



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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A final salute to Sam Saylor from his daughter Linda.

It's hard to believe that the summer is half over and I'm already writing the July SIGNALS. We had some very special visitors this month. First and foremost were **Dale and Linda Drake**. This was special because Linda is the daughter of the late Master Chief Gunner's Mate **Sam Saylor** and, it's safe to say, without Sam Saylor, there would be no USS SLATER preservation. Linda recalled that for years her visits were constantly

interrupted with Sam's words, "Well, I take care of some SLATER business." It was the ship that was Sam's focus and sustained him through the last 20 years of his life.

**Linda and Dale made the trip from Omaha specifically to see USS SLATER because this was Linda's first chance to see the fruit of all her father's effort.**

Board President **Tony Esposito** greeted them as they toured the ship from stem to stern. Linda's husband Dale is a former Marine, and he left Linda on the Observation Deck so he could take the bilge tour. He wanted to see everything. I do believe if we could get them to relocate to Albany we'd have two more dedicated volunteers. Linda brought along Sam's burial flag which we will fly for the month of August and then retire it to the USS CONNOLLY display in Sam's honor.



Jerry Jones and Donna Taggart.

can be seen on Youtube, and a chart of all the Atlantic U-boat sinkings that is on display in our Briefing Room. He created a model of his ship, USS NEAL A SCOTT DE-769 and U-1228 that Donna donated to the Museum, which makes a great educational tool for comparing DEs to their adversaries. Local volunteer **Jerry Jones** was on hand to take her for a personal tour, as Jerry and Frank had established quite a relationship over the years.

We also welcomed the late **Frank McClatchie's daughter, Donna Taggart, aboard the ship on the 15th.** Frank was involved in the capture of U-1228 after the German surrender. He was not only a former DE sailor but a member of the prize crew aboard the U-boat. Frank had been a strong supporter of the Museum, not only financially, but he also provided us with several special exhibits. Among them was a replica Huff/Duff simulator that



SLATER signalman William J. Onorato with Art Dott and Grant Hack.

We were visited by an original **SLATER** crew member on the **26th of the month. William J. Onorato** SM 1/C toured the ship with his daughter Kristen Gibbons, his son-in-law and two grandsons. Volunteer **Art Dott** took him for a tour and **Grant Hack** spent time speaking with him as well. Born in Boston in 1926, Mr. Onorato served on USS BALCH DD-363 before transfer to SLATER. Later in life, he was active in SLATER reunions. He is still in excellent shape and even managed the ladders up to the flying bridge.



Rear Admiral Thomas Moore inspects the flying bridge.

**July also seemed like a month in which we hosted a lot of brass aboard.** First and foremost was a visit by Rear Admiral **Thomas J. Moore**, the program executive officer for aircraft carriers. He was in Albany as part of a Navy Outreach mission visiting to discuss the economic impact that the Navy has on the Capital Region and beyond, along with a discussion on the mission of today's Navy. Board Chairman **BJ Costello** led the tour. It's always

interesting to see how admirals react to BJ when he mentions his younger brother is retired Vice Admiral **Barry Costello**, former COMTHIRDFLT. Two of our education volunteers, **Art Dott** and **Bob Dawson**, were on hand to welcome **RADM Moore**. Bob related his experiences in the "Old Navy" aboard USS WALKER DD-723. RADM Moore seemed genuinely interested in the ship and our effort. It was a great exchange about their experiences and how the Navy has changed and its mission of today.



Captain Jamie Pierce's Retirement Ceremony.

**The ship sparkled with white and gold again on Saturday July 18th when Captain Jamie Pierce retired.** CAPT Pierce is a third-generation graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and holds an MS from the Naval Postgraduate School. He served with various helicopter anti-submarine squadrons. He transferred to the Reserve in 1998 and commanded the Jaguars of HSL 60 in 2004. He went on to take numerous commands and duties, including his most recent as the Deputy Reserve Component Commander for Navy Region

Midwest. He has been awarded the Legion of Merit, the Joint Meritorious Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards). He has over 2,900 flight hours. His event was on a Saturday morning before we opened to the public, so a lot of the regulars on our work crew shot the breeze with him before his ceremony.

**Our education volunteers demonstrated their unwavering ability to make this ship a welcoming destination for the month of July.** Of course, we do a fair share of outreach, too. **Bob Herbst** volunteered for a speaking engagement at the East Greenbush Library on the 6th about the history of SLATER. Not only was he interested in the opportunity to engage with the public, he was interested in returning to what he believed may have been the original building for his old elementary school. His talk was well-received and we thank him for stepping up to the plate for the event.



Preparing to salvage USS BARRY.

**Along the line of offsite events, Barry Witte, Gordon Lattey, Dave Mardon and Danny Statile drove to Washington Navy Yard to scrounge useful parts off of ex-USS BARRY DD933.** BARRY has been the Navy's display ship at the Washington Navy Yard until earlier this year, when the Navy decided that because of a conflict with a bridge being constructed and the maintenance repairs BARRY needed, they did not

want to maintain the floating display ship anymore. Historic ships were invited to remove parts. Our team met up with **Greg Krawczyk** on the pier. Working Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, they managed to fill up Gordon's, Barry's and Greg's cars with items useful to SLATER's operations. Among the items they brought back were an electric submersible pump, a new set of flag poles for the color guard, an assortment of rope and line for Boats and his crew, a "red devil" blower, various machine shop wares, such as drill bits and electric cable, a cargo net, some tarps and galley ware.

