

THE BLUE BONNET

★ U.S.S. HOUSTON ★

Navy Day Issue

Volume 1, Number 5.

Long Beach, California.

27 October, 1938.

FACTS ABOUT THE HOUSTON

TO VISITORS aboard the U.S.S. Houston, the Admiral, Captain, officers and crew bid a welcome. In order that you may become better acquainted with the ship, we present to you this brief description of our ship.

The U.S.S. Houston is one of the heavy cruisers, 600 feet long, with a beam of 66 feet, draws 21 feet of water and displaces 12,500 tons at full load. She is propelled by four turbine units, each unit connected to an individual propeller, and develops a total of 108,000 horsepower at a top speed of 33 knots. The main battery consists of three triple eight inch gun turrets and four five inch anti-aircraft guns. Four seaplanes are carried on board and may be launched from two catapults.

On board the U.S.S. Houston, you will find a barber shop, post office, library, notion store, general kitchen or galley, general store, clothing store, print shop, soda fountain, laundry, telephone exchange, and a telegraph office.

A power plant capable of providing sufficient power which, if used for illumination purposes, could supply a string of street lights placed 12 feet apart, reaching from San Francisco to Shanghai.

A distilling plant to convert sea water to fresh water, with a capacity sufficient to provide each person of a

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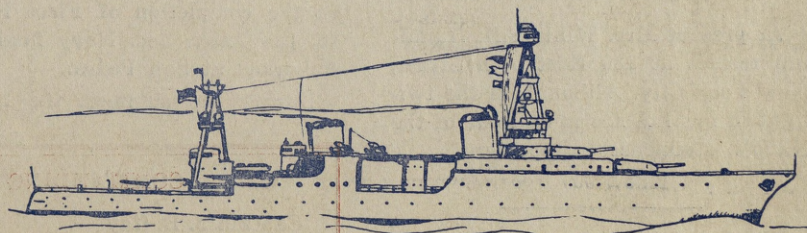
History of the U.S.S. Houston

THE U.S.S. HOUSTON was built at Newport, News, Va. The keel was laid in 1928 and the ship was launched on 7 September, 1929, Miss Elizabeth Holcombe, of Houston, Texas, sponsored the ship, giving her the name of that city in memory of General Houston.

After commissioning in the United States Navy Yard on 17 June, 1930, the U.S.S. Houston made a "shake down" cruise to Europe, visiting England, France, and Holland, returning to Houston, Texas, to extend the welcome of the Navy to the Houston's natal city. Following this memorable visit, final trials and overhaul were held, and the ship sailed for the Asiatic Station on 14 January, 1931, via the Panama Canal and Honolulu, T.H. On 22 February, 1931, the Houston joined the Asiatic Fleet in Manila, P.I., and assumed her role as flagship, hoisting the flag of Admiral Charles B. McVay, Jr., U.S. Navy. On 20 September, 1931, she entered the Yangtze River to assist, if necessary, in rescue work during one of the most devastating floods in the history of that famous river. The Houston went up river about 600 miles to the city of Hankow, returning to Shanghai on 5 October, 1931.

While undergoing routine overhaul in the Cavite Navy Yard, Philippine Islands, on the night of 31 January, 1932, rush orders were received to proceed immediately to Shanghai, where hostilities had broken out between China and Japan. American lives and interests were endangered. Within a few hours the Houston was ready to sail, took aboard 250 Marines to augment the 4th Regiment, Marine Expeditionary Forces, in Shanghai. On arrival, the Marine and bluejacket machine gun platoon were sent ashore for duty.

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U.S.S. HOUSTON

Long Beach - 1938

--: THE BLUE BONNET :--

A weekly publication of the ship's company of the U.S.S. Houston, Captain G. N. Barker, U.S.N., Commanding and Commander C. A. Bailey, U.S.N., Executive Officer.

