



The Scuttlebutt

May 2010



Newsletter for USS Texas BB-35 First Texas Volunteers (FTV)

Docent / Hard Hat Tour (HHT) News

Dates for future 2010 HHT's: Oct 16, Nov 20

Thanks to all for making the May 8th. Hard Hat Tour a success! Perhaps we *really* deserve our summer vacation now.

BB-35 "Celebrating a Century" event - June 26th : Put this on your calendar; more details following. Let me know if you may be available.

Herb Powers (VP Docents) [hwpowers@prodigy.net]

Restoration News

Dates for future 2010 Restoration Work Parties:

Jun 5, 19	Oct 9, 23
Jul 3, 17, 31	Nov 6, 20
Aug 14, 28	Dec 4
Sep 11, 25	

Don't forget we have "Home Work Buckets" for anyone that can work on items away from the ship.

Upcoming Events

"Celebrating a Century" event

Currently it is still planned to take place, but we are anxiously awaiting word on the last two phases of the interp signage projects. The final phase should be completed and installed, but due to the problems we had post installation on the second phase, we are not sure if the Air Castle ones will be re-installed in time. Additionally, we are pushing to have the Marines Space, Machinery Hatch C-1, Wardroom Pantry and Officer's Galley all ready to go by June 26th. All and all I think we will have quite a bit to show off and kick off our centennials in style. A strong turnout by volunteers on the day of will be the icing on the cake. We are sending out invites to all our vets and hope to have as many out as possible also, so it would be great to have the men who worked on the ship hand-in-hand with the men who work on the ship! Plus, I think either standing docents at key spots or many guided tours throughout the day will add immensely to the public enjoyment . . .

Thanks!
Andy Smith (Ship Manager)

Don't forget to mark your calendars for:

Restoration Work Days - June 5, and 19, 2010
"Celebrating a Century" event / Battleship Interpretive Project, "Grand Unveiling" - Saturday June 26, 2010
BB35 Veterans' Reunion - October 9, 2010
Pearl Harbor Ceremony - December 4, 2010
Yuletide TEXAS "A Sailors Christmas" - December 11, 2010

Reminiscing the past

Continuing with Alita Morrison's past reminisces; first is another excerpt from Ed's short write-up on the early history of the FTV covering time during which the ship was in dry dock:

The trip to drydock gave us a breather of over a year in which we had no Ship to work on. While we did get some work to do, including building the Ship Shed in the Garage Area, and welding up the Search Radar Antenna within it, most of our work went into stagnation. On April 16, 1989 a party of FTV members was allowed to visit the Ship in drydock, which was fascinating and resulted in many photos. On February 24, 1990 the Ship was towed back from Galveston to Green's Bayou as a graving dock, for completion of a great many jobs, including mounting new Anti-Aircraft Guns, gun emplacements and a new wooden Main Deck. Many FTV members rode her on this trip, having received training in various shipboard jobs including medical emergency work. Most of the graving dock work was done by specialists, with a little support from specialized members. On July 26, 1990, the Ship was returned to the Park and maneuvered into her present dock. On this triumphant trip, many members joined the crowd. The Ship was re-opened to the Public after about a month's further work.

Alita also sent some personal memories from the dry dock period:

Hi all of you,

Ed and I did not hear much of the details of the restoration at Todd Ship Yard in Galveston. We heard a story that there was so much water in the hull of the ship that the dry dock could almost not be lowered enough to get the ship onto the dry dock deck. The ship did get onto the dry dock deck. As I understand, when the ship was in place on the dry dock, the water was pumped out of the dry dock and the dry dock deck was floated higher. The ship stood on her keel blocks completely out of water. There were welders replacing large amounts of metal panels where needed. Many other repairs helped restore the ship both below the water level and inside the ship. During the dry docking the slip for the ship at San Jacinto was widened and improved.

