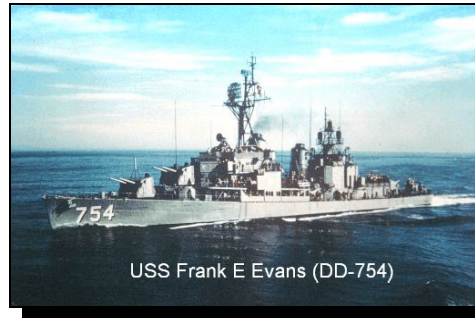
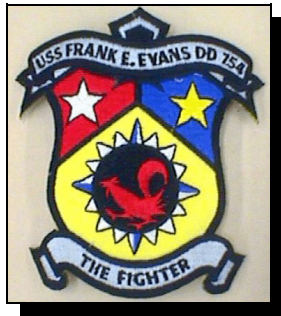


## U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS ASSOCIATION



Named after Brigadier General Frank Edgar Evans USMC, U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754), a SUMNER Class Destroyer, was commissioned 3 February 1945. She had a gallant service record participating in World War II, the Korean conflict, and Vietnam.



She was known affectionately as "The Fighter" because of her uncanny skills to place all her guns right on target regardless of the sea state.

During her tour during the Korean conflict she became affectionately known as the "Grey Ghost". She earned her nickname because of her grey hull and her uncanny ability to slip through the fog and raise havoc with the Koreans with her 5" guns just when the Koreans were expecting a respite.



On 3 June 1969, having just completed a long tour of shore bombardment off the coast of Vietnam, she was operating with a multinational South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) task force of approximately 40 ships in the South China Sea, led by the Task Force Leader, HMAS MELBOURNE, an Australian aircraft carrier, in a "Show of Force" demonstration to the North Vietnamese. At approximately 0315 that dark morning during a change of station maneuver, FRANK E. EVANS and MELBOURNE were involved in a catastrophic collision. HMAS MELBOURNE struck USS FRANK E. EVANS amidships cutting her in half. Within minutes the forward half rolled to port and sank, taking with her 74 brave souls. A total of 10 sailors in the forward section managed to escape and survive. On that fateful morning the three Sage brothers of a Niobrara, Nebraska family were lost. Chief and Boiler Tender Reilly, father and son serving together aboard FRANK E. EVANS, the father survived but the son was lost.

Subsequent investigations placed fault of the collision primarily with FRANK E. EVANS. The important fact of that fateful night was the demonstration of bravery and comradeship by the sailors of both FRANK E. EVANS and MELBOURNE. Had it not been for the courageous action of MELBOURNE's sailors, many more lives would have been lost. Robert Trumbull a correspondent on special assignment for the New York Times, on 7 June 1969 wrote, "members of MELBOURNE jumped aboard the destroyer from the flight deck to help rescue American Sailors." He reported, "The stern section of the destroyer, which remained afloat, was secured alongside MELBOURNE's starboard side within three minutes." Mr. Trumbull's article went on to praise the conduct of MELBOURNE's crew in the moments after the impact by quoting a wide spread belief that because of the speed of response and navigational skills of MELBOURNE's skipper, Captain John Stevenson, many lives were saved. MELBOURNE's Executive Officer Commander Errol acknowledgment praised the crew of EVANS. "They were cool, there was no panic there," he said, "there were no recriminations by the American boys either. Many of the crew shook my hand when they were leaving MELBOURNE and said they were sorry to have met under these circumstances."

There exists perhaps even a greater tragedy than the collision itself. That is, what for the most part, a lack of acknowledgment on the part of the U. S. Navy and the part of our Nation for the sacrifice these men, their parents, and loved ones have made. Even though FRANK E. EVANS had just completed an extended tour of shore bombardment off the Vietnam coast, and even though she was part of a SEATO Task Force making a "show of force" demonstration to the North Vietnamese, her sailors' names are not on the Vietnam Memorial. It seems the location of the fatal collision was beyond the Vietnam "Combat Zone" as interpreted by the U. S. Department of Defense.

