

# Thomas C. Hart Line

## You Gotta Have Hart!



*The newsletter of the Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association  
Dedicated to the sailors who brought a great ship to life!*

### Special points of interest:

- **USS BELKNAP response**
- **President's appeal for next reunion ideas and looking for a reunion coordinator**
- **Treasurer's Report**

### Remember when...

On the night of 22 November 1975, USS JOHN F. KENNEDY collided with USS BELKNAP (CG-26) tragically killing 47 Sailors. USS THOMAS C. HART was on station with JFK and BELKNAP that night and rendered assistance to the stricken crew.

Tommy Sexton remembers, "When I was on my first Med cruise we were involved in a rescue after the collision of the Kennedy and Belknap there were 8 people killed in the explosions and fire. The HART help with fire fighting and rescuing burn victims to our battle dressing stations and brought survivors on-board. This happened in November 1975 off coast of Sicily there are others in the association that know more details of the rescue I was a snipe working in the hole at that time."

As we celebrate with our families this holiday season, please take a moment to remember our fallen shipmates and those who are in harms way today.



From the deck of USS THOMAS C. HART (FF-1092) while rendering assistance to the damaged USS BELKNAP (CG-26) the night of 22 NOV 1975.  
Picture courtesy Tommy Sexton.

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### Got something to say?

This newsletter is dedicated to get the word out about the crew of the finest warship in the Fleet. From the snipes to the twigits, SWOs, Chops, deck-apes, and, of course, the families, this letter is for you to get reconnected with shipmates. We are shooting to publish three times a year in March, July and November. The deadline for the next newsletter is 15 February 2006. Send any suggestions for articles, written material (sea-

stores encouraged!), photos and announcements to Thomas.C.Hart@cox.net or mail it to,;

Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association  
C/O Toby Layman  
112 Arabian Trail  
Spotsylvania, VA 22553

- Todd Black

## President's Call

Shipmates,

Hopefully you've given some thought as to where you'd like to see TCHVA reunion 2007!!! It's now time to start gathering the ideas so we can decide early next year where we'd like to go!! At the business meeting during this last reunion, we decided we will utilize the services of John & Sherry, our reunion planners! That means that we will not have to absolutely have one of our members in the city where we decide to have the reunion..... John and Sherry will make all the arrangements for us... WE just need to decide early next year where/when we'd like to meet again..... We will still need a member to work with John/Sherry as a POC.

The TCHVA reunion coordinator will be point of contact for the planners. As the Reunion Coordinator, you would also be responsible for communicating our desires to the planners wrt to the hospitality suite, stocking the hospitality suite with snacks/beverages (Association will buy the snacks/drink). Other than a few details like that, and OK'ing the reunion planners decisions, the planners will handle the big stuff.

They do all the arranging/negotiations with the hotels, tour folks, etc.

**So, that brings us to the solicitation stage:**

First and foremost, please make your reunion city nomination prior to January 1, 2006. Please keep in mind that the city you nominate should be a great town, with lots to do close to the hotel. It should be a city that is served by a major airport that would not require renting a car to get from the airport to the hotel.. The city should have nice hotels in the vicinity of the attractions. The idea is to limit the amount of "extra traveling" and "added expenses of rental cars, huge limo/cab fares, etc." Our reunion planners are experienced professionals who can make all the arrangements but you should have a general knowledge of the town/attractions, etc. In your nomination, please offer some details about the city/local attractions.

I'll start the ball rolling by nominating two cities: Washington DC & Louisville, Kentucky..... Of course everyone knows about the nations capitol and all the attractions in that city; Govt buildings, Smithsonian, Fords Theatre, Arlington, Vietnam Memorial, WWII memorial.