On April 16, 1989 volunteers were invited to see the ship in the dry dock. Ed and I saw the huge keel blocks. I recall we went inside the ship. In a few places we could see from the inside of the ship to the outside where the metal just about to be added. I do not know how much of the superstructure was being repaired in the dry dock. We saw part of one of the tall cut off parts of a mast resting on the dry dock deck. We were on the dry dock for three hours.

The ship was later towed from Todd Ship Yard to Greens Bayou. Ed's personal logged hours noted that on February 23, 1990 "mustered with crew, travel to Galveston, 8 hours." On February 24, 1990 for "20.0 hours, RON, tow BB-35 Greens Bayou." I do not know what "RON" means. Ed was on the ship when she was towed to Greens Bayou along with many others. I do not have any information telling who else was on the ship that day. At Greens Bayou more work was done. I do not remember what work was done there. The ship was floating in the water.

On July 26, 1990 Ed and I boarded the ship at Greens Bayou to go back to San Jacinto into the widened, improved slip. Now the ship was much safer. It took 5.50 hours according to our logged hours.

A reporter was on the ship. He saw my volunteer name badge and asked me a question. His question was worded something like why was I a volunteer on the ship. I told him I was a volunteer on the ship to do restoration, curatorial cataloging of artifacts. I also was learning what the sailors did on the ship and how they lived on the ship. The ship is a small city with many facilities in addition to the battle training they had to learn. They had beds, meals, medical and dental care, a barber shop, a soda fountain, a store, a library, movies and other facilities. The reporter looked at me blankly and walked away. I do not know what he expected me to tell him. Perhaps he wanted me to tell a hero story about sailors or how they killed the enemy.

We sailed a long ways including under a bridge. We were glad when we saw that the tallest mast of the ship passed safely under the bridge. The tugboats continued to push and pull the ship. It took a while to get moored to the big newly installed mooring columns in the widened slip. I do not recall if all of the connections were made then or later. Finally they connected the gangway from shore to the ship. We then were allowed to go ashore. We were home again with our ship.

I looked at my maps of Pasadena, Galena, Park, and Port of Houston to find Greens Bayou. On one map I found Greens Bayou. Greens Bayou joins Buffalo Bayou from the north. There are rectangular cuts into Greens Bayou which look like man made places suitable for moored ships. The map shows streets leading to those cuts. That area might be where the Texas had been moored on Greens Bayou.

Alita Morrison (Secretary)

Last month's newsletter mentioned the model of the light aircraft carrier USS San Jacinto located at the George Bush Library in College Station TX. Alita sent us another story expanding further on the history of this model:

Hi all of you,

Here is another story about the earlier days of the battleship.

On the ship there had been two models of past historical ships. Each model was about twelve feet long. They were both 1/48th scale. One model was the Cruiser Houston and the other was the Carrier San Jacinto.

The Cruiser Houston model was in a room called "The Houston Room," however I do not remember where the room was.

The Carrier San Jacinto model was in the big room in the complex of rooms where we go to sign in when we come on shipboard. The model had official Navy airplane models not all representing planes actually ever on the carrier.

When the first President Bush was planning the construction of his Bush Presidential Library, we, the volunteers and TPWD people found out that President Bush had been a pilot stationed on the Carrier San Jacinto. Much later Mr. Bush got the carrier model restored and on display in his library on the Texas A & M University in College Station., Texas.

The airplane models were replaced with historically accurate models of planes that had been on the carrier during the time that the then little known pilot, George Herbert Walker Bush, was stationed on the carrier. Ed researched what airplanes were flown from the carrier while this pilot was serving on the ship. Ed was a member of a local model making club in the Clear Lake area. The model makers modified commercially made plastic models to the required variety and number of model airplanes to put on the carrier.

The Cruiser Houston model and the glass case needed repair. I worked on stripping makeshift adhesives on the case to allow for better restoration of the case. The case was not completely restored. Ed restored parts of the model. He found that unknown people got into the display area of the model and stole parts and damaged the model.

