

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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I've never been so happy that it finally got cold. Today it was five above. In December, we were running around in shirtsleeves. Move day and camel day were both quite comfortable. It was great, but there was a problem. You folks have been very generous in making your winter fund donations. We're over \$55,000. But as the warm days wore in and winter never happened, the crew started muttering questions. The word scam was starting to creep into the scuttlebutt around here. As you may imagine, all of the regular volunteers are winter fund donors, and the slogan "Help keep a volunteer warm this winter," is something that is near and dear to their hearts. However, as they were sunning themselves on deck in January, they are all starting to wonder what I'm doing with the money if I'm certainly not using it to buy heating oil. Well, now we're using heating oil and lots of it. It got so cold we even had to mix in some kerosene, and that was even more expensive. Albany did not let me down. The river is iced over and the winter fund is justified.



Bob Callender drills a hole for a cable clamp in the aft passageway.



Gary Sheedy knocks overhead cables back into position - neatness counts!

The SLATER remains moored as before as the work progresses. The aft passageway looks like a war zone. Chipping out all the tile has been completed. **Chad Johnson, Peter Jez, Rocky Rockwood, Earl Herchenroder, Gene Jackey, Don Miller, Jim Gelston and Erik** have been busy chipping paint and grinding bulkheads smooth in preparation for painting. Stan Murawski has been replacing missing and damaged insulation in the area of the aft head. **Gary Sheedy, Larry Williams, Gordon Lattey, Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callender and Barry Witte** have been taking apart all the overhead electrical cableway supports as they replace damaged armored cable and straighten out the wire runs to get everything straight, neat and parallel. We bought two spools of armored cable to support the project. One major hard spot is finding replacement cable stuffing tubes. It seems that the ceramic tiling covering the aft decking severely accelerated the corrosion of these tubes. Every one we have tried to loosen to replace the cable has twisted off right at the deck. A replacement source is desperately needed. So far, our only option seems to be manually reconstructing these on a lathe, but that will be very labor intensive. These projects have all been supported by the RPI Midshipmen, who have continued to assist us with over twenty volunteers each week since returning from Christmas Break. John Camp's team is finishing up their overhaul of the firepump in B1, adding to our self-dewatering capability. Other midshipmen have helped in every way imaginable.



Gene Jackey grinds off excess metal in the washroom.



Rocky Rockwood chips the shower deck and the bottom of the bulkheads.

Barry Witte is also working on a community service cooperative with another teacher at the high school he works at. Industrial Technology students from Barry's class are developing a complete set of roller loader plans on computer, and those plans are being used in **Chris Hanley's** class to cut and weld steel that the SLATER purchased for this project. Ironically, this is a very appropriate project, since it was teenagers too young to be drafted that presumably worked on assembling the original ones during the war. Hopefully by the time school is out in June, two replacement roller racks will be on our starboard side.



Don Miller works to chip years of gunk off the aft motor room deck.



Not to be outdone, Karl Herchenroder gets into the game.

The most time consuming project has been replacement of the wasted steel in the cross passageways. The deck looked like Swiss cheese after we removed the linoleum. A new welder has joined the volunteer crew, **Shawn Bevins**, who used to do shipyard welding at Electric Boat in Groton. Shawn presently works as an engineering tech for New York State, and we're glad to have him with us. He joins **Doug Tanner, Chuck Teal, Tim Benner and Clark Farnsworth. Clark Farnsworth is especially glad to have Shawn aboard.** Clark is still wondering, at age 84, why all the welding jobs we have require him to work on his knees. When he signed on nine years ago, we promised him "A little bench work." They've spent a month cropping out the wasted metal to renewing it with new plate. The problem is it's not just the deck that is gone, but the rot has crept up the bulkheads in the affected areas. The total replacement steel will be about six square feet in four different locations. Alongside the ship, on the pier, Doug has rebuilt "Tanner's Ville" stronger and better than before. Inside his tent the future platform for the SL antenna is taking shape. When the weather permits he's working on the gangway repairs over at the Snow Dock. And he seems to spend a fair amount of time tweaking the heating system aboard the ship. The welding crew has been so hard pressed that they have drafted **Nelson Potter** to fire watch and grind. Their old standby **Joe Breyer** has returned to the radio room to rebuild the TCS power supply now that **Tom Horsfall** has supplied him with a schematic.

