

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

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As I write, it's only three weeks until opening day. The yard period is almost over. We put a sign in the passageway that reads, "Three weeks until deployment. Will your department be ready?" I think we will be. The radio room looks like a radioroom, the CIC looks like a radar room, the captain's cabin looks like a captain's cabin and the passageways are freshly painted.



Maralyn & Dick Walker
Prep work Officers Country



Claire Oesterreich
Detail Painter



Clark Farnsworth
Aft Washroom

On Saturday 11 March, Captain's mast was held in the ship's office. The accused, the Ship's Superintendent and occasional writer of a nautical scandal sheet, was charged by the Ship's Yeoman, Dr. Al Vanderzee, current college history professor, board recording secretary, file clerk, former navy aviation nuclear ordnance man (and we don't even trust him with sharp pencils) and chairman of the USS SLATER Speaker's Bureau, of the following act dereliction of duty; "Despite repeated promises over the last several months to write an article to recruit lecturers for the Speaker's Bureau in the newsletter SLATER SIGNALS, the ship's superintendent has continued to ignore the needs of the poor badgered yeoman. The February SLATER SIGNALS arrived in the mail, and once again there was no mention of the need for volunteers to help the yeoman's efforts in promoting the project by providing SLATER speakers to civic groups libraries, and reunion groups." The presiding judge, board Chairman Frank J. Lasch, Esq. noted attorney and public speaker in his own right, rendered a verdict. "No more needle gunning until you write the March edition, and for god's sake, put something in to shut Al up."

Thus, I appeal to any and all of you who are interested in helping promote the SLATER project. If you have any experience with public speaking and would like to address civic and reunion groups, or if you can stand in front of a group and link three coherent sentences together without stammering, please leave a message for Al Vanderzee at 431-1943. Al

has put together a video and presentation guide to help you get familiar with the project history and he needs your help. Whew.



Tim and Hack tackle deck chores after Moose Stew



Rafe Suarez chipping overhead aft bulkhead



Fitz Bradford Volunteer Tour Guide

Back to needle gunning. Our real heroes are "Chipperdale Stars" *Dick Smith, Chris Fedden, Pat Cancilla, Raf Suarez and Earl Gillette*. Holding a needle gun overhead at any age is no picnic, but what a way to spend the golden years. These are the lead men who are so key to the restoration process. Everyone else follows them into the space. Of course the electrician's would say that without lights and the air compressor, not much would be happening either, so you be the judge. Forward officer's country is all prepared for spraying, which should happen this week. The same goes for the maindeck passageway from the wardroom to the machine shop. The crew has moved into the aft passageway and is scaling the aft cross passageway and working their way forward into the head. *Gordon Lattey* continues his work sanding and restoring the desks and cabinets that will go into the officer's staterooms.

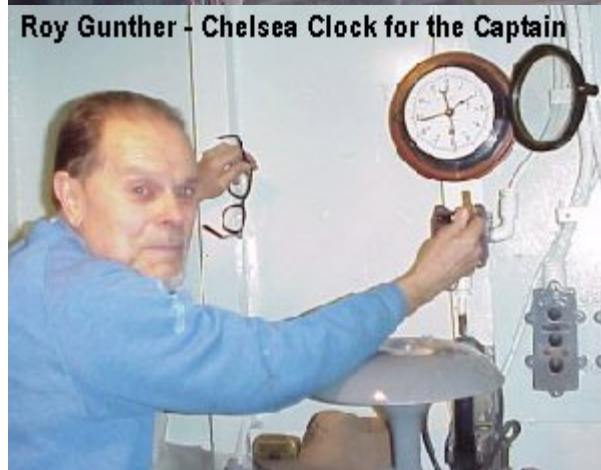
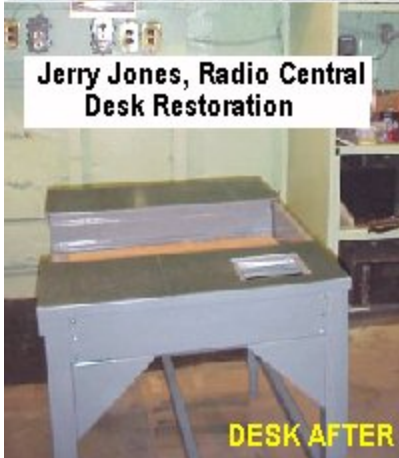


