

## Now Hear This!

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### Association Founded 1946:

by Otto and Trudy Schwarz

## Mayor Parker Wears CA-30 Shirt at Houston's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration



Mayor Parker (center) wears a U.S.S. Houston CA-30 shirt on July 4<sup>th</sup>

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On July 4, 2015 Houston's Mayor, Annise D. Parker, wore a U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 shirt to the City of Houston's official 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration called: "Southwest Airlines Freedom over Texas." Held in Eleanor Tinsley Park in Houston, the 29-year-old annual event featured singer-songwriter and Houston son, Clint Black and double-platinum-selling singer, songwriter Josh Turner who headlined on the Southwest Airlines Stage. The evening culminated with a spectacular fireworks display by Citgo. (Photo: Courtesy of "The New 93Q" Radio Station in Houston).

## Perth-III Honors Perth-I and CA-30 In Sunda Strait



May 4, 2015: Operations Officer of H.M.A.S. Perth III, Lieutenant Commander Dylan White, addresses the crew during a wreath laying ceremony over the wreck of H.M.A.S. Perth I in Sunda Strait.

By Dana Charles

While headed to a port visit in Singapore, H.M.A.S. *Perth* III stopped in Sunda Strait on the evening of 4 May 2015 to remember the crews of H.M.A.S. *Perth* I and U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30, and the final battle the two ships fought there seventy-three years ago. The sailors of the H.M.A.S. *Perth* III stood solemnly on the ship's flight deck as the Australian Anzac frigate paused in the calm waters of the Sunda Strait. As part of the evening's memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony, LSBM Jones, ABET Nolan, and ABET Smith-Luck read from the memoirs of H.M.A.S. *Perth* (D-29) survivors. "They said they felt incredibly moved by the stories they had related to their shipmates," reported an article written in the H.M.A.S. *Perth* III newsletter (July 2015).



HMAS *Perth* III leads RSS *Stalwart* and KD *Jebat*.

Lieutenant Brendan Naylor, Navigating Officer, said: "The deeds and fighting quality of *Perth* have given her a special place in the history of the Royal Australian Navy... They wore a *Perth* tally band, just like we do... When you wear that tally band, when you wear your *Perth* patch and when you cross *Perth's* gangway, do it with great pride because every time you do that, you are living their legacy."

Captain Ingham remarked: "Of all the ships that have flown the Australian White Ensign, there has never been one quite like the first *Perth*. Of all the Australians who fought in the Second World War, none saw more action or saw so much hardship as the crew of *Perth* I. Tonight we recognize that ship, we remember those men and we acknowledge their families. Tonight we honor *Perth* I."



On 6 May 2015 Commander Andrew Schroder, RAN, Assistant Naval Attaché, Australia, and Association Executive Director John Schwarz attended a reception at the Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C., hosted by Naval Attaché Commodore Steve McDowall, DSM, CSM, RAN, to remember the Battle of the Coral Sea.



*From the desk of the Executive Director*

***John K. Schwarz***

This is hoping everyone is doing fine health-wise. This edition of the Blue Bonnet pretty much marks the mid-year point of our fiscal year. It also serves as a good time to reflect on membership in our Association. For most of you contributions are most often and easily done through donations to our fund accounts. The 'general kitty' is necessary for modest Association expenses, the most costly of which is the memorial service. We also have the scholarship program that can only occur with a stream of funding that not only keeps the program alive but literally dictates the amount we can offer for a young person's educational endeavors. Donation amounts are up to the donor. All amounts are welcomed and are most helpful. There truly is strength in numbers.

Donations can also be made through the purchase of some terrific merchandise that our Association has to offer. Your purchases not only enable you to wear your "U.S.S. Houston CA-30 colors" proudly, but also help our Association add to the kitty.

A reminder: If you purchase any kind of merchandise through Amazon, please register with **AmazonSmile** as you will make an Association donation automatically through every purchase—without any effect on that purchase regarding price or vendor.

For any questions/concerns about any Association donating, our trusty Treasurer Pam Foster will be happy to offer assistance ([pam@usshouston.org](mailto:pam@usshouston.org)).

Remember the scholarship application window opened on June 1<sup>st</sup>. For any of you scholarship 'coaches' out there, please advise your prospective candidate to get started early on their submission. Candidates must first answer all application requirements then second, present a package that accumulates the most points relative to any other candidates.

Meanwhile, we here at "Association headquarters" are busy with the usual ongoing matters the foremost of which is planning for Houston in 2016. Mark your calendars: the Annual Memorial Service will be held **March 5, 2016** at the U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Monument in Houston, Texas.

We continue our relationship with the U.S. Navy folks in Washington, D.C. who have jurisdiction over U.S. sunken warships, The Naval History & Heritage Command. Nothing terribly new to report other than the occasional sighting of potential salvagers that gets reported to us, and ongoing tourist dive boat trips being executed by local boat operators to the *Houston* CA-30 wreck site.

Our Association Board of Managers stays the course at their assigned tasks. Vice President Dana Charles remains very busy with a tremendous volume of Association correspondence, some of which is shared in the "Mailbag" section of this newsletter. Each of your Board of Managers is available every day of the year through [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org)

***John***

*Son of Otto and Trudy Schwarz*

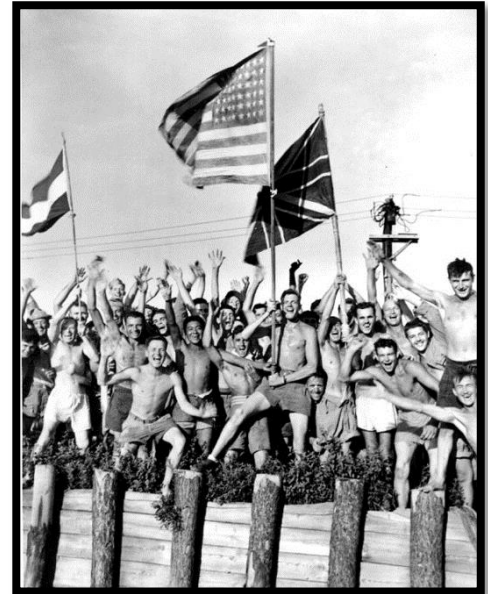


*Remembering 70 Years Ago This Month...*

## **STORIES OF LIBERATION**

By Dana Charles

Seventy years ago this month the bloody Pacific War seemed to be grinding relentlessly toward its fourth year when two American atomic bombs suddenly obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. A few days later, on August 15, 1945—for the first time ever—the Japanese people heard the voice of their Emperor speaking directly to them on the radio. Without actually using the word surrender, Emperor Hirohito told his people that the war was over. Japan now had to “endure the unendurable,” Hirohito said, without a trace of irony, without acknowledging that throughout Asia, throughout the Pacific Region—wherever Japanese forces had invaded since 1937—death and destruction and unendurable suffering had been inflicted in the Emperor’s name on millions upon millions of people.