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-- EDITORIAL --

NAVY DAY was started by a woman. Most of us have readily associated this day with Theodore Roosevelt's birthday, yet few know that its observance was suggested by a woman.

Mrs. William H. Hamilton, founder of the National Navy Club of New York, went to Washington in 1922 and suggested that a certain day be set aside on which to honor the Navy.

The following letter is self-explanatory:

Navy Department
Assistant Secretary's Office
Washington

November 11, 1922

My Dear Mrs. Hamilton:

I have just returned from a five weeks' campaign. The first thing I wish to do is to thank you personally for having suggested the idea of Navy Day. It was your original idea. It worked out excellently, and, I believe, gave a real momentum to a correct understanding of what the Navy means to our country.

With all good wishes,
(Signed) Theodore Roosevelt

At present Mrs. William H. Hamilton resides at 130 East 57th Street, New York City. Although in the twilight of her life she is still one of the Navy's staunchest supporters.

Wood and Stone were standing on Ocean and Pine in Long Beach when they saw a girl coming down Pine. Wood turned to Stone. Stone turned to Wood they both turned to rubber and the girl turned into a beer joint.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON

(Continued from Page 1)

On 13 March, 1933, the Houston left Manila on a good will tour through the southern Philippines, visiting Iloilo, Cebu, Davao, Dumanquilas Bay, and Zamboango. On 29 May, 1933, a good will tour was made to Japan, visiting Yokohama and Kobe, returning to Tsingtao, China, by the way of the famous Japanese Inland Sea. On 17 November, 1933, after being relieved by the U.S.S. Augusta, the Houston departed from Shanghai for San Francisco, stopping at Yokohama enroute. After an overhaul period in the Puget Sound Navy Yard, she joined the Scouting Force of the U.S. Fleet, in Long Beach, California, and departed with the fleet for Atlantic ports.

On the evening of 1 July, 1934, President Roosevelt boarded the Houston at Annapolis, Md., for a cruise of 11,783 miles. In company with the destroyers U.S.S. Gilmer and U.S.S. Williamson, which were later relieved by the cruiser U.S.S. New Orleans, stops were made at: Cape Haitian, Haiti; Mayaguez, P.R.; San Juan, P.R.; St. Thomas, and St. Croix, Virgin Islands; Cartagena, Columbia, S. America; Cristobal, and Balboa, Canal Zone; Cocos Islands; Clipperton Islands; Hilo, and Honolulu, T. H.; and then Portland, Oregon, where our President and good shipmate disembarked.

On 15 May, 1935, the Houston took another member of the Roosevelt family, the late Henry L. Roosevelt, then Ass't. Sec. Navy, on a tour of inspection of Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. After sailing from San Diego, staying in Honolulu for four days, and conferring with Admiral Reeves on the completion of Fleet Problem 16, the Ass't. Sec. Navy finally disembarked at San Pedro.

During the summer, the Houston

accompanied the rest of the Scouting Force on a cruise of Alaskan ports, stopping at Cordova, Seward and Auke Bay. The cruise was completed by short stays at Blaine and Seattle Washington..

On 3 October, 1935 the Houston again broke the flag of the President of the United States for the Second Presidential Cruise, a vacation cruise of 12,000 miles. This trip took the Chief Executive to many interesting ports, among them being Cerros Islands, Cape San Lucas, Magdalena Bay, Cocos Islands, Tiger Islands, and Charleston, S.C.

The 29th of April, 1936 saw the Houston southbound out of San Pedro, stopping at Panama, and crossing the Equator on the 20th of May. It arrived at Valparaiso, Chile, 29 May and then took leave on the 2nd of June. Long remembered by the Houston crew was the big time had by all in the Chilean port. Thirteen days of steady steaming and the ship was again in Long Beach. On July 6 the Houston left for the North, visiting the following ports: Seattle and Bremerton, Wash.; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, Calif., returning to Long Beach on the 22nd of August.

