



USS HOUSTON CA-30 BLUE BONNET

“The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast”

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FROM THE SURVIVORS

Sadly we begin this report with the following loss from our ranks:

**AUST, RICHARD
REAS, JOHN**

**MARCH 14, 2003
APRIL 14, 2003**

**Blood clot in heart
Kidney failure**

“Pluto”, as AUST was known to his shipmates, passed away from us on March 14, 2003, the result of a blood clot in his heart. He was cremated and his ashes scattered at sea.

JOHN REAS joined his shipmates standing watch in Sunda Straits on April 14, 2003 after a long illness. Services were conducted on April 18. In attendance as honorary pallbearers were his shipmates Albert “Elmo” Kennedy, Gene Parham and Crayton “Quaty” Gordon of the 131st FA. Representing our Next Generation: Val Poss, Lin & Ron Drees, CA-30 widow Jimmy Pryor, Lost Battalion NG Becky Freitas, 131st wife Frankie Gordon. John rests in his family plot in Arlington, Texas. He was a kind and thoughtful shipmate who, despite his own many discomforts, constantly expressed concern about others. He will be missed.

We must also sadly report the death of Muriel O’Brien. Bob had left a message on my answering machine informing me of Muriel’s passing on May 13. Despite several phone calls since, I have not been able to reach Bob for more information. We extend our sincerest sympathy to Bob and his family.

LOSS OF A FRIEND – Capt. Clarke Coldren, Texas Commandery, has been a staunch friend and supporter of the USS *Houston* Survivors Association since long before his work on the monument committee. Capt. Coldren passed away on May 4, and his memorial service was held May 15, at which time we were represented by Lin and Ron Drees. Capt. Coldren had been working closely to assist the scholarship committee in raising funds. He will be sincerely missed by all of us.

MISC: During a conversation between NG John Schwarz and diver Greg Smith at the March reunion in Houston, Smith narrated the numerous dives he has made on the *Houston*. In the long conversation, he made a sketch of details describing his observations of the ship where it lay. The drawing shows the depths at different points; how the ship is lying, etc. John thought that a copy of the sketch would be of interest to all, so a copy of same appears in this column.... Did you know that there were two Dutchmen aboard the *Houston* when she went down? Our Dutch friend, Johan Van Leer sends us a report from the Royal Netherlands Navy Institute for Maritime History, verifying this fact. The two were Jacobus C. van Leur, Sub Lt. Dutch Reservist, and Petrus J.A. Stoopman, who held a deck rating.... Ray Goodson's grandson was recently inducted into the Navy, and it was revealed that a former Naval Officer could swear in a relative. Ray had the honor of giving his grandson his start on his Naval career.

FROM DOWN UNDER: Many events were conducted throughout Australia to commemorate the 61st anniversary of the loss of HMAS PERTH AND HOUSTON.

A ceremony was held at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, at which time a plaque memorializing HMAS PERTH AND HOUSTON was unveiled. The event was well attended by Naval representatives from Australian and United States Embassies.

In Brisbane, a memorial service was conducted at the Eternal Flame Anzac Square by PERTH survivor Ernie Toovey. Although few of the fifteen Queensland survivors remain, an increasing number of Next Generation people attend this event. Pictured at the ceremony were PERTH survivors Ernie Toovey, Charles "Chilla" Goodchap and Charles Wrey.

Another ceremony was held at the Cennetaph in Sydney.

The annual HMAS PERTH Regatta was held by the Nedlands Yacht Club in Perth, WA. Arthur Bancroft reports to us that a database has been set up of next of kin of the HMAS PERTH crew, and for the first time, they were invited to attend the event. About 120 boats participated in 8 divisions, and as always one of the races are named for the USS HOUSTON.

We must add the loss here of another of our beloved Australian family. Ngaire Goodchap, wife of HMAS PERTH survivor Charles "Chilla" Goodchap passed from us on Tuesday, April 8. The Goodchaps gave us many fond memories of our trips to their home on the Goldcoast. She was a very special lady and will be missed by those who were fortunate enough to know her.

