



Now Hear This!

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Association Founded 1947

By Otto and Trudy Schwarz

USS Houston (CA-30) Day of Remembrance 2024



Photo by Dennis Flynn

City of Houston officials presented a proclamation to the Association at the 2024 USS *Houston* (CA-30) annual Memorial Service in Houston, Texas on March 2, 2024, (Left to Right): Robert Dembo III, Houston's Director of Veterans Affairs; Teresa Reilly, widow of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor John Reilly; Donna Mae Flynn, widow of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor David Flynn; Amy Peck, Vice Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member, District A; and Eunell Weissinger, widow of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor William Weissinger.

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Day of Remembrance 2024

Association members, families, and friends, were among over 40 registered attendees who enjoyed mild spring weather on March 1-2, 2024, during the 2024 "Day of Remembrance" (DOR) weekend at the Hilton Garden Inn—Houston Galleria in Houston, Texas. The weekend marked the 82nd anniversary of the WWII loss of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) at the February 28-March 1, 1942 Battle of Sunda Strait.

(Continued on next page)



DOR attendees gathered on March 1, 2024, inside the Indonesian Consulate for a group photo with the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia (Front row, 5th from Left).

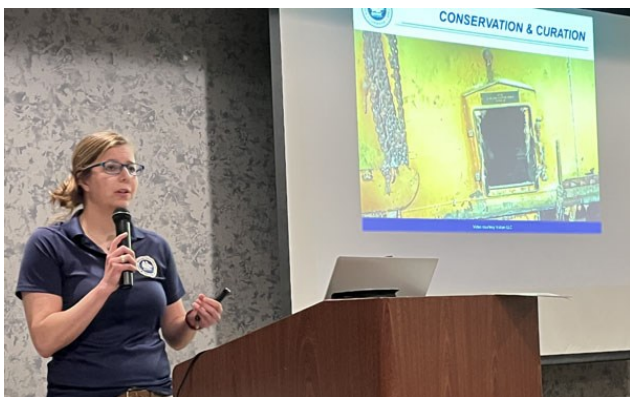
The DOR weekend officially began on Friday afternoon, March 1, 2024, as a bus, generously provided by the Harris County Precinct Four Transportation Department, brought most DOR attendees to the Indonesian Consulate in Houston, where **the Honorable Andre Omer Siregar**, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston, and his staff warmly welcomed us.

The Association’s executive director, **John K. Schwarz**, presented the Consul-General with a gift from the Association—a framed schematic of USS *Houston* (CA-30) in appreciation for Consul-General Siregar’s close relationship with our organization during his tenure as Consul-General (Photo at left). Consul-General Siregar will be re-assigned soon, and we will miss him. After the presentation, Consul-General Siregar and his staff showed us the consulate’s large exhibit room, including a display featuring a model of *Houston* and several large, framed pictures of *Houston* and other ships of ABDA.



We appreciate the cordial relationship we have with the Consul-General’s staff, including: **Hadyan Tamimi**, Vice Consul for Information and Social Culture Affairs; **Oktorian S. Hakim**, Consul for Information and Social Culture Affairs; **Muhamad Alam**, Staff of Information and Social Culture Affairs; and **Budiardjo Waluyo**, Staff of Information and Social Culture Affairs, Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia. We thank them for their hospitality during our visit.

The Association’s Executive Director **John K. Schwarz** kicked off the Friday night banquet program with a moment of silence for the USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivors, family members and friends whom we lost over the past year, including: USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **Marvin Sizemore**; **Cletus M. Flynn**, Son of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **David C. Flynn**; **Ella Jane Harris**, widow of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **Lanson Harris**; **Annette Smith**, widow of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **Harold P. Smith**; **Jack Mintzer**, cousin of USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewman **LT (jg) Francis Weiler, USN**; and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) Survivor **Frank McGovern**. John then announced our Association’s 2024 USS *Houston* CA-30 Scholarship Award recipient, **Avery Chambliss**, granddaughter of the late USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **Cecil Chambliss**, USN, and the recipient of the U.S. Naval Academy Scholarship, the “USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Scholarship,” **Ashley Rubiano**. Congratulations to both scholarship recipients! Many thanks to our Association’s historian, **Donald M. Kehn, Jr.**, for hosting and displaying his collection of USS *Houston* (CA-30)-related materials in the Association’s meeting/dining room at the hotel.



After announcing our scholarship recipients, John introduced **Blair Atcheson**, Program Analyst with the Naval History and Heritage Command’s (NHHC) Underwater Archeology Branch, Washington, D.C., (left) who presented a PowerPoint show featuring many interesting insights on the NHHC’s underwater archeology activities.

Author **Sally Mott Freeman** then discussed the creation of her book about three brothers—her father and two uncles—who served as U.S. Naval officers during the Pacific War. The excellent book, [The Jersey Brothers](#), tells the WWII stories of all three brothers, one of whom was captured by Imperial Japanese forces in the Philippines. To read a book review by John K. Schwarz, go to page 18.