29 Aug 1945: Released Allied POWs at Aomori, Japan (Photo: NARA #80-G-490444)

By August 1945, 736 American prisoners of war—Sailors and Marines of U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 and soldiers of the 131<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery/2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion—had somehow managed to survive 42 months of suffering at the hands of the Japanese, which for most of them, included the construction of the Burma-Thailand railway. As prisoners of war, each of them had endured many unendurable things, including witnessing deaths among fellow POW shipmates and friends; 77 *Houston* survivors and 89 soldiers of the 131<sup>st</sup> had perished due to malnutrition, disease, beatings, and torture. By the summer of 1945 most of the surviving men of *Houston* and the 131<sup>st</sup> had been transported to various POW camps scattered throughout S.E. Asia. Below is a sample of the various stories of liberation experienced by these remarkable men as a direct result of the Emperor’s radio broadcast of August 15, 1945:

### **JACK FELIZ - OHASI, JAPAN**

In a POW camp in Ohasi, Japan U.S.S. *Houston* sailor Jack Feliz first heard the war was over from a broadcast on a secret radio which fellow crewman Jerry Bunch had built and hidden from the Japanese guards. “We were hardly able to hide our great joy from the Japs,” Feliz later wrote.<sup>1</sup> “The next day the Japs rounded up all the POWS up who were working in the mine repair shops and put us in a large warehouse and told us to remain there until they returned. We were pretty apprehensive that these mad dogs might machine-gun us. We were organized to make an all-hands attack on any gun-toting Jap, take his weapon and head for the seaport at Kamaishi and we would commandeer fishing boats to take us to our ships. Fortunately, we didn’t have to put that plan into effect. The reason we were put in seclusion was that they didn’t want us to hear the Emperor tell his people that he surrendered his country to the allied military forces and that they were to treat POWS and invading forces with due respect...”

<sup>1</sup> Feliz, Jack M. from The Saga of Sailor Jack, Writers’ Club Press (2001), p. 67.

According to Jack Feliz, Jerry Bunch immediately made contact with U.S. forces with his radio and transmitter. "The POW coordinator informed Jerry to sit tight. He said they couldn't evacuate us for about three weeks but they would send a carrier plane over the camp the next day...We could hardly wait for that plane to arrive. He buzzed our camp and it was easy to see that he found our camp because we were all out on the parade ground jumping up and down waving everything that we had to attract his attention."<sup>2</sup>

### **MARVIN E. TILGHMAN - SAIGON, FRENCH INDO-CHINA**

In a "big, French Foreign Legion camp" in Saigon, French Indo-China (Vietnam), 131<sup>st</sup> survivor Marvin E. Tilghman and his fellow American POWs (including my father) first learned that the war was over when planes came over one day and started dropping leaflets. "We knew it was really over because some of the Japs had told us that we had dropped the big bomb on one of their towns and that town was finished. The next day, I believe, the (American) planes came in and landed out at the air base. One of our captains...came in with the OSS people to make arrangements to get us out. We started having fun then. Of course, the Japs didn't know what to do, and most of the Korean guards had vanished. (The captain) let us go to town if we wanted to. We still came back at night to the camp. We went to town to visit, buy food, eat, visit with people. Some French people invited us to their homes, and we ate dinner with them. That's when the Vietnamese war started. The natives had an uprising one day in town and started shooting and ransacking the town and killing people... I had my GI khakis on, and that saved me. If they knew you were an American they didn't bother you, but you had to prove it before they'd let you go..."<sup>3</sup>

### **GUS FORSMAN - SINGAPORE**

At the Outram Road Prison in Singapore, Singapore Japanese guards said nothing to U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 survivor Melford L. ("Gus") Forsman as they suddenly released him and several other allied POWs from solitary confinement. Forsman had languished in prison for six months. The Japanese had sentenced him to six years in prison for disseminating war news. "[The Japanese guards] marched us over by the gate and opened it, and he says, 'Go!' We just stood there, and they kept pushing us, and saying 'Go!' I think it was Major (Windy) Rogers (131<sup>st</sup> FA/2<sup>nd</sup> BN) who said, 'Well, they're going to shoot us in the back. They're going to say we were escaping.' So he says, 'By God, let's give them a run for their money! Run in a zigzag course.' Anyway, we took off down the hill. The Japs were laughing behind us, and we figured, well, they're about to open fire. But they didn't. We got down the hill, and there we were, just standing there. We didn't know what to do, and a Chinaman came by on a bicycle, and Major Rogers said something to him. Well, he stopped and fortunately spoke some English. He told us that the war was over. Of course we didn't believe him. He said, 'No, no, they boom, boom one time! Japan finished!' We still didn't believe him, but he did get across to us that the best thing for us to do was to go to Changi, so we did."

"We got to Changi, and there was a Jap guard with a wooden rifle, not a regular Japanese rifle. We started up this road, and here came a bunch of POWs from Changi, the regular Changi jail. They came running down, and there was ol' Crayton (Crayton Gordon, 131<sup>st</sup> FA/2<sup>nd</sup> BN). I remember they threw

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<sup>2</sup> Feliz, Jack M. from The Saga of Sailor Jack, Writers' Club Press (2001), p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> LaForte, Robert S, and Marcello, Ronald E., Building the Death Railway, SR Books (1993), pp. 253-254.

their arms around us and wanted to know where we came from. They thought when we left Thailand we were dead for sure. Anyway, they took us over to the jail and told us the war was over. They took us inside the jail, and we got introduced all over. My God, it felt like a hero's welcome."<sup>4</sup>

