



### CA-30 BLUE BONNET

#### “The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast”

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### REUNION

USS Houston Survivors and Next Generation

Feb. 26-28, 2004

DoubleTree Hotel – Allen Center

400 Dallas St, Houston, TX 77002

712 759-0202

Toll Free: 800 245-4378

USS Houston Survivors and Next Generation

### FROM THE SURVIVORS

**LOSSES** – We are saddened to hear of the loss of Larry, son of Adm. BOB FULTON. The Admiral had also lost his daughter just a few months before.

We also recently lost a good friend, Capt. Carl Ragsdale, “Rags”, as he was affectionately called, was one of the original Texas Commandery that built our magnificent monument in Sam Houston Park. Admiral Fulton made arrangements for a floral piece on behalf of the survivors. Val Poss made arrangements for a potted plant on behalf of the Next Generation.

Another loss to our HOUSTON family to report: Mary Lou Bunch who passed away on June 17, 2003 from complications after heart valve surgery. Trudy and I remember with fondness our visits with JERRY and Mary Lou in past years. She was a lovely lady and will be greatly missed.

**SCUTTLEBUTT** – Wasn't the last Blue Bonnet a piece of work? A bit 4.0 to Val..... HOWARD BROOKS was recently on an all expense paid trip to Boston for an interview with a British film company. They are doing a documentary on the Burma/Siam Railroad. Another star is born... We had a pleasant surprise phone call from JACK and Marie FELIZ. They were visiting in NJ and thought we might have lunch together. However I had just gotten out of the hospital and could not

handle it. It was great, however, to have chatted a wee bit with them. Shipmate DUTCH KOOPER called to wish Trudy a happy birthday, god ole DUTCH never forgets.... I received a phone call the other night from an Englishman who says he could not get BERGIE or POLIDORO on the phone. I told him it would be difficult as they both have been dead for years. Turned out that he was George Winston. I remember George very well when we first went to the jungle. He has been living in Rhode Island for the past thirty years. Our good friends Arthur "Blood Bancroft (HAMAS PERTH) and wife Myria called twice, once for their annual Happy Birthday America on July 4, and the other to wish Trudy a happy birthday.

**HONORS TO TWO PATRIOTS** – In the recent issue of the Cruiser Sailors Newsletter, our shipmates BILL STEWART and HARRY KELEY were honored by the Kansas House of Representatives for their service in the Navy's Asiatic Fleet. Both were presented with Recognition Certificates and received a standing ovation. The certificates were presented by Rep. Frank Miller –R-Independence. Although a little late in our lives, nevertheless it is great to be so recognize publicly. Congratulations to both our shipmates.

## OTTO

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### A LINE FROM LIN

**ANOTHER PASSING** - Captain Carl Ragsdale passed away this summer, and in addition to the traditional funeral, a special memorial service was held on the Battleship TEXAS. John Bradley & Eunelle Weissinger represented us at that service (unfortunately many of us were unable to attend - the service was the same week-end as the Lost Battalion reunion). Carl will be missed at our annual Memorial services - many of you may remember a memorial service at which he told us how he was able to retrieve the USS HOUSTON bell from the Battleship TEXAS, store it, and have it placed onto the Monument. We shall always be indebted to his foresight to head up the committee which resulted in the USS HOUSTON Memorial Monument - and our annual Memorial Services.

Diane Ragsdale sent a nice thank you for the large lily plant that we (Next Generation) sent to the funeral for Carl Ragsdale, and she also appreciated the large floral arrangement from the USS HOUSTON Survivors. She said that they reminded her of the men Carl thought so much of. For those who do not know, Carl is the "Father of the USS HOUSTON Memorial Monument." He is the one who had the idea for creating the Monument, started the fund raising for the Monument, and headed the committee for the building and dedication of the Monument -- this is the Monument at which we meet each year for our Memorial Services.

Donations may be made to the Shiner's Hospital for Children. Diane's address is 118 Hillsborough Dr. West, Montgomery, TX 77356.

