

## 2022 Auction Items

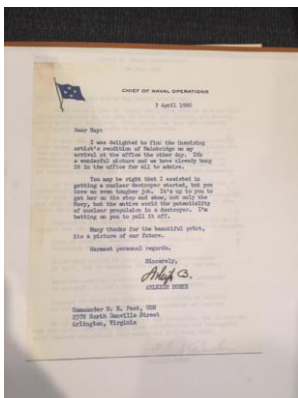
### *It is Time to Refuel the Frank Knox*

Our annual WHITE ELEPHANT AUCTION is on line this year. Auction opens Monday November 7th at 0900 Central time and goes through Friday, November 11th, 2000 Central time. Winners will be announced for each item and payment requested. This our traditional fund-raising event to raise money and refuel the ships passage for the year 2022. There are a number of special items to bid on. Bidding is easy. Text your item number and bid or, email us your bid. Either way you will be in the bidding for some very special items. [Text 817-723-7654](tel:817-723-7654) or [email d\\_landers@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_landers@sbcglobal.net). Winners will be announced for each item and payment requested Saturday November 12, 2022.

#### #1 Star Finder Complete unit with cover.

This star finder is designed to portray graphically the approximate altitude and azimuth of the 57 numbered stars listed in the Air and Nautical Almanacs, and any other celestial bodies that may be plotted on the star base. The complete unit consists of 9 altitude- azimuth templates (blue line), meridian angle template (red line), dual star-base (black line) and the instruction sheet, all enclosed in a circular container. Donated by Steve Cross 619-992-9449

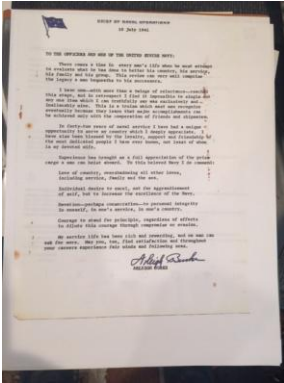
Minimum bid \$35



#### #2 Letter From ADM Arleigh Burke

Personally signed letter offered to us to raise money for our annual auction. The signature is in ink and original. Addressed to the Officers and Men of the United States Navy about his retiring.

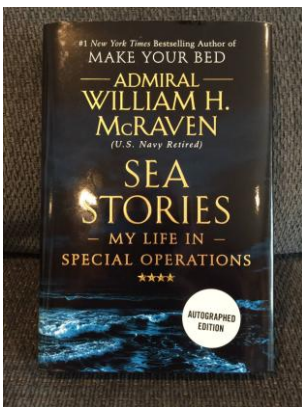
Minimum Bid \$50



### # 3 Letter From ADM Arleigh Burke

**Personally signed letter offered to us to raise money for our annual auction. The signature is in ink and original. Letter about getting artist rendition of USS Bainbridge which he helped get started**

**Minimum Bid \$50**



### # 4 Autographed copy of Admiral McRaven's life in Special Operations.

**Autographed copy of Admiral McRaven's life in Special Operations. Admiral McRaven is the first to ascend to four star rank from the Navy Seal community.**

**Donated by Steve Cross 619-992-9449**

**Minimum Bid \$45**



### # 5 USS Frank Knox ash tray

**Bronze engraved tray from USS Frank Knox DD-742 from Bath Iron Works. Donated by Bill Atkinson. Minimum Bid \$45**



### # 6 USS Frank Knox ash tray

**Porcelain ashtray for the Commanding Officer - USS Frank Knox DDR-742. Donated by Bill Atkinson**

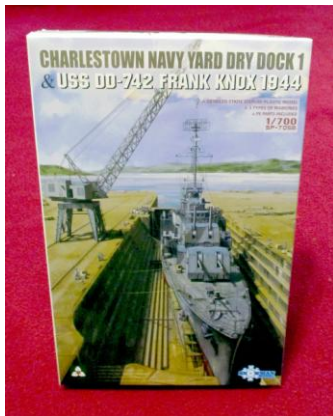
**Minimum Bid \$45**



## #7 Postal Covers

Postal Covers for USS Frank Knox DD-742 launching and commissioning services-1944 signed by Mrs. Frank Knox. Donated by **Bill Atkinson**

Minimum Bid \$45



## # 8 Plastic Model

Plastic Model of USS Frank Knox DD-742. Donated by **Bill Atkinson**

Minimum Bid \$45



## # 9 Knox Cap

Old USS Frank Knox Hat with Scramble Eggs. Donated by **Bill Atkinson**

Minimum Bid \$30



## # 10 WW2 memorabilia

WW2 memorabilia from YN2 Curtis Burnside from 1944-VJ-Day 1945 on board USS Frank Knox DD-742. Donated by **Bill Atkinson**

Minimum Bid \$55



**# 11 Hand Drawn painting**  
**Hand Drawn painting of USS Frank Knox**  
**DDR-742. Donated by Bill Atkinson**

**Minimum Bid \$45**



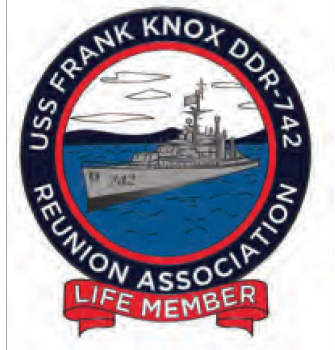
**# 12 Navy Rescue Knife. Blade is a seat**  
**belt cutter and a hardened point to break**  
**car windows. Donated by Hank Swithers.**

**Minimum Bid \$45**





96 LIFE MEMBERS and counting



# KNOX KNEWS

Editor: LT Steve Cross '67 - '68

## OUR HISTORY WON'T SAVE ITSELF!

*"It is only through shared stories and pictures that we live on and do not die."*

[www.ussfrankknox.com](http://www.ussfrankknox.com)

Fall 2022



In this issue – **FALL REUNION SPECIAL - BETTER THEM THAN US – 100 YEARS OF CARRIER AVIATION** – View from the salvage fleet - RRR The Ride of His Life Rick Swaney BM3 (BMCS ret.) - RRR BETTER LIVING THROUGH CHEMESTRY Don Greer BT3 (BTC ret.) and Mike Haloski BT3 (BT-1 ret.) - RRR LUNCH BREAK AND THE BLAST Bob Harp EM3, Jon Osborne CSSN - Call for Reef Runners - SECNAV FRANK KNOX, TWO OCEAN WAR, GOOSEBERRYS AND MULBERRYS – Taps

**DUES ARE DUE:** Those paying dues annually \$30 for 2022 is greatly appreciated. Membership and Life Members continue strong. **ANNUAL DUES** – I hope you are planning to renew at \$30 per year, roughly half of our members support us by writing a check annually. Life Members make a one-time payment, then enjoy life time privileges payment free. (Checks and donations - send to Margaret Watson, 3421 NW Coronado ST., Corvallis OR 97330.) Our financial position is strong thanks to you.