I KNOW OF NO OTHER BOND OF FRIENDSHIP THAT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN TWO SHIPS CREWS, FROM TWO DIFFERENT NATIONS. IF NOTHING ELSE, WE CAN BE GRATEFUL THAT OUT OF OUR HARSHIPS THERE CAME THIS LIFELONG BOND.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Ray Goodson and Bill Ingram have notified me that they have received correspondence indicating that the long fought for concurrent receipt payment bill has been approved. This means that any retired veteran earning 60-100% disability, will now receive both their retirement pay **AND** VA compensation. Each branch of service will be mailing application forms. These forms will require that the following be attached:

- A) Your last DFAS statement from your branch of service which shows the amount of your retirement in one location, and the amount of your VA Disability Compensation in another location, on the same document. If you do not have such a document, please contact this telephone number 1 800 321-1080 and request one be sent to you. (It is for all of the services) This is known as Retire Account Statement.
- B) Your last VA Medical Statement which shows the disabilities (and the % of each) on the form. All of us whom are drawing VA Disability Comp have such a form which the VA mails to you whenever you have a change in VA ratings, a C & P physical, any type of appeal action on a claim, or when called in for an examination. You may have many, use the latest you have.
- C) A copy of your final DD Form 214 (what you received at retirement).

LINE FROM LIN - These past two months (since the last Memorial Service) have been a blur. I lost 3 very dear friends: my Mother, John Reas, and Clarke Coldren. John fell and was in the hospital for approximately 2-3 months before his passing in middle April. John was a very dear friend to Ron and I – as is his daughter, Vickie Keehr and her husband, Wally. We will miss John. Clarke just passed away in May; he had not been ill. Clarke was the past commander of the Texas Commandery - a very good friend to us of the USS HOUSTON group -- in fact this past year, he made arrangements to have needed repairs completed at the Monument before the Memorial Service – he always was ready to help me with any requests for local arrangements when I was completing my tasks to "make ready" for each reunion / Memorial Service week-end. Condolences may be sent to The Coldren Family, c/o Eleanor Bissell, 625 Harter Road, Dallas, Texas 75218. My Mother's health had been quickly deteriorating - her death was not a surprise - but yet we are always "surprised" when a loved one passes. I wrote a short piece about my Mother to send to the faculty at my school, and several commented that it was a very nice tribute to my Mother so I will include it here: "My Mother -- My Mother is at peace -- her life has been so difficult these past 4 years depending on others for simple things that we take for granted (when she was used to doing so much for herself and others) -- I was glad that both my sister and I were able to be at her side when she passed. She was beautiful - her skin (no wrinkles) - her hair -- but mainly beautiful because she was such a good Mother, and we loved her so. She was my hero - always trying to do as much as she could in spite of her physical ailments and limitations, (Parkinson) - never giving up." We (Ron, my sister Barbara, my aunt and cousins, numerous friends) will miss my Mother: long conversations, beautiful yard (vegetables and flowers), fantastic meals, wonderful advice, etc., etc. If it had not been for my Mother's persistence, Ron and I would never have found the USS HOUSTON Survivors Association. Ron and I met Otto in March of 1995 at a Nimitz Symposium - he said that I should write to him and he might be able to get me some information about my cousin, James Raydell Wilson, a Marine aboard the HOUSTON. My Mother kept insisting that I write to Otto to get the information. About a month or so later, I did write - and

within a couple of weeks I received two letters from Marines who knew Raydell - and then information about the Lost Battalion reunion, the dedication of the Monument (and learned about the USS HOUSTON Survivors Association) - and the rest is now history!!!!

Ron has now completed a full year at UT - and will complete an internship in Ardmore, Oklahoma, this summer - working in the archives at Noble Foundation. He will then return to Austin to complete his degree next May.

I will soon start negotiating with the hotel for next year's reunion. If anyone would like to send a thank you note to the hotel, the bus service, the Houston Park service, or any other group, please send me a note (or an e-mail to lindrees.usshou-ca30@juno.com) and I will get the needed address to you. My home address is 14219 Wickersham, Houston, TX. 77077.

Remember (make a note on your 2004 calendar) - the next Memorial Service will be Saturday, February 27th - with the reunion being on Friday and Saturday, the 27th and 28th.

INTERNET works again - Lin had a LONG LOST cousin find her on the internet via the USS HOUSTON website. And that we talked for 1-1/2 hours today, within 12-14 hours of his first contact with the USS HOUSTON website. The cousin is a namesake for Raydell - his name is Jerry Raydell Wilson - whereas my cousin on the HOUSTON who would be his uncle is James Raydell Wilson. What a find - what a conversation - over 30 years of memories to cover - memories to last a lifetime. In addition to my USS HOUSTON family, I now have "real" blood family.

FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

REUNIONS

131st Lost Battalion/USS Houston
August 13 – 17, 2003
Omni Hotel (Park West), Dallas, Texas

USS Houston Survivors Memorial Service/Reunion
February 27-28, 2004
Westchase Hilton, Houston, Texas

GOING TO MUSEUMS – The picture of the USS Houston that was autographed by the survivors attending the March reunion was sent to the Australian Navy Museum along with a copy of President Bush's proclamation announcing March 1, 2002 as Asiatic Fleet Day. The USS *Lexington* Museum was presented with a paperweight containing the oil of the *Houston* donated by Jerry Ranger, the 48 star flag mounted on the *Houston* on the 60th anniversary of her sinking donated by David Faltot and the USS Houston 2002 Dive Team, a framed copy of the Proclamation marking March 1, 2002 as National Asiatic Fleet Day signed by President Bush, the interior porthole donated by diver Brad Gift, Australian Commemorative Coins, pictures of sketches of both the HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston* in the Battle of the Sunda Strait donated by

O.C MCMANUS along with copies of the videos: Death Becomes The Ghost, The Battle of the Java Sea, March 1, 2002 Phone Conversation with the divers in Jakarta and the survivors at the '02 Reunion, and The True Story of the Bridge on the River Kwai donated by Vic Campbell.

IN SEARCH OF –

DUEL L. NISWONGER – Col. Edward J. Robarg (Ret) (nephew); 734 Deerfield St., Leavenworth, KS 66048 email: erobarge@kc.rr.com

DANIEL S. RAFALOVICH – Carl Patterson (Royal Navy – POW in Japan) of Durban, South Africa. Write to me (Val) or email yericarl@absamail.co.za

DONATIONS – (Tax ID # DLN 17053122009007) Again, many thanks to all of you for your generosity! There are only 16 donors this quarter (out of 400+) and their gifts are very much appreciated!

Survivor – Ella & LANSON HARRIS, Theresa & PAUL PAPISH

Friends – Tom Sledge, Vivian Barber. Fred Haring, Dr. Bee Sun Lu, Frank Enright

Surviving Spouse – Bette Fowler, Anne DuHaime, Jimmie Pryor

Next Generation – Mr. & Mrs. Arthur DuHaime III, Mr. & Mrs. David DuHaime, Mr. & Mrs. James DuHaime, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond DuHaime, Billie Johnson, Robert Cumming

THIS ORGANIZATION – I been asked the same question several times and I feel I should share it with all. Some have wondered if the “Next Generation” is restricted only to the children of survivors. The phrase is all inclusive. This not only includes the children but also everyone from brothers/ sisters, great nieces to nephews in law and any other combination. The Next Generation represents the families of the crew of the *Houston*. This *organization* represents survivors, families, surviving spouses and friends. We always welcome new members into our family with open arms!

NAVAL ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES, TEXAS COMMANDERY – On February 14, 2003, Commander General Thomas F. Brown, III, along with LCDR Clarke Coldren, USN (Ret.), CAPT Carter Conlin, USN (Ret.) CAPT George Holyfield, USN (Ret) and CAPT W.O. King, Jr., USN (Ret.) presented former President George W. Bush the ADM George Dewey Award for his leadership and dauntless professionalism in the service of the United States. Also, the Texas Commandery’s Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration at the USS *Texas* on December 7, 2002 had over 600 people in attendance and hosted 130 Pear Harbor survivors.

We were terribly saddened with the news of Capt. Clarke Coldren’s death. This man was a shining example of the phrase “an officer and a gentleman”. I had spoken to him the week before his death and the news came as a terrible blow.

IN HONOR OF JOE (In his local newspaper - by **BILL STEWART** Nov. '01)

“For those at the Veterans’ Day concert last Monday evening, and any who are interested in my story as to why I stood up when the band played ‘Colonel Bogey March’, here’s why.

Joe Gans was a First Class Machinist Mate survivor when the USS *Houston* sank in March 1942. He was not real young at that time. He served several years on the Yangtze River Patrol and was transferred to the USS *Houston* when the patrol was discontinued.

