



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The Monday Crew congratulates Clark Farnsworth on his 88th birthday.

Our senior active volunteer celebrated his 88th birthday this January third, I think. This January third just happened to be a Monday, our biggest volunteer day, so we decided to make an event of it. With the whole crew present, **Smitty** made Clark his favorite lunch, and **Paul Czesak** presented Clark with a beautiful birthday cake with Clark in his CPO dress uniform and a picture of Clark's beloved ship, his USS LEYTE CV32. It seemed to be one of the few Mondays where it didn't snow so we had a great turnout of volunteers for the event, about 20 people. We even posted it on our Facebook page.

It was about two weeks later, on a Monday that I was sitting across from Clark, that he mentioned a birthday party that friends had thrown for him the previous Monday. That would have been January 10. Two birthday parties. So I asked him directly, when is your birthday? We've always celebrated it on the third and you've never corrected us." I'm not clear about his answer, but he mumbled something about getting more parties this way. In fact, for those of you who pay attention to

details, you'll notice that this is Clark's second 88th birthday. Apparently I got it wrong and we celebrated it last year, too. This from a guy who told us when he reached 80, he was going to start counting down. So maybe he's 72 in his mind. He acts like it. So whenever and which ever, "Happy birthday, Clark."





Snow and more snow.



Super Dave Mardon plows the parking lot.

It would be a real challenge to write this edition without making any reference to the weather. I went back and reviewed several past years' editions of the January SIGNALS to see how much worse this January was from Januarys past, and you know what. It's not much different. January in Albany is generally lousy. I will say that the 15 below zero morning was an eye opener for all of us. Suffice to say, with all the talk about global warming, I just knew it would be a mild winter, so I planned a major outdoor project, restoration of the portside deckhouse corrosion just aft of the galley. That project is not progressing as well as I had hoped. Working out in the snow and cold, **Doug Tanner, Dave Mardon, Tim Benner, Gene Jackey** and **Chuck Teal** have cut away the first section of wasted metal along the deck by the forward B-2 hatch. As they cut, the whole bulkhead started to buckle. It turned out that the vertical supports were so wasted that there was nothing holding the deck up. This meant halting the job, and putting temporary stiffeners in to hold every thing in place while the vertical frames were rebuilt. And then a whole series of stuffing tubes were rotted out, so they had to be replaced, as well as a lube oil tank vent, before the bulkhead could be replaced. They've got Clark inside fabricating the freeing ports for the fan rooms. If you understood all that, get a job in a shipyard. In simple word, the job keeps getting more complicated. Good thing these guys are volunteers or the cost overruns would be enormous. **Ken Kaskoun** and **Walt Stuart** spent a couple miserable days down in cold forward engine room fire watching for the crew topside.



Jerry Jones installing his TBL transmitter filter box.

The second big job is up in the radio room. **Jerry Jones** and **Joe Breyer** have the motor generator set welded down. **Barry Witte** completed the restoration of the MG set motor controller and has it mounted on the port bulkhead. Jerry completed fabrication of a vertical support for the wiring that will go from the overhead down to the bottom of the TBL transmitter behind the unit. Jerry also has the filter unit painted and ready to install on the aft bulkhead. They are just about ready to begin the wiring. They been competing with Tanner for welding support, and have been pretty successful based on the radio room's close proximity to the forward supply heating coils. In fact, the only time they make any progress on the deckhouse outside is when Tanner is there to beat Dave and Benner.



Bill Wettreau has put in more hours than anybody this winter.



Ron Mazure scaling the main propulsion generators in B-4.

Down in B-4, Bill Wetterau, Ron Mazure and Chris Fedden have been working away on the main propulsion generators. Ron and Chris have been doing the lion's share of the needle gunning. Bill has been disassembling the cooling lines, valves, pipe fittings and viewing port, sandblasting them, repainting and reassembling them. Bill has been averaging three days a week down there, and even brought his curious daughter Alyssa to help one day so she could experience first hand what "Dad" has been up to. Keeping the compressor, air tools and air lines working in this cold has been a challenge. It usually involves a one hour warm up with a kerosene heater before starting the air compressor and hanging all the needle guns and air hoses in front of an electric heater when not in use.