Life Members now total 96. Almost half of our dues. The rest of our funding coming from our Annual White Elephant \$2035.00 and Veterans Day Auction [\$1630.00 plus a \$680.00 donation.] FKRA remains well funded to continue our operations. Our major costs are Website maintenance, mail costs for our newsletter KNOX KNEWS, Our 80th Anniversary of the ship commissioning is in 2024. Ideas and concept for this anniversary are welcome any time.

Our auctions are fun and contain some amazing values – this year we'll auction off two Arleigh Burke, ADM USN signatures on separate typed correspondence. These sell for around \$300 on eBay plus other unique items. Donations, items and photos are welcome. Contact Harry Chandler 928-925-9490 or Steve Cross 619-992-9449.

Fall 2022



USS Frank Knox (DDR742) Reunion Association  
Harry Chandler, President: [hchandler64@gmail.com](mailto:hchandler64@gmail.com), 928-925-9490  
Stephen Cross, VP Communications: [stephencross742@gmail.com](mailto:stephencross742@gmail.com), 619-922-9449  
[www.ussfrankknox.com](http://www.ussfrankknox.com)



**"ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE"** Orv Kreig

If you haven't already paid dues for 2023, in the words of Orv, "Dues are Due"

## **2023 Membership Renewal, Life Membership & Membership Application**

It's that time of year again; to remind you the Membership Dues are due. We would appreciate you filling out the information below and sending it with your check to:

USS Frank Knox Reunion Association c/o Margaret Watson, Treasurer 3421 NW Coronado St., Corvallis, Oregon 97330  
Tel: 541-757-8067 **PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO "MARGARET WATSON"**

<b>Annual Dues Renewal:</b> \$30	<b>Lifetime Dues (one-time payment):</b>	Age 60 – 69, \$300
		Age 70 – 79, \$200
		Age 80 – 89, \$100
		Age 90 + , Free

Membership dues include Master Roster (to be mailed out early March), newsletters and mailings, special pricing for the Reunion activities, and voting privileges on matters before the membership at the annual business meeting. Even if you are unable to attend the reunion, your dues will help support costs to maintain and preserve our **USS Frank Knox Reunion Association** - membership roster, website maintenance ([ussfrankknox.com](http://ussfrankknox.com)), mailings and to preserve our Mission Statement: "The USS Frank Knox Reunion Association conducts reunions and other meetings to foster camaraderie with the officers and sailors who served aboard the USS Frank Knox (DDR-742) during her 27 years of service in the US Navy. The Reunion Association will maintain a factual narrative of the ship and men who served aboard USS Frank Knox." **If you have a special talent and would like to offer your assistance, help is appreciated.**

### **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL**

#### **APPLICANT INFORMATION - JOIN**

Name:		
Date of birth (optional):	Wife/Companion:	
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Phone/s:	Rank when on board:	Years Served on Ship (mo/yr to mo/yr)
E-mail:		

**\*\*MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR CALENDAR YEAR INCLUDE: MASTER ROSTER, REUNION PRICING & NEWSLETTER\*\***

#### **NOTES:**

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**We're exploring an Alaskan Cruise in 2023  
for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual USS Frank Knox DDR742 Reunion  
Look for details to follow**

## KNOX KNEWS – FALL REUNION SPECIAL IN THIS ISSUE –

WILIMINGTON/CAPE FEAR REPORT; ROYAL REEF RUNNERS REUNION; 2023 DESTINATION/SEATTLE & ALASKA; D DAY PHOTO PART ONE; EALS ANCHOR, SALVAGE MAINSTAY; CAPE FEAR, FRYING PAN SHOALS AND CAPE HATTERAS. / CAPE FEAR REPORT – Wilmington, NC was a perfect reunion destination; plenty of history, an eight-block historic district filled with charming restaurants, shops and h-i-s-to-r-y. The city has long been a trading port and Civil War lifeline for southern forces in spite of the fearsome triangle of mariner's hazards and storms – Cape Fear, Frying Pan Shoals and Cape Hatteras along the northern approaches to Cape Fear. Sailor Beware! During our visit Hurricane Fiona passing east of us, Red Flagging the local beaches and delivering 30 minutes of heavy rain, then hurried north to slam into Nova Scotia. Our weather was pleasant throughout.

Our first tour was the battleship USS NORTH CAROLINA BB-55, a state war memorial to 10,000 plus NC veterans from all wars. The ship is the most decorated battleship in WWII. Sharp eyed sailors quickly noticed the two-tone paint scheme and concluded volunteers were part of the way through the painting process often referred to as “dip the ship” – a complete, bottom to top, paint job. In addition to the three massive main 16" turrets, there ship has 10 - 5" mounts, 60 40mm, 36-53 20mm, and 1.1 in guns seemed to be everywhere. One of our members located the name of a friend's father who served aboard the battleship during WWII. USS N. CAROLINA ranks high in historic ship preservation.

After lunch, a cruise on Cape Fear River put the active port terminal and shipping facilities on display. A delightful afternoon on the water. A short bus ride back to our hotel where groups sampled fresh seafood and other dinner delights often accompanied with Carolina dipping sauce – not to be missed. Not all were familiar with fish like Red Drum, Corvina and Black Sea Bass but those who ordered were not disappointed. Clams and oysters were universal choices – with Carolina sauces to accentuate the quality.

Special guest and speaker VFW senior leader Kelly Goddard arrived with brother Butch, CSCM in tow and spent many hours with our group in the hospitality room. These West Virginia natives were very familiar with Wilmington and all its charms. Kelly and Butch were highly ranked WV high school quarterbacks before joining the Navy and both served aboard the USS GRAPPLE ARS – 7. Sound familiar? GRAPPLE was the earliest arrival at Pratas Reef midnight of the day FRANK KNOX grounded in 1965. He witnessed 38 days of typhoons and struggle to free our ship.

