

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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**The summer of 1998 has come and gone, and our beloved USS Slater has become a popular tourist attraction in Albany**, being taken in by our new home. Our schedule has finally settled into what will be a short-lived routine. We tear the ship apart and work like hell Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Wednesday afternoon we bust our butts cleaning her up so at 11 AM Thursday morning she is spanking clean for our visiting public. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday we welcome a steady stream of curious visitors. On Saturday, **Tony Dudes's** (US Maritime Academy) engineers and **Barry Witte's** (USNR) electricians work mysteriously behind the chains and caution tape, making various improvements to *Slater's* innards. More on that later...

**Our big event was the DESA Convention that came in from Springfield, MA.** Over 250 DE veterans and their wives toured the Slater that morning, More than enough to take her back to sea. **Mayor Gerald Jennings** spoke at the memorial service and County Executive **Mike Breslin** attended the afternoon luncheon. Both spoke of the positive impact *Slater* was having on Albany. The DESA crew were impressed enough to vote on having their year 2000 convention in our fair city. We expect to have the restoration really well along by that date, so hang on guys and girls. This is a convention you have to make.

**More big news was the cross country journey of Ray Windle (DE 640) and Sam Saylor(DE 306).** They secured a second load of WW II shipboard artifacts donated by **Bob Rogers**. This last load included a complete set of WW II charts, navigation books and instruments, portholes, spare searchlight lenses, bunk bottoms, uniforms, joinerdoors, and telescopes. These guys are no spring chickens, but they got the three tons of gear loaded in the New Mexico heat, moved it to Dallas, unloaded it in the Texas heat; and two months later, loaded it up again for the trip to Albany.

**However, there was one addition to the load, a WW II Navy jeep "driven" by Ray Windle!** Ray found the jeep and lovingly restored it and finished it with a haze gray paint job and lettering that says "**USS SLATER SHORE PATROL.**" Ray even donated his S.P. Arm band for us to wear when riding the jeep. Driving it around the streets of Albany has created a lot of attention for the *Slater*. So many people asked Ray where they could get one like it, that he bought a second jeep restored it and is donating it to the Foundation as a raffle piece to benefit the Slater. Details will be forthcoming . . .

**The volunteer crew continues to work hard at it.** We are all in awe of **Dutch Hannmann (DE 530)** as he has now nearly completed the overhead under gun tub 41. He also brought his little grandson around for a tour and we immediately nicknamed him "the little chipper".

**A cracked cylinder liner has the engineers rethinking their approach to the emergency diesel in B-4.** They're checking out the 3-268 A in B-2 to see if it is in better shape. Not content with working deep inside the ship, **Tony Dudes** rounded up some of his diving buddies and checked out the hull. They reported no marine growth, zincs in good shape, sea chests well secure and no dents in the bottom of the sonar dome. This last report was pleasantly surprising considering we have less than a foot of water under the dome at low tide.

**Additional deck force projects include repainting the deck** outside the pilot house, the "K" Guns and roller loaders, Gun 3 and the main deck forward. **Chris Fedden (DD 711)** has been taught how to use a spray gun and is spraying out the 40 mm gun mounts. New volunteer **Carlton Clovell (CVE 69)** has been working with **Larry Case (Sea Cadet)** to sort, sew and repair the signal flags. Thanks to all of you who laundered the flags and had them hanging around your houses drying for days.

**The electricians have been busy working on weather deck lights and additional lights in the machinery spaces.** One disadvantage to better lightening down there is to see all the work that needs to be done. They also rigged all the starboard side longwire antennas.

**Bob Callender's (DE 744) riggers** completed all the lifeline work on the 01 level and are working on the main deck life lines. They are supported by the welders who are making repairs to stanchions as they work along. Welding is an ongoing task aboard Slater and there is plenty of work. If you can weld, **WE NEED YOU!**

**We have received help from several unexpected sources.** The crew of the **USS Rinehart DE 196**, came to visit and spent a morning working on gun 1. One tourist on one of **Roy Gunther's (DD-711, LSD-17)** tours was **Jim Calnon of Fleet Bank**. Jim offered to organize two volunteer days for the Fleet Bank employees. Twenty Fleet Bank volunteers came aboard Sept. 14 and 15 and repainted the 01 level deck around the stack, and the main deck starboard side. They also corrosealed the overhead under gun 41. Their efforts also placed the **Slater** on news broadcasts from two TV stations.

**Doug Tanner of the GE Plastics Plant took a tour** given by our former NYC volunteer workhorse **Rafael Suarez (DD-944)** and was so impressed he volunteered himself, his co-workers and GE to the task of creating a working head aboard the ship. He is in the process of restoring the aft head and has **Rafael** busy chipping down to the bare metal. The project will include a deep sink, wash basin, hot water heater, commode, urinal and installation of a septic tank. **General Electric** is even funding the project and providing materials. This will be a major step forward in **Slater's** habitability. **Doug's** only complaint is the grief he takes for being an ex-Coast Guard Damage Controlman. The Navy vets keep telling him 24' is a long way to be from shore. But, most Navy guys never did weather station duty on a 311' Cutter.

**Volunteer Nights:** If you want to volunteer for maintenance and can only work weekday evenings, we have a deal for you. We will be running volunteer evenings Monday and Tuesday from four to eight-thirty. If you clean, chip, paint or weld, stop in and see us. It might be a good idea to call in advance if you plan to come as we lock the gate at six PM.

**Another of the old New York Crew, Ron Frankosky came up for a weekend** and split his time behind a needle gun and leading tours. It was great to see him again. There were also several NYC Volunteers aboard during the DESA tour visiting with Albany Volunteers while comparing notes and checking on the progress since the ship left the City. It was good to have them back aboard and we hope they can come up more often.

**We are also pleased to report a "genuine" Slater veteran came for a visit with his wife and friends. Ceylon E. Russell**, a Plankowner who served on the ship from her Commissioning through 1945, spent a few hours with us reminiscing and helping us with the Quarterdeck Watch. Striking the bells was a new experience for him as he served below decks in the engine room.

**Another local Slater vet, Edward G. Elze**, has signed on to become a tour guide and a lot of us are going to sneak the time to be on one of his tours, that's for sure! Along with volunteer **Don Norris**, who makes the trip from Hollidaysburg, PA the *USS Slater* has expert guides with these former crew.

**Journalist Ann Morrow of Metroland profiled the Slater in a recent issue.** It was a great piece that we were all proud of, as we work to get the word out about the ship. We hope video rentals of "*The Enemy Below*" went through the roof that week. Speaking of getting the word out, if you are taking a trip, come see us for some brochures. We need to get these out to other attractions and highway rest-stops, particularly along the NYS Thruway. If you can help us with these, we need you.

**Finally, the Michigan Chapter of DESA has been begging us to allow them to come east and sleep aboard for a field day week.** We finally told **Dick Breil** if you guys don't mind hanging your own bunks, eating at the truck stop, washing with a cold water hose and using a port-a-john, come on over. So they are . . . The week of October 4th they will be aboard. They are still looking for a cook, so if anyone wants to volunteer they have an open berth.