Sally Mott Freeman



On Saturday morning, March 2, Historian **Blane Amphor** presented an interesting PowerPoint show called “From Pearl Harbor to Midway,” which helped place early Pacific War battles, including *Houston*’s various WWII battles, into historic perspective.

At 12:30 p.m., a bus departed the hotel for the annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service at the site of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument in Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. —Dana Charles

Association member and Historian **Blane Amphor** presented his PowerPoint show “From Pearl Harbor to Midway” during the morning breakfast gathering on March 2, 2024. (Photos on this page by Dana Charles)

2024 USS Houston (CA-30) Scholarship Recipients



AVERY CHAMBLISS

Granddaughter of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivor Cecil Chambliss

INTERNAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



ASHLEY RUBIANO

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



At the *USS Houston* (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service on March 2, 2024, at the site of the *USS Houston* (CA-30) Monument in Sam Houston Park in the City of Houston: Brayden Wehring (at the podium), Lead Cadet, Petty Officer 3rd Class, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Houston Division, led attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. John K. Schwarz (at left), Executive Director, *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivors' Association & Next Generations®, served as Master of Ceremonies. (Photo by Dennis Flynn)

The 2024 Annual *USS Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service

Approximately 200 people attended this year's *USS Houston* (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service held at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, March 2, 2024, under partly cloudy skies at the site of the *USS Houston* (CA-30) Monument. The Association's executive director, **John K. Schwarz**, again served as MC this year. **The Reverend Gil Raynor, MM2, SS (retired)**, presented the Invocation and Benediction. **Brayden Wehring, Lead Cadet, Petty Officer 3rd Class, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Houston Division**, led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and **Wayne R. Thompson, CW04, U.S. Coast Guard (retired)**, provided the "All Hands" Boatswain's Call. Association vice president **Dana Charles** welcomed and recognized guests, which included 13 relatives of *USS Houston* (CA-30) crewmen **Tai Chi Fat, Zee Zhong Fong, and Tung Ven Yun** (see photo on page 10). The relatives were attending their very first *USS Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service.

Robert Dembo III, Director of Veterans Affairs, Mayor's Office, and **Amy Peck, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, the City of Houston and City Council Member, District A**, provided a welcome by the City of Houston. Ms. Peck then presented the Association with a special City Proclamation, which the widows of *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivors in attendance—**Donna Mae Flynn, Teresa Reilly, and Eunell Weissinger**—gratefully accepted.

Speakers representing the WWII nations of the American-British-Dutch-Australian Command (ABDA) included: **The Honorable Ned Talbot, Deputy Consul-General of Australia, Houston, Texas**; **Commander Chris Emonson, RAN, Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C.**; **Commander Derek Powles, CEng CMarEng, MIMechE, Royal Navy, Assistant Naval Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.**; **Captain Matt Tharp, USN, Chief of Staff, Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.**; and **Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jose Alvarez, U.S. Marine Corps**. Speaking as a representative of the Republic of Indonesia: **the Honorable Andre Omar Siregar, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia, Houston, Texas**.

2024 USS Houston (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service Guest Speakers



**The Honorable Ned Talbot, Deputy
Consul-General of Australia, Houston,
Texas**



**Commander Chris Emonson,
RAN, Assistant Naval Attaché,
Embassy of Australia, Washington,
D.C.**



**Commander Derek Powles, CEng
CMarEng MIMechE, Royal Navy,
Assistant Naval Attaché, British
Embassy, Washington, D.C.**



**Captain Matt Tharp, USN,
Chief of Staff, Naval History
and Heritage Command,
Washington, D.C.;**



**Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jose Alvarez,
U.S. Marine Corps.**



**The Honorable Andre Omer
Siregar, Consul-General of the
Republic of Indonesia, Houston,
Texas**

(Photos by Dana Charles)

The Association's vice president **Dana Charles** recited the lyrics to "The Navy Hymn" as **The Community Band of Southeast Texas** performed the music. **The McMlore Detachment, Marine Corps League** provided the Rifle Salute. Echo Taps was beautifully provided by **The Community Band of Southeast Texas**. **Matt Rejmaniak** led us in singing the National Anthem and "God Bless America," accompanied by **The Community Band of Southeast Texas**.



We deeply appreciate all participants who laid wreaths at the base of the Monument during our wreath-laying ceremony and we thank the **Sea Cadets** (pictured above) who helped tremendously throughout the memorial service. We thank the wonderful **Gideon family** who provided refreshments at the annual Memorial Service site again this year. We also thank the **City of Houston** and **The Heritage Society** for their gracious support for the annual *USS Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service. (Photo above by Dennis Flynn).



CAPT Matt Tharp, USN, Chief of Staff, Naval History & Heritage Command, laid a wreath during the Memorial Service. (Photo by Dennis Flynn).



(L to R:) Bernice Harapat, daughter of a former Dutch Colonial Army POW and Scott Ingram, son of *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivor Bill Ingram discussed their August 2023 pilgrimage to places on the "Death Railway" where their fathers had been POWs during WWII.