Reunion second day featured the Wilmington Railroad Museum – a fascinating collection of memories and rolling stock delighting everyone. Our engineering veterans all took turns trying on the engineer's duties on the locomotives. Our lunch break found us wandering the famed boardwalk in search of food and sights like the veteran's memorial on the boardwalk looking directly across the river to USS N. CAROLINA. One restaurant was

in the former Maritime Museum (now relocated) complete with dozens of art and artifacts from the museum. Following lunch, we rode through the historic homes section to the Science and History Museum. Here the mystery of the Capes and Shoals was revealed. Ocean water began 30 miles out 8000 years BCE ago. At 3000 years BCE the ocean was three miles out; 100 years ago, the ocean covered the high ground creating barrier islands and shoals, thus the Capes to be Feared as earlier mariners called them. Evening hospitality was enjoyed by all. The room also served a meeting point for several “Royal Reef Runners” as veterans of Pratas Reef are referred to – Kelly Goddard was joined by FKRA members Don Greer, Mike Haloski and Rick Swaney. These men reviewed 48 power point slides and three pages of notes before their appearance at Friday night’s banquet to recall their experiences.

Friday morning, the annual Business meeting reviewed our financial position and chose the site of the 2023 FKRA Reunion. Finances remain strong thanks to Life Members, Annual Members and our two auctions – the reunion White Elephant Auction and the Annual Veteran’s Auction of valued items and memorabilia. The 2023 Reunion destination is Seattle and our Alaska Cruise, beginning and ending in Seattle. Make your plans to attend – details to follow. Seattle was a very popular choice. Following the business meeting our White Elephant Auction raised over \$1325.00 for the Association. After an afternoon free, members and guests gather for the annual banquet.

The banquets included a happy hour followed by a selection of beef/rice, chicken and shrimp. Following dinner and pledge President Harry Chandler saluted POW/MIAs in our traditional ceremony. Harry then introduced Communications VP Steve Cross who introduced the four WILMINGTON WILMINGTON “Royal Reef Runners” to recall specific details of their 38 days on and around Pratas Reef in 1965. Never before seen photos from Don Greer, Roger Mullinix and Gary Platou as well as many illustrations from the Salvage Report brought home the storm filled days and nights while crews struggled to release the FRANK KNOX from the death grip of the reef. Dramatic day of refloating photos showed the foam-filled ship floating free after the 38- day ordeal.

Wives, daughters and granddaughters were moved by the detail and personal insights shared by their sailors imply doing their duty. Our guest Kelly Goddard personally witnessed the entire 38-day ordeal from the bridge of USS GRAPPLE as the Captain’s talker, or communicator. Goddard concluded “ they were doing their duty, but in my mind they were heroes, everyone of them.” Frank Knox Reunion Association is grateful to VFW and Commander, Kelly Goddard and his brother for adding to our reunion. WILMINGTON

## BETTER THEM THAN US –

As I was reflecting on the Navy Birthday and skimming TIN CAN SAILORS this caption caught my attention from the article “Going Home Through Terrible Weather”. My first thought looking at this quote “Here is an example of a larger ship, USS SANTE FE (CL-60) as she is rolling about 35 degrees to starboard as she rides out a Typhoon in the South China Sea 1944.” I wouldn’t be surprised if I heard a yawn or two; maybe even a throat clearing. “Been there and done that” is the likely reaction.

The next caption says “According to LCDR Robert Newton Bavier, Jr excerpts, USS GANTNER (DE-60) found her way into a tropical storm and was in it for seven days where she rolled 45 degrees every day.” “Yep”, might be the reply “ but I remember” .....and that special memory is ready for retelling.

At the Wilmington reunion Mike Haloski BT1 displayed an original program from the Commissioning Ceremony for USS FRANK KNOX dated 19 November 1966, Yokosuka Japan. A few day later, our ship and another destroyer escorted USS CONSTELLATION CV-64 from Japan home to San Francisco. They encountered a storm close to Japan that attacked the three ships with fury, drowning the forward fire room of the other destroyer. Jim Lasswell, Weapons Officer at the time recalls “That was the second worse storm of my career!” Our ship suffered a crack in the fantail hatch which allowed seawater to short out steering, forcing the ship to use after steering for 2-3 days, including refueling twice. President Harry Chandler recalls the ship’s gyro-compass loudly hitting the stops at 47 degrees in the same storm.



TCS included a chart from ADM Chester Nimitz’s fleet communication dated 13 February 1945 following Typhoon Cobra, listing the fate of 6 destroyers, HULL, MONAGHAN, DEWEY, AYLWIN, SPENCE and HICKOX.

**HULL** sunk with 70% fuel on board. Reported roll 70 deg.

**MONAGHAN** sunk with 76% fuel aboard. No roll reported.

**DEWEY** Survived. Fuel onboard ? Fuel and water ballast and fuel to the high side. 75 deg. Roll

**ALWYN** Survived. 80% fuel onboard. 70 deg roll.

**SPENCE** sunk. Fuel onboard 15%, Very little water ballast. Hung at 50 deg, capsized.

**HICKOX** survived. 14% fuel onboard. Fully ballasted. 70 degree roll.

Nimitz adds – “Yet the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet wishes to emphasize that that to insure safety at sea, the best that science can devise and that naval organization can provide must be regarded only as an aid, and never as a substitute for the good



seamanship, self-reliance, and a sense of ultimate responsibility which are the first requisites in a seaman and naval officer.”

ED note - Nimitz, although junior in rank, was selected by President Roosevelt and immediately approved by SECNAV Knox December 16, 1941, as soon as he returned to Washington DC from inspecting Pearl Harbor, Knox informed Nimitz, “How soon can you travel?” “the President says “Tell Nimitz the get the hell out to Pearl and stay there until the war is won!” Nimitz left for Pearl by train, then plane, on December 18, 1941. (From Admiral Nimitz – Brayton Harris.)

## 100 YEARS OF CARRIER AVIATION –

The commissioning of the first US Aircraft carrier was launched 20 March 1922. Originally the USS JUPITER, Navy Fleet Collier #3. The US navy was closely monitoring the British interest in naval aviation and thinking independently at the same time. As time went on other countries noted British and US developments, especially Japan. After LANGLEY, partially built battlecruisers LEXINGTON and SARATOGA were repurposed as aircraft carriers after the US signed the Washington Naval Treaty. ADM Ernest King, a naval aviator, became CO of the USS LEXINGTON in 1930. The LEXINGTON was the largest aircraft carrier in the world at the time. King was, and remained, a strong voice for aviation and lobbied for carrier construction before and during WWII. Navy brass watched US Army Air Corp demonstrations of high altitude bombing against remnants of the German WWI fleet led by controversial Gen, William “Billy” Mitchell. It was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that elevated carriers, by necessity into the lead role in WWII in the Pacific. “By taking out the battleships, the Japanese forced an end to the ingrained, time-honored fascination with the so-called queen of the seas. Of necessity, the burden was shifted to those heretofore naval stepchildren of the twentieth century: the submarine and the aircraft carrier.” Brayton Harris, in Admiral Nimitz.