Buckets of Tile and Concrete

Gary Sheedy has continued on his path of destruction. After doing the big rip out in the galley, he got a hold of an electric ninety pound jack hammer and spent three weeks jacking out the tile and concrete that the Greeks Navy in the aft crew head and passageway. In some places the concrete was six inches thick, with ceramic tile on top. I made my deal with the devil to get this job done. I told Gary that if he chopped it up, I'd get it to the Dumpster in pails. Well, because of the weight we were afraid to fill the Dumpster more than one third full. This week will be our fourth Dumpster load. This should be the end of it for this season. We still have the galley and the shower stalls to do in the future.

Clark Farnsworth followed Gary into the aft crew's washroom. With the tile gone Clark went to work with Doug's plasma cutter and cut away the entire Greek style stainless steel trough sinks and sheathing that had been added. In one day he cut out about three- hundred pounds of stainless. The plasma cutter made it all possible. *Tim Benner* shouldered the roll of second- duty welder when Clark went to Florida and while Russ was on census duty.

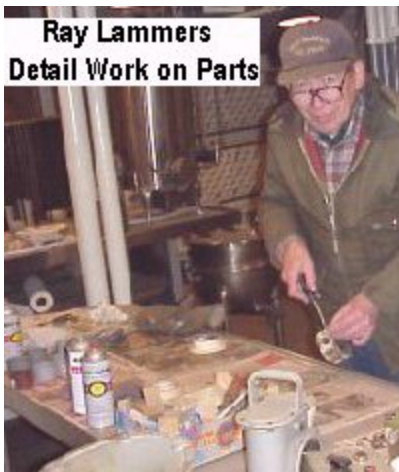
The warm weather brought out Beeler, who managed to cut his forehead within fifteen minutes of stepping aboard. That's another oak leaf cluster for his SLATER purple heart, or whatever you do for a guy who can't get a cup of coffee without hurting himself. He went to work in the aft head removing deck tile around the compartment perimeter in preparation for installing the trough. *Hack Charbonneau* also reported back aboard after the ice melted around his ice-fishing hut. We were especially glad to see him as he hosted our annual moose stew and Alaskan salmon luncheon in the CPO mess. You know a guy has been away a long time when he has to ask where the coffeepot is now. He made a base for the new hot water heater and is helping Doug on the fresh water system.



Larry, Bob and Mike have CIC just about back together. The radar's are in place, all the plotting and status boards have been mounted as well as the instruments. *Hal Hatfield* is fabricating the base for the 36" plotting table that we need to complete the space. *Ken Kaskoun* has been back working on the sound powered phone systems on the 02 level forward. *Barry* has completely rewired the darken ship system outside the CIC so we can demonstrate the operation of the system to the visitors. Meanwhile, *Bob Dawson* is detailing the brightwork and painting the deck.

Down in radio, Don and Jerry have that space close to completion. Jerry is restoring the operator's tables. He has one finished and reassembled, and the second one still in pieces but well on the way. *Charlie Havlick* brought back a beautifully restored RBH radio receiver for CIC. The quality of their work sets a standard for all of us. *Roy Gunther* just about has the captain's stateroom wrapped up. He has refinished all the furniture, the bunk and mounted the wall clock. He also has the sink installed in the head. The place is fit for the Captain.