**UP-DATE** on Info for the Next Reunion / Memorial Service Week-end - February 27-28, 2004

I asked Sharron Long and her sister, Patty Letze, to help with the hotel for next year. Sharron and Patty (along with the expertise of Sharron's son who is in the hotel business) made arrangements with the DoubleTree Hotel which is right across the street from the USS HOUSTON Memorial Monument. You will be able to walk over at any time to view the Monument - also if you request, you may be able to get a "park" side room and be able to see the Monument at night from your room. (Isn't this GREAT!)

To make your reservations, please call the downtown DoubleTree Allen Center at 1-800-245-4378 (local number is 713-759-0202), and ask for the USS HOUSTON Survivor's Association discount. The room rate is \$79 per night. Please request any special needs, e.g., non-smoking, handicapped, near an elevator, whatever your needs are. This rate will be available for pre- and post-reunion dates. Doubles and kings are available at the rate; other rooms should also be discounted. Please be aware that you must cancel your own reservation (or part of your reservation), if you have to cancel - or have to leave early. Please cancel at least 24 hours in advance, or you will be responsible for your original reservation. Also remember to request the "park" side of the hotel if you wish to view the Monument from your hotel room, BUT please remember that this request will be honored only if the "park" side rooms are available when you check-in. If you wish to arrive on the 26th (Thursday), we usually have an "early bird" reception.

AND PLEASE remember to thank Sharron and Patty when you see them.

Please **DO NOT** make your reservations over the internet - or through some other discounted service. Last year, the Hilton did roll over the internet rates to make up our needed quota for the complimentary perks -- we might not be as lucky this year. SO PLEASE make all reservations with the hotel.

We make our contract based on everyone paying the USS HOUSTON discounted rate -- and the hotel promises us complimentary services and perks, e.g., complimentary use of the hospitality suite - use of a piano (yes, the singing can continue). A complimentary shuttle will be available for trips downtown & for those unable to make the walk from the hotel to the Monument for the Memorial Service. The DoubleTree is on the shuttle route and is a stopping point for the shuttle; \$19 from Bush/Intercontinental and \$14 from Hobby (one way); these rates are subject to change.

Registration packets will be in the next newsletter, BUT you may start reserving your room today.

**A THANK YOU** - Ron, my sister, and I thank you for your e-mails, cards, notes of sympathy, and memorial gifts when our Mother passed away this past spring. Many thanks to our USS HOUSTON family.

### FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

**THANK YOU NG'S** – I had such a positive response from the readers since the last edition. I feel sure it's because of the NG's input and participation – keep it coming.....**please!**

**MILITARY MEDAL RECIPIENTS** – The following Medal and Award lists awarded for Individual Performance are currently being compiled by the American War Library. The medals & awards to be registered are: Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Distinguished Flying Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Mariners Medal, Medal Of Honor, Meritorious Service Medal, Prisoner of War Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Silver Star Medal, Soldier's Medal, Victoria Cross. Mailing address: The American War Library, 16907 Brighton Avenue, Gardena, CA 90247-5420. Phone: 1-310-532-0634 (10am-3pm Monday through Saturday) Fax: 1-310-532-0634. The information website is: <http://members.aol.com/veterans/medlist.htm>.

**MAILBAG** – JACK SMITH keeps me posted via email regularly. Just as I was sending out the June newsletter, I received word he had been in the hospital with water on his lungs. They found a