The controversy about high altitude bombing success claims between US Army Air Corp and the US Navy continued into WWII and beyond.

San Diego and USS MIDWAY Museum will celebrate the arrival of USS LANGLEY CV-1 to San Diego in 1924, her new home port. Following the loss of LANGLEY CV-1 in 1941 the name was used a second time for. USS LANGLEY CVL-27 Here is a photo of USS LANGLEY CVL-27 rolling heavily in Typhoon Cobra (Photo from Tin Can Sailors.)



## **View from the salvage fleet -**

If you are one you know it. If not, few remain who remember the 38-day struggle named the “most dramatic and successful ship salvage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. Kelly Goddard’s Navy salvage ship USS GRAPPLE ARS7 was first to arrive to lend assistance. They served as on scene commander during the initial salvage phase. Goddard was the 2012 WV State Commander. He traveled to Wilmington NC “because I wanted to meet and talk with the men who lived aboard that stranded ship. It was rough on us; the typhoons were scary. It must have been hell on them for 38 days.”

The destroyer USS FRANK KNOX was the Navy’s Ship of the Year in 1964. It ran aground July 18, 1965, at 0230 in the morning, setting in motion a massive effort to save the ship, refloat it and return it to the closest shipyard for repair. Goddard’s ship, USS GRAPPLE was the first salvage/rescue ship to arrive on scene. Towing three barges, GRAPPLE laid a salvage anchor and mooring cable, passing the cable to the KNOX. This prevented the KNOX from moving parallel to the reef, also called broaching, a fatal event for the ship. GRAPPLE then directed a tug to place one of the barges at the starboard quarter of KNOX, then ordered ammunition and fuel unloading to lighten the stranded ship. The work began immediately as a Typhoon Gilda threatened.

The barge eventually held about 10 tons of ammunition and around 41,000 gallons of Navy Special Fuel. As Gilda approached rain and wind rose and the barge started smashing at the side of the KNOX, splitting seams and damaging the ship’s side. The current was 5-6 knots pushing the KNOX sideways into danger. Shells, explosives and powder casings on the barge started falling off into the shallow water and between the ship and the barge. A small group of KNOX volunteers including ENS. Price, Marshall and Patterson dragged cargo netting over the load. GRAPPLE directed the tug COCOPA to pass a line to the bucking barge. They did so under very hazardous conditions while Patterson and the ship’s weapons officer, Roggencamp secured the tow line. The barge was towed away easing this crisis. Current across the reef was pushing on the KNOX. Winds continued to build to 30 knots, swells to 10-12 feet. GRAPPLE heaved on her mooring and the KNOX advanced to full power to avoid falling further into danger. The KNOX continued to sustain a terrific beating, pounding up and down, side to side on the reef. Goddard was with the captain on the bridge, relaying his orders to save both ships. He received a number of “Don’t relay that!” orders from his captain to avoid his unplanned comments.

Goddard and his CO were amazed to see the 22-foot motor whaleboat round the stern of the KNOX and head for GRAPPLE to shelter from the weather. The boat was skillfully tended by Rick Swaney BM3. The motor whale boat continued to shelter behind GRAPPLE. They were considering putting further to sea because wind and waves were moving the 3400-ton KNOX 75 feet along the reef, entrenching it on the reef. Just before midnight, GRAPPLE slipped her beach gear, letting the tow wire to the KNOX run free. No one could brave the open decks on the KNOX to assist. The KNOX suffered great buffeting during the night of July 20. The worst of the storm passed, and USS MIDWAY

arrived on scene to evacuate 155 nonessential personnel, leaving 95 volunteers aboard KNOX. GRAPPLE had to lay two new sets of beach gear to survive the weather and help the KNOX. Taken day by day, the saga seems like an endless series of weather and operational challenges.

The next day Swabey and his 2-person crew were reported at GRAPPLE. The following day Swabey and crew were returned to the KNOX by helicopter. As soon as sea conditions smoothed out the motor whale boat was returned. Swaney's skill with the whaleboat was the ride of his life.

GRAPPLE's best time to try to pull the KNOX off the reef was at high tide. There was only one high tide per day, often at night. About 4 hours of preparation preceded high tide for the KNOX crew and 2-3 hours for GRAPPLE and additional tugs. The work stressful because of the constant danger of equipment failure or breakage under the extreme stress of powerful forces. On August 11, GRAPPLE was not available to assist. Her screw was entangled in a beach gear wire while laying the first of two new beach gear anchors. Fortunately, seas were calm when the occurred. There were other dangers. The use of explosives.

Blasting coral to improve the path required by KNOX to reach open water was an initiative started August 1. On the 9<sup>th</sup> divers mistakenly laid a 50-pound hose charge too close to the KNOX. The explosion opened a 12 ft by 8 ft hole in the bow, three ft deep in many places. Personnel were cleared from the forward portion of the KNOX before avoiding injuries. EM Bob Harp was directed away from running the emergency diesel. "Suddenly, the front hall of the rose up, followed by a sharp crack. Then, the bow slammed down on the reef. Everyone was shook up." A ruptured gasoline line sparked a fire. It was quickly put out. Blasting resumed the next day with lots of new rules and continued until the last day. The head of the EOD team earned the nickname "Boom- Boom". From the KNOX crew. Goddard watched the KNOX lift then slam down on the reef. The blast is still clear in his mind 62 years later.

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> just before midnight, another salvage vessel the CONSERVER, was pushed far out of position by the current of 5 knots. A 5/8' line parted, knocking down a dozen men on the ship. None were hurt seriously. Miraculously, in the 38 days of operations no one was killed or seriously hurt. Everyone, including those in charge wanted to be done with the salvage.

