit the ship aft, detonating just above the upper deck next to the cruiser's number three turret. Because the gun house had been rotated about 30° in order to try to use its rangefinder against the approaching planes (in case there were torpedo bombers involved), the area immediately below the blast was unprotected by the turret overhang itself. In the compartment beneath, sitting around the barbette, was stationed the After Damage Repair Party under **CWO Joseph Bienert, USN**. Almost all of these sailors, including 'Bosun Bienert', were killed or severely wounded. Above them, the Turret Officer, **LT George E. Davis, Jr., USN**, who had been sitting in the hatchway of the turret observing, was killed instantly. Hot fragments from the bomb pierced the thin-walled gun house in over 200 hundred places and ignited powder bags inside the turret. Many of the gun crew were killed by blast, fire, and smoke. There were relatively few survivors; those who lived through the initial fiasco were sent to Jogjakarta under the care of Dr. Wassell...



(Left): CWO Joseph Bienert, USN;
(Right): LT George E. Davis, Jr.



USS *Houston* (ca. 1941) while being repainted at Cavite. Her refurbished MK19 AA director ("Sky Forward") is sited above the bridge and just aft of Turret Two.

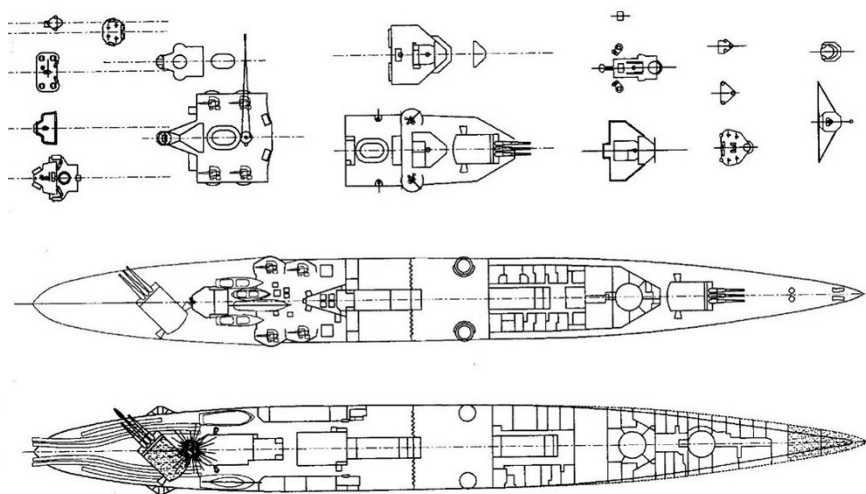
Notwithstanding her damages and casualties, it was decided to keep ***Houston*** in the combat zone. Since her AA capabilities had not been severely compromised—although her FWD AA director was jammed—her value as a convoy escort was intact. This decision came after the ship withdrew to the port of Tjilatjap on the southwest coast of Java. There ADM Thomas C. Hart, USN (CINCAF) and her skipper, CAPT Albert H. Rooks (USNA 1914) conferred in the captain's cabin along with the cruiser's Gunnery Officer (CDR Arthur Maher, USN) and Chief Gunner (WO J. E. Hogan, USN). They seem to have understood that no replacement was coming for some time—the Pacific Fleet's more modern cruiser **USS *Phoenix* (CL-46)** was alleged to have been in the pipeline for that assignment, but after some activities around Australia & later escorting an India-bound convoy, she never approached Java.

Photo # 80-G-237439 Bomb damage to USS Marblehead, February 1942



When the men in CAPT Rooks' cabin learned that **CA-30's** defective forward MK. 19 AA director had been repaired and was again operable, they apparently felt the ship could continue in her primary role as convoy escort. The forced retirement of **Marblehead**, whose seaworthiness had been impaired may have factored in as well. In any case, that appears to have been the decisive moment for determining the fate of the ship and her crew. According to Hart's subsequent accounts, the decision to remain in the NEI was largely CAPT Rooks', but it is most unlikely **Houston's** skipper made the choice recklessly or without due consideration. Described as "rock-solid" by surviving officers, Rooks (who had already been an aide to Hart at the Naval Academy) was known as a thoughtful, serious, and conscientious officer.

On *Marbly*, a Royal Netherlands Navy liaison officer named **Ted Luxemburg** lost all of his belongings in the damaged cruiser. A few days later, by verbal orders, Sub-Lt Luxemburg was transferred at Tjilatjap to the same duty on board the old four-piper destroyer **USS Whipple (DD-217)**. In the famous photo taken at Tjilatjap of **CL-12's** damaged stern, one can see a lone individual standing atop her after gun house next to a line of clothing drying out. When I interviewed Ted by phone in Holland back in ~2012-13, one of many interesting things he told me was that the individual atop the gun house in that photo was actually him.