### **JAMES GEE - NEAR NAGASAKI, JAPAN**

After surviving the death railway, U.S.S. *Houston* Marine survivor James Gee was eventually transported to a POW coal mining camp near Nagasaki, Japan. "We were about 45 miles from Nagasaki (by train). We probably felt the bomb and heard the darn thing, but we didn't know it because we heard a lot of explosions that we didn't know what in the world they were. But we knew one thing: there weren't hardly any Japanese planes in the sky. We knew occasionally that American planes were in the area from the air raid sounds. We knew things were shaping up in our favor... After Hiroshima, they called us on the parade ground, and this is when we had our biggest run down through the city. This is when people were jeering at us because of the number of people that had been killed. But, anyway, Nagasaki was hit next, and we were called onto the parade ground, and the Japanese in a formal ceremony told us what had happened and said that America and Japan were now friends and that they were our friends and that they wanted to treat us the very best they could and that they were sorry for all the hardships that we'd suffered and all that. And in just fifteen minutes' time, they switched from our major enemy to our best friend, and to seal this, to let us know they meant it, they turned over their rifles and ammunition to us, which we accepted without hesitation. We had a man who made an American flag and had carried it with him for quite a while, and we took the Stars and Stripes and replaced that rising sun with Old Glory. That was the end of our POW days...Of course, we were pretty stunned...That first day, we took our rifles and we walked out across the countryside looking for food."<sup>5</sup>

*Note: These are just a few of the many stories of liberation experienced in August 1945 by U.S.S. Houston CA-30 and 131<sup>st</sup> FA/2<sup>nd</sup> BN survivors. Each man experienced his moment of POW liberation in his own unique way. [To all Survivors: If you would like to tell the story of your POW liberation day in the next issue of the Blue Bonnet, please contact Dana Charles at: [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org)].*

### **You Shop, Amazon Gives**

*By Pam Crispi Foster, Treasurer*

Many of us already shop online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Did you know that Amazon has a program where they will donate a portion of your purchase price to the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association and Next Generations? There is no additional cost to you or to the association and the proceeds help to perpetuate the memory of our ship and the sacrifices made by her crew. Visit our website: [www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org) and click on the AmazonSmile link or go to the website shown below. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the **USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association and Next Generations** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support the **USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association and Next Generations** by starting your shopping at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-2814051>.

<sup>4</sup> LaForte, Robert S, and Marcello, Ronald E., *Building the Death Railway*, SR Books (1993), pp. 255-256.

<sup>5</sup> LaForte, Robert S, and Marcello, Ronald E., *Building the Death Railway*, SR Books (1993), pp. 275-276.

# The Photo of U.S.S. Houston CA-30 at Tjilatjap, Java, February 6, 1942

By

Donald M. Kehn, Jr.



As we all know, **Marblehead** and **Houston** were both bombed and damaged by Japanese navy bombers on February 4, 1942 in what has become known as *The Battle of the Flores Sea*. The allied ships were at that time located between the Kangean Archipelago and the island of Bali, far to the east of Surabaya, Java. **Marblehead** was more severely damaged, badly flooded with her steering knocked out, and as a result it took her longer to get back to port. **Houston** suffered more casualties but her steaming ability was unimpaired and she returned to the southwestern Javanese port of Tjilatjap the following day (Feb. 5). **Marblehead** reached there a day later (Feb. 6) and as she steamed past her big sister a huge cheer went up from the crew of **Houston**. (By that time **Houston** had already sent her wounded off in Dutch hospital trains for Jogjakarta, and her dead ashore for burial in the European cemetery at Tjilatjap.) This remarkable photo was taken from **Marblehead** as she slowly moved ahead of **Houston** to the docks at Tjilatjap.

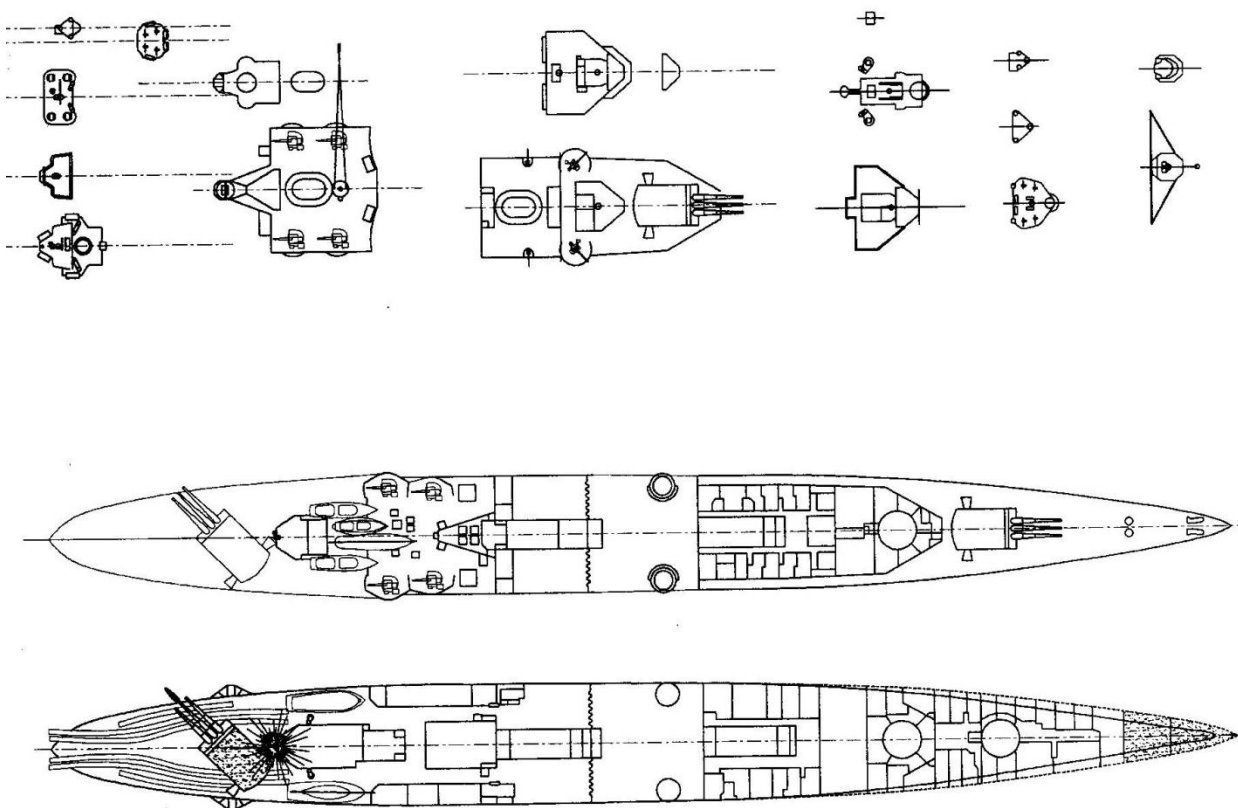
This picture has existed in poor reproductions, very blurred and dim, for years but this is the first time an original copy, in pristine condition, has been located. It was in the back of **Marblehead's** Action Report for the Feb. 4th bombing and subsequent repairs, and found at NARA II in College Park, MD by

military historian Robert Stern. Its value is considerable, as it is far and away the clearest image we have of **Houston** in the last weeks of her life. And in it we see that even severe damage to a large warship is not always obvious or apparent at first glance.