A few hours later just before high tide on August 24<sup>th</sup>, the KNOX lunged and was suddenly free of the reef. Not only that but the KNOX floated and was stable. The combined crews lustily sheered. Ships horns and whistles sounded. After preparations, the KNOX was towed stern first to Kaohsiung Taiwan for temporary repairs. Goddard and GRAPPLE were ordered to stay behind and retrieve anchors and beach gear from the salvage. After 38 days of effort more work for the faithful companion to the grounded destroyer. Speed was essential as a 10<sup>th</sup> typhoon was forming, soon to join the 9 typhoons that harassed the salvage fleet and the KNOX since mid-July. The salvage/rescue vessels GRAPPLE, GREENLET and CONSERVER performed sensational work in storms up close to the reef. The companion tugs MUNSEE, MAHOPAC, COCOPA and SOUX were in

constant motion laying beach gear, pulling on the KNOX and weathering storms.

Larger ships like the TALLGEDA, PRAIRIE, POINT DEFIANCE, MARS, and CARTER HALL stood off providing direct support at a respectful distance from Pratas Reef. The connection from large ships to the KNOX were smaller utility craft and LCU 1495 skippered by a BMC making endless trips loaded with equipment and supplies certainly equaled the work of salvage vessels and tugs.

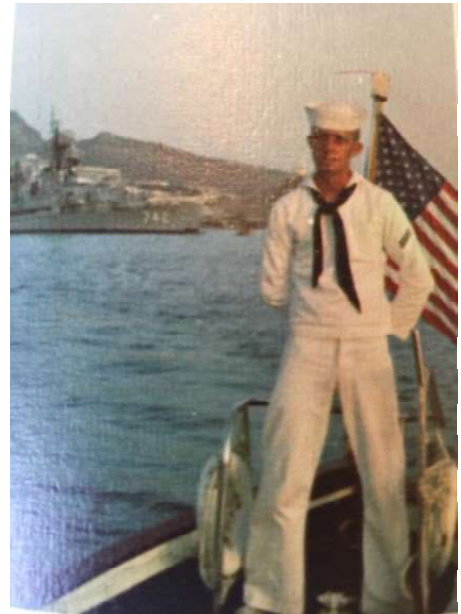
Goddard's memories include the fierce weather, the constant danger near the reef and 23 nights of rigging and work to be ready for high tide usually well before dawn. He was elated at the success of the salvage.

### **ROYAL REEF RUNNERS - The Ride of His Life – Rick Swaney BM3 (BMCS ret.)**

The USS FRANK KNOX DDR-742 went aground on Pratas Reef 18 July 1965. By 21 July the on-board salvage crew of 95 volunteers was reduced to around 38 toward the end of the 38-day salvage operations. Rick Swaney was one who stayed aboard to the end. Swaney's skills emerged a few weeks earlier growing during the salvage operations.

The FRANK KNOX was picking up Secret orders from a mine sweeper off the coast of Qui Nonh, South Vietnam. Swaney was coxswain of the ship's 22' motor whaleboat. The boat officer was ENS Price. Price recalled the weather was rough as the whaleboat came alongside the bucking mine sweeper. During the transfer the minesweeper reared up on a swell, rolled and the downward course would have crushed the whaleboat and injured the crew. Swaney's reactions moved the whaleboat clear just as the much larger minesweeper narrowly missed the small boat.

A few weeks later, following unloading of the forward magazines onto a barge alongside the starboard side of FRANK KNOX, the weather deteriorated. Typhoon Gilda approached. The ammunition loaded barge was smashing against the side of the ship and the motor whaleboat was in jeopardy. Swaney recalls "We would have brought the whaleboat aboard using the boat falls if power to the winches was available. It was not." He was ordered to get the boat underway in mounting seas and shelter near GRAPPLE ARS-7. Swaney and two crew motored out from the ship as darkness fell during the storm. "It was a very long night," until Swaney and crew could secure the whale boat alongside GRAPPLE.



GRAPPLE was dealing with the effects of wind up to 30 kts and 8–10-foot seas. The BOAT crew EVENTUALLY sheltered on GRAPPLE the next two days then, mid-day on the

third day the crew of three were brought aboard a helicopter and returned to FRANK KNOX. Nothing can dim the memory of the ride of his life in a 22' boat during Typhoon Gilda.

After returning to the FRANK KNOX, Swaney and fellow boatswains' mates were plunged into a series of challenging assignments assisting the ship salvage operations. Twenty-foot steel I-beams were brought aboard for reinforcing the front part of the ship. Welding equipment and generators were next. A section of anchor chain was relocated from forward to the ship's stern to secure beach gear cables. A huge air compressor was broken down into two parts and brought aboard ship. There was the forty tons of foam, and catalyst in 55-gallon drums, and nitrogen cylinders arriving to be stored aboard. The steady stream of fuel, food, parts, supplies, and boats delivering these items created a crash course in advanced techniques and skills for the boatswain's mates.

Boatswain's Mates saw or performed a wide variety of highly skilled tasks far beyond routine on-board operations. Safely and skillful execution was a priority. He retired as a Senior Chief Boatswains Mate. "We were 20 somethings. The ship was our home. We just did our duty."

### **ROYAL REEF RUNNERS – BETTER LIVING THROUGH CHEMESTRY - Don Greer BT3 (BTC ret,) and Mike Haloski BT3 (BT-1 ret.)**

When the FRANK KNOX ran aground the morning of 18 July 1965 Mike Haloski was on watch, his relief was late and just entering the after fireroom when the ship started running onto the reef. The initial shock was the sonar dome sheering off, then the bow began riding on the reef, up to 130 feet, before stopping. Haloski recalls it was "smooth going on the reef." Greer was sleeping in after berthing, near the very back of the ship. The ship had stopped. There was an eerie silence. "I got dressed and went up to the forward fireroom where I stood watch the night before. The captain ordered all hands to their duty stations."

Over the next few days, the ship began to flood forcing the engineers to abandon the forward engineering spaces and boilers 1 and 2. Engineering staff focused on boilers 3 and 4 and the after-engineering spaces. If boiler 3's leak could be sealed it could be kept in reserve. Boiler 4, already compromised with sea water contamination, was ordered to provide steam for ship's power and electrical generation. Greer explains, "Normally at sea we would blow down and empty the mud drum in a boiler once a day. The buildup in the mud drum of the boiler 4 now required a hard blow down every watch, six times a day."