On April 17, 1990 we packed up the Houston model parts and the model was moved to our garage at home. TPWD staff made up legal papers to allow the move of a very large expensive model. We had insurance to cover the model. TPWD paid for the insurance. Ed and sometimes both of us worked on the model. We did not get all of the repairs completed, but lots of the parts were repaired. The model filled half of our two-car garage. Ed's car was out in the rain, heat and cold in the driveway. The weather did some damage to the car paint.

When the decision was made to restore the carrier model the restorers sent an 18-wheeler rig to take the carrier model off the ship on January 28, 1996. The people who handled the model removal from the ship took the model out of the glass case. They temporarily removed some model parts to help get the model through doorways. They had to angle the deck of the model to allow the model to go through several doorways. The 12 foot long model was very difficult to get out of the display room on the Texas and past several curved passageways to get out onto the open main deck of the ship. After that the model was rolled across the deck, down the gangway and to the big rig truck. I did not hear the details of how and when the model was originally put on the ship. This big rig then came to our house to load the Cruiser Houston model onto the truck. The supervisor of the moving crew was very delighted that we had done so much work on the model and had it put together so perfectly. Several people helped move the model onto the truck. I recall the drivers of the truck were a husband and wife each sharing the driving. The truck had a small "room" at the back of the cab nicely equipped for living comfortably. Ed and I were invited to see the interior of their "room." We climbed up several steps and we were happily greeted by a small dog. We live on a street two lanes wide. That truck crowded our street. When they put the cruiser model into the truck, the carrier model and other large models were already in the truck. The models San Jacinto and the Houston with other models were driven by these drivers to USNNSRDC David Taylor Model Basin at Carderock, Maryland.

The Carrier San Jacinto was restored and moved to be displayed at the Bush Library. Ed and I went to see the opening ceremony of the library on February 5, 1999. Ed and his model maker friends had previously installed the new airplane models on the carrier deck.

The Cruiser Houston model restoration was to be completed later. There is (or was) an organization in Houston named "Cruiser Houston Survivors." They were organizing a show place for the cruiser's bell and other things. I do not know where this show place is located. The bell had been on display in the Ward Room on the Texas. I do not know if they were able to get the model to their show place. The organization had member veterans and families of both Cruiser Houston ships. Even though the Houston's bell had sunk with the ship at Sunda Strait, some very expert diver was able to find the bell and bring it safely out of the water.

I recall an interesting meeting on the Texas with a Carrier San Jacinto veteran. He explained to Ed and me pointing to a certain place on the model where he successfully hid his "booze" under a high ledge.

This is the story of these models as I can recall several decades later.

Alita Morrison (Secretary)

From the FTVNews Staff

While passing stories back and forth with Alita, I related the following story to her concerning some hours she was showing in the very early books. She encouraged me to share this with the FTV:

Alita,

Thanks for the story. I do remember those models on board. I remember the carrier with the jet aircraft and such. I thought it funny that those planes were on that model. At the time, I did not realize the significance of what ship that was. It is also good to know that that is the model I saw in the Bush Library. It gives it even more meaning. I spent quite a bit of time looking at that model in the Library. It is also good to know that you and Ed worked on it.

When I first came out to volunteer on the Texas, I worked in the Cruiser Houston Room with other HL&P volunteers. We were re-doing the lighting. That compartment is directly across the ship from the Dreadnought Room and aft one compartment.

I worked with John Jeter very early in the volunteer efforts. There was no organization at that time. I was at the ship on the first day that HL&P volunteers came out, it was in August 1985. I got mixed up the first day as to where I was supposed to go and wound up with the VIP bunch (HL&P's Vice President of Public Affairs, etc). We had doughnuts and coffee, a presentation, and a tour much like our present Hard Hat Tour. I thought it was quite the first class affair for a bunch of volunteer workers. It was not until the end of the tour, when the newspaper photographers showed up, that I found out that the "workers" were working in the Cruiser Houston room, and that is where I should have been. I, being the only "worker" on the tour, then had my picture taken, (a staged shot with a borrowed tool belt and hard hat), which appeared in several local newspapers. I will find the article and send you a copy. I did come out several other weekends and cannot remember just how many, but do believe it added up to more than 16 hours. Maybe toward the end of the time I was coming out, some sort of organization was developing and hours were being tracked. I am impressed that your records show my daughter's and my early hours. I helped not only in the Cruiser Houston room but also in restoring the lighting in the third deck starboard side passage.