April 16, 1937, we left for Fleet Problem 18, visiting the Hawaiian Islands and arriving in San Francisco on 28 May for the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. Many a sore foot went to bed aboard the Houston after that was over. We returned to Long Beach and after a few days visited Ventura, Calif. On the 28th of June the ship left for Astoria, Ore. From 6 of July to 11 October our ship remained at the N.Y. Mare Island for overhaul. We returned to Long Beach on the 12th of October, and remained in that area until Fleet Problem 19, when we again visited the Hawaiian Islands.

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COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE HOUSTON

Captain J. B. Gay

Captain R. A. Dawes

Captain W. Baggeley

Captain W. B. Woodson

Captain G. E. Baker

Captain G. N. Barker

Retired 30 June, 1936.

Chief of Staff & aide, 12th Nav. Dis.

Comdr. Destroyer Squadron ONE.

Judge Advocate General.

Duty connection Argentine Navy.

Present C.O.

NAVY OVER THE AIR

Sunday, 22 October 1938, on station KECA the Magic Eye program presented the high commands of the Navy. The program was one of the most impressive in its scope being representative of the power of the Navy. Admiral Leahy in New York acting as the director was in touch with all commands by two way voice communication. In addition to this party line effect most of the commands had a demonstration to present. Admiral Bloch, second in command, spoke from the Houston, flagship, U. S. Fleet, sending his respects to all commands. Admiral King broadcasted from one of the new PBV planes, the first broadcast from such a plane, over San Diego area. His broadcast was followed by a simulated bombing attack at 10,000 feet elevation and 180 knots directed by Comdr. Quigley. Admiral Johnson in command of the Atlantic Squadron had the Brooklyn repel an aircraft attack in a most realistic manner. The Yorktown attack group One, Lt. Comdr., Browning in charge, made an attack on Anacostia much similar to the attack on the fleet made for the Legionnaires. Admiral Lackey in charge of the European Squadron at Villefranche, France, sent his regards to his brother officers. Unfortunately Admiral Yarnell could not speak on the program but Admiral Meyers at Manila spoke in his stead. Capt. R. S. Edwards at the Submarine Base, New London, Conn., had a small skit portraying in a lifelike manner the steps in the rescue work from a submarine 100 feet below the surface both by diving bell and the "lung." Lt. W. C. Eddy and Lt. Morrison were the actors—Lt. Eddy in the bell and Lt. Morrison with the "lung". This description was the first of its kind. The program closed with the Midshipman choir at Annapolis singing the hymn "Eternal Father Strong to Save". Immediately afterwards Admiral Leahy dismissed all with "All units resume normal operations."

Fireman: "Wish we had a fifth for bridge."

Seaman: "You don't need a fifth for bridge, you dope."

Fireman: "Well then, make it a pint."



Dear Sal,

Our ship o' steel is a standin' back on its haunches for inspection today and tha public is already swarmin' up tha gangways to see what kind o' life us Navies are leadin'.

Some o' tha lads are takin' these shore people around and pointin' out things to them so they can sorta get an idea where their tax money's been goin'. And I'd be a hankerin' to do tha same if I had some cash invested in a passel o' hogs cause a body's sure itchin' to know if tha critters have been fed properly and a takin' on fat fast enough for tha next butcherin'.

Yes sir, this Navy Day idea seems to me to be about tha only way tha public can be a learnin' about our ways, but it's just a smatterin' they'll be gettin'. A body has to be a wearin' tha blue for a spell to be usin' Navy lingo and slang in tha proper fashion.

I can remember one o' tha lads aboard who got hitched in matrimony. His wife allus did everything possible to please him, especially fixin' up tasty dishes so's he'd smile. She had Navy beans for him one day, but when he hollered for red lead (ketchup) so he could swim them in proper fashion she was thrown for a loss. However, tha very next day she presented him with another heapin' dish o' beans. Tha lad bit in them right away. Then he turned to his wife with these words, "Honey, these beans taste awfully funny. What is tha matter with them?"