At 7:00 p.m. on Saturday evening, 2024 DOR attendees gathered for dinner back at our hotel's "USS *Houston* (CA-30) meeting room." After dinner, **Scott Ingram** and Association Secretary **Bernice Harapat** presented a PowerPoint show, "Our Death Railway Pilgrimage," about the August 2023 trip they and Jerry Ranger made to Thailand to visit the Burma-Thailand Railway. **Dana Charles** then presented a video made during the 1990s in which a large group of *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivors and their wives gathered at the home of *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivor **Art Duham**e in the Poconos. Among the *USS Houston* (CA-30) Survivors appearing in the video were: **Otto Schwarz, Joe Gans, Howard Brooks, and Paul "Pap" Papish.**

Many thanks to all who attended and participated in DOR 2024! We have already begun planning for next year's "Day of Remembrance" gathering to be held in Houston in early March 2025. See you there!

DOR 2024 Snapshots







Photo by Dana Charles

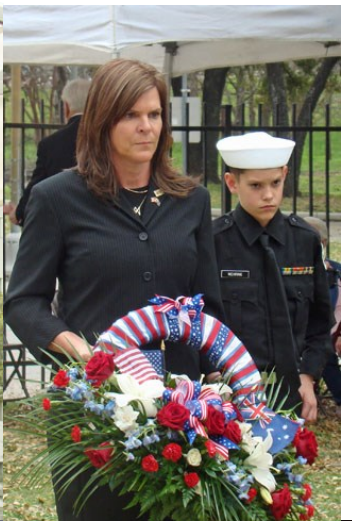


Photo by Dennis Flynn



Photo by Dennis Flynn





Photos by Dennis Flynn

Overseas Commemorations 2024

On February 28, 2024, the Last Post Ceremony commemorating the loss of HMAS Perth 1 was held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australia.



NEDLANDS YACHT CLUB

'TO SHOW RESPECT AND FOR THE LOVE OF SAILING'

64TH HMAS PERTH MEMORIAL REGATTA
SUNDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2024

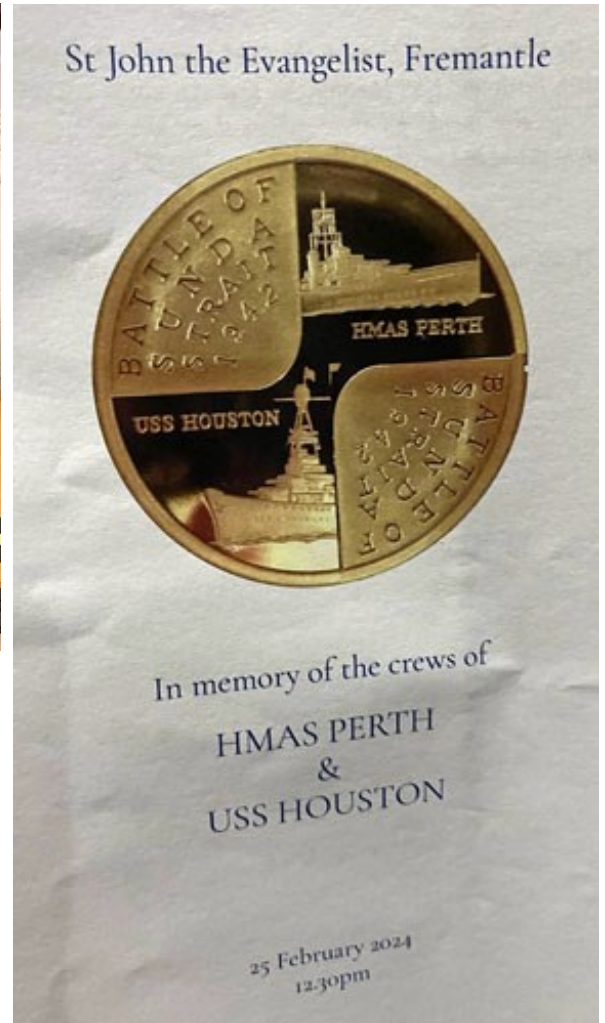
For more information :
<https://www.nyc.org.au/sailing/regattas/>

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The 64th annual HMAS *Perth* Memorial Regatta was held on February 18, 2024, at the Nedlands Yacht Club in Perth, Australia.

(L to R:) Tara Bolton and Pattie Wright at the HMAS *Perth* (D-29) and USS *Houston* (CA-30) commemoration ceremony on March 2, 2024, at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Australia. Pattie Wright, author of [The Men of the Line](#) and [Ray Parkin's Odyssey](#) served as speaker during the annual gathering which had some 15 HMAS *Perth* 1 descendants in attendance.





(Above and Right): The crews of HMAS *Perth* 1 and USS *Houston* (CA-30) were remembered at the annual commemoration ceremony at St. John the Evangelist, Fremantle, Western Australia on February 25, 2024.



The crew of the British WWII heavy cruiser HMS *Exeter* was remembered during the March 2, 2024 commemoration ceremony held at St. Andrew & St. Catherine Chapel in Exeter Cathedral in the UK. HMS *Exeter* was lost in battle on March 1, 1942.