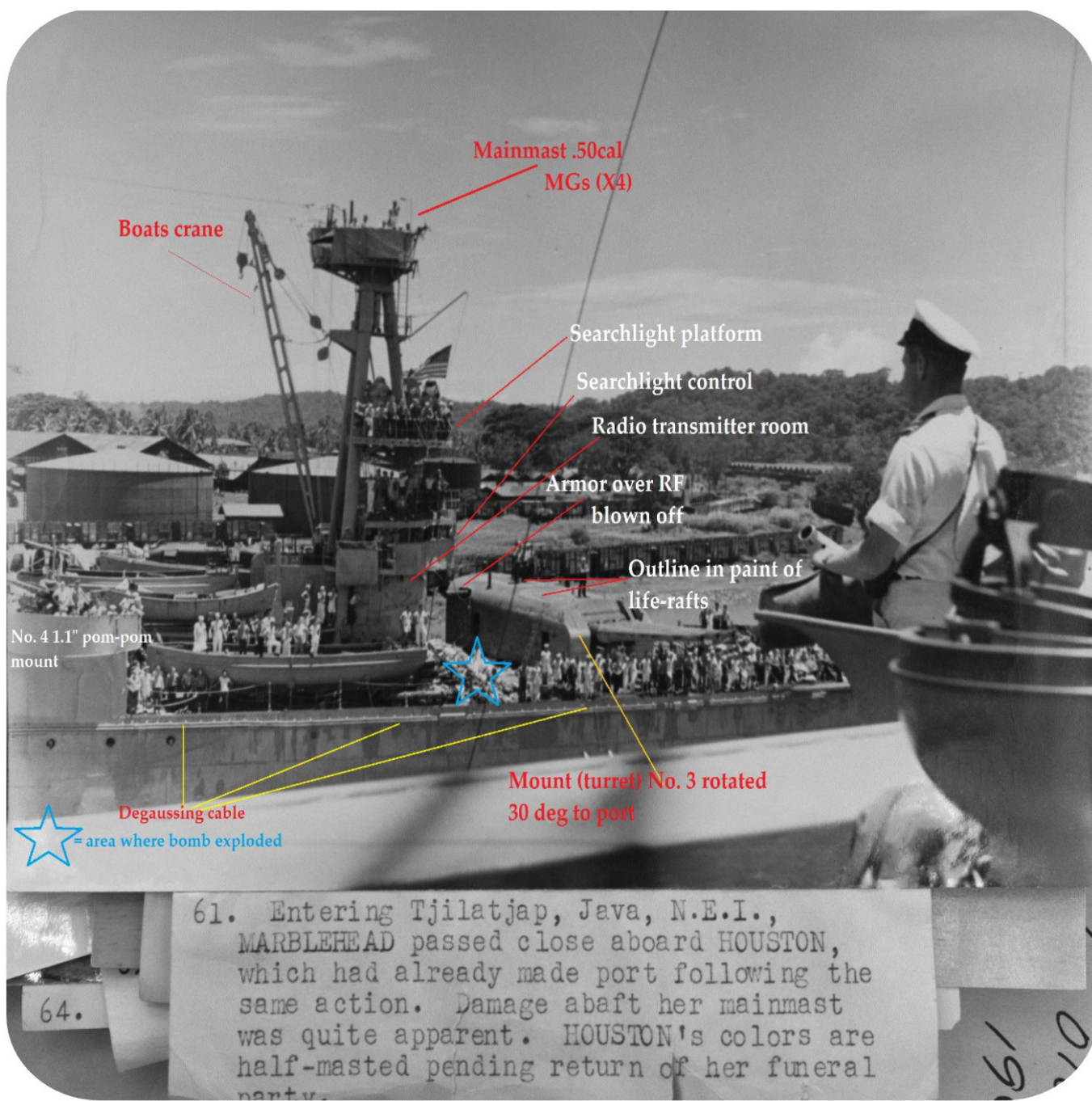


Damage to USS Houston (CA-30) from the February 4, 1942 bomb hit.

One of the stalwart heroes of the Feb. 4th bombing attack was **John Ranger, AMM3/c, USN**, who ran aft to help fight the fires. His close friend, **Russell Shelton, S1/c, USN** was a member of the turret crew, but did not survive. Ranger endured very considerable personal danger in spraying carbon dioxide on the blazing gun house interior without the benefit of a gasmask or breather. For his bravery Ranger was awarded a well-deserved Silver Star.

