



THOMAS C. HART LINE

YOU GOTTA HAVE HART

Vol. 3 Issue 37

November 2024

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T. C. Hart Veterans Assoc. Officers 2023-25		
President	Steve Holliday	DC1 (85-90)
Vice Pres.	Bill Tylock	EM2 (78-83)
	Dan Vasconcellos	FTG2 (77-82)
Treasurer	Dennis Paul	HM1 (91-93)
Secretary	Mark Lamboni	LTJG (76-78)
Historian	Ron Church	FTG2 (73-77)
Storekeeper	John Ebata	BTFN (86-90)
Newsletter	Dave Neimeyer	LTJG (75-77)
Webmaster	Todd Black	LT (87-90)
Chaplain	Mike Garcia	FTG2 (77-79)
Chairman	Phil Leblanc	HT2 (73-76)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Shipmates,

It's time once again to bring our Shipmates up to date on our upcoming (Portland, Maine) reunion that is currently being organized with Armed Forces Reunions for the dates of Wednesday, October 15th through Sunday morning October 19th, 2025. For Shipmates that want to arrive early and take in some sights prior to the actual reunion start date, we have arranged the block of rooms to be available on October 13th and 14th at our Hotel (Best Western Merry Manor Inn) located at 700 Main St. South Portland, Maine. Rooms are \$129 per/night for a single or double. \$10 for any extra occupancy.

Our timing in Maine could not be better as fall foliage should be in full display. Portland and the surrounding areas are everything you would imagine. Rugged coastline, several Lighthouses, and numerous other well-known attractions. The Old Port area is famous for its eateries, especially fresh local seafood.

As always, I would like to promote interest in attending these reunions. Garry Collins founded this organization and kept the ball rolling for years. The TCHVA Officers are stepping up to fulfill this legacy in remembrance of our Shipmate. We must continue to build our organization and reach out to Hart Shipmates that are not aware of our existence. This is vital to maintain a productive team of shipmates that are active in supporting and volunteering their time to fulfill the mission.

I am asking if you are interested in becoming more involved and taking on an Office, please know that we welcome your willingness to serve. The Secretary position is presently being filled by our Shipmate Mark Lamboni until this upcoming Business Meeting in Portland, Maine. This position must be filled at that time. In addition, our Ships Store Operator, John Ebata is seeking a replacement. John has held this position since the beginning of TCHVA.

Members are reaching retirement age and would like to pass down some responsibility. With this said, the organization must seek further interest of service. There are many opportunities to continue this legacy. With your help, we will continue to enjoy the camaraderie of coming together as Shipmates from all eras of our ships' life.

As we enter the holiday season, I would like to express my thanks to all. I hope all of you will enjoy a safe and blessed Thanksgiving & Christmas. I look forward to seeing you in Portland in 2025!!!

All the Best,
Steve Holliday DC1(SW) USN Ret.
TCHVA President

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Notes from the Vice President

The reunion in Norfolk last year was great, but now it's time to look forward to the next reunion, in Portland, ME. Norfolk was my 3rd reunion, and I wish I had attended more. It was great to see old shipmates and talk about our adventures on the Hart. Personally, I'd like it if more shipmates from my time onboard ('78-'83) could make it. Please get the word out to anyone that you know that was on the T C Hart about the reunion. We welcome all T C Hart Shipmates to join us, so get the word out and meet us in Portland, October 2025

And in general, even if you cannot come to the reunion, keep your membership up to date, and please share www.thomaschart.org with any shipmates you know. As we all get older, the Association can use all the support we can muster.

All the best,
Bill Tylock
EM2(SW) 78 - 83
TCHVA Vice President

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FINANCIAL REPORT THOMAS C HART VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Hello Shipmates

We have had multiple renewals.

Current Balance in our Checking Account is \$4514.39

Have Transferred \$337.61 from PayPal which is not reflected in Bank Balance, as this usually takes 3 business days to appear in the Bank.

Have a Blessed Day

Dennis Paul HMC(SW/AW), USN, Ret SMDR 1991-1993

Treasurer USS Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association

From the Chairman

Shipmates,

As most of you know, the next TCHVA reunion will be October 14 to October 19, 2025 in Portland, Maine. The reunion committee headed by Dave Neimeyer has been busy completing the final details of the reunion. The reunion schedule and venue will be available in the near future. For those of you who have never visited the Portland area you will find many things to see and do in Portland and the surrounding areas. Portland has a reputation as a “Foodie City” with many restaurants and brew pubs. As a city with a working waterfront, there is no shortage of places to eat great seafood from lobster to clams, and many others. There are also many places to visit in the surrounding areas from LL Beans Main Store in Freeport to the North and Kennebunkport to the South. Plenty of places to visit with historical significance and many quaint shops along the coast to shop. Of course, the scenery along the coast is spectacular, and the reunion will be during the peak foliage season. I hope many of you will attend as I know you will have a great time.