On a more human level, it is probable that here we see men we have all known over the years. Family members and NOK will likely have a relative there somewhere. That all of these men would either be dead or POWs within a few weeks is an extremely poignant and sobering thought.

**Houston** was hit by a single, stray 250kg bomb (551 lbs) dropped by Imperial Japanese Navy bombers flying out of Kendari, Celebes. Released at high altitude, the bomb struck behind the number three turret, which had been rotated 30° to port during the engagement to keep an eye out for low-flying torpedo planes. The explosion froze the turret there, but it did not cause the turret to move into that position.

On its way down the bomb nicked the port yardarm on the mainmast, next to the .50cal MG nest atop that tripod—wherein both Earl Joe Snyder and Marvin Bain were stationed—then went through the searchlight platform where it killed a young seaman named Bruce Adkins; it then ripped a ten foot slash in the tripod leg of the mast and pierced the radio shack before emerging above the main deck and detonating. Through the searchlight platform and radio shack it left holes of about 14" in diameter.



Although not obvious in the picture, the side of the turret was pierced in over 200 places by small fragments from the bomb. Most of these holes were only an inch or two in diameter. These, however, sent red-hot shards into the gun house which killed and injured many. More destructively, they also



caused propellant fires in the 8" powder bags that burned to death most of the men in the gun house itself.

The armored cover for the right rangefinder telescope was blown off—as seen in the picture—as were the life-rafts atop the turret. Their outlines can be seen in this image. In the turret's rear hatch—this was open—sat the Turret Officer, LT George Davis, Jr. who was spotting enemy planes. As one may see, he was extremely close to the impact and was killed instantly. Both turret hatch doors can be seen to have been blown off by the explosion. A makeshift ladder has been placed alongside the gun house to enable men to get to the top of the turret—probably to remove the remains of damaged life-rafts.

Additionally, fragments killed and wounded men seeking shelter under the boats—which we see here forward of the turret—and in the crew's head, and wiped out, almost to a man, the After Damage Repair Party who were stationed just below the number three mount in a crew's space. (Howard Brooks was one of very few survivors of that group.) The explosion blew a large hole in the deck—approx. 12' X 18'—but no fires were started below where the After Damage Repair Party had been. There were numerous water lines and electrical mains wrecked, though, and considerable flooding in that area afterwards, which made the rescue of wounded and recovery of bodies not only grim, but highly precarious.

The photo also shows a good deal of material at the location of the hole in the deck, but it is difficult to say just what it is. It almost appears to be bedding or clothing. We do know that a great deal of damage was inflicted on bunks in the crew-space below the bomb, and it is possible, I suppose, that water-logged and damaged bedding and clothing had been brought up on deck. Later a steel plate was welded over the hole in the deck. The cruiser likewise had a cold storage compartment for food destroyed, and it is recorded that many canned Armor hams were quickly consumed over the next days.

**Marblehead** would be under emergency repairs at Tjilatjap until Feb. 13, at which point she began a long, arduous odyssey back to the states. But because she retained an intact 5" battery and her AA directors had been repaired (*and* her power plant was undamaged) **Houston**, unfortunately and ironically, was kept in the battle zone. According to the later recollections of ADM Thomas Hart (CINCAF) this decision was largely that of CAPT Albert H. Rooks, **Houston's** skipper, but it is hard to believe that he was not encouraged to remain on station if at all possible. The dutiful warship then left Tjilatjap for Darwin on Feb. 11, 1942 and reached the northern Australian port a few days later. In so doing her fate was sealed; less than three weeks later she would be sunk in the Battle of Sunda Strait along with the gallant Australian light cruiser, **H.M.A.S. Perth**.

A Chief Yeoman on **Marblehead** named Beauford G. Gabriel later wrote: *"Entering the harbor of Tjilatjap, we passed the HOUSTON who had beaten us there. As we passed she gave three great big cheers and I don't think we could have felt better at any time in our life."*

Among much else, this remarkable image records those moments.

Here and There...

## ANZAC Day 2015



25 April 2015: The H.M.A.S. *Perth* Survivors Association marches in the annual ANZAC Day Parade in Melbourne, Australia carrying the U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 banner which our Association had recently gifted to them.



H.M.A.S *Perth* Survivor David Manning chats with LT (jg) Ricardo Elizalde, USN—the United States Navy representative—at ANZAC Day, 2015 in Melbourne.



Observing ANZAC Day 2015 in San Francisco: Front Row: Lauren Daigre, great granddaughter of Eugene Crispi, USN. Back Row: Taylor Daigre, great grand-daughter of Eugene Crispi, USN; Stephanie Daigre, granddaughter in law of Eugene Crispi, USN; Commander Andrew Schroder, RAN, Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of Australia; Pam Foster, daughter of Eugene Crispi, USN





25 April 2015: Australians in the Houston-area gathered for a dawn memorial service at the U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Monument in observance of ANZAC Day. This year marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WWI Battle of Gallipoli.



The U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Monument was the site of the ANZAC Day 2015 Memorial Service in Houston, Texas.

### U.S.S. *Houston* (CL-81) Association's Annual Reunion

August 18 – 23, 2015

Radisson Hotel – Green Bay, WI

Contact: Barbara Hillebrand 608-424-6095;

[Bhillebrand@charter.net](mailto:Bhillebrand@charter.net)

Shipmates, families and friends are welcome!



21 July 2015: NG Jerry Ranger (Right) visited with U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Survivor Marvin Sizemore (Left) and his wife Helen (not pictured) and NG Deb Clark (not pictured) in Ohio.

## CREWMEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

### CHESTER YANNUCCI, MUS 1/C, USN

By Joe and Marlene McCain

The “Smoky Hollow” district of Youngstown, Ohio, today borders Youngstown State University. But in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this housing neighborhood was populated largely by Italian-American families – many of whom had immigrated to the United States to find a better life. Most were employed in the iron mills within walking distance of where they lived. In 1957, the Golden Eagle Club erected the Smoky Hollow War Memorial to honor fallen soldiers of World War II and the Korean War who had once lived in this close-knit neighborhood. One of the names listed on that memorial is that of Chester Yannucci, a U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 sailor.



Chester Yannucci was born in 1918 in Fairpoint, Ohio, and graduated from Campbell (Ohio) Memorial High School in 1935. In high school, Chester proved to be a talented musician and became a member of both the school's band and orchestra. His senior graduation yearbook reflects this (and his instrument of choice) in his nickname, “Tuba Ruba”.