From the desk of the Executive Director
John K. Schwarz

This Blue Bonnet edition has been produced just after yet another absolutely wonderful ‘Day of Remembrance’ (DOR) gathering sponsored by our Association in Houston, Texas, March 1-2, 2024. Coverage of the DOR 2024 is featured in this Blue Bonnet issue. I want to take this opportunity to re-emphasize our appreciation to all who participated in the two days of activities, capped off with the Saturday, March 2, Annual Memorial Service conducted at the USS *Houston* CA-30 monument in Sam Houston Park. It remains a wonderful honoring of the men of the USS *Houston* (CA-30), HMAS *Perth* (D-29), the servicemen of the allied fleet (ABDA), and the 131st Field Artillery/2nd Battalion (“The Lost Battalion”).

Our thanks begin with the wonderful folks at the Indonesian Consulate under the direction of Consul-General Andre Siregar for hosting our group on Friday afternoon, March 1. Additionally, we thank the City of Houston; The Heritage Society; The Community Band of Southeast Texas and its conductor, Jacob McWherter; Reverend Gil Raynor; vocalist Matt Rejmaniak; the Sea Cadets and their leaders—Dennis Taylor, Carrie Wehring, and Charlie Lindley; We thank Wayne R. Thompson; ABDA representatives: Ned Talbot and Commander Chris Emonson (Australia); Commander Derek Powles (Great Britain); Aura Cuellar (Netherlands); Captain Matt Tharp, USN and U.S. Marine Warrant Officer 5 Jose Alvarez (U.S.); The McLemore Detachment, Marine Corps League; the Naval Order of the U.S., Texas Commandery; the Gideon Family (refreshments); U.S. Marine and Houston, Texas Police Officer Charles LaMont; and soundman Carlos Parra. And, of course, the DOR coordination through the hard work of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivors’ Association & Next Generations’ Board of Managers: Sue Kreutzer, Dana Charles, Pam Moura, and Bernice Harapat.

Because of the dedication of so many individuals, this service is a very unique and special commemoration that I encourage anyone, who has not yet been there, to try to attend in the future. For those regular, loyal attendees, please continue to be present to honor the brave crewmen of USS *Houston* (CA-30).

With regard to the USS *Houston* (CA-30) monument, it is placed in a protected part of Sam Houston Park on the grounds of The Heritage Society (THS), 1100 Bagby St., Houston, Texas, 77002, (713) 655-1912. Visitors should check in advance for THS hours of operation.

Merchandise: as of this writing, there are only two men’s large, embroidered polo shirts left (red, green), plenty of challenge coins, and USS *Houston* (CA-30) hats. Contact us for purchase while supplies last. (See page 23 for more information).

Reminder: Open, ongoing lines of communication remain most important for our Association. Please update us if/when any change occurs to either your e-mail and/or physical address.

Reminder: The next internal scholarship application window will open on **June 1, 2024**.

Our U.S.S. Houston Monument

Our Monument is more than rock and stone,
Standing proudly in the Texas sun.
It's a symbol of honor to the men
Who died before the war was won.
The bell that crowns this monument
Rang out the hours that night,
When our *Houston* and the *Perth*
Vanished in the night.

Next morning, though, was evidence
Of how gallantly they had fought.
Japanese ships so battered and sunk
Showed the damage they had wrought.
Those of us who still survived
Hoped for safety on Java's shore,
But the Japanese awaited us
And a fate as prisoners of war.

Our names inscribed at the monument's base
Are now part of history.
We shared in *Houston's* glory,
In our Navy's "Tradition of the Sea."
Our Memorial Service is our special time
To remember those men we knew,
Who fought so bravely on the ship we loved
Was back in World War Two.

This monument is a tribute to one of our
Navy's finest ships and a crew
that fought to the very last.

March 1, 1999
Lloyd V. Willey
U.S.M.C. Detachment
U.S.S. Houston (CA-30)



Photo by Dana Charles

Death Railway's Last British POW Dies at Age 104



Jack Jennings, a former British soldier thought to be the last of the approximately 30,000 British POW laborers who worked on the Burma-Thailand Railway, passed away on January 19, 2024. He was 104 years of age. He was born on March 10, 1919, at Old Hill, Staffordshire, England, to Joseph Jennings and Ethel, née Dunn. Jack was 14 when he left school and took up an apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner. He enrolled in evening classes at an art college, where he won prizes for his woodworking pieces, completely unaware that he was fated to be working with wood a few years later as a

prisoner of war during the construction of the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway.

Jennings was called up and posted to the 1st Battalion, the Cambridgeshire Regiment (1 CR) when the Second World War broke out in 1939 and was eventually transported to Singapore in 1942. On February 15, 1942, Jennings and his fellow British soldiers in a mortar platoon were ordered to surrender to the Imperial Japanese Army when Singapore fell. He spent the next 10 months in Singapore's Changi POW Camp, living on a diet of boiled rice. In November 1942, Jennings and his fellow POWs were crammed into crowded steel cattle trucks and transported to Thailand to work in the tropical heat, constructing the Burma-Thailand Railway.