Boiler water chemistry is a balancing equation. When salt water is present a white "boiler compound must be mixed in a flask, the flask attached to the boiler feed water to reduce salt accumulation. The PH of the boiler feed needs to be in a range



Fall 2022

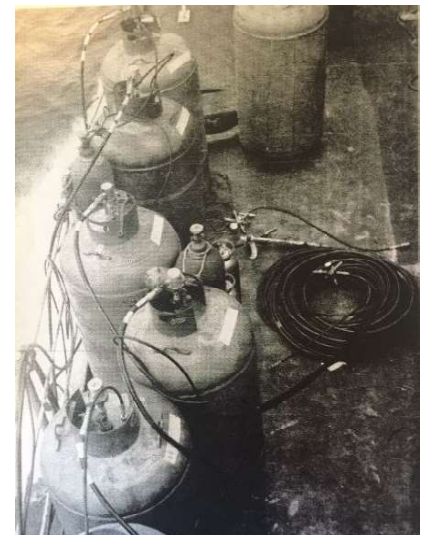


of 7-7.4ph recalls Greer (right). Water quality was monitored by the ship's Water King, a second-class petty officer. The KNOX did not have any Ph sensors. A water sample was taken regularly and tested in the ship's lab. ' Big Mike ' Haloski (right) recalled mixing so much boiler compound "it seems like I was mixing compound every time I turned around. When we opened the number 4 boiler in the shipyard there was boiler compound everywhere, all the way up to here" he gestured. Greer and Haloski and other BT's kept number 4 boiler alive until a new assignment required them to mix new chemicals.



Around 4 August materials for mixing experimental foam arrived at the FRANK KNOX. Salvage personnel tested a foam made of resin, catalyst and Freon bubbles. When the mixed foam was sprayed into water filled spaces it expanded and squeezed water out of the space, adding strength to the space as well. The hardened foam provided a buoyancy ration of 10 to 1.

When materials were brought to the FRANK KNOX, it was placed near the ship's torpedo tubes, between number 1 and 2 stacks, on the O1 level a popular sleeping area in fair weather. Greer, Haloski and two others were instructed to use the equipment and materials. Six-hundred-pound flasks were filled, one with resin the other with catalyst. Freon was added to the resin and catalyst in each flask. Then each flask was hand rolled for 30 minutes to ensure absorption of the Freon with the liquids. Flasks were paired then charged with nitrogen, a propellant, and ready for use. Each 1000 pounds of material would displace around 10 tons of water. Greer, Haloski and two others worked separate 6-hour shifts. They mixed 152 pairs of flasks equal to 76 tons of foam from the raw material. Divers and salvage personnel applied the foam using Alamite spray gun nozzles connected by hose to the tanks. Foam was applied to spaces up to the last day sealing and reinforcing the strength of the ship.



The Urofroth foam and catalyst arrived on the KNOX in 55-gallon drums. Catalyst and foam was scooped into separate flasks, topped with freon, sealed and moved in pairs to hoses with nitrogen propellant. Greer and Haloski recall the foam smelled "Like AFFF", (Aqueous Film Forming Foam used in petroleum firefighting). "It was sticky, and we made a mess of the O1 level." The popular fair-weather sleeping area was abandoned.

After, six plus hours of mixing foam Greer would eat the evening meal, trying to get to the food while it was still warm. After meals he would assist in other areas to help the short-handed crew. Sleeping in the 100-degree heat on the reef was difficult. Greer would get up around midnight and sit with the ship's corpsman (medical) who was assigned monitoring on the cables attached to tugs or beach gear anchors. The tension on these cables

needed to stay within limits; a braking cable could easily kill or seriously injure several shipmates. Greer spent the hours midnight to first light keeping the corpsman company and recording tension readings. Greer says everyone filled in to assist or replace someone called away for other work.

During the period of greatest buffeting by the Typhoon Gilda Greer and other engineers were issued survival knives, a life preserver, and a water repellent flashlight. The great concern was the KNOX would split in two sections, forcing the engineers into the ocean near the reef. Greer always carried his knife and survival gear. He still has the knife and flashlight. The life preserver was for Greer, the light for recognition at night in the water. "The knife was for sharks", recalls Greer.

The life preserver was also a pillow substitute. Sleeping compartments forward and aft were flooded and uncomfortably moist to sleep in. Temperatures on the reef during typhoon season were near 100 degrees. Bob Harp, an electrician's mate, said you had to be near dead to sleep in a compartment. The best choice was outside during clear weather, on the 01 level or aft on the helicopter deck above the after-gun mount. During frequent storms, sleeping was best inside in open areas like the mess decks. Messengers, looking for the next watch to wake, had to know where to find each watch stander.

The reopening of the ship's store, selling cigarettes and candy lifted spirits. Another lift came when each man was offered a "holiday" on one of the large support ships. The "holiday" included two nights aboard included freshwater showers, clean sheets and a proper bunk, regular hot meals, dessert, laundry and uninterrupted rest. There was no fresh water for showers, or hot water, on the grounded destroyer. After two days you returned to the KNOX by boat or helicopter. Most men received two holidays during 38 days on the reef.

Swim call during calm weather allowed experienced swimmers a chance to swim in the ocean off the stern of the KNOX. An armed shark watch was always set. Greer did not join swim call. I wasn't a strong swimmer, so I passed on swim call," he recalled. Why jump off a perfectly good ship to swim with sharks was a thought shared by many Royal Reef Runners.

### **ROYAL REEF RUNNERS – LUNCH BREAK AND THE BLAST– Bob Harp EM3, Jon Osborne CSSN**

When number 4 was in standby, the ship would use the emergency diesel to provide electricity. The decision meant running the emergency diesel well beyond reason. Bob Harp EM3 and one other electricians' mate were assigned duties to keep the diesel running many long hours daily. He dozed, on the mess deck, just above the running diesel. There were breaks for food brought in by helicopter, a brief saltwater shower, His favorite food were sandwiches at noon meals. One warm clear day Harp took his sandwich and sat up near the ship's bow, port side, feet thru the lifelines and gazing at the water. Suddenly, "I heard a gunshot and felt the bullet go past my head! I stood up and yelled at the ass\*\*\*\*. 'What the f\*\*\* are you doing?' At that point I realized it was Captain Grkovic shooting at

sharks! I then made a quick dash for the nearest door into the ship, hoping I wasn't recognized."