The Yannucci family was living in Smoky Hollow when Chester enlisted in the U.S. Navy on June 16, 1936. After completing basic training at Great Lakes NTS in Illinois, Chester was transferred to the U.S.S. *Argonne* at San Pedro, CA. He completed his training as a Navy musician in January 1937 and reported aboard the U.S.S. *Houston*, a part of the Commander Scouting Force. For the next three years, he was transferred frequently and served on not only the *Houston*, but also the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, U.S.S. *Louisville*, U.S.S. *Lexington* and U.S.S. *Saratoga*. The CSF fleet exercises and maneuvers often took the ships far away from California, so the flag was transferred often. Since the band was part of the “flag allowance,” it too was moved when the flag was transferred to a different ship.

March 1940 marked a big change for Chester when he was assigned to the U.S.S. *Henderson*, a transport ship which regularly ferried sailors back and forth between California and Manila, Philippines. He was headed for the Asiatic Station and would report for duty aboard the Asiatic Fleet's flagship, U.S.S. *Augusta*, on May 1, 1940. There he joined the flagship band, then under the direction of Bandmaster Sid Zeramby. In November 1940 in Manila, Bandmaster Zeramby brought the entire band to the U.S.S. *Houston* when the Asiatic Station flag was transferred. The *Houston's* band was rightly considered to be among the best. They performed for Admiral Thomas Hart and other dignitaries aboard ship and in such venues as the prestigious Manila Polo Club, the Manila Hotel, the Army/Navy Club and the Cavite Naval Yard Officers' Club. Daily they played morning colors, noontime concerts and each evening before shipboard movies were shown.

But these performances came to an end with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. That same evening, (December 8 in the Philippines), the *Houston* had just cleared the entrance to the harbor when the Japanese attacked at Iloilo. The world was now at war and each band member





**CAPT Rooks (center) inspects *Houston's* band. Chester Yannucci holds a tuba (at right).**

had an assigned battle station. Their chances to play became limited as the *Houston* spent much of its time on convoy duties between Australia and Java.

On February 4, 1942 a Japanese bomber managed to hit the stern of the *Houston*, killing almost four dozen crew members. The *Houston* made its way to Tjilatjap, Java, to bury the dead and to get hospital treatment for the wounded. All crew members who could be spared from duty attended as the band led the funeral procession to the burial site at a local cemetery.

When the *Houston* was lost in Sunda Strait the night of February 28 - March 1, 1942, only seven of the eighteen band members were able to reach land where they were quickly captured by the enemy. Five bandsmen survived brutal treatment in the Japanese POW camps to return home. Although he was reported having been seen alive in the water after the *Houston* sank, Chester Yannucci was not seen again after that night. And so, along with many of his shipmates, Chester stands eternal watch in Sunda Strait.

Additional notes & credits for this story:

- (1) A very special thanks to Gerald Nunziato who supplied much of the information for Chester's story. Mr. Nunziato was present with his father, a member of the Golden Eagle Club, in 1957 at the original dedication of the Smoky Hollow War Memorial. This memorial, and the names of those young men who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, inspired Mr. Nunziato to research all of those men and learn their stories. The memorial has recently been updated to include the names of one soldier who was not listed originally and of a Vietnam veteran.
- (2) The individual photo of Chester Yannucci in uniform is from a post-war edition of the Campbell Memorial High School yearbook, "The Reveler", and was provided through the research of Mr. Nunziato.
- (3) The picture of Captain Albert H. Rooks inspecting the *Houston's* band in August 1941 includes Chester Yannucci with his Sousaphone at the right edge. This picture is often published and can also be seen in the Cruiser Houston Collection at the University of Houston.
- (4) Chester Yannucci's name can also be found on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery, Manila, Philippines.



## ...NOW HEAR THIS...!

### INTERNAL ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

Applications for next year's scholarship program competition are being accepted beginning June 1 with the deadline for submission extending to November 1, 2015.

To apply for the scholarship applicants can go to [www.uss-houston.org](http://www.uss-houston.org) and click on the scholarship tab, scroll down to bottom of the page and click to download the application packet.

Application packets can also be obtained by writing to John Keith Schwarz, 2500 Clarendon Blvd. Apt. 121, Arlington, VA 22201.

Each year the amount our Association can award to the Internal Scholarship recipient depends on your generosity. The scholarship award available for 2016 will be \$3,000. Donations are always accepted and appreciated, and are necessary to perpetuate this program.

You can also remember the U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Scholarship Fund in your will, estate planning, or beneficiary designations. All donations are tax deductible.

Donations should be made out to: U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 Survivors' Association. Please note on your check: "Scholarship Donation."

Mail Donations to: Pam Crispi Foster, 370 Lilac Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648

To-date and after approximately 15 years of program implementation, we have awarded **12** scholarships totaling **\$25,250.00**. This is an extremely successful program outcome by any measure.

We thank everyone who has donated and participated in this worthwhile endeavor.



### Past Internal Annual Scholarship Winners

- 2004 – Gene Bankhead, grandson of Gene Crispi
- 2005 – Katy Fort, granddaughter of Cecil Chambliss
- 2006 – Gerald Agin, grandson of Gerald Agin
- 2007 – Jenny Garrett, granddaughter of Joe Garrett
- 2008 – Raymond Davis, great nephew of George Davis, Jr.
- 2009 – Alex James, great nephew of John Stefanek
- 2010 – Kevin Swick, grandson of John Reilly
- 2012 – Cody Karcher, great grandson of Richard H. Gingras
- 2013 – Laura Reilly, granddaughter of John Reilly  
and Maggie Tuttle, great niece of Howard Brooks
- 2014 – Stephanie Daigre, granddaughter-in-law of Gene Crispi
- 2015 – Stephen Reilly, grandson of John Reilly

### Past U.S. Naval Academy Foundation Scholarship Winners

- 2010 – Stephen Scales
- 2011 – Lene Gilchrist,
- 2013 – Robert Z. Sutherland
- 2014 – Evan S. Hovenden
- 2015 – Megan Cessna



## U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Due to the generosity of our Association members and others, and since its purchase in 2008, this permanent scholarship—the U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Scholarship—has been awarded five times. This scholarship award enables a year of preparatory military school education, which helps these candidates enter the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and helps produce proud Naval Officers. We are pleased to report that our first and second scholarship recipients have now graduated from the USNA and are currently serving as officers in the U.S. Navy. What a lasting tribute to the legacy of the men of U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30)!

Notes on news received via email at [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) and via regular mail...