As a POW, Jennings's poor diet made him susceptible to diseases, and he suffered malnutrition, dysentery, and malaria. British doctors worked with improvised medical tools and no anesthetic on a tropical ulcer that developed on his leg. "I never got down," he said. "You just got on with it. I never gave up hope. I made up my mind to forget about home."

Jennings was at a Chungkai hospital camp, where he was diagnosed with renal colic. It was at a time when the Japanese began the "Speedo" phase of the railway's construction—a deadly period when the Japanese pushed POW laborers to work harder and longer hours to complete the work by October 1943. He said afterward that his hospital stay probably saved his life since he missed the worst period on the railway.

During the last year of the war, he was well enough to be sent north to cut down trees and pile wood alongside the railway tracks. The Japanese used the wood to fuel their steam locomotives. He was up north near Uttaradit when he learned the war was over, and a few weeks after VJ Day, he was on his way home.

When he arrived home and he and his family sat down for a meal, his mother served what she remembered was his favorite dessert—Rice pudding! His mother could not understand why there was so much laughter. Two months later, he married his sweetheart, Lillian Millard. They had two daughters. Jennings went back to joinery work.

In the early 1990s, Jennings started to write about his time as a POW. His book, Prisoner Without a Crime, was eventually published in 2011. He would regularly attend the Far East Prisoner of War reunions and would talk about his war experiences during visits to schools.



Schoolchildren sing Happy Birthday to Jennings on his 103rd birthday – BBC

In 1995, Jennings made the first of four pilgrimages to Singapore and Thailand. The National Lottery funded his third trip in 2010. Two years later, he was featured in a National Lottery television ad for a campaign called “Life Changing,” and Jennings’s story became known to millions of TV viewers who learned how the Big Lottery Fund, under its “Heroes Return” program, had helped return him to the Far East, accompanied by his granddaughter, to visit the graves of his dead comrades. In an interview for the Lottery, Jennings said that the Thailand he visited was “completely different” from the one he had experienced: “The place is really a nice tourist area now.”

In 2015 Jennings went on his last trip to Thailand. He was featured in an ITV News at Ten report on the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. Remembering his time as a POW, he said: “Survival was my focus. I had no thoughts of dying. The prisoners who eventually got home were lucky, and I was determined to be one of the lucky ones. Some were tortured and affected badly. I wasn’t.” — Dana Charles

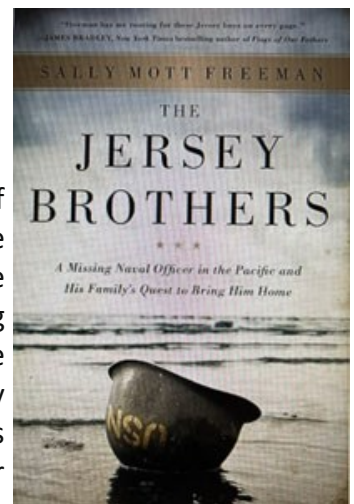
Sources:

The Economist, February 14, 2024; Telegraph obituaries, February 2, 2024; “Burma Railway veteran dies aged 104” by Charlotte Cox, BBC News

Book Review

The Jersey Brothers by Sally Mott Freeman

I cannot speak more highly about this book, its story, and its graphic depiction of what really occurred during the years of tortuous treatment by Imperial Japanese forces of Allied POWs in the Pacific Theater during WWII. For example, the description of what occurred during the hellship transport of Allied POWs during this horrible war experience will leave you spellbound yet informed about the disturbing truth of what prisoners of war went through (as well as why so many never made it home to tell the world about it). It is one of the very best books about the Pacific Theater campaign that I have had the pleasure of reading. For anyone even remotely interested, this is a must-read. My respect and admiration for this book's brilliant author and the service rendered to our country by her family. —John K. Schwarz





(L to R): RADM Sam Cox, USN (ret.), Director, NHHHC; Bradley Kreuger, NHHHC; and John K. Schwarz, Executive Director, USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivors' Association & Next Generations®.

LTJG Weiler's Flask Donated to NHHHC

On April 4, 2024, Executive Director John K. Schwarz presented on behalf of our Association, a flask originally belonging to USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewman LTJG Francis Weiler, to RADM Sam Cox, USN (retired), Director of Naval History & Heritage Command (NHHHC) at NHHHC Headquarters, Navy Yard, Washington, DC. The flask came to the Association through Jack and Pat Mintzer. The late Jack Mintzer was a cousin of LTJG Francis Weiler. Jack was also a member of the original Survivors' Association Scholarship Program Committee.

Though badly wounded, LTJG Francis Weiler survived the Battle of Sunda Strait and with the help of his shipmates, he was able to make it to shore on Java only to become a POW immediately. By March 15th, he was hospitalized, only to pass away eleven days later on March 26th, 1942.