I hosted a reunion in Louisville and it was a smashing success. Great hotel located right on the Ohio River, great rates (we paid only \$85/nite for big suites), Many attractions within walking distance of the hotel. Louisville Slugger museum (choked full of baseball memorabilia), Frazier Firearms Museum, Louisville Science Center, Belle of Louisville (paddlewheel steamship), Fourth Street Live (great entertainment/dining), Hard Rock Café, Churchill Downs, home of the Ky Derby...Army base, Fort Knox and the General Patton Museum are about 25 minutes from downtown. Click this link to see some of the things we did with the Calhoun

<http://www.ssb630.org/2004Reunion/2004Reunion.htm>. Everyone commented on how much they liked the town and they want to come back..... The day at the Churchill Downs races was super and many spent some time (and a lot of \$\$) in the nearby Caesars Casino Riverboat!!!

Please get your ideas in so we can present them all to All Hands!!

We also need some new members!!!! Everyone needs to call up those shipmates and encourage them to join. Remember, we are providing the TCHVA lapel pin to all new members..... Send them an application or direct them to the website....

Gearin' up for the next one,

All the best,

Garry



The Association is a fraternal organization for current or previous United States Navy Members who served aboard the destroyer escort/ fast frigate USS Thomas C. Hart (DE/FF-1092). The primary purpose of the Association is for former shipmates who share a common background of service aboard the T C Hart to enjoy camaraderie and to provide the opportunity for members to actively participate in reunions and other activities of the Association.

## Treasurer's Report

Hi, my name is Randy Groen and I was stationed on the Hart from May of 1973 until I was discharged from the Navy in July of 1976. I came on board as a STGSA and left as an STG2. Last August I attended the first meeting of the Thomas C Hart DE/FF1092 Veterans Association that was held in Norfolk Virginia. I had a wonderful time. It was fun seeing and meeting T. C. Hart crew members from the commissioning in 1973 right on through to the decommissioning in 1992. It was particularly gratifying to see the people that I served with. There were six of us in attendance that were from the commissioning crew, and several others that came on board before I left. It had been over 29 years since I'd seen any of them. Of the six Plank owners, four of us were Sonar men. These were people that I had lived, worked, ate, breathed and played with for 3 years of my life. It was great to see them again. I was surprised at how much and how little they had changed. Back then; I was not a gung ho sailor type. The only reason that I enlisted was so to avoid getting drafted. I was seasick much of my time at sea and I never adjusted to the discipline and structure of the military. The day I was discharged was one of the happiest days of my life. My plan was to re-start my life and never look back. Over the years though, I realized that I couldn't just ignore that part of my life as if it had never happened. I had met some wonderful people while on the Hart and I regretted that I hadn't maintained contact with them. Thanks to Garry for getting the ball rolling. He organized this Association and made it possible for me to re-connect with some of these shipmates. It was well worth the trip to Norfolk. I plan to be at the next reunion in 2007 and strongly encourage all of you to go. Especially if you served with me. I look forward to reconnecting with you too.

The real purpose of this article is to provide you with a financial report. As your treasurer, I am responsible for keeping the accounts of the Association and supplying the membership periodic financial reports. I will do this in the Association's News Letter and at the bi-annual Association meetings. I intend to maintain an accurate accounting of all the assets, credits and expenses of this Association. You deserve to know where your dues money is going. The only income we have had so far has come from dues. The Association has had no other income. In the future we may get some extra money from the sale of memorabilia such as t-shirts, hats, mugs and the like. To be sure the figure I had for dues paid was correct, I cross checked by taking the number of members and multiplying that by \$20.00.

I then added the dues of members who paid in advance for future years. (We have several members that have paid up through 2010. Thank you. A little extra capital helps a lot when starting an association like this.) I then compared that to the total of all the deposits. These numbers matched, and that tells me that all the money that should have been deposited is accounted for.

I was able to document most of Associations expenses. The expense for the membership pins is self-explanatory. The meeting expenses were incurred at the reunion of the Association that was held Norfolk VA July 28 -31 2005. We paid \$78.75 for the bartender at the banquet and \$93.66 for the morning coffee set up in the hospitality room. I don't have an accurate accounting for the Miscellaneous Pre-August expenses of \$58.53. I do know that it includes PO box rental and possibly some other administrative expenses. The storekeeper expense of \$100.00 is a check I wrote to E Scott Ruerup. Scott is the Association's Store Keeper. This money will allow him to make an advance purchase of T.C. Hart memorabilia that will be offered for re-sale to the membership. Once Scott gets the "Ships Store" running, it should be self-sustaining. He will make periodic reports to the board and I will include the data in future financial reports. The miscellaneous expense is a dues check that was returned because of insufficient funds.