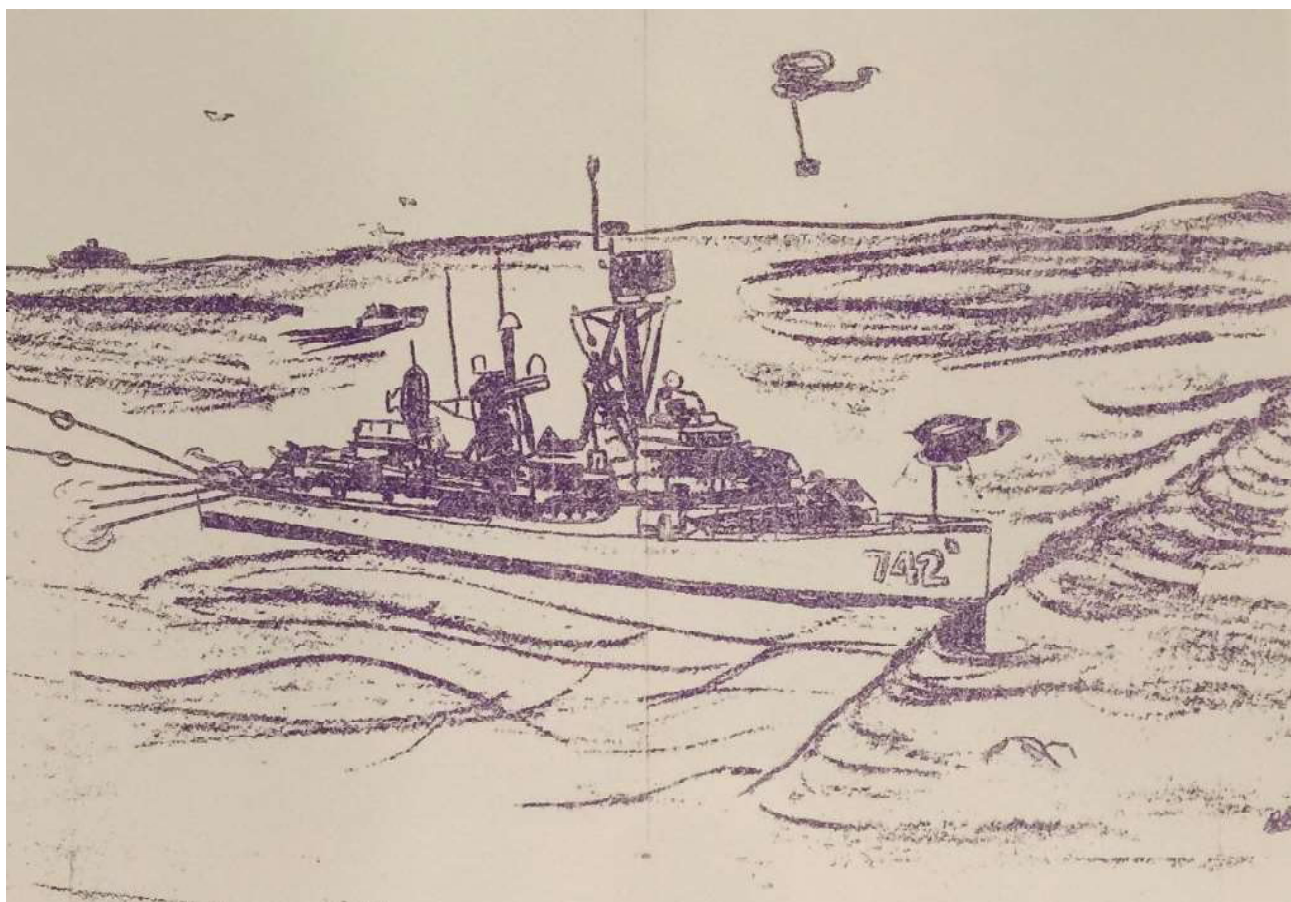
About this time the captain was persuaded to give up shark shooting and surrender his rifle he kept on the bridge. Another reason for the change was shooting sharks attracted other sharks. The opportunities for a swim call off the fantail of the ship would be too dangerous if the practice continued. Swim call continued, always with an armed shark watch posted.

August 9<sup>th</sup> Harp (Right) was manning the Emergency Diesel when he was told to leave his station and move aft. A 50-pound hose charge was being laid outside the hull of the ship to blast coral. Harp was reluctant to leave but a sharp NOW from supervisors got him moving aft, leaving his diesel running. A few minutes later Harp heard a sharp explosion on the port side and saw the deck forward rise. A sharp crack followed. Last, Harp felt the forward part of the ship slam down on the reef. Everyone was stunned. An inspection inside the ship showed the port side forward caved in three feet and an ammunition hoist and decking driven up one deck. The explosion opened a hole allowing ocean water to flow freely into the ship.



Quick thinking crew started using the hole to catch fish. The fish were prepped then cooked using a metal plate and blowtorch. For the lucky few the cooked fish was a welcome relief from prepared food sent to their ship by boat or helicopter. One sailor's recollection of food supplied to the grounded ship was "cold mashed potatoes!" Not everyone received cold food, but food imported is not the same as food right from the steam table of your own ship.

On two occasions Harp was afforded a "holiday" sending him in a rotation to one of the larger ships for two nights off rest on fresh sheets, in air conditioning and several hot meals, or real Navy chow. Harp twice received a "holiday" for food and freshwater showers only to find "water hours" were in force allowing him the bare minimum of fresh hot water. The two "water hours" remains grossly unfair in his mind 57 years later. There was another morale item that required quick action to solve.



"Dark was the night, rough were the seas, seven miles from the Communist China Pratas Islets USS FRANK KNOX grounded. This was how Newsweek Magazine described the grounding of the KNOX. But only the "Royal Reef Runners" know what really happened.

As one of the "Royal Reef Runners" you, Rodger L. MULLINIX, FN are cordially invited to attend the 1st Annual "Maximum Effort Operation" celebration at Nagahama Beach, Nagai Heights, beginning 1800, 17 July 1966 to way past the memorable hour of 0231, 18 July.

For a small fee of \$5.00 (¥1800) you will be provided with the best booze, best food, and best entertainment that you could possibly find in WESTPAC. So mates, as old old shipmates, lets make this party!!!!



## Call for Reef Runners

If you are one you know it. If not, few remain who remember the 38-day struggle named the “most dramatic and successful ship salvage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. Kelly Goddard’s Navy salvage ship USS GRAPPLE ARS7 was first to arrive to lend assistance. They served as on scene commander during the initial salvage phase. Goddard was the 2012 WV State Commander. He traveled to Wilmington NC “because I wanted to meet and talk with the men who lived aboard that stranded ship. It was rough on us; the typhoons were scary. It must have been hell on them for 38 days.”