The wardroom has been converted to a temporary paint shop, the center for mixing the primer, green and whites we are using for the restoration. The *Peek brothers* were back and sprayed out the CIC, passageways and the captain's cabin. Tommy has followed up, spraying the chartroom and primer in the storeroom. *Dick and Maralyn Walker, George, Nancy, Claire and Erik* have continued their important work of cleaning, vacuuming, masking and doing the trim painting after spraying. New volunteer *Dick Palovic* has joined us cleaning and painting decks. Dick is a former Coast Guard ET, who did LORAN duty in the fifties. Of course our other Coasties *Dick Walker* and *Doug Tanner* are elated. They're all doing okay here on the Rensselaer side where we're snugged up to the pier, but the may have some problem over at the Snow Dock where we're twenty-four foot from shore. That's a long way away from the beach for those Coasties. Speaking of new volunteers, professional painters *Gary Salmon and Carl Mason* have given us several days and sprayed out the wardroom passage. *Ray Lammers* continues to repair and paint fixtures and box covers. He's really settled into the Mess Decks and has lots of room to spread out the hardware. Of course he's always prepared to pick up shop & move to another area as we close in behind him!



Ray Lammers
Detail Work on Parts



Nancy Buxton-scrubbing OC Bulkheads



Bob Dawson - CIC

Doug Tanner has also brought his crew in from GE and they have been working hard running the fresh water lines from the aft crew's quarters, through the machinery spaces to the galley. Doug donated a burner for an oil fired hot water heater that we are installing in the muffler room so the *Michigan crew* will have plenty of hot water for showers when they arrive aboard. Doug is also working on another little problem. The Albany winter and freezing water wasn't very kind to our propeller shaft packing. We have sump pumps rigged in both shaft alleys. The cooling line to the port shaft bearing split this winter. We reduced it to a drip with a soft patch. The starboard sump-pump was frozen solid to the bilge, so don't listen to anyone who tells you it doesn't freeze 9' below the water line in Albany! The packing on the starboard shaft has been leaking every since the ship came over from Greece. Kind of makes us wish the surveyor in Souda Bay had addressed the stern tubes as he addressed the sea chests. "Water under the bridge", or in the shaft alleys as the case may be. Anyway, the situation is well under control. She's so high out of the water anyway that even flooded, the water only rises to a foot above the shaft. Regardless, Doug is working on semi permanent fixes for both shafts, to stop the leaking until we can get into dry-dock.

The Naval Reservists were a big help this month. *The Albany crew* sprayed primer and topcoat in the amidships storeroom and the forward officer's head. They also helped the electricians run the five-pair cable for the ship's entertainment system from the machine shop to the aft crews quarters. The *Glens Falls crew* came the following Sunday and ran new fresh water lines in B-1 and B-2 between the galley and the new hot water heater in the muffler room. They also hung the book- shelf and gyro repeater in CIC and burned and ground smooth a lot of projections off the deck in the aft passageway and head.

Debbie Moore has joined our staff as marketing coordinator as one of the few, the proud, the paid. That's almost a source of guilt in this outfit. Be that as it may, she will fill the important role as the human being on the telephone for all those of you who are tired of listening to my message on the answering machine. Her primary functions are to work with *Marketing Chair, Joanne McFadden* to help promote awareness of the project, book and schedule tours and tighten up our administrative functions and work with Nancy coordinating the guide volunteers. Her role dovetails Nancy's with the tours and guide volunteers. Deb's role is to get them in the parking lot, and Nancy takes over from there with the tours, education and interpretation. Deb has an extensive background in travel writing in the Albany region, a wealth of contacts, and most important, a sense of humor which is very important when you're on the phone, and the needle guns start going in the pilothouse. With the Education Coordinator scrubbing bulkheads and the Ship's Superintendent hauling concrete to the Dumpster, we can't wait to see Deb find her niche. Dick and Maralyn Walker have also volunteered to assist Nancy and Deb as volunteer guide coordinator. This means they may be calling YOU to assist with some tour guide assistance so brush up on your volunteer handbook and have those Navy "uniforms" ready for action.