A diver recovered a flask alongside *Houston* in September 2013. The flask had initials engraved on it, so the diver did some research commencing with our Association website, where he confirmed LTJG Weiler's name matched the initials engraved on the flask. He then found the story of LTJG Weiler's U.S. Naval Academy class ring ([TheStoryofFranWeiler.PDF \(usshouston.org\)](#)). That ring had previously been found and identified and eventually made its way to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, where it was, and still is, on display at the Alumni House. LTJG Weiler was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, class of 1939. Reading the story of LTJG Weiler's class ring led the diver to Mr. Mintzer, the article's author, to whom the diver graciously presented the flask.

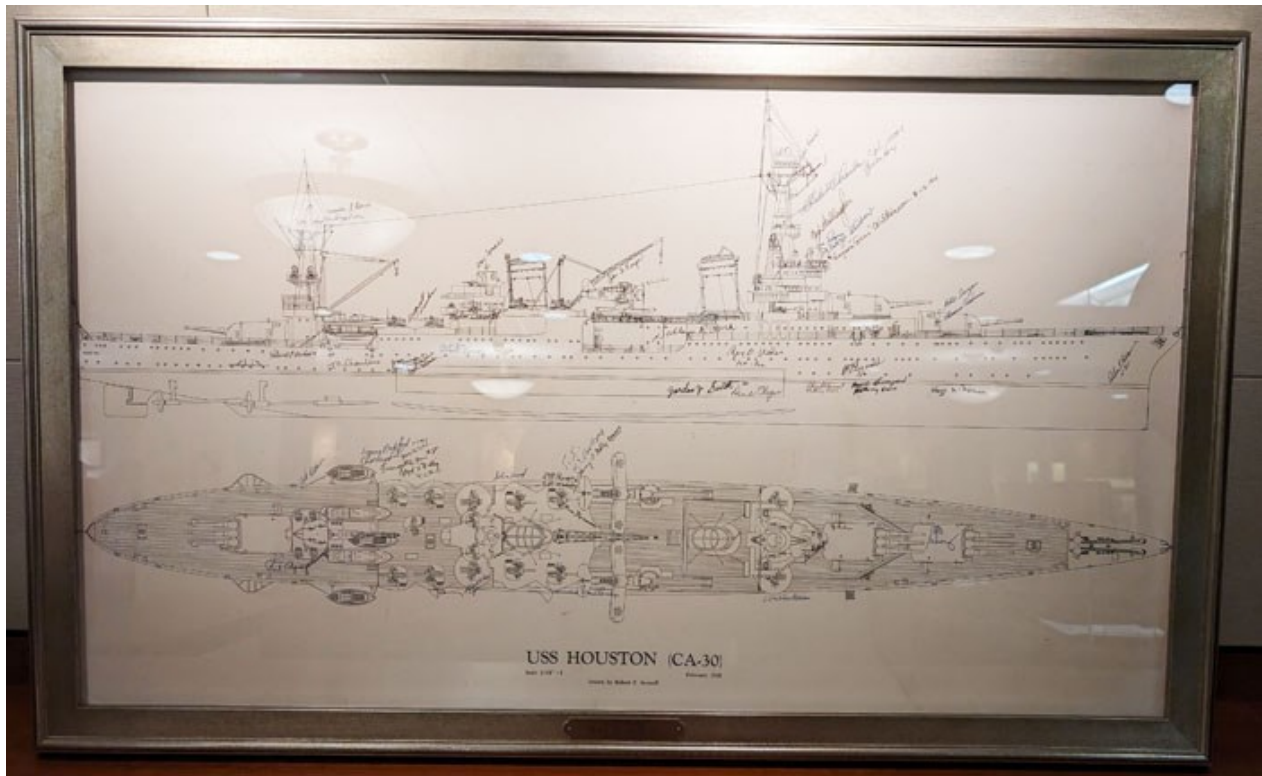


With Jack Mintzer's passing on December 23, 2022, and after much thought, his widow, Pat, made an offer of the flask to the Association in the hope of finding an appropriate home for it, hence our gifting of it to NHHHC. NHHHC will assess the flask's condition and begin immediate treatment as necessary. Following completion of that process, it will be added to the USS *Houston* (CA-30) collection and given proper display consideration.

We thank Mrs. Mintzer for the donation, the Arguelles family of Bolivia, North Carolina, for transporting it safely to Washington, DC, and, of course, the Naval History & Heritage Command for accepting this important CA-30 artifact. —John K. Schwarz