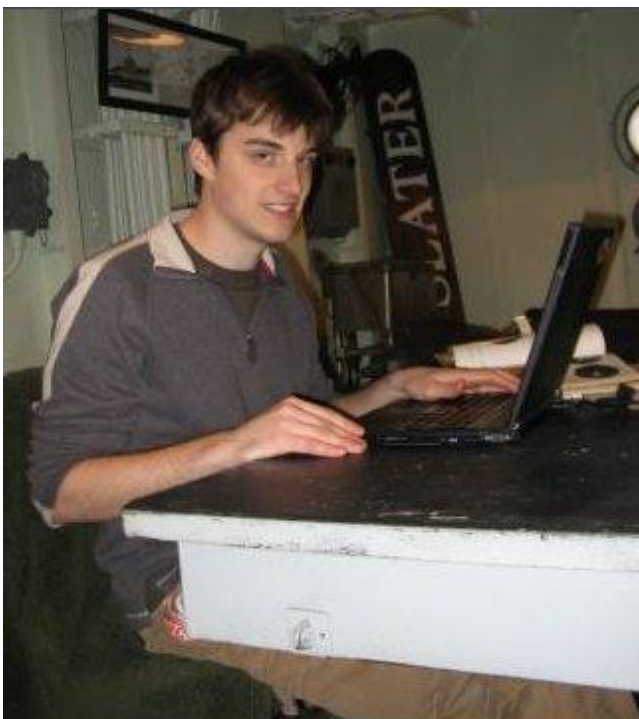
Tom Horsfall lives out in San Francisco and volunteers with the PAMPANITO and RED OAK VICTORY. In his spare time he is working on a SLATER project. You may recall that last May we removed the RCA TBL transmitter from the salvage tug USS CLAMP in the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet. The only way we were able to accomplish this was with the help of the submarine PAMPANITO volunteers.

One of their most dedicated volunteers, Tom was so enamored with the TBL that he volunteered to restore it for us. Probably to keep us from screwing it up. The big black transmitter had been stripped quite a bit while in the fleet. This is turning into a major restoration project, and at the moment Tom is working to gather missing parts and trying to identify what all is missing.

He reports he has made some significant progress in putting the oscillator section, in the bottom section of the transmitter, back together. He's found a lot of needed pieces in my junk box and is continuing to look high and low for other needed parts. The transmitter itself was also stripped, including some shock mounted tube shelves that are going to have to be duplicated from pictures in the manual. Most of the meters are missing and will have to be replaced and repaired in addition to the cleaning and more cleaning that has to be done. After everything is mechanically back together he plans to test it electrically and then electronically. Electrically, CLAMP was a DC and DEs were AC, so for installation on the SLATER we will have to change the motor of the motor generator from a 115 volt DC to a 440 3-phase motor. He figures the whole restoration will take about two years. When the time comes we are hoping to bring him east with the transmitter to supervise the installation and make the first transmission.



The RCA TBL transmitter in San Francisco awaiting restoration.



RPI student Zach Barth hard at work on the CIC radar simulation.

Erik Collin and Jerry Jones are working on radar simulation in CIC. Their plan is to overlay modern simulation systems over the old gear but leave all the original systems intact so they can be restored at a future date if the knowledge, will and manpower ever come together to make it happen. Zacj Barth, a student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, is working on software to generate radar displays for the public. They plan two different programs: a continuously running display for general tours and a multimedia show for special occasions. They are hoping to create two types of displays: the PPI, which is the sweeping radar display we are all familiar with and the range only "A" scope display. The PPI display will be fed to the SA, SL and VD repeater radar units. An oscilloscope type display that reflects the PPI displays will be fed to the A scope. Their plan is to insert LCD screens between the currently installed radar display tubes and the face of the unit thus preserving the installation of the original tube.

With Jerry Jones laid up with a broken leg, Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callen and Bill Coyle have been pitching in with the SL radar installation. When completed, the radar displays will show what the surface targets are doing, the Dead Reckoning Tracer will plot the movement of the SLATER, the pitometer will reflect the ship's speed, the gyrocompass repeater will reflect the ship's course and voices will come from various locations within CIC. We hope to include sound effects of sonar, guns firing and various explosions. The goal is to have visitors leaving the space saying "Wow." I said "Wow" when I heard the DRT grinding away for the first time.