tumor & is being treated for cancer of the liver. Jack has been a huge help in keeping up with the messages on our website and responding to them. RAY GOODSON keeps me giggling with emails he sends as does Dottie Crispi. We are all stunned to learn of the sudden death of JB Pryor on June 2<sup>nd</sup> of an apparent heart attack. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jimmie and her family. GENE CRISPI was in the hospital in ICU for a week with heart problems. At this writing, he's back in the hospital and not doing well. Now we have news that Dotty is waiting for test results from finding a shadow on her lungs from in some Xrays. I was notified that Admiral Bob Fulton's son Larry died of cancer the end of April. This is an exceptionally hard blow as the Admiral's daughter had died of Huntington's disease the end of last year. Again, our prayers extend to Admiral Fulton during this sad time. We always enjoy receiving cards from Dutch Kooper. Although his health keeps him from attending the reunions, he is with us in heart and spirit. I also just received news that he's been back in the hospital and in bad shape. Joe Kollmyer sent a copy of footage of the 2003 March reunion, Fred Seiker sent copies of videos about the USS Indianapolis, story of the Edinburg Tattoo and out takes of an interview by the BBC for their Hell in the Pacific project. That was a lot of video watching! Joe Lochner sent a tape of a speech he had on file. I received an email from Joe Kollmyer to advise me that NG Earl Lusk died on June 6<sup>th</sup>. BILL STEWART sent a donation to the kitty with a news article enclosed. It seems that the Kansas House of Representatives honored him and HARRY KELLEY for their service in the US Navy's Asiatic Fleet during WWII. They received a standing ovation from the House members! As they say down under – Good on ya! HARRY MCMANUS sent a short letter saying he plans to attend the next March reunion. Dorothy and LLOYD WILLEY write of family visits...glowing with love and pride. MATT MARINOS writes he is 84 years young and still enjoys managing a marina along fishing, boating & family gatherings. He sends his thanks to all the NG's for the cards at Christmas, Father's Day and his birthday. Ben Reynolds sent a copy of JOSEPH COMER's (KIA) records for our archives. What struck me strange is that they listed him missing in action March 1, 1942 but listed him presumed dead (and noted his date of death as) December 15, 1945 with location of death aboard the USS Houston. Thanks Ben, very interesting. It was good to hear from Doris Edwards after such a while! She inquired as to a subscription fee. Doris (and all) – we are a non-profit organization and exist solely upon y'all's generosity! We have no set dues or membership fees. WILBUR SMITH wrote that he found family of one of his shipmates and asked we add to her to our mail roster – we'd be delighted to! Johan van Leer sent an article from the "nieuws magazine" (April 2003) about the monthly demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy in The Hague since December 1994. It also includes copies of correspondence between the Japanese Prime Minister and the President of the Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts..... awww, I just had to chew my lip with all the verbal dancing around of the issue by the Prime Minister!! We are sad to learn from Donna that her husband Ken Rogers of the USS Houston Association (CA-30 and CL-81) died May 16 of cancer. He fought a long hard battle. OC MCMANUS called out of the blue just to chat. He sends his regards to one and all. Nancy Morrow, NG is recovering from a modified radical mastectomy done March 12. She also reports the loss of her mother, Louise Kruse on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Nancy continues to garden & from the harvest makes jams. I always enjoy the long and lovely letters from Mattie Atterberry telling of her life of gardening. In her most recent letter, she began with "To all the loved ones of the USS Houston – "The Galloping Ghost" – the Next Generation" and shared the story of how she and her late husband, CHARLES met and their love story. OTTO SCHWARZ is dealing with a flare up with his prostate cancer. While in the hospital, his kidneys shut down on him, but he's on an even keel now. We were disappointed not to see Judy and Lee Robinson. We found out that Judy is recovering from a hysterectomy triggered by uterine cancer. Our prayers are with all of you facing

health issues. I received a lovely letter from Terry Willis, daughter of Bill Rentz and daughter of Chaplin RENTZ advising that Bill had died at the age of 89 on July 12. She compliments our Rachel for taking "on an ambitious task". We also send our sympathies to all of our family that has lost loved ones. GUS FORSMAN sends occasional emails updating me on what he's been up to. He's slowed down a bit but his messages are always full of such joy and love. Our Otto is having a bout with his prostate cancer again. He went into the hospital for tests and he ran into a rough time with his kidneys/bladder functioning properly. I talk with him often & he never complains (nor do any of you).

**FROM DOWN UNDER** – Lt. Col. Terry Beaton, Ret. wrote an article about a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary pilgrimage back to the Burma-Siam Railway for ANZAC 2003. I will gladly send a copy to anyone who inquires. Steve Youll of the HMAS Perth Organization met Max & me at the Austin airport to discuss how our organizations are alike and differ a bit. We explained our concept of a more relaxed "family" oriented organization without requiring formal submissions of names to join and voting on them. We feel this has not only expanded our membership but strengthened it. Steve presented me with a plaque from the Perth Organization, a letter from Vice Admiral C.A. Richie AO RAN, Chief of the Navy (Australian), hat pins and a puter kangaroo. I will bring them to the next reunion in March to share with everyone.