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

- 1/22/2024: I received the following email from **HMS EXETER Association's Tom Jowett**: "Good Evening All, I have finally received confirmation that the service can take place at St Andrew & St Catherine (our!) Chapel in Exeter Cathedral on 2nd March with an 11-00 start time...This will mark the 82nd Anniversary of the "Exeter" Sinking and the 76th Anniversary of the window's dedication...There is a plan for the service to be live on the Cathedral's Facebook page, although we will be amongst the repairs and maintenance, so the quality might not be the usual high standard...Some of us will be staying at the Livermead House Hotel for the weekend & will probably be using the train (strikes permitting!) to travel up to Exeter & back. If you wish to join us, have a word with Jess on reception & mention HMS Exeter... After the service, we are scheduled to visit the White Ensign Club for a bit of lunch & "up spirits" (of course!)... As you may be aware, the EWEC is planning to close later this year, so this will be the final time we can use the club (& make sure the rum barrel is empty before it moves on!)... Just so I can get some idea of the numbers, could you RSVP, please? Thanks, Tom. Tom Jowett."
- 1/22/2024: I emailed the US Naval Attache in Jakarta as follows: "Dear Mr. Panjeti, I understand you are the new U.S. Naval Attache at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. I'm vice president of the U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) Survivors' Association and Next Generations and editor of the association's newsletter, The Blue Bonnet. I'm writing you to inquire if there will be a commemoration of the loss of U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) and H.M.A.S. *Perth* (D-29) at the March 1, 1942, Battle of Sunda Strait in Banten Bay this year. If a commemoration takes place this year, would you be so kind as to let us know about it? I would be pleased to include your report in the April 2024 issue of our newsletter. I attended the commemoration in Banten Bay aboard the U.S.S. *Sampson* on March 1, 2015, and wrote about it on pages 11-12 in the April 2015 issue of The Blue Bonnet, which can be found online at [bb_apr2015.pdf \(usshouston.org\)](#). In addition, we would welcome any information you could provide us about the status of the remains of U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) and the effort to create a conservation zone around her. I'm looking forward to hearing from you."
- 1/23/2024: Received the following email from the Naval Attache in Jakarta: "Hi Dana, Thanks for reaching out. I am indeed the USN Attache here in Jakarta, and we are planning a commemoration on Ex-HOUSTON and Ex-PERTH. I actually just met the new Australian Navy Attache yesterday, and he requested the US side host the commemoration again this year. I ran it for the first time last year, and I was told it was the greatest turnout from the Indonesian side, so I was happy to hear that. Did you happen to get the photos from last year? Let me know, and I'll be happy to forward them to you... About four months ago, I met with the leadership at the Bahari Museum. The renovations from the fire are complete. Unfortunately, everything the USN donated was completely destroyed. There is a designated space for HOUSTON and PERTH, but so far, we haven't gotten much traction on receiving donations for display. This is something I'll be following up with on my next call with NHHC...More to follow when I get home in a few hours. V/R, Patrick, **CDR S. Patrick Panjeti, U.S. Naval Attaché, Jakarta**.
- 1/27/2024: Received an email from our Association's Historian **Donald M. Kehn, Jr.**, which included some photos of a framed line drawing of USS *Houston* (CA-30) signed by about fifty CA-30 survivors that Don had collected over a 20-year period. "I had it archivally framed and then put it in the Special Collections Reading Room (as part of the *Cruiser Houston Collection*) at the University of Houston's M.D. Anderson Library via Christian Kelleher," Don wrote. (See photo on the next page)

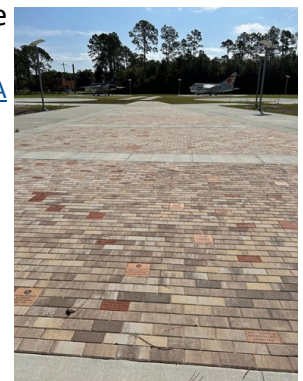
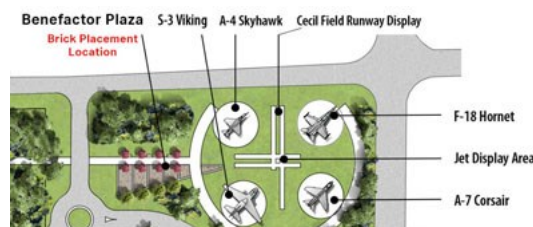


- 2/1/2024: Received the following sad news from the **Lost Battalion Association's Terry Shields**: "It is with a very heavy heart that I share the news that **Rufus Choate** passed away yesterday. Rufus had requested to be cremated, and Mike indicated it could be in about 10 days. As soon as we find out more information, I'll let you know. Rufus would have been 102 on March 15, 2024. Terry Shields." [EDITOR'S NOTE: Rufus Choate was the last of the still-living soldiers of the 131st Field Artillery/2nd Battalion ("the Lost Battalion"). Funeral Services were held for Rufus Choate in Texas on March 6, 2024.]
- 2/28/2024: I received the following email from **Ben Bekkering, Vice Admiral (retired), RNN, from the Kingdom of the Netherlands**: "Dear friends, The Battle of the Java Sea [Memorial Service] was held yesterday [February 27, 2024] in The Hague, with, amongst many others, the NL CNO, AUS ambassador, and UK and US defense attaches attending. It was a dignified and warming commemoration in which the partnerships between our nations were underlined, also based on our shared history. The theme of the commemoration was that we should not allow the lessons from those days to get lost, certainly not in this turbulent [world] in which we live. I wish you and all those present a great commemoration on March 1st. Yours aye, Ben Bekkering, VADM (retired), Chairman Karel Doorman Fund."