- 4/16/15: Received an email from **Neil H. Bennett** as follows: "My uncle **Raymond Frank Hall** was aboard the U.S.S. *Houston* when it was hit and/or sank. We are looking for information more than we have about him. He was a medic 1st class. We have put a book together about him and the time he served. We are looking for more information of that might have known him." [Note: If you have any information regarding **Raymond Frank Hall**, please email it to: [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) and I will see that it is forwarded to Mr. Bennett. – Dana]
- 5/2/15: Received an email from **Harley Keller** as follows: "To Whom It May Concern, I recently read **Stoker Munro, Survivor** and it described how he was friends with an American sailor from the U.S.S. *Houston*. He knew this man as "Slim" and he was a senior radio operator when the ship was sunk. I am curious to know the name of this sailor. It is said in the book that he was a career sailor who had joined the Navy in the 30s and he was from Texas. Any information would be most appreciated as Slim sounds like one heck of a good bloke. Regards, Harley Keller." [Note: If you have any information regarding "Slim," please email it to: [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) and I will see that it is forwarded to Mr. Keller. – Dana]
- 5/5/15: Received from **Don Kehn, Jr.** the following email: "Guys, This is by far the best look at a ship just like U.S.S. *Houston* I've ever seen...It is from her sister U.S.S. *Northampton* in the summer of '42. Splendid photos showing interiors, exteriors, guns, planes, workshops, supplies, bridge & more." <http://images.google.com/hosted/life/8d7d9c430ec85524.html> Enjoy!"
- 5/16/15: Received from **Pete Johnston** (*Perth* Association) the following email: "Hi Dana, Finally getting around to sending you Anzac Day Melbourne 2015 info. The day was rather inclement but the crowds were enormous. **LT (jg) Ricardo Elizalde, USN** represented U.S.S. *Houston*, Ricardo is a fine example of the U.S. Navy. He especially mentioned how great it was to meet **David Manning** our last POW from Sunda Strait who lives in Victoria... The memorial in the U.S. Embassy in Indonesia got a good run down here, what a great idea from that young Scout. The National Assoc. sent a donation of \$1,000.00 to help him with his project. All the best to you and the greater *Houston* family. Kind Regards, Pete Johnston, H.M.A.S. *Perth* Assoc. [Victoria Area]."
- 5/21/15: Received the following email: "Dear Sirs, My name is **Jesse Nicholas**. My great uncle **Anthony Nicolao(s)** went to war and was reportedly lost KIA in the sinking of the U.S.S. *Houston*. His life and death has always been a tragic mystery for our family. While trying to gather information about his ultimate sacrifice I have found conflicting reports that suggest my Uncle Tony may have survived the battle and actually perished in a labor camp...I am reaching out in hopes that someone in your community has knowledge of my uncle and knows what happened to him so that we can put the pieces of this puzzle together and finally have closure for our lost family member...Please forward this letter and/or post in your forums while there is still a chance that somebody out there knows the truth. Sincerely, Jesse L. Nicholas, US Navy Veteran.
- 5/28/15: I emailed **Eunell Weissinger** to ask if she was Okay following the floods in Houston. Eunell replied as follows: "The conditions in Harris County are just unbelievable. However, Deer Park City officials have been working on our drainage system for several years. Apparently it has paid off. I had wondered about the monument as that area was hit hard. Thanks for your concern. E."
- 6/3/15: Received an inquiry from **Glinda Tarrence Cameron** as follows: "Good morning, Is there any way to determine if my uncle, **Earl Leonard Tarrence, Seaman Second Class**, may have been aboard the U.S.S. *Houston* on February 4, 1942? Earl had no children and all siblings have passed away, leaving our family without any information other than word of mouth reports...His sister once told me he was aboard a ship which was fired on and died on Feb. 4, 1942. In reviewing ship history, I see the *Houston* was attacked on this day. Could my uncle have been aboard that day?... Thank you for any information you are able to provide...Sincerely, Glinda Tarrence Cameron."
- 6/3/15: Emailed a reply to Glinda Cameron as follows: "Dear Ms. Cameron, Thank you for contacting us regarding your uncle, U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 crewman **Earl Leonard Tarrence, SM2/c, USN**. According to our Association records, your uncle was killed in action aboard the ship on 4 February 1942 during an air raid. I am

very sorry for your loss... All of the crewmen who perished in the attack were buried at Tjilatjap, Java a few days later when the ship arrived there... In our files I have a scan of a report written after the service by the chaplain. I will email the scan to you in a follow-up email...Again, I am very sorry for your loss...Sincerely, R. Dana Charles”

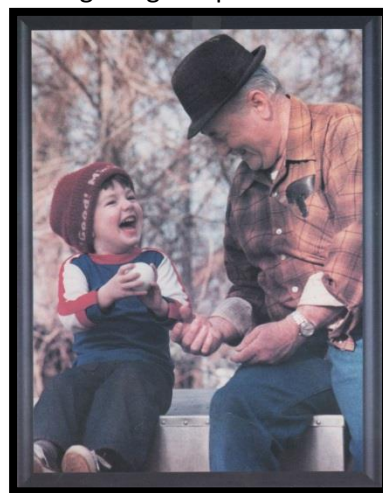
- 6/3/15: Received the following reply from **Glinda Cameron**: “Dear Mr. Charles, It was very kind of you to respond so quickly. I have often wondered about my uncle, he was 13 years older than my father and so we knew little about him. His life and his service to our country left a lasting impression on my father, who also chose to serve, when he reached legal age. It is a blessing to know what happened to him and to now have information as to his final resting place. I look forward to reading the report you mentioned...I will share this information with our family. We all have great respect for the men and women who choose to serve our country, and often sacrifice their lives in service... Wishing you and your group the very best. Your group's name is accurate; we hope to keep this spirit alive in all of our ‘next generations’”.
- 6/24/15: Received an email from **Molly Ford of Colorado Congressman Buck’s office** as follows: “Dear Sir or Madam, I am from Congressman Buck’s office in Colorado. Our office has been contacted by a constituent for help obtaining a POW medal for her father [**Merritt Eddy**] who is now deceased, but was a survivor of the U.S.S. *Houston*. We were able to obtain the medal, and now I want to learn as much as possible about the final battle that all the men faced, as well as any individual details about this man; we will use the information in a presentation ceremony of the medal to the family...I would appreciate any direction you can give to assist me in finding reliable information. Thank you.”
- 6/24/15: I provided Molly Ford with as much information on **Merritt Eddy** as I could find, including Mr. Eddy’s POW Record; a suggested reading list; and a copy of my Power Point show—***Survivors of Sunda Strait***. *[Note: If anyone has information on U.S.S. Houston CA-30 crewman Merritt Eddy which I could pass along to Ms. Ford, please contact me at [contact@uss-houston.org](mailto:contact@uss-houston.org). Thanks! Dana]*
- 7/11/15: John Schwarz emailed: “I joined Howard and Sylvia Brooks and my Mom [Trudy Schwarz] at Mom's house in Union, NJ as they went over/analyzed a lot of the CA-30 'stuff' that Mom has. They continually wrestle with the challenge of who/where to eventually send stuff, including the emerging display at the Houston Maritime Museum, and I believe Howard has a museum in NJ that may be interested in some things.”