(At Right): John Ranger, AMM3/c,





This remarkable photo taken at Tjilatjap, Java, shows *Marblehead* passing close by *Houston* after the bombings of Feb. 4, 1942. *Houston's* dead have already been taken off the ship for burial at the small Tjilatjap European cemetery. Notations on the photo show areas affected by the single 250kg bomb that struck CA-30. Sailors sheltering during the attack were wounded and killed on the searchlight platform, the radio room, in the crew's head one deck below, beneath the ships' boats, below the gun house of turret 3, inside the gun house and below the turret in compartments associated with the powder train. Turret Officer LT Geo. Davis (also the Division Officer for 3rd Div) would have been sitting in the open hatch at the rear of the gun house...just above the blue star.

**USS Houston (CA-30) Survivors
Turning 100!**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Robert L. Hanley



Marvin Sizemore

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

- 2/23/2022: Received the following email from author **Marty Irons**: "Ahoy, I'm working on a book about the US Navy air attacks against Saigon on 12 January 1945. Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet Fast Carrier Task Force 38 pounded Indochina during the day. Forty-one ships were sunk. In Saigon, the POWs were witness to the attack. I'm seeking written accounts of the attacks by USS *Houston* survivors. **Otto C. Schwarz** gave a short but poignant version of what he saw that day. That is the only account I've found. *Do you know of any other accounts?* Years ago, during research for another book, **Al Kopp PhM** gave me an interview. At that time, 12 January 1945 wasn't on my radar. But, I'll forever remember the times Al & I spoke. Thank you for any and all help. Sincerely, Marty Irons, Author, *Phalanx Against the Divine Wind*, 2017; *Corsair Down! Tales of Rescue & Survival during World War II*, 2021."
- 2/24/2022: Replied to **Marty Irons** as follows: "Marty, Thanks for your email regarding USN air attacks against Imperial Japanese forces on 12 January 1945. I am sorry to report that I know of no specific accounts of USS *Houston* survivors on that day. Although my father, **PFC Howard Robert Charles, USMC** told me that the American bombing raids on Saigon were frightening, I don't recall him mentioning any specific dates... I will be happy to place your email inquiry in the upcoming April issue of our Association's newsletter to see if any of our readers have any information regarding the air attack on Saigon on 12 January 1945. If any of our readers have accounts, I will certainly pass them along. Best wishes on your book project."
- 2/24/2022: Received the following email from **Marty Irons**: "Evening Dana, I'd appreciate the submission in the newsletter... Post the 12Jan45 attacks, there were also a pair of B-29 raids on the city. I'm less interested in those raids, but it might stir some memories. Attached is a photo of the raids on the Saigon River near the prison camp. Best, Marty."



Saigon under attack by U.S. carrier planes on 12 January 1945

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



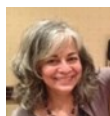
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* The Board of Managers is available to members for questions, concerns, input, or to clarify any matter regarding the Association via email (to contact@usshouston.org), phone, or regular mail.

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

November 27, 2021 to March 19, 2022

In Memory of Howard Brooks

Silvia Brooks

In Memory of Eugene Crispi

Donna Flynn

In Memory of David Flynn

Donna Flynn

In Memory of Ray Goodson

Scott Ingram

In Memory of William Ingram, Jr.

Scott Ingram

In Memory of John Reilly

Donna Flynn

In Memory of William Weissinger

Eunelle Weissinger

In Memory of Trudy Schwarz

Donna Flynn

Other Donations:

Richard Bain; Bernice Harapat; Tim and Jo Klenk; Joe and Melisse Kollmyer; Joe and Marlene McCain; Michael Reilly; Linda Elaine Robinson; Linda Swick.

Amazon Smile Donations received YTD: \$35.64

Financial Report

by Pam Moura, Treasurer

January 1 – March 12, 2022

General Fund

Beginning Balance:	\$27,589.25
Receipts:	* + 7,404.19
Expenses:	* - 4,907.63
Ending Balance:	\$30,085.81



Scholarship Fund

Beginning Balance:	\$21,202.55
Receipts:	+ 2,550.34
Expenses:	00.00
Ending Balance:	\$23,752.89

**Total expenses and receipts from the DOR 2022 are not yet final.*



Published by:

USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association and Next Generations® (April, August, December)

Editor: Dana Charles

Proofreaders: Pam Moura, John Schwarz, Sue Kreutzer, Bernice Harapat, Marlene McCain.

Distribution: Dana Charles, Pam Moura

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.



Photo by Dennis Flynn