You will note that there is an entry for 2006-2007 dues. The by laws of the Association state that dues are \$10.00 per year but will be collected in 2 year increments. For any one that is not already a member, all new dues collected will be for years 2006-2007. For those Thomas C Hart Veterans out there who haven't yet become members, if you join now you will be a member in good standing for our next reunion in 2007.

Starting Balance	January 1, 2005		\$ 0.00
Income			
	Dues 2005-2006	\$1,100.00	
	Dues 2006-2007	\$ 0.00	
	Dues 2007-2008	\$ 100.00	
	Dues 2009-2010	\$ 60.00	
Total income			\$ 1,260.00
Expenses			
	Membership Pins	\$ 322.00	
	Meeting Expenses	\$ 172.41	
	Store Keeper	\$ 100.00	
	Miscellaneous	\$ 20.00	
	Pre Aug Expenses	\$ 58.53	
Total expenses			\$ 672.94
Net income			\$ 587.06
Current balance	October 31 2005		\$ 587.06

## Items of Interest

### Navy Ship Prints Available

HT1 Mark "Ozzie" Osborne (Retired), a Knox Frigate shipmate who served in USS BLAKELY (FF-1072) makes prints of ships that are available for purchase. You can see his handy work online at <http://groups.msn.com/navyships>. If you are interested in purchasing a 11 x 17 print, you can contact Ozzie at 447 Mechanicsville Rd., Apt 14, Hinesburg, VT 05461, or at his email address, soybeanpigfarmer@yahoo.com.



*Have a safe and happy holiday season!*

Photo Courtesy of the US Navy Safety Center



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Dedicated to the sailors who brought a great ship to life!*

Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association  
C/O Toby Layman  
112 Arabian Trail  
Spotsylvania, VA 22553  
Email: [secretary@thomaschart.org](mailto:secretary@thomaschart.org)

*Not a member yet? It's easy and  
cheap! Just mail \$20 for two years  
dues to:*

**USS THOMAS C. HART  
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**  
c/o Randy Groen  
2219 Friendship Lane  
Burnsville, MN 55337

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB AT  
[WWW.THOMASCHART.ORG](http://WWW.THOMASCHART.ORG)**

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## *Where to next???*

*Start giving some thought to where  
the next reunion should be in 2007!*

*We discussed several locations  
across the country at the business  
meeting but wanted to give everyone  
an opportunity to make a sugges-  
tion. If you have a great place for  
the next reunion, please email or  
snail-mail your suggestion to the ad-  
dresses at right*

## Association Staff

### Elected Officers

President, Garry Collins  
Vice President, Steve Garcia  
Secretary, Toby Layman  
Treasurer, Randy Groen

### Volunteer Staff

Historian, Andy Roberts  
Storekeeper, E. Scott Ruerup  
Newsletter, Todd Black  
Webmaster, Ray Polen



## Chaplain Wanted!

### ....and boy do we need one!

During the business meeting at the reunion all of the officer and assistant positions were filled with the exception of a Chaplain. What does the Chaplain do? The Chaplain will be the primary point of contact for notification of illness/death of any Association Member or T C Hart Shipmate. In addition, he will initiate contact with relatives of the infirmed or deceased and keep the Association informed via direct e-mails and the official Association Website, of specifics, regarding the illness or death. He will send appropriate get well, condolences or sympathy

cards on behalf of the Association and tender his signature to the card using the "Chaplain, USS Thomas C. Hart FF-1092 Veterans Association" tag line. When notified, he will report any illness or death to the Association. The Chaplain will offer the invocation at the reunion banquet. If you are interested, please contact any of the Association officers.