As is always the case, the TCHVA business meeting and officer election will be held Saturday morning. As per the by-laws our president will move to Chairman of the Board, and the Vice President will move to the president’s position so there will be an opening for Vice President. There will also be openings for Secretary and Ships storekeeper. Mark Lamboni took over the Secretary position on an interim basis after the untimely death of our founder, Garry Collins. We appreciate Mark volunteering to do this during this sad and hectic period. John Ebata has been the ship’s storekeeper for many years, but would like to step down next year. It is time for some new blood to step up and get involved in the inner workings of the organization. So please consider putting your hat in the ring for these positions. Unless we have more people getting involved this organization will falter and eventually disappear.

Hope all of you have a wonderful and bountiful holiday season. Looking forward to seeing many of you in Portland next year.

Sincerely,
Phil Leblanc
HT2(1973-1976)
Chairman TCHVA

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FINAL FAREWELLS

David “Long John” Jones, BM3 1986-1990 passed away from a heart attack on June 11, 2024 in Pen Yan, New York.

Go to the Hart website, eternal deployment section, for updates and listing of shipmates who have passed away. Additional information on rate/rank and time on board for those who have passed would be appreciated.

From the Secretary

Shipmates, I'm happy to report we have a total of 111 paid up members. That said, a good many dues will expire at year end. Please take a moment to renew online at <https://www.thomaschart.org/join-or-renew/>

Memberships for the following shipmates will expire 31 December 2024:

Ahern Mike; Babb Ronald; Baer Dennis; Batton John; Berry Robert; Bocha Frank; Boswell James; Church Ron; Clark Thomas; Cobb Kerry ; Elson Malcolm; Ferchau Paul; Funkhouser Randy; Gleaves Michael; Groen Randy; Ishee Jeff; Johnson Kenneth; Kreisher Jr George; Kust Michael; Leatherwood Jerry; Leblanc Philip; Lopez Jesus; Marchetta Joseph; McGourn Joe; Mertz Nelson; Mettendorf Eric; Paul Dennis; Poirier Raymond; Rush Richard; Seigle Thomas; Shanahan Michael; Shank William; Thiel Toby; Tumminello Joseph; Wagoner Lee; Walker Daron

For those whose dues have expired prior to 2025 or for those who have never been a member, we do offer a grace period for the rest of this year. So, if you join us now, the balance of 2024 will be grandfathered so your \$20 dues will pay your membership to 1 January 2027!!!!

If you believe your name is listed in error pls let me know and I will reverify with our Treasurer that you have paid. If you have not received a Welcome Back email from me, that only means I haven't been informed that your payment has been received.

Many thanks to all those who made reunion 2023 a great event! Plans are charging ahead for our forthcoming reunion in beautiful Portland ME in October 2025. As in the past, the reunion is a members only event (including your family and friends), so please check out our web site or Facebook page for future info.

I wish all of our members, as well as shipmates who are hopefully members to be, and all former Hart shipmates a most Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

All the best,
Mark Lamboni, CAPT, USN (Ret)
LTjg COMMO/First LT 1976 - 1979

USS Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association Acting Secretary

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Comments and items for the newsletter can be sent to Dave Neimeyer at dave@neimeyer.org or 9026 Haaf Road, Fogelsville PA 18051-1717

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If you are on facebook, consider joining the USS Thomas C. Hart FF 1092 group, with its 817 members and hundreds of photos and posts.

REUNION 2025

Portland, Maine – Oct 2025

As previously noted, Sherry of “A Complete Reunion”, who planned the last few Thomas C. Hart reunions, has retired and closed the company. We’ve decided to go with Armed Forces Reunion/Book My Reunion as the reunion planner for our 2025 reunion. AFT will handle registration and collecting money, but we are on our own for planning tours.

I’ve been in touch with Chris at Maine Tour Connections to start planning for the tours. She will get back to me with info on suggested tours. In late December/early January we’ll post a survey on the TCHVA website to see which tours have the most appeal. By the end of January 2025 I should be able to get back to Chris with our input and start nailing down the schedule. The end goal is to have a registration form out to our shipmates by April 2025.

Some items to mull over while we wait for info from Chris and the posting of the survey: Would like to stick to our traditional schedule of three days of tours (Wed-Thurs-Friday) or trim that down to just one or two days? Do you want to take harbor or bay cruises, or stick to dry land? Do you prefer being dropped off at a spot and allowed to wander, or do you prefer sticking with the group at each site? In addition, I’d especially welcome input from those of you who have been in this part of Maine, letting us know what things you recommend.