If that isn't enough, along with typing all the winter fund thank you letters, keeping the ship clean and working on the aft passageway restoration, Erik has another project going on down on the messdecks.

He is overhauling a MK14 gunsight to return it to operating condition. All of you WWII-era gunners will remember that every 20mm gun was equipped with one of these sights, as were all MK 51 gun directors to control the 40mm gun mounts. Basically, an electric air compressor on the mount drove two gyroscopes in the gun sight to stabilize the target. A sight setter had to twist knobs to set the estimated range and target speed while the gunner looked into the glass reticule and saw two white illuminated concentric circles. When you had both circles superimposed on the target, your range angle was figured correctly and supposedly you'd be hitting the target. The Navy spent a fortune to develop this fire control system at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. And you know what? Most every gunner I've ever talked to says, "I didn't trust that damned thing. I just looked over the top and followed the tracers." Any of you guys want to comment on that?

As you may imagine, labor negotiation is a delicate subject around here, particularly when no one is getting a paycheck except me. So when I asked **Gary Sheedy** to help out on the aft maindeck passageway project to straighten out the overhead cableways, I wasn't surprised when his response was, "You know I haven't been getting much help on the reefer deck lately. I need to spend some time on my own project for a change." Being the kind of loyal guy that I am, I immediately decided to sell out my old buddy **Chris Fedden**. Remember Chris?



A MK14 gunsight ready for its cover to go back on. It's a secret weapon so don't look too closely at it!



Les Yarbrough works on a canvas cover designed to cover the 20mm guns for our long cold winters.

Chris has been chipping paint here since 1997. He's the last of the original chippers, and the only one who has the patience, grit and stamina to chip overhead. I "volunteered" Chris to help Gary on the reefer deck so Gary would help with the electrical work on the main deck passageway. And then there's negotiating with the engineers. Chippers are in great demand, topside and below. Engineers **Gus Negus**, **Gary Lubrano** and **Karl Herchenroder** feel a proprietary attitude towards **Karl's twin brother Earl** and Earl's buddy **Don Miller**, and that they should be chipping in the engineroom, despite all the work to be done in the passageway. For now, everybody seems happy. I should give special mention to a couple of volunteers. Both **Stan Murawski** and **Jim Gelston** are in the throes of chemotherapy, and have continued their volunteer work with us. That is a special level of dedication from two special volunteers.

The education staff is keeping busy despite the lack of visitors. Education Coordinator **Eric Rivet** is in the process of applying for a permanent education charter through the New York State Board of Regents. The SLATER currently holds a provisional charter that allows the ship to operate as a non-profit educational corporation. A permanent charter will put the SLATER in the same league as state universities and museums such as the New York State Museum. The charter could also open the way to grant sources that we currently can't apply for. Eric is also applying to the National Register of Historic Places to get the SLATER listed as a National Landmark. We're currently on the Register for national significance, which looks good on a grant application but is not nearly as prestigious as being listed as a landmark. The application process for both the charter and landmark status involves filling out about eighty pages of material, then waiting anywhere from six months to a year for a response. We'll keep you posted when we hear something.



Chris Fedden keeps Gary Sheedy happy by chipping the reefer deck overhead.

The education staff is also making its mark on the winter restoration. Eric, along with volunteers **Gordon Lattey**, **Paul Czesak** and **Glenn Harrison**, are restoring one of the lockers in forward berthing. The locker will be cleaned out, fitted with a new wooden grate bottom by Glenn, and then filled with all the uniforms and toiletries a sailor would have been issued in 1944. After a couple hours with a Bluejacket's Manual, Eric figured out how to roll up uniforms and tie them off with clothes stops. The locker will give visitors and school children a better understanding of just what a WWII sailor would have had on the ship. It will also give them a greater appreciation for their own spacious closets.

Locally, Dr. Lauren Ayers is working to develop a World War II Round Table. For anyone interested in the history of the period 1939-1945, their organizational meeting will be held on March 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Guilderland Public Library in Guilderland, New York. The meeting is open to all and welcomes anyone who shares an interest in this period. It would be greatly appreciated if you would share this information where you think it might be of interest.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't go back to the opening paragraph. We can't thank you enough for your support of the Winter Fund, and all the kind and supportive notes that have come with your donations. We put the notes up in the CPO mess so that the crew knows how many people are out there pulling for us. See you next month.