#### **IN SEARCH OF:**

WILLIAM OLIVER: David Oliver (son) 9002 Sheridan Rd, Lot 47, Kenosha, WI 53143. Email [sdcvp@aol.com](mailto:sdcvp@aol.com). Phone: 262 697-1113

CHARLIE (ARKIE) & LOYS (BLACKIE) PARSONS: (Loys was transferred to the Edsall from the Houston. Both were KIA the same day) Jo Gallagher (niece) of DeKalb, TX. Email: [Texasjoemma@juno.com](mailto:Texasjoemma@juno.com)

JOHN WILSON ANDERSON – Sylvia Lee (niece) at email: [slee5088@juno.com](mailto:slee5088@juno.com)

Virgil Armstrong of 2708 Parkview Ln Apt 3305, Bedford, TX 76022-6939 is looking for a friend in '43 who was a WAVE who husband was on the Houston. Does any one remember such a couple?

**FOR SALE** - Caps \$15, Monument and Bell pins \$2 each, "Death Becomes the Ghost" videos \$15, Avenge the Houston posters \$10, schematic of the HOUSTON \$5 for small, \$10 for large, 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial aboard the USS Blue Ridge video \$15 & Bumper stickers \$2.00.

**NEW BOOK** – Meg Parkes, daughter of British Army Capt. A.A. Duncan has published her father's diaries in a book titled "Notify Alec Rattray..." Capt. Duncan was in the camps in Java & Japan with survivors from the *Houston* which includes mention of Joe Dalton while in the Zentsuji camp. Capt. Duncan documented the battle of the Java Sea as told to him by the survivors also. This book is available through Amazon.co.uk or directly through Meg at Kranji Publications 34 Queens Rd, Hoylake, Wirral CH427 2AJ, England at a cost of \$28 (including postage).

**OLD BOOK** – Otto Schwarz has found 2 copies of the book "The Ghost That Died at Sunda Strait" by W.G. WINSLOW. You can send a check to Otto for \$19 to order one (267 Forest Dr., Union, NJ 07083-7966).

**LOST BATTALION/USS HOUSTON AUGUST REUNION** - This was the first year that the NG's handled the reunion. I must say that Pat and Joe Cadenhead, President '03 have raised the bar for those of us that will follow. They did an outstanding job taking care of every minuscule detail! The USS *Houston* survivors were: Sylvia & HOWARD BROOKS, Marie & JACK FELIZ, Mary & SKIP SCHILPEROORT, Dorothy & LLOYD WILLEY & family, Marti and BOB CHARLES, JOHN HOOD, AL KOPP, AL KENNEDY, EUGENE PARHAM, Donna & DAVID FLYNN and Theresa and PAUL PAPISH...widows Jimmie Pryor & family, Erma Snyder & family, Nadine Faulk and NG's Ron & Lin Drees, Val & Max Poss, Clay Ramsey, Jim Hornfisher & Tony Tulley . 131<sup>st</sup> family included Warren Robertson & son Jim, Frank & Leeta Ficklin & Susan & Georgia, LV Whitaker, Sue Bumpass, Bernice & Charles Clay, Jenny & Mike Bray, Dan Buzzo & family, Frankie & Tom York, Larry & Layne Summers, Lynn Stasey, Cullan Brimage, Yvonne West, Denis Brunner, Estelle Krampack, Butch Starnes, Paul & Hazel Leatherwood, Joe and Grace Clay, Tom Sledge & Imogene Christian, Betty & Ed Hudson, Lyda Argabright, Frankie and Quaty Gordon, Mariel & JL Summers, Betty & Ferdinand Haring, Wanda and Youngun Clark, Maxine & George Ray, Hazel Anderson, Reba Thornton, Rene & Lowell Spencer, Herbert Morris, Mary Johnston, Carolyn Morris, Kyle and Vivian Thompson, DeeDee Prince, Sycily Lattimore, Marie Matlock, Ray Boucher, Nita Ogle, Pauline Long, Ozella Solomon, Judy Matlock, Rosalie Gregg, Treaila Burns, Stanley Galbraith, Jim Whitaker, BD Fillmore & nephew John, Bea & Jack Ridings, Eddie and Bernard Gaston, Fay Slate, Cindy Johnson, Dorothy & Luther Prunty, Lindsay, Marsha & David Canright, Gail and Mike Bialas, Eddie Fung and his new bride Judy, Ann Smith, William and Oneta Slone, Cecilia & Carl Clements, Eldridge & Jo Griffith, Hortnese Offerle, Lula Mae & Coy York, Becke & Mike Freitas, Diane Granbury, Christyna Palase, Gladys & Hook Matthews & sons Randy and Tommy, Debbie Halm, Ralph Frederick, Tammy & Chris Vandenheuvel, JR Johnson & Beth Looker. If I missed someone --- I'm truly sorry!