As part of our improved communications and marketing plan, we plan to bring in a second phone line when we return to the Snow Dock and put the ship's computer on line so those of you who want to contact us by E-mail can. They'll be an E-mail link to the website so you'll be able to contact us easily. *Pat and Mike* have done a marvelous job answering E-mail for us, but the traffic volume is increasing to the point where we need to start handling it aboard. SLATER news articles continue to appear thanks to the diligence of Joanne E. McFadden, DEHF Board member who is the Chair of Marketing & Publicity. Her recent article that appeared in the Capital District and Hudson Valley Mature Life publication featured *Les and Annette Beauchaine*. Les's smiling face as photographed by *Pat Perrella* captured the cover that was distributed in a

12 County area. Les reports he's been taking a lot of heat about "winning the WAR single-handedly" but it's all for the good of SLATER!



Another SLATER "News Maker" is Fitz Bradford, volunteer tour guide. Fitz recently received an award for being included in the Who's Who of American Junior College Students and requested his interview be held aboard SLATER. Fitz and Times Union staff writer, Michael Lopez, braved a bitterly cold day to complete a tour of SLATER along with conducting the interview and taking photos for the article that appeared in the Sunday, 19 March TU. We are as proud of Fitz as he is of us and hope he can continue as part of our volunteer team as he works towards his future educational goals as a student at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy.

Eric Weidman is progressing well with his plans to attend the 15th Reunion of the USS Slater Alumni Association in Mobile, AL from 27-30 April. Many of you may not know this but Eric has been researching SLATER'S history for his Master's Thesis at SUNY Albany. We will have more of this in a future issue but just want to report that between the generosity of the SLATER Crew and a Grant from NYS Assemblyman John J. McEneny's Office, Eric will be able to attend and accomplish his goal of obtaining oral histories and other important historical data from the men who commissioned SLATER and served aboard her during 1944-45. This is a valuable project towards our establishment as a living museum dedicated to Destroyer Escort history. We only wish that we ALL could be there with him!

The Tour Guide Meeting was held 18 March in the Mess Hall. About 30 volunteers attended and Nancy Buxton, Educational and Volunteer Coordinator covered all the topics regarding conducting tours aboard SLATER. Everyone seemed eager and enthusiastic about having the newly restored areas added to the tour. Now when Radio Central and Combat Information Center are mentioned the compartments will reflect their importance to the overall scheme of SLATER as a fighting vessel during WW II.

We hope all the tour guides realize their importance as SLATER representatives and how much their service is valued as they bring groups about the ship. **Remember, Opening Day 2000 is Saturday, APRIL 1st.**

In our continuing search for grant money *Frank Lasch* secured a NYS House Member item through Assemblyman John Faso for restoring our wooden motor whaleboat. That's an exciting project that we're looking forward to. However; we had one disappointment. Our request for restoration funds for the aft crew's quarters was politely turned down by NYS Parks and Recreation. That's kind of okay, because it will now give the crew something to do next winter. However, on the plus side of the ledger, our grant for the ice deflection system is still pending. The contract for painting the hull above the waterline is in the process of being bid out, and prospective bidders will be coming by as this goes to press. The bid opening will be Monday, March 27, like we don't have enough going on with the move scheduled for the next day.

Things are falling in place for the move. Tugs are being arranged for through *Bart Brake and Bill Welsh* at Empire Marine. The NYS Canal Corps tugs are in dry-dock in Waterford, north of the lock and this won't open until May. The Albany Water Department is again providing the crane to set the camels and the gangway in place thanks to Commissioner *Bob Cross* and *John Kosa*. *Tom Moore* has the mission of packing the four worst camels with Styrofoam between now and next Tuesday, and will be using his boat the day we set the camels in place. And, we just got a call that one-hundred and twenty Cub Scouts want to tour the ship the Saturday after we arrive. It looks like our third year in Albany is about to start with a bang.

We'll be moving minus our quarterdeck ships' bell; it has been called into duty to be used in the Spring Concert to be held at the South Colonie High School. The Memorial Concert Band of Colonie requested our bell to be used during a John Philip Sousa march, "Liberty Bell" and we were pleased to send it along. We are sure there will be enough noise and excitement to announce our arrival back to the Albany side of the river however; so until next month, goodbye Rensselaer and we'll **SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SHORE.**