



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**Well, it's November, and all you old hands know what that means. It's Winter Fund Solicitation time again.** Thanks to your generosity for the past decade, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SLATER's arrival here in Albany October 27<sup>th</sup>. The idea of having a ceremony to mark the date actually got started almost a year ago when the Capital District Chief Petty Officers Association began making plans for their annual luncheon aboard the SLATER. They used to do their SLATER luncheon for the volunteers on Pearl Harbor day, but when we moved that event to the Zaloga American Legion Post, the CPO Association sought another day to honor the SLATER Volunteers. They settled on Navy Day, October 27<sup>th</sup>, which coincides with the date that the SLATER arrived in Albany. This year marked our tenth anniversary and we knew we had to do something special.



**That special something turned out to be reaching out to all of the people who helped us early on in bringing the SLATER to Albany.** Working with **Paul Czesak**, we developed a list of about eighty people who rode the ship up, served on our first board, helped with the initial permitting, established the mooring and met us on the pier. We sent the invitations out and worked with the Chiefs' Association to schedule the luncheon. When the day came, it was pouring down rain. That probably kept the crowd down to about half of what it might have been, but it didn't seem to dampen anyone's spirits. **Mayor Jennings** was a surprise guest and arrived about twenty minutes early so he had time to wander through the ship and chat with the volunteers. To say that the gang in the machine shop and the cooks in the galley were surprised when he wandered in would be an understatement.



**Pat Perrella cuts the 10th anniversary cake.**

**Along with Mayor Jennings, Albany County Executive Mike Breslin and Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino all spoke on what an asset the SLATER has become to the community.** When the Mayor addressed the need for a permanent home on this side of the river, Kathy was quick to respond that while she wished us well, she wasn't anxious to lose Rensselaer's claim on us during the winter months. Some of the old friends who were present included **Steve Resler** from Coastal Resource Management, **Mark Bruno** from the Port of Albany, **Al St. Jean** and **Norm Nilsson** of the original "SLATER Seven," **Mark Peckham** from the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, **Les Beauchaine** who was on the dock to sell souvenirs in 1997 and still is, **Pat McCoy** from the Department of Military and Naval Affairs, **Mike Stenzel** who developed our website

before I knew what the Internet was, and original board members **Kevin Lynch, Barbara Higbee** and **Tom Owens**.

**The high point of the ceremony was when the CPO association named Pat Perrella their SLATER Volunteer of the Year.** Pat has devoted ten years to the project and almost single-handedly created and organized our DE Museum in the after berthing compartment. As her husband **Frank** looked on, **Senior Chief Riedel** gave Pat this much-deserved award. Pat's contribution truly lifted our level of professionalism to a place we could never have been without her. We define ourselves as a museum, but it has been Pat who gave us the legitimacy in the claim. Thanks to the efforts of the members of the **Capital District Chief Petty Officers Association** and **EMCM Jack Ryan, STCM**

**Pat McCoy, YNCS Sean Robbins, CECS Steve Riedel, ENC Pete Goutos, HTC Clark Farnsworth, DPC Howard Fox, EMC Bob Grimm, CSC Bernard Smith, and last but not least CSC Art Dott, we all retired to a festive lunch on the messdecks where much reminiscing and marveling at the accomplishments since 1997 took place. We cleared the last of the guests about 1400 and ships work resumed as it always has.**

**Veteran's Day weekend was also a major event for us. Military Vehicle collectors Charlene Ryan, a subvet who swerved in an "R" Boat John Kolanchick, Glen Tremblay, Peter Goutos, Greg and Tim Wolanin, Bill Peaslee and Jamie Darrah brought equipment down to the SLATER for the weekend. That Saturday night we honored veterans at our fourth annual USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club. This is our annual black tie gala organized by Doris Fischer Malesardi, Geoffrey Bullard, Paul Czesak and Tony Esposito, among others. Some find it amusing to see people like Doug Tanner, Tommy Moore, and Eric Rivet in tuxedos. I can't speak for the others, but in my case it's one of the few outfits I have that doesn't have paint or a grease spot somewhere. Emcee CDR Bill Kraus introduced a three-part program that put the SLATER in historical perspective and brought our guests up to date. Graham Jones, who lived through the worst war years in England, talked about "How the Convoys Saved England." I brought the group up to date on the year in review. Then Barry Witte and Midshipman John Camp gave their presentation on "Engaging the Next Generation," giving evidence that interest in the SLATER will not wane with the passing of the greatest generation. Following dinner, the high point of the evening was when Doris presented Pat Perrella with the first annual USS SLATER Trustees Award. Pat couldn't be with us due to a long standing family commitment, so SLATER plankowner and Museum Committee chairman Cliff Woltz, who had come all the way from Houston with his daughter Cathy, proudly accepted on Pat's behalf. The following morning Paul Czesak organized a Sunday memorial service that was well attended and was covered by the media. It was a beautiful morning to parade the colors, and Erik's gun crew of RPI Midshipmen looked ship shape as the smoke from the three round salute rolled across the water. We thank all who came to support the SLATER Veteran's Day weekend.**