- 3/27/2024: Received the following email from **NG Scott Ingram**: "Dana, There is a National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum being built in my hometown of Jacksonville, Fla, and they are offering memorial bricks as a source of fundraising. So I designed and ordered these for my dad. They should be installed in the next few weeks. For more information, here's a link to their website:

[National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum - National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum \(powmiamemorial.org\)](http://National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum - National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum (powmiamemorial.org))





Team Houston 2023: Back row (left to right): Dominick Basse; Lorna Basse; Daryl Basse; Dr. Douglas Rennert, MD; Malou Rennert; Peter Bota; Marta Bota; Maria Kanellias; Jade Glab (Miss World America District of Columbia 2023); Andrea Schindler (Mrs. Virginia American 2023); Tara Walker. Front row (left to right): Anna Kerry; and Tiarah Williams (Miss District of Columbia America's Teen 2023).

mission and commences that effort by laying a wreath at the USS *Houston* CA-30/HMAS *Perth* I marker on McLellan Drive. That marker was dedicated and placed back in 1994 by several of our survivors, including our Association founders, Otto and Trudy Schwarz. As the marker resides in cemetery section 12, we also have five USS *Houston* CA-30 crewmen, three along with their spouses, lying at rest in the same section: **Joe/Isabelle Gans; Otto/Trudy Schwarz; John/Irma Stefanek; David Flynn; and William Batchelor.**

Those resting places received a wreath, as does each and every gravesite, as far as the eye can see throughout the cemetery, which is the goal of the day's effort. As you can see from the photos taken of the Team, this year's group numbered thirteen dedicated folks contributing their time and effort on what is normally a very chilly day in the Washington, D.C., area. As some have family members and/or friends also buried at the cemetery, the Team also focuses on those gravesites. This includes Mr. and Mrs. Gallo, the parents of our Team Leader, Marta Bota. Before leaving the cemetery, and as the Team normally includes one or more "beauty queen(s)," time was taken to engage with, encourage, and mentor a young group of Girl Scouts who were also contributing their time and service to the day's effort. Our many thanks to Marta Bota and the entire "Team *Houston*" group for their service on this wonderful day of remembrance for our nation's heroes.

Wreaths Across America 2023

by John K. Schwarz

On December 16th, 2023, "Team *Houston*" once again assembled under the leadership of Marta Bota to engage in the **tenth consecutive year** of contribution to the "Wreaths Across America" day at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA. On this day, thousands of dedicated volunteers gather at the cemetery to assist in laying wreaths on each and every gravesite in honor of the service/sacrifice of our beloved nation's servicemen/women lying at rest.

It is the mission of the "Wreaths Across America" effort to: "remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach the next generation the value of freedom." Team *Houston* proudly contributes to that



(Back Row, Left to right): Jade Glab (Miss World America District of Columbia 2023); and Andrea Schindler (Mrs. Virginia American 2023) with the Girl Scouts USA, Nation's Capital: Troop 33145.

Now See This!

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- USS Houston (CA-30) Hats – (\$25.00 ea.)
- USS Houston (CA-30) Large Men's Polos – (\$28.00 ea.) (1) in Red; (1) in Light Green

Visit our website's 'Ship's Store' at www.usshouston.org/shipsstore.html and see all of the USS Houston (CA-30) items!

(All Items Plus Shipping)

USS Houston CA-30 Challenge Coin



Front

Back



USS Houston CA-30 Hats



USS Houston CA-30 Men's Polo Shirts

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



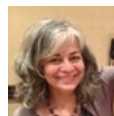
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Email: Pam@usshouston.org



Secretary: Bernice Harapat
Daughter of KNIL POW Survivor Willem Terluin
Special Projects, Scholarship Committee
Email: Bernice@usshouston.org

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®!

* 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.

Thank you...!

...on behalf of the Association

Donations

November 16, 2023 — March 29, 2024

In Memory of Eugene Crispi

Donna Mae Flynn

In Memory of David Flynn

Donna Mae Flynn

In Memory of Isabelle Gans

Rich Gans

In Memory of Joe Gans

Rich Gans

In Memory of Phil Gans

Rich Gans

In Memory of John Reilly

Donna Mae Flynn

In Memory of Trudy Schwarz

Donna Mae Flynn

Other Donations

Chris Emonson

Bernice Harapat

Tim & Jo Klenk

Joe & Melisse Kollmyer

Loudoun County Public Library Program

Patricia Mintzer

Michael & Jo Marie Reilly

Financial Report

January 1 - April 6, 2024

General Fund

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$30,502.19 |
| Receipts | \$8,691.54 |
| Expenses | <u>-\$5,525.29</u> |
| Ending Balance | \$33,668.44 |



Scholarship Fund

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$22,126.60 |
| Receipts | \$2,217.82 |
| Expenses | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| Ending Balance | \$24,344.42 |



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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.



At the USS Houston (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service on March 2, 2024 (L to R): Orla Powles, daughter of Derek Powles; Commander Derek Powles, CEng, CMarEng, MIMechE, Royal Navy, Assistant Naval Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.; and Teresa Reilly, Widow of USS Houston (CA-30) Survivor John Reilly. (Photo by Michael Reilly).