Forward in B-3, they have a nice big electric heater down there, so when Erik comes in his first task in the morning is turn that on to warm the space for the crew. Gus Negus, Mike Dingmon, Gary Lubrano and Rocky have kept busy on the restoration of the diesels. Gus and Mike have just about wrapped up repainting the ships service generator on the port side down there. Rocky has been working on the two main propulsion diesels, taking parts home for repainting, and cleaning and scaling the blocks on site. Barry Witte undertook the restoration of the sound powered phone horn in the sound powered phone booth in the aft engine room, B-3. The horn would have been a basket base, but thanks to Fred Ingo of Mohawk Electro Techniques, the horn is now as good as new. Fred, a Marine veteran, was able to create a new coil for the sound powered phone horn. The original horn now sounds just like it did when new, and is yet another feature of the SLATER that has been faithfully returned to original condition. Thank you, Fred. We hope to see you on SLATER the next time you are in Albany.



Gene Jackey and Doug Tanner look on as Super Dave fits a patch along the port deckhouse.



Down below the welding Walt Stuart comes up from fire watch.

With lots of restoration on the ship, we cannot forget the latest good deed at the trailer. Snowmelt had been running in from the roof top, through a small crack in the air conditioner. Linda cried for help so it would stop collecting on her desk. **Chris Lecce** came to the rescue! Even with the latest heavy snows and onset of bitter cold, Chris threw up a ladder, firmly footed in the snow bank, and climbed up to see what was the matter. He came back inside, armed with a caulk gun, and sealed it up. Water takes the path of least resistance, and always gets its way. So we're watching. We also want to thank **Anthony Renna** for keeping the parking lot plowed all winter so Rosehn and Linda can get to the trailer.

Linda and Rosehn have been very busy even though we have been closed to the public. To increase awareness of the USS SLATER in our local schools and in celebration of Black History Month, we are working to increase awareness of the story of the USS MASON DE529 and the role she played in desegregating the armed forces. We are offering the video *Proudly We Served: The Men of the USS MASON*, to Capital Region schools in celebration of Black History Month. Few Americans know the history-changing story of the destroyer escort USS MASON, the only World War II major combatant warship manned by an African-American crew. At a time when most Black members of the US Navy were relegated to mess duties, the crew of the USS MASON escorted six convoys across the perilous North Atlantic, from the weeks leading up to the D-Day invasion until V-E Day in 1945. *Proudly We Served* tells the story of these heroic men and their contributions to the Allied victory. The videos came to us from the estate of **Marty Davis**, and we felt it would be a wonderful tribute to Marty to use the videos in this way.

Education planning and programming for the month focused a great deal on outreach to the different communities that make up Albany. **Jack Madden** and **Linda Wruck** created a show 'n tell on the benefits of volunteering at the SLATER. They visited the **Zaloga Post** to offer the veterans a new and exciting place to hang their hats once or twice a week during the tour season, as a tour guide or doing maintenance, or both. They even let the veterans know about the infamous breakfasts and lunches onboard! It's all about the camaraderie.

Another community within a community is the world of ship reunions. Linda visited with **Jeanne Toth** of the **Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau** to share new ideas on how to invite more ship reunions to the SLATER, because we have so much to offer that is really quite unique. Albany County has great accommodations, military history with over thirty military historic sites to explore and fun activities for all ages. Albany is conveniently located at the crossroads of the Northeast so stay here, tour the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum aboard the USS SLATER DE 7 nearby Cooperstown, Lake George or your hometown! 66, the Watervliet Arsenal Museum or take a day tour to West Point, the New York State Military Museum, nearby Cooperstown, Lake George or your hometown!

The Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau staff considers it a privilege to act as your reunion and meeting liaison to Albany's hotels, attractions, restaurants, and venues and their services are complimentary. They have been coordinating military reunions and meetings with great success for over 30 years! Contact them and let them know more about your organization and how they can help you with your reunion plans. They will work with you personally to guide you through the process. Call today and they can send you a planning packet and an Albany Visitors Guide.