SuSu Ficklin honored us all by choosing to receive her Captain's bars at the reunion. Capt. Susan Ficklin gave a very moving speech during the ceremony and we were all touched that she wanted her Lost Battalion/USS Houston family to share in the pride and joy of it all. We were all misty eyed and grinning from ear to ear. Col. Georgia Ficklin, USAF presided over the ceremony --- truly a family affair!

**NOW HEAR THIS!** – The Scholarship Committee announces they will be accepting applications for a \$1,000 Scholarship to be announced at the March '04 reunion! Please send your inquiries to Susan Krug, 3031 Loop Rd, Stevenson, WA 98648. She will in turn mail the application & instructions to be **completed and returned no later than December 1<sup>st</sup>**. Criteria: Be at least a high school senior assured of entering/attending college up to and including a college junior who will enter his/her final year of undergraduate education. Be related (blood/marriage) to/or associated in some way with a crew member/descendant of the USS Houston (CA-30), Next Generation, the USS Houston Survivors Association and the Next Generation organization and/or has shown a keen interest in the history of the USS Houston CA-30's history and/or crew's legacy. This interest could come, for example, in the form of having participated in communications with any of the survivors and/or the organization while striving to learn more. Eligibility will be determined by the scholarship selection sub-committee, whose decisions are final. Be able to document current academic grades. Be able to document community/civic activity(s). Present an essay (not to exceed 5 pages) on; 'What does the memory of the USS Houston (CA-30) mean to

me. Complete each item as indicated on the scholarship application including all necessary supporting documents.

**THE RED @** - If you see a red @ by your name on the newsletter envelope, it is to advise this is your last newsletter.

**DONATIONS** – Many thanks again to the generosity of a few so that many can receive the newsletter: O C MCMANUS, Bill Gary in memory of Lin Drees's other, John & Patricia Mintzer, Janet Esip, WILLIAM STEWART, Dorothy & LLOYD WILLEY, Marion Beardsley, Doris Edwards in memory of QUINTON MADSON, JIM BALLEW, RAY SPARKS, JAMES KENNEY and her brother ROBERT PULLEN also in honor of OTTO SCHWARZ, George Jones, Marcella & MARUICE HURD, WILBUR SMITH, George and Rosemary Jones, Charles and Doris Edwards, Peg Parris in memory of her brother, HAROLD VINJE, Anonymous, Pam Benzel in memory of her father, in memory of JIM BALLEW from his family, Theresa and PAUL PAPISH, Jean Burroughs, in memory of Paul Papish, Jr. from Theresa and PAUL PAPISH, AL KENNEDY, EUGENE PARHAM, Fred Hekking.

Please remember this is a non-profit organization (Our Tax ID # is 17053122009007) and we depend entirely upon your kindness and generosity. The cost of paper, printing, postage, phone, etc. is soaring and we truly appreciate your feeding the kitty.