Joe was a real likeable fellow, interesting to talk to and listen to – life of the party sort-of-fellow without being obnoxious. We affectionately called him the Ancient Mariner.

At the Veterans' Day concert, the band played the 'Colonel Bogey March'. That number was the theme music for the movie 'Bridge Over the River Kwai'.

At the last reunion of the Lost Battalion Association (members of the USS Houston survivors and 2nd Btn 131st Field Artillery captured in Java and incarcerated in Bicycle Camp, Batavia, Java, about six months before being sent elsewhere) that I was able to attend, during their Saturday night banquet the band played the 'Colonel Bogey March'. Most of our men worked building the 'Death Railway' through the jungles of Burma. When the band started playing the march, Joe got up from his table and marched around the banquet hall while it was being played.

Joe Gans left us last year. At the Veterans' Day concert, I had to stand at attention with tears in my eyes, remembering the ancient Mariner."

MAILBAG – We are saddened to learn of the death of Glen Clark and extend our deepest sympathy to Wanda & 'Youngun' Clark (131st FA) in the loss of their son. They wish to thank one and all for the calls and cards that have given them comfort. Anne DuHaime sends her usual cheerful note along with a family donation. She proudly announced the birth of granddaughter Kira 2-13-03 (thanks to son David and wife) PLUS the birth of grandson Cole 2-27-03 (thanks to son Raymond and wife)! Whew – and I thought my family was expanding fast & furious!! Ella Harris sent a donation with a note that **LANSON** enjoys the newsletter along with thanks. Wayne Strong writes that his mother in law, Winnie Schertz (widow of **JOE SCHERTZ**) is now deceased with no specific information. **JOE GARRETT** finally received his POW medal and Purple at a special ceremony on March 25th with about 500 attending! We're very proud of you! Unfortunately, his beautiful wife, Louise was too ill to attend. She lost her 6 month battle with pancreatic cancer on April 4th. The Garrett family soon after lost their aunt (Louise's sister in law), June Carter-Cash. It has been a sad time for them and we extend our deepest sympathy. Mason Logie found some film from his October 2000 dive on the *Houston* & sent a magnificent picture of the 50 star flag he had mounted on the wreckage along with two slides of same. The picture will be brought to the March reunion to enjoy --- thank you Mason!

SCHOLARSHIP FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance forward	\$10,288.20
Interest Feb	4.83
Interest March	3.65
Donations	170.00
Auction	655.00
Total	\$11,121.68
Debits ----	NONE

GIVE US THE SHIRT OFF YOUR BACK!

Special Collections & Archives is looking for a pair of naval uniforms to display in the Cruiser Houston Exhibit that will be located in the new wing of the University of Houston library. We are looking for both a navy wool dress uniform and a white cotton uniform, ideally with hats, scarves, and other accessories intact. Our first preference would be to add a genuine uniform from the USS Houston (CA-30) to the collection. We would also be interested in a uniform from the USS Houston

(CL-81), or a uniform from another ship from the 1930s or 1940s that belonged to a USS Houston (CA-30) crew member.

Because the uniforms will be exhibited, we need to be very particular about the condition of the items we accept. They should be free from moth holes or large tears, although some stains and surface dirt are to be expected. Because of space limitations, we will only be able to accept two uniforms total into the Cruiser Houston Collection.

A pair of authentic uniforms would add great interest to the Cruiser Houston Exhibit. If you can help us by donating a uniform, please contact Julie Grob, Special Collections Librarian, by e-mail at jgrob@uh.edu or by phone at 713-743-9744.

THE RED @ - Please remember to send your change of email or snail mail address. Those newsletters sent with a red @ are noted to be the last ones to be received. If you have an email address, please let us know so we can save on the postage. Thank you!

THE STORY OF THE RECOVERY OF THE OIL FROM THE USS HOUSTON AND THE MAKING OF THE OIL PAPER WEIGHT

By Jerry Ranger

During the March 2001 USS Houston Reunion, Mason Logie brought up that he found the area of the USS Houston by an oil film on the surface and then using a bottom finder to locate the USS Houston. Both Val and I talked about how it would be great to get some Houston's oil to give to the survivors. The idea was set in motion. Since I was going over to Java in March 2002 to dive on the USS Houston with Mason, I would try to recover some oil for the survivors.