### CA-30 Crewman Earl C. Humphrey Remembered by His Grandson Jay Hannah...

At the last reunion, Next Generationer Jay Hannah emailed a photo (at right, below) of himself as a child laughing with his grandfather, U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 survivor Earl C. Humphrey. Several weeks later we found in our Association archives the photo of Mr. Humphrey during his time in the U.S. Navy (at Left, below). We’re pleased to publish the two pictures together. Thanks, Jay, for emailing the great photo!



Earl C. Humphrey while in the U.S. Navy



Earl with his grandson, Jay Hannah



## Texas Commandery Provides Wreath

by  
Gil Raynor, MM2 SS (elt),  
Commander, Texas Commandery  
of the Naval Order  
and  
CAPT W. O. King, USN

The Texas Commandery of the Naval Officers of the United States (NOUS) has joined with the Commanding Officer, Commander Scott McGinnis, USN, of the submarine U.S.S. *Houston* (SSN-713) to provide a wreath, which in the fall of 2015, the crew of the submarine will place in Sunda Strait in remembrance of the sunken heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30)'s crew.



U.S.S. Houston SSN-713

Commander McGinnis requested that the Texas Commandery consider providing a commemoration wreath to deploy in the Sunda Strait as the Submarine U.S.S. *Houston* transits the Strait during her Western Pacific deployment in 2015. The Commanding Officer will provide a videotape of the memorial service that is tentatively scheduled for late October or early November 2015 depending on mission requirements. The wreath was shipped to Commander McGinnis in April 2014 to be stowed on the sub until the memorial Service.

Two-thirds of the *Houston*'s crew—some 700 men—were lost during the Battle of Sunda Strait on March 1, 1942, as the ship went down fighting alongside the Australian light cruiser H.M.A.S. *Perth*. The crewmen who survived the

sinking of the U.S.S. *Houston* suffered for hours in the sea fighting to reach land as the currents drew them away. Covered with fuel oil and tormented by battle wounds, some succumbed to the sea and never reached land. All 368 Sailors and Marines who survived the destruction of the *Houston* were captured by Japanese invasion forces on Java and became prisoners of war. Most were used as slave Laborers during the Burma-Thailand Railroad construction project which was depicted in the 1957 motion picture ***The Bridge on the River Kwai***.

President Roosevelt, speaking of this heroic ship on Memorial Day, 1942, in Houston, noted:

*"When ship and men went down, still fighting, they did not go down to defeat...The officers and men of the U.S.S. Houston were privileged to prove, once again, that free Americans consider no price too high to pay in defense of their freedom. The officers and men of the U.S.S. Houston drove a hard bargain. They sold their liberty and their lives most dearly."*

Today, the U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) rests approximately 120 feet below the surface of Sunda Strait.

The Commandery has also provided the crew with copies of ***Ship of Ghosts*** by James D. Hornfischer; ***The Last Battle Station*** by Duane Schultz; and a DVD entitled ***The Last Stand of the U.S.S. Houston*** narrated by Otto Schwarz, a U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) survivor.

The Texas Commandery is honored to be able to contribute to another generation of U.S.S. *Houston* sailors learning about and commemorating such an important part of our WWII naval history.



## U.S.S. HOUSTON CA-30 ITEMS FOR SALE

DVD "Last Stand" (8 oz.) \$20.00  
 Bumper Sticker (1-3 is 1 oz.) \$2.00  
 Challenge Coin (3 oz.) \$10.00  
 Bell or Monument Lapel Pin (specify type)  
 (1 - 6 pins is 1 oz.) \$3.00  
 Ship Lapel Pin (specify silver or gold highlights)  
 (1 - 3 pins are 1 oz.) \$4.00



Polo Shirts - Short Sleeve, Navy Blue  
 with Gold Embroidery of the USS Houston:  
 Men's - sizes M-2XL \$25.00  
 Women's - sizes S-XL \$25.00  
 (Shipping Weight-10 oz.)



T-Shirts (size Medium) (9 oz.) \$10.00  
 T-Shirts (size Small, large, and X-Large) (9 oz.) \$20.00  
 T-Shirts (size 2XL or 3 XL) (9 oz.) \$25.00

Note Cards of the USS Houston Ship (pack of 10) (5 oz.) \$10.00

Ship of Ghosts book (about the USS Houston),  
 Autographed by author James Hornfischer (2.2 lb.) \$30.00

### Shipping Costs:

1 oz. – 6 oz. = \$4.00  
 7 oz. – 12 oz. = \$7.50  
 13 oz. – 5 lb. = \$10.50

Make checks payable to:

**USS Houston CA-30 Survivors' Association**

Mail checks to:

Sue Kreutzer  
 43156 Meadowbrook Cir.  
 Parker, CO 80138

Questions? Email: [Sue@USSHouston.org](mailto:Sue@USSHouston.org)

Blue Ball Cap ("USS Houston CA-30", 10 oz.) \$15.00  
 Brown Ball Cap ("USS Houston CA-30", 10 oz.) \$5.00  
 Brown & Black Ball Cap  
 ("U.S.S. Houston CA-30 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation", 10 oz.) \$5.00



Blue Ball Cap



Brown & Black Ball Cap



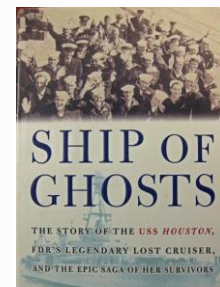
Women's Polo Shirt



Men's Polo Shirt



T-Shirt



Ship of Ghosts  
 Autographed by author  
 James Hornfischer

Include the following information  
 (please print clearly):

Name  
 Address  
 City, State and Zip Code  
 Phone Number  
 Items Ordered, Size and Quantity

Meet your...

## Board of Managers

...here to serve you!