**A PERFECT DAY** - Max and I had the 3 oldest grandsons (Sunday afternoon – Friday afternoon) for the summer. We decided that since American Airlines is threatening bankruptcy that we needed to use what miles we had saved. We flew out with the kiddos for 4 fun filled days in Disneyland. However, that wasn't our perfect day. We drove down to Chula Vista July 19<sup>th</sup> for a visit with JACK and June SMITH. I had suggested we meet for lunch as I didn't want to impose with their health issues but they insisted we come to their home. Their daughter, son and daughter in law "catered" the lunch and took care of all of the details. I made a pig of myself eating Jack's home grown tomatoes.... And I normally don't care that much for them! DUTCH KOOPER and his nephew, Dorothy and LLOYD WILLEY, JACK & June BARTZ and DORSEY SWANSON were also there along with JACK and June's two granddaughters (very lovely young ladies). This was the first time I met "SWANEE". We all had a lovely visit. I was so thrilled to see everyone and very honored the Smith's had the luncheon in my honor. I was thrilled, humbled, and even teary eyed. Our grandsons had drawn pictures for each survivor: the ships bell, the ship and the American flag. Each grandson presented their art work to each survivor with a salute after I introduced them. Although we had given the boys the "best behavior" talk, they thoroughly enjoyed themselves playing with JACK & June's great grand-daughter (she's a cutie pie). JACK & June, you will never know how much I appreciated that PERFECT DAY!

**IT'S HAPPENING!!!** – When I was first drafted for this job, I moaned and groaned to Otto that I knew very little about computers..... and it fell on deaf ears. Since he wouldn't listen to me, I have had to read and re-read tutorials. I've got to tell you that most of them are NOT user friendly. It may seem like small potatoes to you, but by golly, I finally accomplished something here without having to get my son in law to help (bless his heart, thank God he's so patient). The USS Lexington Museum asked for information and pictures about the HOUSTON. I had agreed to send it but with a heavy heart knowing I am computer challenged. I had scanned some materials plus had information about our crew members that our Rachel has done for us. I set aside a good portion of my day to get it done as I anticipated a lot of mistakes on my part. Well, let me tell you, it

went smooth as silk. Our dream has been to have our archives scanned in the event of such a request. This is the first time we've been able to do it and I almost broke my arm patting myself on my back!! There's plenty more to scan and our Rachel is busy working on it. It's happening, people! The history of the HOUSTON and her crew will be so easy to share in the future.... Now to get more bio's on you men!!! THAT'S AN ORDER!!!

**A WALK IN THE PARK** – If you happen to be in Union, New Jersey and want to take a lovely walk in the park you must take a stroll through **Otto Schwarz Woods**. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, Flag Day, the Township Committee dedicated 3.5 acres of park just across the street from the Union Hospital in honor of our Otto for his dedication to his community and “service to his country”. It had been raining for days, even the morning of the dedication, but the Township forged on. A tent was erected, chairs put in place and coffee and do-nuts were served. (Sound familiar?) Just as the Mayor began to speak, the sun came out. About 35 people attended including city leaders, friends and family. There was a very nice piece in the local newspaper with a picture of Otto, the Mayor and four Committeemen standing in front of the park sign. Well done, Otto..... VERY well done! PLUS

The American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. of New Jersey (July '03 issue) giving a history of the organization. It had several pictures (current and of yesteryear – he's still as handsome as he ever was!) It states that Otto was the first Commander of the New Jersey Post #1 in '51, in '54 he was involved with his charter group leading the county by having legislation introduced in Congress which would have paid Ex-Prisoners of War retroactive pay for promotion (and was FINALLY accomplished just this year), investigated a move by the War Claims Commission to deny POW payment to several Korean War Ex-POW's & after appearing before the War Claims Commission was able to get the decision reversed, he was the National Vice-Commander in '55, he designed the organizations Commemorative Seals in '55-'56 that are still in use, he was also on a project to find ex-POW's from the '60's and '70's to help them with benefits and medical treatment and still attends the quarterly meetings.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LIBRARIES** - Julie Grob asked me to include the policy in the Blue Bonnet to help people better understand what kinds of materials the library was interested in adding to the collection.

### **Cruiser Houston Collection Development Policy**

Special Collections & Archives,  
University of Houston Libraries

#### **Collection Focus**

##### *Subject Areas*

The history of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) and her crew, with particular focus on her actions during World War II, and the POW experiences of her crew members. Additional materials focus on the *Houston's* earlier history,