A year after the salvage, a ROYAL REEF RUNNERS invitation was circulated in Yokosuka to men who served in the salvage fleet and support and to members of the On Board Salvage Crew living on the grounded destroyer. Living on board were: Don Greer BT3, Rich Huehn YN3, Mike Haloski BT3, Gary Platou SFSN, Lionel Price ENS, Bob Harp EM3, Gary Johnson, EM3, Roger Mullinix FN, Ed Reid ENS, Darrel Hawk SFP3, Guy Stacy QM2, Rick Swaney BM3, Mike Loy LTjg, Veith LT, Darrell Patterson BM2, Marshall BM2, Jon Osborne, CSSN. There are at least 21 others who were on the ship when it was freed from the reef August 24, 1965. There are additional volunteers totaling 95 that remained with the ship at the end of the evacuation by helo to USS MIDWAY. All should be added to this list.

Please come forward with your story and photos. If you don’t your story dies with you. Frank Knox Reunion Association is here to help. 619-992-9449



Don Greer, Richard Huehn, Bob Harp, Steve Cross,  
Mike Haloski - Royal Reef Runners

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## SECNAV FRANK KNOX, TWO OCEAN WAR, GOOSEBERRYS AND MULBERRYS –

The photos from Margaret Watson is labeled “D Day”. The photo shows a line of shattered ships, clearly sunk. It is not battle damage however, but photos of the PORT of OMAHA BEACH. The ships are part of construction of an artificial harbor at Omaha Beach. “Most Especially Secret – We are planning to construct very quickly two synthetic harbors on the beaches of this wide sandy bay of the Seine estuary.” Wrote Winston Churchill. The man behind the work is Edmond Moran of New York Harbors Moran Towing.

The artificial harbors would consist of Gooseberries – outer lines of ships scuttled bow to stern to form breakwaters – and 146 Mulberries – inner fixed breakwaters, each displacing 1,600 to 7,000 tons and made of giant concrete caissons ranging up to 5 stories high, 200 feet long, 69 feet in beam, and with a draft of 23 feet. Moran’s job day one, June 6, 1944, was to put 10,000 tons of gasoline, ammunition and K-Ration meals on the beach at Normandy. Mulberry A was in place June 6 and received “through 18 June 197,444 troops, 27,340 vehicles, 68,799 long tons of supplies” Samuel E. Morrison. By late June Mulberry A was fatally damaged in a violent storm. Mulberry B survived at Gold Beach keeping invasion supplies moving.

Frank Knox had a role – he knew Moran and suggested him to ADM King. Later, as head of the War Production Board helped arrange the 31,000 tons of steel and 330,000 cubic yards of concrete to a material-starved England. Moran’s tugboat fleet grew to 150-160 strong. On June 6, as the assault took place, Moran radioed “90 caissons in tow”.

In the next issue of KNOX KNEWS we’ll have more on the activities of Frank Knox in the next editions. Special thanks to Margaret Watson our Treasurer for sharing her father’s D Day photos.



*Naval Reserve Captain Edmond J. Moran receives urgent and specific instructions from Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Dwight D. Eisenhower on board the destroyer USS Thompson after D-Day. The general ordered Moran back to the United States “for more supplies and equipment to keep the invasion going.”*

# **TAPS – Reporting To A New Duty Station**

## **List of Taps reported since the last newsletter:**

**Evans, Thomas R. FTG-3 Aboard 1967-8/1970**  
**05/13/2003 Orangeville,PA**



**Toll, David RD-2 Aboard 9/1954-07/1957**  
**02/13/2022 Reno, Nevada**

Fair winds and following seas, gentlemen. From an Orv Krieg Newsletter:  
“May the lord fill our sails with fair wind, support our hulls in inviting seas,  
guide our hands upon the tiller toward pleasant places, and bring us home O  
Lord, to a safe and loving harbor.”

“We are destroyermen! Ready to sail and always can do. The first to arrive  
and the last to go.” Destroyerman’s Creed

## Life Member Certificate and Pin





# USS Frank Knox Ships Store



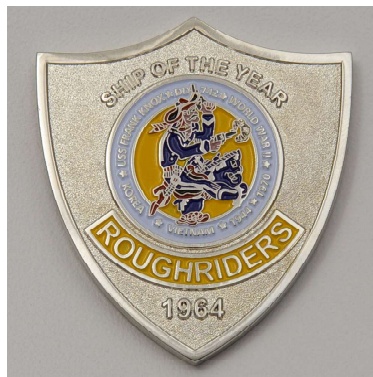
**Baseball Cap \$20.00**



**Rough Rider Patch \$5.00**



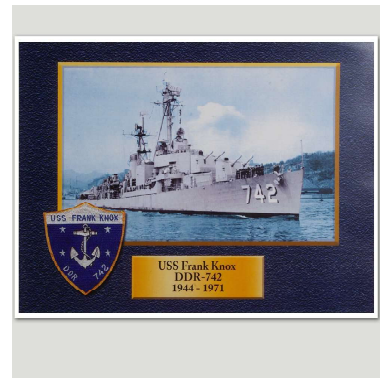
**USS Frank Knox Shield Patch \$5.00**



**Ship of the Year Roughriders 1964 Medallion \$10.00**



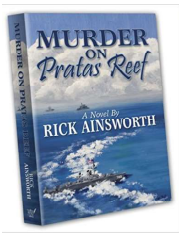
**U.S.S. Frank Knox Ship's Medallion \$10.00**



**License Plate Frame \$20.00**

**USS Frank Knox \$10.00**

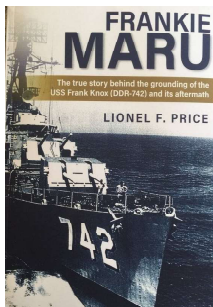
**Photo - Ship with shield patch and plaque \$5.00**



### **Murder on Pratas Reef**

**Finalist for the 2007 National Best Books Award for Historical Fiction, this must-read delivers a compelling story of suspense and intrigue. Set in the context of the real life accident, the burgeoning Vietnam war and the civil rights movement, the fictional murder tests the men of the Knox to their limits. Follow the adventure as they attempt the next-to-impossible feat of freeing their ship and turn what could have been**

**humiliation into a testament to honor, loyalty, and dedication. This item is available on Amazon.com.**



**Copies available - USS Frank Knox Reunion Assoc. \$30.00 send check to Margaret Watson Treasurer. or, Order it Amazon.com Frankiemaru Lionel F. Price**

**"The true story behind the Grounding of the USS Frank Knox (DDR-742) and its Aftermath"**

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**Corvallis, OR 97330**

Fall 2022





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