I was a leader in the Sea Scouts, with my youngest adopted daughter, Rose. In 1991, she and I came out to the ship one day looking for projects for the scouts to become involved with. Nothing became of that. Bob Lunsford (Consulting Editor)

IMPORTANT!!! Please submit any articles of interest, announcements or information to be included in future newsletters to: **BB35FTVNews@Gmail.com.**

Any views and opinions that may appear in this newsletter are not particularly the expressed views and opinions of the editorial staff of said publication (i.e., we reserve the right to plead the 5th!).

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Bob Lunsford

Page 10D • Wednesday, August 7, 1985 • The Echo

HL&P employees help restore U.S.S. Texas

An effort to halt the deterioration of the battleship U.S.S. Texas has begun, with volunteers pledging to work to save the survivor of two world wars.

The Texas is visited by about one million tourists each year, making it one of the most popular attractions in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department system.

But experts say rust has been gnawing into the ship's lower decks and superstructure since it was docked in the late 1940s in a brackish inlet of the Houston Ship Channel near the site of the San Jacinto battlefield.

To preserve the Texas, many of the

ship's supporters are volunteering their efforts to see that the battleship is restored to its former glory. The restoration will be under the direction of TP&W, with support from the Battleship Texas Advisory Board, which estimates the restoration effort will cost about \$10 million.

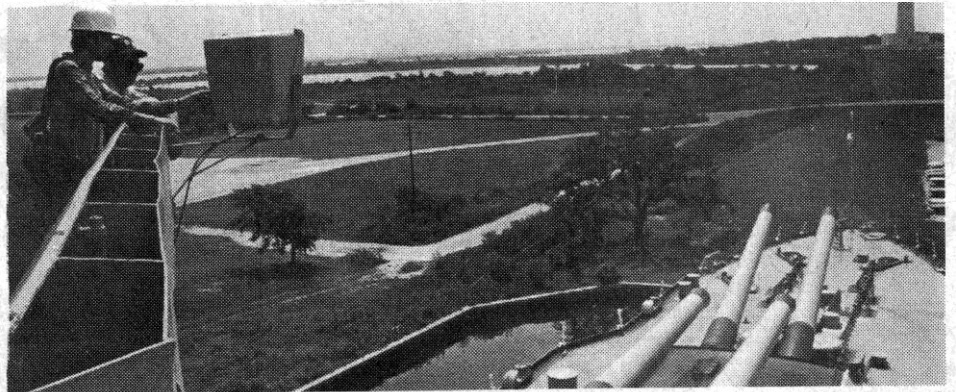
Plans call for major restoration work to take place after the ship is towed to Todd Shipyard in Galveston to be dry-docked. Prior to this, thousands of hours of volunteer work will be necessary to prepare for the towing, which will coincide with Texas' 150th birthday celebration.

Houston Lighting & Power Co. is supporting this effort by encouraging

its employees to volunteer their time to take part in the work that precedes the towing.

More than 25 Light Company volunteers, with more expected, have committed to performed number of tasks including rehabilitation of deteriorated electrical equipment. This will include converting the ship's direct current electrical system into a more practical alternating current system. This will allow quality lighting for portions of the ship later to be worked on.

Persons interested in assisting with the restoration effort should write: Remember the Texas, P.O. Box 1986, Bellaire, Texas 77401.



SHIP RESTORATION. Bob Lunsford (left) an electrical engineer for Houston Lighting & Power Co. and Doug Fleck, a park ranger with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, examine a light fixture on the bridge on the battleship U.S.S. Texas. Lunsford is one of a number of HL&P employees who are volunteering their time to rehabilitate the ship's antiquated electrical system. HL&P employees are also helping to perform other tasks in support of a TP&W effort to restore the rusting battleship so it can be enjoyed by tourists for years to come.