On September 11th, 2002, with the destroying of the Twin Towers in New York, the dive to Java was in trouble. I had met two divers via the internet that were living in Java. They both had some other divers that wanted to join us on the dive to the USS Houston for the 60th year anniversary ceremony. When the dive was called off, we passed it on to the other teams to recover some oil from the USS Houston and send it back to us.

On Feb. 17, 2002, Brad Gift and his friend Pat made a dive on the USS Houston preparing for the 60th year dive. While diving on the wreckage, they discovered a port hole ring which they recovered and also made an underwater video of the ship. Both items were sent back to the United States. The items did not arrive at the hotel in time to show at the reunion. During the dive, Brad did not see any oil to recover.

I then informed David Faltot's dive team to see if they could find any oil on the March 1, 2002 dive on the USS Houston. Neither dive teams found any oil.

Brad Gift made more dives on the USS Houston over the next several months but not finding any oil leak from the ship. But, on Jan. 26, 2003, while diving on the USS Houston, while he was taking underwater pictures with his new camera, he found a leak. He took several pictures and then headed for the surface to get something to capture the oil in. The only thing he had was two plastic jars. He emptied them, put on a new tank and returned to the spot to recover the oil. He held the jar upside down, letting the oil fill up the jar before heading for the surface. They both had oil all over their gear when they came back up to the surface. As soon as Brad got back to his house, he emailed me telling he had recovered two jars of oil and one would be on its way to me. Brad also

told me that he had taken pictures of the spot that the oil had come out of the ship. As soon as he could get them downloaded, he would send the pictures to me. I emailed Val to tell her that the oil and pictures were on their way and we needed to come up with a way that each USS Houston survivor could hold or see the oil. Both Val and I came up with a glass vial to place them in. I told her that I would look into it. The next day, Brad emailed me the pictures of the oil coming out of the USS Houston. I could not wait to get my hands on the oil coming from the ship. A week later, one jar of oil arrived at my house. During the trip back to the United States, the jar had leaked. I started to clean up the mess from the trip and got oil all over me. This is when I knew I was going to have trouble keeping the oil in anything. It had been kept closed up in the tanks of the ships for 61 years and did not want to stay closed up anymore. I took pictures of the jar just in case I dropped it. The jar was pure black with a green label on it. (Oil leak from USS Houston CA-30 on January 26, 2003 collected by diver/photographer Bradley D. Gift at a depth of 51 feet). The odor of the oil would turn you away.

Now, I had come up with an idea for showing off the oil. The oil in the glass vial did not work for me and could easily break. I remembered David saying something about them putting oil drops in plastic for displays. So, I started looking at placing them in plastic. I remembered that I used to pick up paperweights at the store with items in them so I went to the hobby shop to get all the items I needed to make the paperweights and started to work. I wanted to get the paperweights to look like the oil was coming out of the USS Houston. Being that this was the first time I had attempted to do this, I placed the plastic in the mold and waited a couple of minutes before injecting the oil into the plastic. As soon as I put the oil in the plastic, I was in trouble. The oil, again, did not want to stay in it and started coming up to the surface. I placed another layer of the plastic to try and trap the oil. Again, the oil came to the surface but it did trap some of it. I waited just before this layer started to get hard and placed another layer of plastic on it. Now it had trapped some more but some of the oil made it all the way out. After it was hard, I removed it from the mold and cleaned it up. The oil had run down the side of the mold. I then had to sand down the plastic to make it smooth and clear. I took pictures of the paperweight and sent them to Val for her comments on it. The picture did not do it justice so I sent it to her. She liked the item and we were running against the clock to get them done. I would make as many as I could before leaving for the USS Houston reunion. I bought two more molds to help get more done in a day. I could only get three done at a time on my off days. I tried to get six of them made. Each paperweight had to be sanded down approximately seven (7) times or more to get them to look like glass. Each paperweight came out different due to the challenge of keeping the oil inside the plastic. I just could not just give the survivors a paperweight without telling them how the oil was recovered and when. So I got my friend to help me come up with the letter of authenticity. I sent a copy to Brad to get his ok because he was the one that recovered the oil. With the oil paperweight and letter coming together, I got ready to depart to Houston.