Tha poor girl started cryin' then as if her heart would break, but between sobs she answered, "And I did all this to please you, too. I walked all of ten blocks to tha paint store for tha red-lead you wanted on them, (sob)."

Just goes to show you that a body has to spend a spell on tha briny deep

HAPPENINGS IN THE PAST

MANY an exciting and interesting event has occurred to the mighty Rambler Ship in the last eight years. A brief outline of some will be related herewith and, perhaps, bring back some happy moments for those who took part in them. The Houston's career has been a very full one, with a number of special happenings, two of those which had us very proud to be a member of its crew, were when the President's Flag was hoisted and we bore the name "Floating White House".

All of our turrets have at some time held an "E", Number 3 Turret and Number 1 Anti-Aircraft Gun Crews were record breakers while the Houston was Flagship of Asiatic Station.

The Houston has won the Engineering "E", the Daughters of the American Revolution's Trophy for Anti-Aircraft and a lot of the annual prize money for Gunnery Events.

Two really exciting times on the Houston of importance were the ramming of a French Gunboat, and the freighter "Fiskus" which removed a number of stern plates and stanchions. At this time the Chiefs were forced to live in very airy quarters as it was winter season.

While serving as Flagship in the Asiatic Station the Floating Drydock in Olongapo was used by the Houston which was the longest ship to use it. Floats had to be placed at each end of the dock so the bow and stern could be worked on.

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the late Henry L. Roosevelt traveled on board while making inspections of Naval Stations on the West Coast. The Houston had the honor of flying the President's Flag at the foremast and the Commander-in-chief of the U.S. Fleet's on the mainmast at the same time.

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aboard one o' Uncle Sam's ships to get a smatterin' o' such talk.

Love,

Gus

HAPPENINGS IN THE PAST

(Continued from page 3)

While serving with the Fleet the Houston is the relief flagship of the CinC U.S. Fleet and many are the times when the flags of Commander Scouting Force and Commander Cruisers, Scouting Force have been hoisted to the mainmast.

During the Sino-Japanese affair in the years 1932-33, the Houston was senior man-of-war over all forces. It was during this trouble that the Houston broke all records while making a run to Shanghai from Manila to protect American interests there. The Blue-jackets of the Houston were sent ashore immediately upon our arrival to erect a barricade at the power plant and to protect it.

A very amusing incident happened when the ship was in China waters. The Houston had torpedo tubes at that time and during one of our practices one of our torpedoes started to chase us all over the ocean. It was a very fast chase with the Houston winning out, and a very much damaged torpedo hoisted on board later.

A very interesting sight to the crew was the time we went up the famous Yangtze River. The river flooded land for miles and many villages on floats were seen drifting down the river.

HOUSTON FACTS

(Continued from page 1)

city of 800,000 with a tumbler of water each day.

The length of the Houston may be compared with the length of two football fields placed end to end or the height of a 48 story building.

The Houston has its own police force fire department, plumbers, electrical and telephone service men, and others on duty at all times superintending public facilities.

At present the Houston stands first in Engineering and sports three "E's" for efficiency in gunnery.

For you who have been on board we trust you have enjoyed your visit and profited by your experience. We hope that you have absorbed some of the tradition of the Navy and of our

ham and eggs.

The first ship's dance was held at the auditorium Houston, Texas, Navy Day 1930. Two days later a ship's ball was held aboard with one orchestra playing on the quarterdeck and another on the main-deck aft. The festivities and music were broadcast, making it the first time that a broadcast had ever been given from aboard a Man of War.

On the shakedown cruise to Europe travel talks were given to the crew in the recreation room.

The 1st test shots from the Houston's guns were fired off Key West, Florida.

The first ice cream aboard was made by the ship's cook by the old fashioned method, a freezer run entirely by handpower.