For so many years, we ourselves, U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754) shipmates and crew, were remiss in our duties and obligations. Like so many, our time aboard ship became a memory of the distant past. Then in 1992, Mr. H. G. "Nick" Nichols (1950-1954) of Frankston, Texas sought out shipmates who had served aboard U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS at one time or another during her three decades of service. Those men formed an association in Grapevine, Texas. Subsequently, the U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS Association was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in the State of Texas. We have followed each year with a reunion.

The primary mission, objectives, and purpose of the U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS Association shall be to:

- Identify and locate all who have served in U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754).
- Promote camaraderie among shipmates, family and friends of shipmates who served aboard U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754), as well as others with similar interest.
- Promote a spirit of national patriotism.
- Help assure that the history of U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754) is maintained.
- Conduct research, communicate, appropriately publicize, help commemorate the deceased and those lost at sea, through timely ceremonies, publicity and memorials.



Reunions provide the place to renew old acquaintances and to make friends with new shipmates and family members. Reunions bring us together as one extended family. The "bond" is still there that existed when we were all much younger!

Reunions and memorial services are important, especially when there has been a tragedy that has taken lives. Reunions provide an invaluable ingredient to the healing process. There have been many incidents of tears and release of the pain and suffering because of the sharing and caring by shipmates.

Before every evening meal we light the "candle of remembrance". Three shipmates representing each decade of service, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, lights one portion of the candle. At the main banquet we toast all shipmates who, for whatever circumstance, are unable to be with us. We also recite the "Ode to the Fallen" followed by "Lest We Forget".



A table is set for our fallen shipmates, represented by a white hat. A white linen table cloth that could be used as a clean bandage for the wounds of our fallen shipmates. A red rose to signify the blood our fallen shipmates have shed. A crystal glass of water to quench their thirst for freedom. Salt to remind us of the pain they feel lest we forget them. White bone china is the purity of their hearts and sacrifices. Centered and hovering behind and above is the flame of a single burning candle.



It is our eternal promise that we shall not forget them.

## *Ode to the Fallen*

*They shall grow not old,  
As we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

## *Lest We Forget*

from Laurence Binyon's "For the Fallen"



## REUNIONS

DATE	LOCATION	FACILITY
1. September 25-26, 1992	Grapevine, TX	Hilton Conference Center
2. October 1-2, 1993	Granbury, TX	Lodge on Lake Granbury
3. October 21-22, 1994	Las Vegas, NV	Hacienda Hotel
4. September 6-9, 1995	Charleston, SC	Holiday Inn, Mt. Pleasant
5. October 12-19, 1996	Corpus Christi, TX	Holiday Inn, Emerald Beach
6. September 25-27, 1997	San Diego, CA	Marriott Suites
7. August 27-29, 1998	Alexandria, VA	Holiday Inn, Old Town
8. 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 3 June 1969 Collision and Loss of 74 Crew Members		
May 29, 1999	Niobrara, NE	Memorial Service
June 3-6, 1999	Sydney, Australia	HMAS Melbourne host
9. September 21-23, 2000	Aurora, CO	Holiday Inn, Denver Southeast
10. September 6-8, 2001	Aurora, CO	Holiday Inn, Denver Southeast
11. September 5-7, 2002	St. Louis, MO	Renaissance Airport
12. July 31-August 2, 2003	Long Beach, CA	Renaissance Long Beach
13. September 23-25, 2004	Lubbock, TX	Holiday Inn Hotel Towers
14. June 9-11, 2005	Milwaukee, WI	Four Points-Sheraton
15. September 21-23, 2006	Excelsior Springs, MO	Elms Resort, Spa & Conference Center
16. October 4-6, 2007	Excelsior Springs, MO	Elms Resort, Spa & Conference Center