**The Army tried to take over but they forgot the tanks.**

**As we look back on the year, it is thanks to your donations that we have made the progress that we have, and the Winter Fund Drive is a major part of this. Some of our accomplishments in 2007 included the CIC simulation, finishing the port shaft alley, acquiring the MK-6 depth**



**Finishing up the port shaft alley. More exciting work like this will happen during the winter.**

charges, installing our second "K" gun roller loader, repainting the deckplates in B-4, restoring the whaleboat, repainting the aft head and passageway, repainting the port and starboard main deckhouse with Imron epoxy, completing the 01 level deck painting, installing the watertight door between B-3 and B-4, successfully running the diesel generator set in B-3, installing the SL radar antenna and console, repainting the mast, and making covers for all the 20mm and 40mm guns. That doesn't count all the "routine" maintenance and repair work, such as tearing down guns to replace bearings, cleaning motor controller contacts, polishing the helm and cleaning the heads.



**Winter work in the forward passageway.**

**This winter we will follow through with the following projects and hopefully see them through to completion.** We will replace all the wasted metal in the forward crew's head and passageway and complete scaling and repainting the area, a project that was interrupted by a little fire a couple years back. We will go on to activate this head for our youth group overnight camping program. This will involve installing a working sink and commode, a septic tank with grinder pump, and running a sewage line through the length of the ship to the main septic tank aft for pumping ashore. In addition to this work, the shipfitters will continue removal and restoration of the wasted chocks along the main deck.

**We are working to fabricate the missing port depth charge rack on the fantail that was removed while SLATER was in Greek service.** This is a joint project with volunteer **Andy Desorbo** doing design, **Hal Hatfield** and **Frank Wasco** doing the shop fabrication, and **Greg Wolanin** doing the installation aboard. We are also continuing the fabrication of the depth charge projector roller loaders by **Barry Witte** and his industrial technology students at **Colonie High School**.

**The engineers and electricians will continue restoration of the ship's service generator set in B-3.** **Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder** and **Gary Lubrano** hit a real milestone this month. After over two years of work and countless setbacks and heartbreaks, they successfully test-ran the ship's service generator for thirty minutes. The next step will be to set up permanent cooling and involve the electricians so that the unit can be used to generate power, but this was a major accomplishment and a long time coming. I think I'll reward Gus by giving him a ship's clock for the engineroom. The engineers will also continue cosmetic restoration of spaces B-3 and B-4, working for the day when we can open these spaces to the public. Down in the bilges the Rensselaer Polytechnic Midshipmen will continue restoration of the fire and bilge drain system. Also below the waterline, Gary Sheedy will continue his work on the reefer deck, but as job security is critical to him, there is no completion date in sight.



**Steering - not on the standard tour.**

**In an effort to let people in to see more of what we have been accomplishing over the summer, we began offering what we call **Hard Hat Tours**.** These tours last two to four hours, much longer than the standard tour. They cover just about every part of the ship. From the bilges to the flying bridge and the peak tank to the steering gear compartment, the tour touches on close to every aspect of shipboard engineering. These tours follow the standard tour route but branch off at various places to see areas such as the windlass, gyro room, reefer deck, ammunition storage, sickbay, aft berthing and steering. We try to concentrate on the electrical and mechanical aspects of the ship as opposed to describing shipboard life and sea stories. To add that aspect would lengthen the tours to six hours or more. The highlights of the tours so far were totally unexpected. The first highlight is the forward 3" gun controller panel. This panel is located across from the Chiefs quarters and is full of vacuum tubes and other electronics. The panel attracts electrical engineers on the tour like a magnet.