On Friday night, February 28, 2003, after dinner, the paperweight and letter were passed out to the seven survivors who were able to attend the reunion. After the ceremony, one of the paperweights were auctioned off for the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association Scholarship Fund. The paperweight went for \$355.00. Thank you, Sharron Long for buying the paperweight.

I would like to thank the following people who helped in getting the oil from the ship and into the hands of the survivors:

Brad Gift and Enju Kim who filmed and recovered the oil.

Glen Godsey for putting the letter of authenticity together.

Rebecca Ranger for putting up with me while I made the paperweights.

Jolene Steward (Ranger), my sister, who helped in handing the paperweights out

Val Poss and Lin Drees

Most of all, for the seven survivors that made the trip to Houston and the survivors who were unable to make the trip. God Bless you all and it's an honor knowing you all.

The Ranger family

THE CLOCK OF LIFE – The clock of life is wound but once and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in tomorrow, for the clock may then be still.

(Author unknown)

POW'S by John Schwarz -

On a glorious Sunday back in April of 2003, we in America had just a great day. I have no recollection what the weather was; it didn't matter, I was ecstatic, hope you were too. We had just learned you see that our 7 American POW's in Iraq had been found, and liberated. Hallelujah. American's had an enlightened sensitivity for this bunch; it was probably due to a lot of things like the ever increasing media coverage, perhaps because two young ladies were involved, who knows, who cares. All CA-30 folk have to love those (all) POW's and their new found freedom.

Something else certainly comes to mind. Notice how we have evolved; all the attention paid to making sure our POW's are alright, that they are fully checked out medically first, then spiritually, emotionally, psychologically. Then there's the recognized concern for trying to do everything possible to facilitate short-term adjustment back to a normal life of freedom, while also concerning ourselves with assuring they do not have long-term lingering effects that could affect living normal lives. This is a great evolution of knowledge translated to action for our modern day soldiers. And this after 3 weeks of captivity!

Makes you want to reflect back again on our CA-30 guys who certainly never had quite those levels of luxury of care, concern, knowledge about effects, both short and long-term, after being held captive. I know my dad and the rest of the CA-30 guys were captive three and one-half years no less, so imagine just this; what toll is taken on one's body by not eating correctly for 3.5 years, being over-worked physically, let alone the mental stresses/pressures and the physical punishment in other ways. Our CA-30 guys certainly faced their share of issues post internment. There were challenges with getting on in certain situations, and of course the numerous health problems being dealt with to this day, and particularly as they age further. What sacrifices then, and now.

We all know our guys didn't have all the advantages of today's high faulting psychologists, psychiatrists, shrinks, guru's, and etcetera. We all also know they did doggone okay for themselves, and for us. No, they did marvelously! Hay, maybe all this medical/psychological treatment is over-kill, nah, better to err on the side of caution, I hope you agree.

This is just such a great time to share in the joy of our 7 freed POW's and their families, while also increasing the admiration for our CA-30 POW survivors that we are so fortunate to be the sons, daughters, friends and associates of. Also, a great time to make sure our grandchildren's generation really know what our guys went through relative to what is offered our military personnel (and POW's in particular), today.

Yes, they are the greatest generation and God Bless them, and America.

FINANCIAL REPORT

DEBITS		CREDITS	
Postage newsletter	296.82	Previous balance	5829.24
Printing newsletter	370.78	Donations & sales	1050.00
Balance of reunion expenses	572.29		
Phone/internet	430.58		
Website fee	35.00		
Supplies & computer	1442.99		
Total	3267.27	Current balance	3611.97