Keep an eye out for that survey, and let us know your thoughts.

See you in Portland in 2025!!

Dave Neimeyer

dave@neimeyer.org

484-378-2725



HART IN HISTORY – FIRST MED DEPLOYMENT 1975 Part 3

- 22 November: Hart was in the battle group when the Kennedy collided with the Belknap. It was close to taps when the voice of LT Hunt, the OOD, came over the 1MC: "There has been a collision between the Kennedy and the Belknap. There is a huge fire. All hands man rescue and assistance stations." We were about two miles away at that time. I immediately ran topside and saw the Kennedy highlighted by fire. My first thought was "Oh my God; we've lost the carrier." Then the perspective changed and the Kennedy slid away revealing that the flames were all from the Belknap. The entire midsection was ablaze, and survivors gathered on the focsle and fantail. We could see the Belknap's firefighting crews bravely tackling the fire. We started to approach to help fight the fires, but then were ordered off. Instead, our small boats took injured sailors off the Belknap and brought them to Hart while two other task force ships, the Bordelon and one other, went in close to fight the fire. Hart's helo deck allowed for the more severely injured sailors to be transferred to the Kennedy or other medical facilities. Hart carried about 20 or more survivors for a few days until they debarked on the 26th.

A few days after the collision, when Hart still had Belknap sailors onboard, we came across a body floating in the ocean. We stopped and launched our motor whale boat to recover the body. All we could tell at that point was that the body had on dark clothing, similar to a sailor's dungarees. I was on the bridge wing with Captain Rohrbough and several of the Belknap sailors when the CO turned to one of the Belknap crew and said "That's one of your shipmates." I still remember the solemn expression on the sailor's face after that cruelly insensitive remark. As it turns out, once we had recovered the body it was determined that the victim was an Italian fisherman, based on the clothing, lira in the pocket, and other indicators. The body was soon heloed off the ship and turned in to authorities for identification.

- 28 Nov - 4 Dec: Bizerte, Tunisia. Camels, Arabs, goats and sheep in the streets, bazaars and bizarre in Bizerte. One sailor commented "This Tunisian writing is like that Greek stuff: it makes my eyes hurt to read it." There was a small American community in Bizerte, possibly associated with a US government office. Captain Rohrbough allowed them to come on board and use the ship's store. The ship's store was a 10x10 space with limited supplies. The guests sorely depleted the stock, especially snacks, music cassettes and tape players. Some of the crew were a bit miffed at the decimated offerings remaining in the store until the Captain pointed out that we'd be back home in a few weeks, but that was the only chance the Americans in Bizerte had to obtain US items for Christmas. He also reminded everyone that the ship's store profits benefitted the Welfare and Recreation fund, so the sailors would get some benefit from the money spent by our guests.



YN3 Ron Baylis
Capt Rohrbough



HM1 Currier



Bizerte street scene



ENS Hobie Chivers

THOMAS C. HART DE/FF 1092 VETERANS ASSOCIATION



TCHVA relies on your continued support to help build the Association and keep the great memories of T C Hart alive! You can continue to help by referring other shipmates to us and letting us know when you have an email address, phone number or some other bit of info that may help us locate our shipmates. The success of the Association depends on the active support of our members!

You can stay up to date with current events and happenings by visiting our website at www.thomaschart.org

THOMAS C. HART VETERANS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Check your membership status: <https://thomaschart.org/tchva-member-listing/> If your name does not appear here then your membership expired before 2023 or you were never a member.



If a shipmate told you about the TCHVA, please tell us who: _____

Tell us about yourself and your service aboard USS THOMAS C. HART (DD/FF 1092)

First Name: _____ M.I.: _____ Last Name _____

Rate/Rank on TCH: _____ Division: _____

Year Reported: _____ Year Detached: _____

Current Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell/Work Phone: _____

Current Email address: _____

Spouse Name (if desired): _____

Dues are only \$10 per year. We have chosen to collect for two years (\$20) at a time to reduce the administrative burden on our all-volunteer staff. Thanks for your understanding and support. You may join for any additional years if desired.

I am sending in \$ _____ Please begin/renew my membership!

Mail this form and check or money order to:

USS Thomas C. Hart Veterans Association
C/O Dennis Paul
6490 Big Cheese Rd
Natrona, WY 82646

Note: If you have any difficulty printing this form, please just write the requested information on a short note and include with your payment. We'll make sure to muster you in. Thanks!