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## Membership

Our U.S.S. *Houston* "family" continues to grow weekly as more and more folks want to know about the gallant crew of U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30. If you have relatives and friends who have not yet joined our Association, please encourage them to join us! Members do not have yearly dues. However we do operate based on the generosity of our membership. Annual donations are gratefully accepted. For more information and a membership form, click on: <http://www.usshouston.org/memberform.pdf>, fill out the form and send it in!

## Welcome Aboard!

*We would like to  
extend a hearty  
welcome to everyone  
who has recently  
joined our U.S.S.  
Houston (CA-30)  
Survivors' Association  
and Next Generations™!*



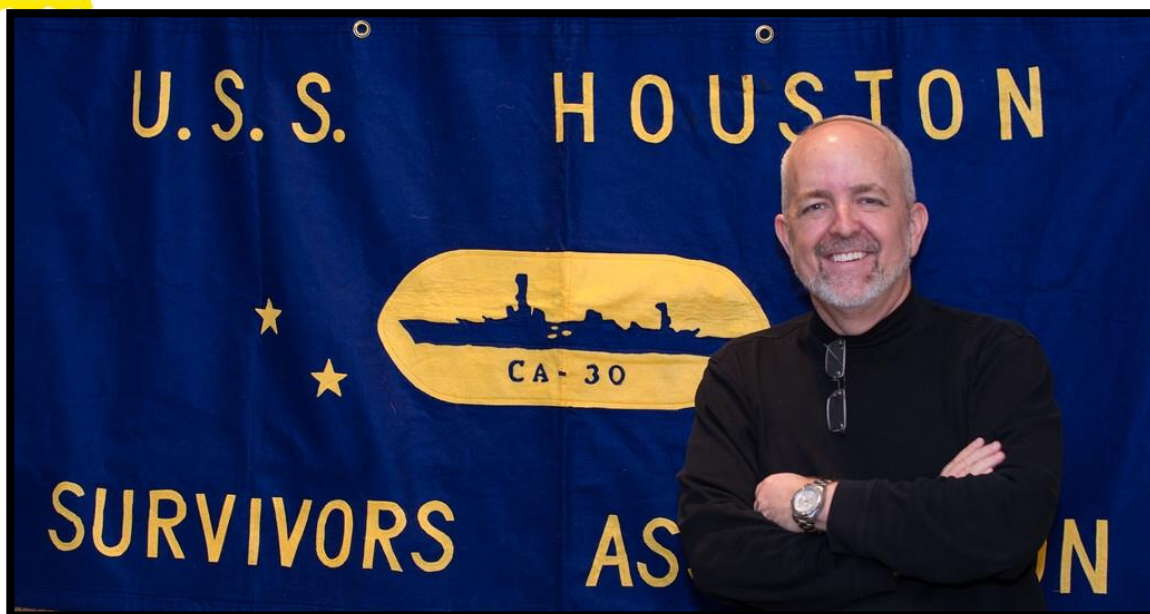
Association Website:  
[www.usshouston.org](http://www.usshouston.org)

Facebook Group Site:  
[USS Houston CA-30](#)



Spotlight on:

Tim Joseph



**F**or the past several years Houstonian amateur photographer Tim Joseph has been shooting beautiful photos of our U.S.S. *Houston* CA-30 reunion activities and sharing them with us at no charge. “As the son of a WWII vet who loved photography and passed the love of it on to me, shooting photos was a natural thing to do when I first discovered the group in 2008,” he wrote in an email. “I can’t think of these men, their families and this history without feeling an immense sense of awe, gratitude and personal humility.”

Tim’s interest in taking pictures started at an early age. “I started shooting B&W with a very weathered Nikkormat at age 11 and later worked in a local camera store over the summers and holidays,” he explained. “Sports photography followed with my love of all things motor racing after high school. I have found my greatest joy photographing people, particularly kids in sports, actions and candids, and when I briefly considered doing it professionally I developed the corny tag line, ‘capturing Life long enough to See it.’ It is a terribly addictive blessing.”

“As I have learned about the accomplishments of your Association, and as I have experienced the joy of meeting and photographing the families of these great men, I can only imagine the pride that you have given each of them as they have witnessed this multi-generational honoring of their service. To any degree that I have been able to be a part of this is a personal gift I cannot quantify... To all, please accept my warmest gratitude for allowing me to be a part of it.”

Tim’s photos of our 2015 Reunion weekend can be seen at: <http://timjoseph.smugmug.com/Events/USS-Houston-2015-Ceremony/n-xg89fp/i-gNBCg5v/A> and at: <http://timjoseph.smugmug.com/Events/USS-Houston-2015-Banquet-Hyatt/n-zkRGgQ/i-fdbHCLP>

We thank Tim from the bottom of our hearts for the gracious donation of his time and talent. Photography is a hobby for Tim; he works from home. To contact him, email me at: [contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org). – Dana Charles



## In Memoriam

In addition to remembering those of our U.S.S. *Houston* Family who have passed on from this life, the **Blue Bonnet** also remembers those from H.M.A.S. *Perth* (D-29) and the 131<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup> BN who forged such close bonds with our U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) crewmen while enduring the same treatment as POWs.

They too will never be forgotten.



## In Memoriam



**Sycily J. Lattimore**

5/11/15

Widow of 131<sup>st</sup> FA/2<sup>nd</sup> BN Member  
LT James Lattimore



## Thank you

...on behalf of the Association to those who have made donations, as follows:

### Donations:

Memorial Donations:

*In memory of Lanson H. Harris:*  
Ella Jane Harris

### Other Donations:

Nanna Booker  
Melissa Ellsworth  
Donna Mae Flynn  
Billie Marie Johnson  
Sue Kreutzer  
Sheila Lein  
Jane Matthews  
John Schwarz

Amazon Smile donations received  
August 7, 2014 to May 6, 2015: \$23.47

## Financial Report

*by Pam Foster, Treasurer*

### Fiscal Year 2015

January 1 – June 30, 2015

#### Scholarship Fund

Beginning Balance	\$13,245.84
Receipts	+4,275.63
Expenses	<u>-3,000.00</u>

**Ending Balance** **\$14,521.47**



#### General Fund

Beginning Balance	\$15,706.27
Receipts	+6,297.06
Expenses	<u>-6,212.08</u>

**Ending Balance** **\$15,791.25**



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**Editor:** Dana Charles

**Proofreaders:** Pam Foster, John Schwarz, Sue Kreutzer

**Distribution:** Sue Kreutzer, Pam Foster

#### Articles or information may be sent to:

[contact@usshouston.org](mailto:contact@usshouston.org) or [Bluebonnet@usshouston.org](mailto:Bluebonnet@usshouston.org).

#### All articles submitted are subject to editing.

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