The first issue of the "BLUE BONNET" was published enroute Panama to Honolulu on or about 3 February, 1931.

The present No. 1 messhall was the actual recreation room, complete with library, writing desks, reading tables and transoms.

The name "BLUE BONNET" was selected after a poll had been taken among the crew during December, 1930.

REMEMBER

When the barber shop consisted of only 2 chairs.

When the ship's service office was in the sick bay and the doctor was the ship service officer.

When it was a plankowner's rate to sleep on the torpedo tubes because it was so cool there in the hot weather off China.

When the tailor shop consisted of one marine with a flatiron.

The insignia of our planes while in China, a Chinese Laundry mark meaning 'the bird that flies'.

The big roll of 39 degrees.

ship. As you have walked the Houston's teak wood decks, and been shown the ship's principal points of interest we wish you to remember that the Houston is your ship and that the Navy is your Navy—we are the custodians. As you cherish your homes so we cherish our ship and strive to keep it a most efficient factor in maintaining the peace and honor of our great nation.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON

(Continued from page 2)

Rush orders put the ship in the Navy Yard at Mare Island on the 6th of June where she was made ready for a fishing trip in southern waters with President Roosevelt aboard. The President embarked on 14 July at the pier in Oakland. Shortly after the Houston swung past the anchored

fleet in San Francisco Bay, thus allowing the President to review the entire assembled fleet. On 16 of July the President again embarked aboard the ship at San Diego and the Houston steamed out of the harbor bound for the fishing grounds. At Socorro Island, Clipperton Island, The Galapagos Islands, and Cocos Island fishing was found to be excellent. On the 4th and 5th of August the ship transited the canal and after a brief stop at Old Providence Island finally terminated its voyage at Pensacola. Here the chief executive bid goodbye. A short trip to Norfolk, the trip around to the West Coast via the canal to the Navy Yard, and the short distance to Long Beach, plus the gunnery drills in the vicinity of Long Beach brings us up to the present time. No wonder the ship has been dubbed the "Rambler Ship".

NAVY DAY

ON BOARD the U. S. S. HOUSTON

27 OCTOBER, 1938.

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA



The U. S. S. HOUSTON, Flagship of the United States Fleet, is made available for your careful inspection and survey so that you, as a citizen of the United States, may become better acquainted with the ideals, accomplishments, and functions of the Navy.

PROGRAM

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

- 1000 Line throwing gun demonstration (Main deck aft).
Flag hoist drill (Signal Bridge)—10 minutes.
Semaphore drill (Signal Bridge)—10 minutes.
- 1015 Diving operations from Motor Launch.
- 1030 Man overboard drill.
Flag hoist drill (Signal Bridge).
Semaphore drill (Signal Bridge).
- 1045 Concert by Ship's Orchestra. (No. 3 messing compartment).
- 1100 Plane catapulted (weather permitting).
Flag hoist drill (Signal Bridge).
Semaphore drill (Signal Bridge).
Line throwing gun demonstration (Main deck aft).
- 1130 Flag hoist drill (Signal Bridge).
Semaphore drill (Signal Bridge).
Line throwing gun demonstration (Main deck aft).

Forecastle

Operation of ground tackle—anchors, chains and gear.
Soundings for depth (chain platforms).

Port Hangar

Copies of Ship's paper (BLUE BONNET) given out.
Knots, splicing, fancy work—Knot Board Exhibit.
Worming, parcelling, sewing—demonstration.
Charts and navigational instruments—demonstration.
Landing Force uniforms and equipment.
Small arms display.

Main Deck Aft

Radio field set demonstrated.
Drill shells and powder (8" and 5" guns).
Bag laid out for inspection.

Galley

Preparation of food.

No. 1 Messing Compartment

Mess table display.

Machine Shop

Welding, cutting, and drilling tools display.
Engineering equipment and instruments.
Burner and parts display.