



The Scuttlebutt

March 2010



Newsletter for USS Texas BB35 First Texas Volunteers (FTV)

President's Corner

Overheard in the FTVNews Room (some little hole in the wall eatery off the downtown tunnel system close to the Esperson Buildings). As reported by a fly on the wall:

Suzanne: What does FTV stand for? Foundation for Texas Veterans?

Bob: First Texas Volunteers.

Suzanne: Where does the "First" come from?

Bob: Ya know, First, the First Texas Volunteers.

Suzanne: What does that mean?

Bob: It's a play on words. It goes back to the names of the early militias in our countries history.

Suzanne: Huh?

Bob: Ya know, early in our history states and counties would form volunteer militias during times of war. Some big shot would be the colonel and his friends were the officers. They would name their militia after the state or county that they were from. The first group to form would be named the "First Whatever Volunteers", and would go into battle with that name. We are the first volunteer group to form for the Battleship Texas, so we called ourselves the "First Texas Volunteers".

Suzanne: I see. What is this "Master at Arms" thing anyway? I think we should dump it. Why don't we just call it "Vice President of New People"?

Bob: Well, at first the group was sorta a quasi-military organization in that they had titles like captain and chief and wore military like uniforms. At some point it was decided to do away with all that and take on a less military look. It was decided to keep the one military title of "Master at Arms".

Suzanne: How come?

Laura: Why don't we ask Don and see if he can clear this up for us, then maybe we can put it in the newsletter. Oh, there he is now. Hi Don, we were just discussing this month's newsletter.

Don: Hi guys, couldn't help but overhear part of y'all's discussion.

Okay, guys, here goes:

My disclaimer is that no one who was there at the beginning is here now, with the exception of Alita, so she might be a secondary source for your inquiry, but the following should be fairly accurate.

FTV was officially formed according to the original by-laws (date not listed) in March 1984 by Bernard Olive, the current fire chief in Baytown. However, I have also seen the date April 1985 used as the official organization date.

The selection of the name is pretty much what you suggested. There was no other organized volunteer group in existence on the ship, so it was pretty easy to come up with "First". "Texas" is similarly simple to explain; the group was to support the Battleship Texas. "Volunteers" is also a simple explanation; it is an organization composed of volunteers to support the ship.

Your comments about militias may be stretching the issue some. Yes, it does "sound" like some 19th Century militia, and certainly fitting considering we are located at the San Jacinto Battleground, but I don't believe it had anything to do with the creation of the name.

The Founder was Bernard Olive, as stated above, with his trusted core volunteers of Ed Morrison, Blaine Corman, and others. Chuck Moore was also an early member.

When the organization was formed, they did organize as a quasi-military outfit, at least superficially. They created a Navy type uniform and a rank structure, which was reflective of work and hours performed by the individuals. One could theoretically rise from Seaman Recruit to Admiral.

When these guys formed the group, they did produce a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Texas Parks & Wildlife stating each parties' responsibilities and establishing guidelines for organization and direction.

Laura: So Don, when was it decided to do away with the quasi-military aspect of the organization?

Don: In 2004, FTV voted to change the by-laws to disassociate itself with the military aspect of identification and recognition. Titles were changed as follows:

Master Chief Petty Officer to President
Senior Chief Petty Officer to Vice President (of restoration or docents)
Chief Yeoman to Secretary
Master at Arms - remained Master at Arms rather than change to more contemporary Sergeant at Arms. I believe we decided that "sergeant" sounded a bit false considering we were serving a battleship, and that even though "master" is a naval term, it also sounded generic enough to retain.

Also when we changed the by-laws, we dumped the military uniforms. Well, actually, they became optional, but with stipulations that they should only be worn in a proper setting. If a person liked the military style, we recommended a khaki uniform without military insignia, but with FTV patches. Our preferred uniform became the khaki trouser, navy blue golf shirt w/battleship logo, etc.

Laura: Why was that?

Don: The reasoning behind this was generally, and probably too simply: We aren't here to "play" sailor. We're here to work. FTV is not a place to play out Walter Mitty dreams. If one wants to be a sailor, then we can direct him to the local recruiter. The other is that as we age (perhaps that's only me), it makes less sense to dress up as a sailor. If one wants to pull off the uniform image, then one has to be age appropriate. I guess that would make me an admiral! And ultimately, our current uniform is a uniform, but one that the general public can easily warm up to. It makes us more accessible and credible.

Suzanne: I have seen volunteers dressed several different ways. What is the correct way for me to dress when I come out to the ship?

Don: Specifically, our current and correct uniform is:

Khaki trousers (preferably Dickies brand from Wal-Mart, as it best matches a "uniform" pair of trousers.
Navy blue golf shirt from the gift shop.
Name tag on right breast.
Navy blue USS Texas baseball cap.
Ideally, black, polished low quarter shoes, but reality means shoes that one is comfortable in.
Belt - the suggestion was this was a good way to advertise one's service affiliation, if any. For example, I wear my Marine Corps web belt w/buckle. A navy web belt w/brass buckle would be optimum.

Will this get you started?

Laura: Wow, Don, what a great job you did of providing us with this information! We very much appreciate the time it must have taken for you to dig into the archives, then write up this history for us! Again, we very much appreciate your doing this for us, and truly believe that the entire FTV membership will find it to be most interesting and informative.

Bob: Thanks Don. That was a swell explanation ! One question; who's Walter Mitty?

Laura: You knit wit.

Suzanne: Yeah, thanks Don. Swell !

Bob: Now, how do we write this up?