Admiral Paul Czesak will be stepping down over the course of this next year in his role as coordinator of celebrations and ceremonies for the SLATER. Carrying the torch are **Gordon Lattey, Jim Kuba, and Glenn Harrison.** Admiral Czesak did so much, that it will take a committee of three to try and fill his shoes. Watch our new online events calendar for upcoming celebration dates.

We are getting the SLATER ready to greet a new tour season. The labels that are posted on the bulkheads all over the ship have been updated and relaminated; the tour-route has two additions: photographs of what each stop on the tour would have looked like in action, back in the day, and will be stored in a drawer or compartment for easy access by the tour guides. A historic photograph tucked away at each station is one way to help visitors connect to the human side of all this steel. Second, is the information on SLATER's original post office. Linda talked with **Marvin Cash, SLATER's very own postal clerk,** and learned about the history of the office onboard. We have a canvas SLATER mail bag along with a photo of Marvin standing on the fo'c's'le wearing his pith helmet and side arm, ready to tackle the mail.

Mark Gardiner and Linda attended the Hudson Valley Community College Job Fair, in search of stellar applicants to the tour guide program. The system was perfect. Mark, in his quiet way, would engage passersby, while Linda talked their heads off, excited about her display of artifacts, photographs, and sounds of 1940s music playing. The day was a success and interviews are about to begin.

The overnight program is growing. A meeting to discuss new ideas from the guides and the coming changes to the program was held with **Herb Marlow, Grant Hack, Tom McLaughlin, Heather Maron, Rob Nielsen, Mike Paulmeno, Penny Hutton, Kelly Salisbury** (formerly Lassonde, she's back with a married name), **Paul Guarnieri,** and our newest intern tour guide, **Kayla Smith.** The boy and girl scouts will find new adventures at the SLATER!

The new school program, Museum in a Bag, has received requests from teachers. Linda has been writing the background information for each theme that will help teachers with content information while augmenting their textbooks.

We lost a friend and shipmate this month in the person of Dean Hoover. Dean was a longtime member of the DESA Board of Directors and their recruiting champion. Dean died on Sunday, January 16, 2011. Way too young to cross the bar, Dean had served aboard the DEALEY Class DEs USS VAN VOORHIS and the USS HARTLEY. Dean had made it his mission to recruit the postwar DE sailors who served in the DEALEY, GARCIA, KNOX and all the other postwar class ships into DESA, and worked tirelessly to make their numbers grow. Once again, the SLATER's flag flew at half staff in Dean's honor.





The last moments of the USS KITTIWAKE.

Finally, the muster list of World War II vessels continues to shrink. We lost another old friend, one who gave a lot to the SLATER, the USS KITTIWAKE ASR-13. This was Bill Haggart's old home and a source of many parts for the SLATER. KITTIWAKE spent the last 20 years in the James River Reserve Fleet, and we scoured the engineroom many times looking for parts. When the blower blew on our emergency diesel generator, it was KITTIWAKE that provided two spares. Back in 2005 Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder, Joe Breyer, Paul Czesak, Barry Witte, Ed Zajkowski, and Stan Murawski spent two days tearing down her emergency diesel and we left with a truck load of parts. This January she was towed from the James River and scuttled in the clear Caribbean waters of the Cayman Islands, where officials say the sunken vessel will attract fish and tourists. She now rests on a sandy bottom off Grand Cayman's Seven Mile Beach, at a depth of 62 feet so the top deck is close to the Caribbean Sea's surface, making it easily accessible for snorkelers and divers. Crews carefully flooded the rusty hulk so the 2,200-ton ship would settle upright. Holes were punched in the hull and large pumps gradually piped sea water into the ship, which was compartmentalized into three sections. As it began to sink in a cascade of bubbles, the Kittiwake leaned a bit to its starboard side. But divers reported it landed upright on its keel. Every time another World War II vintage vessel goes away, it serves as a reminder of how important it is to preserve our SLATER.

See you next month