IN CONCLUSION - First and foremost, I want to thank some folks for coming aboard and offering their expertise. Sue Kreutzer (daughter of **PAUL PAPISH**) has volunteered to work with Vic Campbell to work on our website to keep it updated. Poor Vic had tried often to lead me through it; however, I am a mental midget when it comes to computers. Sue has saved the day! The Scholarship Committee has been going through some re-organization in hopes to have more Houstonites participating. We now have Ron Drees (nephew in law of **RAYDELL WILSON**), Sharron Long (daughter of **ALBERT MCGARVEY**), and Marilyn VanDeever (daughter of **TONY RUSSELL**) participating. Pam Foster (daughter of **GENE CRISPI**) has formulated a process to contact businesses for donations & has volunteered to help us. The death of Capt. Coldren has delta us a blow in our hopes to communicate with oil businesses, however, we plan to move forward with NED GALLAGHER's ideas..... I always appreciate input for the newsletter from the NG's & want to thank them again..... I have been in touch with our Rachel Wilson on her progress with the scanning of decades of archives we have on hand. It's a slow process – VERY slow and tedious. We must first sort and tag each item to note how we should set up the files. I have set up folders such as CREW MEMBERS, POW CAMPS, SHIP, etc. The CREW MEMBER folder holds more folders on each crew member when we have any information. Within each member's folder, we have files on news articles, pictures, etc. Rachel is a student at the Texas School for the Blind and must attend her classes, do her homework and tend to her daily routine. She can usually devote about 45 minutes a day with access to a computer to do the scanning for us. We have items from the 20's until current date. It's difficult to describe the massive amount of records and work she has volunteered to do for us. I inquired to get a cost estimate to hire someone to do this and it was \$75 per hour with a MINIMUM of 200 hours quoted to me. She is doing this FOR FREE!! This summer, Rachel will be able to move into her own apartment and out of the dorm. She asked permission to continue working on the files to scan if she could get her uncle to find a computer for her. I spoke to Otto about this and we agreed that investing in a computer for her would be a

win-win opportunity for her AND the organization. When I offered this arrangement to Rachel, she was first speechless, and then she cried. She sent me a two page thank you I've included in the newsletter. Our son in law, Sean, was able to get us what she needed at below cost! It is such an honor and pleasure working with her. She is an inspiration, yet, she is always telling me how inspired *she* is after reading about our crew members. Rachel has many medical problems that severely restrict her lifestyle; however, she continues to be determined to work on her goals. People..... we are lucky to have her on our team!!

In the mean time, Max and I drove down to donate the previously mentioned items to the USS Lexington Museum on May 19th. We were a tad concerned how we would get them aboard as the entrance has a ramp approximately 2 blocks long & it's all uphill. We calculated at least two trips carrying a fairly heavy and/or bulky load each time. When I called Judith Whipple, the curator, she had made arrangements for us to simply drive our car up and unload! Wow! Talk about special treatment!! The museum has set aside a special room for the CA-30 display, however it was extraordinarily bare. Judith was euphoric with the items and begging for more. As soon as I can get the newsletter out, I'll be perusing our files for more donations. IF ANY OF YOU SURVIVORS HAVE BEEN HANGING ON TO ANYTHING PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THE LEXINGTON AS THEY HAVE 360,000 VISITORS EACH YEAR AND THIS WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF THE CA-30 AND HER CREW!!!

..... just now, I'm under the gun to get this newsletter out as quickly as possible. We are expecting a phone call from our son (my dad's namesake) and daughter in law to make a fast drive to Houston for the birth of their son..... until the next newsletter – God Bless!

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Dear USS Houston Survivors,

My name is Rachel Watkins, I am the one who has been privileged enough to get a glimpse and understanding of what you guys went through in World War II. I have been archiving the records for you during this school year. I have been doing this work at the library here at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired during my work training class.

This work has been very interesting to me and my heart goes out to each and every one of you. I am glad that I am able to help make a dream come true, as you have made one of mine come true. Just the act of wanting to give me a computer is a larger gift to me than you can ever imagine! When Val told me that you wanted to do this for me, tears came streaming down y face. I am overwhelmed by your generosity!

It has been an honor and a joy for me to work on these records. I look forward to meeting you all next year. I will be continuing this work for you throughout the summer at my apartment here in Austin. Although my hometown is in Sherman, Texas, and my family lives there, I am in the process of moving into my own apartment. My long-time goal has been to live as independently as possible and to have a meaningful life. The work that I have been doing for you has been very meaningful and fulfilling to me and I appreciate the chance you giving me to continue.

You cannot imagine the value of everything that you have provided for me. The computer, the scanner and JAWS are truly going to make me a more independent person. These are the tools that I need to continue your work. You will never know how much I appreciate this!

Respectfully yours,  
Rachel Watkins  
1100 W 45<sup>th</sup> St  
Austin, TX 78756

HOUSTON DIVERS DRAWING - HOUSTON 03-'03

Greg Smith

GREG SMITH

Bradley D. Smith

BRADLEY DEAN SMITH