**The second highlight is climbing down two decks below the Chiefs quarters to take a look at the 3" ammunition magazines and get a look at the hull of the ship along with the keel.** And, of course, the third highlight is the engine and motor rooms. We now have doors in the after engine and motor rooms so we can lead people in through the aft bunk room and into the engineering spaces without having to go down a vertical ladder. We often end up spending a good deal of time in these compartments, since there is so much to see and so many sea stories to tell. Often times with DE veterans on the tour, our guides are the ones receiving the tour! When the program started we expected to be inundated with requests for tours. Strangely, this turned out to not be the case. But they are starting to prove popular as family birthday presents to old sailors, and with a \$25 per person price tag; it's cheaper than that dinner at a nice restaurant.

**Off site, we anticipate the completion of the restoration of the whaleboat by "Rocky" Rockwood down at Scarano's boatyard, so the boat will be ready for spring.** Back aboard, **Erik Collin** will focus on the refinement and expansion of our radar simulation in our CIC display and the completion of the restoration of the charthouse display. And in the security of the code room, he will hopefully be recording and generating thank you letters for your generous winter fund donations.



**No volunteers are braver than our tour guides - Les Beauchaine explains how rank has its privileges.**

And **Rosehn, Eric Rivet** and I will continue work on our permanent museum charter, trying to get us National Landmark Status, and promoting and lining up school tours for spring, making our annual grant applications to Save America's Treasures, NYS OPRHP, DOS, and requesting State member items and Federal Appropriations as we continue the quest for funding for dry-docking and the permanent mooring in Albany.

**Don't forget that if you worked for General Electric and donate to the SLATER, you need to identify yourselves. There's free money to be had for the SLATER if you folks speak up!**

Approved gifts from eligible GE participants will be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis. If you have given ANY monetary donation to the SLATER this calendar year, you must register by phone with the Customer Service Center at 800-305-0669. To register online you will need your SSO I.D. and password. Remember, our official organization name is ***Destroyer Escort Historical Museum***. Then, we will go online to verify that your gift was received. We must receive gifts from a minimum of ten GE donors totaling a minimum of \$1000 each calendar year in order to remain eligible. Employees, retirees, and surviving spouses of retirees are eligible to participate. And not only GE, but other corporations, as well. If your corporation has a matching gift program, please notify us. If you're not sure, call your retirement office and ask. Many corporations will match your gift dollar for dollar; some even double their match.



**Nasty outside but the crew is warm and cozy (and hard at work) thanks to the Winter Fund!**

**In addition to corporate matching, the Winter Fund is a key to getting us through the winter without eating through our savings.** Each winter the USS SLATER closes to the public between the months of December and March. Thus we have no operating income from ticket, gift shop, and overnight camping during these months. While we cut to the bone, our expenses, insurance, utilities, maintenance supplies and payroll continue. Winter is the time we do most of our interior restoration projects. This year we will continue our restoration work in the forward crew's head, reefer deck and in the machinery spaces. For the past ten years, rather than eat up our savings, we have appealed to the members of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum to make an additional \$100 donation to help carry us through the winter. Responding admirably to the plea, "Help keep a volunteer warm this winter" they have generated over \$50,000 a year in Winter Fund Donations.

**Much as we hate to lean on you for this, we know you are the folks who appreciate the efforts of the volunteers the most.** I have always believed that the only way you can lead a fund like this is by example, and I have given my \$100 to the drive. Normally I like to be the first one, but since Winter Fund Donations started arriving in August, I can't quite take that honor this year. If you believe what we are doing is worthwhile, now is the time to contribute. If you cannot give \$100, any contribution is welcome. If you can afford more, please by all means feel free to give at whatever level you believe we deserve. If you are not a member of the museum, your contribution will make you a museum member. Our goal is to make sure that when there are no longer any DE sailors to speak for themselves, SLATER will be here to speak for them. Please join us in that effort and give generously to the Winter Fund. Don't count on global warming. Please do your part to help keep a volunteer warm this winter.

**See you next Month.**