Laura: How about if we

At this point the fly decided that he ("it" doesn't seem quite fitting for such an intelligent fly, so we will call it a "he", not sure how to differentiate between male and female flies) had heard enough and went on about his business.

Disclaimer: The preceding conversation could have taken place, in fact much of it did take place, just not quite in this way. Names of the participants have not been changed in order to not protect the not so innocent.

Docent / Hard Hat Tour (HHT) News

Dates for future 2010 HHT's:

- May 8
- Oct 16
- Nov 20

Folks,

Thanks for making last Saturday's Hard Hat Tour a success.

Though a number of anticipated guests didn't make the early groups, overall we satisfied a whole bunch of visitors (84 total), from Tekies to doctoral students, bringing in \$2,550. Not close to a record, but certainly on the high side of what would be a nominal tour. Seems like most everyone had a good time. Your efforts were certainly recognized and appreciated. Thanks very much on a job well done.

Next Hard Hat Tour scheduled: May 8th. Mark your calendars!

Herb and Don

Restoration News

Dates for future 2010 Restoration Work Parties:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| ▪ Mar 27 | ▪ Aug 14, 28 |
| ▪ Apr 10, 24 | ▪ Sep 11, 25 |
| ▪ May 8, 22 | ▪ Oct 9, 23 |
| ▪ Jun 5, 19 | ▪ Nov 6, 20 |
| ▪ Jul 3, 17, 31 | ▪ Dec 4 |

Other News

Marine Space

On March 17th, Beth Tragus sent out an urgent call for help to apply two coats of rust bullet to the overhead in the Marine Space to prevent new rust formation. The service project that assisted that week was only able to take care of one coat. The second coat had to be applied within 72 hours, or the entire space has to be roughed up with sandpaper and re-done.

Beth has sent this thank you to all who showed up, an update, and a request for additional help:

Thank you to everyone who responded to our urgent call for help on the Marine Space last week! FTV was well represented by Tony Adams, Tom Gillette, Del Hines, Scott Nunez, William Ray, and Suzanne Riggerbach. It's looking great in there - a few more weeks and that space should be getting pretty close to being done.

An update on a bit more upcoming work to be done:

We didn't quite get the entire area double coated before deadline - the space around the bread locker needs to be roughed up and wiped down. We're hoping to work on that on April 1st or 2nd so our brand new restoration tech, Jordan, can work on it on Sunday. Also, the following week on the 8th and 9th we'd like to finish up any of the last painting to be done.

If this fits in anyone's schedule, we'd love to have your help! Thanks again, and have a great week and a Happy Easter!

Beth Tragus
Volunteer Coordinator

Interesting Facts

If anyone has any little known but interesting facts about The Ship, submit them to the FTVNews Staff and we'll give you a "by" line.

Submitted by Herb Powers:

What do the FC Main Battery radar system and Verizon's LTE build out have in common?

700 MHz

(OK, so the FC was 750MHz, but close enough.)

FTV Library

Recommended Reading

The FTVNews Staff would like, from time to time, to list books for recommended reading. In my opinion, there should be no doubt as to which is the first book on the list. This month's selections do not deal with great war strategies or famous battles. Rather, this month's theme is about the life of the average sailor, including life aboard the most powerful weapon in the world, from her infancy to her slow fade from glory, to life aboard a "lowly" fleet tug, saving ships from certain destruction, to life aboard a severely stricken ship, as the crew battles to keep her from sinking. Bob Lunsford (Consulting Editor)

The following titles may or may not be available in the FTV Library:

- "Come on Texas" by Paul Schubert (this should be required before being allowed to join the FTV, in my opinion)
- "Battleship Sailor" by Theodore C. Mason (excellent account of life on a battleship in pre WWII navy and the Pearl Harbor attack)
- "We Will Stand by You": Serving in the Pawnee, 1942-1945 by Theodore C. Mason
- "Rendezvous With Destiny": A Sailor's War by Theodore C. Mason

These three books by Mason give an excellent account of life for the enlisted man in the pre WWII and WWII Navy.

And while mentioning the Pawnee:

- "Battle to Save the Houston": October 1944 to March 1945 by John Grider Miller (focuses on the damage control efforts to save the light cruiser Houston (Laura's father's ship) after being torpedoed off of Formosa and her tow by the fleet tug Pawnee)

Upcoming Events

Don't forget to mark your calendars for:

- HHT - May 8, 2010
- Restoration Work Days - March 27, April 10, and 24, 2010
- 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

From the FTVNews Staff

Contest Results !!!

The contest was a fantastic success! Voter turnout was tremendous, greater than any previous turnout during this FTVNews Staff's history. Not counting the FTVNews Staff's votes, three people submitted votes, (but we won't talk about that). The winning name won by an overwhelming landslide with an outstanding 9 points!

Breakdown of points is listed to the right. In all honesty, "The Scuttlebutt" is the only name that received two or more votes from outside the FTVNews Staff; both of those were first choice. So, "The Scuttlebutt" it is; submitted by our very own Senior Editor, Laura Lunsford. (Bob thinks he actually thought of it first but knows better than to try and claim it. Well, he thought about it, one day while drinking a Shiner Bock. At least he thinks he thought about it, just before falling asleep.)

1st place - The Scuttlebutt - 9 points
2nd place - FTVNews - 4 points
3rd place - Now Hear This - 3 points
Runners up:
Come on Texas - 2 points
The Semaphore - 2 points
The Halyard - 1 points

A special thanks to those who expressed their opinions and helped choose the new name.

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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