**On Tuesday, Andrew Gallotta, a Naval Academy classmate and friend of Barry Witte filled in for Greg.** Andrew helped us obtain a set of suction/pressure gauges for B4's seawater system that Justin Bopp is restoring back in Albany, and numerous direct-read thermometers that can be used in the machinery systems. It appears that the days of obtaining original WWII-era parts from other ships have ended. There was nothing on BARRY in the way of ship parts that were compatible with SLATER. It is also worth making a note of the fact that this was the first time a crew from SLATER took parts from another museum. In the past, all the ships we had gone on to strip parts were rusting hulks. BARRY was different--when the party arrived, the ship was in a condition of being ready to receive visitors. While SLATER's crew was only there for two half-days, other HNSA ships of the same era stayed the entire week and by the end, there was little of value left to remove. BARRY will be sold for scrap soon, and there is now one less historic naval ship on display in the world.

**However, parts continue to arrive from strange places, like Herb Dahlhaus's garage on Long Island.** Herb had been a port engineer with Gibson and Cushman Dredging and they used a lot of surplus GM DE engines in their equipment. When they took their last GM engine out of service, Herb made it a point to squirrel away all the spare parts that he could. Over the years he has been feeding us pumps, heat exchangers, injectors and gaskets in a steady stream. He drove all the way up from Long Island to deliver this last load of ten 278A exhaust elbows and assorted gaskets. That finally cleaned out his garage. We know that Mrs. Dahlhaus is happy about that.



Herb Dahlhaus delivers again.



Restoration-wise the crew has been making significant progress with the good weather. The engineers, **Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon, Gary Lubrano and Ken Myrick** are working to establish a regular program of exercising the two operating generator sets, the 200 KW ships service generator in B-3 and the 100 KW emergency diesel generator. Mondays have been test run days and they alternate, running one engine a

The B-3 generator test run.

week and working the bugs out. When everything is running smoothly, they'll get into a quarterly testing schedule. We've shifted the load several times to put the ship on her own power. However, during a routine check, **Barry Witte** found a failed part in the switchboard disconnect for the generator that left one phase connected even when the disconnect indicated "off." Electrically, that's a big deal, so we won't be shifting the load again until the repair is complete. Barry is in the process of making repairs with a spare we recovered years ago from LSM-45.



Progress on the RDF platform.

The top priority project has been the restoration of the radio direction finder platform. **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Gene Jackey, Super Dave Mardon, and Danny Statile** have been doing the welding and fitting with **Earl Herchenroder** as their dedicated fire watch. Work has been slow as the project is right smack on the tour route, and welding must cease every time visitors come through. Despite that limitation, the project is about

60% complete. All of the replacement steel has been fitted and tacked into place. All that remains is seal welding. Doug has fabricated a replica radio direction finder loop antenna and pedestal which will be mounted on the platform to complete the project. The way our luck usually runs, a week after we complete the project and take the scaffold down, some donor will come up with the authentic RDF antenna for us.



Gary Sheedy making progress in the steering gear room.

**Gary Sheedy and Bill Wetterau continue to make progress in the compartments aft.** The chemical warfare stowage space is ready for painting. Scaling continues in the steering gear compartment and the carpenter shop. Gary has fabricated all the parts for the smoke generator vent on the fantail and he has had the steering gear compartment vent motor rebuilt, and reinstalled all

the ductwork and wired in the controller. In the middle of summer, he hasn't had a lot of volunteers to help him chip out the space down there, because with the sun hitting the deck it has been beastly hot.

**The 20mm guns continue to get attention from several volunteers. Bill Holt** has been working his way around the four amidships mounts, scaling, cleaning and touching up the paint. In the process he found a broken stuffing tube on mount 24 that **Matt Clifford** handily welded up. **Angelo Bracco** finished the spent cartridge bags on all the guns. And up forward on the 01 level **Guy Huse** spent the month wrestling with the old shoulder rests so he could replace them with the new ones made by **George Christophersen**. He finally got all four out so the replacements should go in next week.

**Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Paul Guarnieri, Thomas Scian, Dick Brumley, and Nelson Potter** have kept the mooring lines tight, finished up lashing the grating into the last raft and are making more rope fendering. They were quite excited with all the line the crew brought back from the USS BARRY, and replaced the line on the accommodation ladder block and tackle.



King's Point Midshipsman Tim Hughes at the Tiller.

**Our King's Point Intern, Tim Hughes, completed his two weeks aboard USS SLATER working with our volunteers.** This is the first time we've had an intern from one of the academies aboard and it was a profitable experience for all of us. This is part of the letter Tim wrote us upon completion of his internship.

"The volunteers, tour guides, and employees that I met on board the USS SLATER were welcoming and friendly in the utmost manner. They accepted me as part of the SLATER family right away. The knowledge and wisdom that I have gained from them will not only help me in the classroom, but in all aspects of life as well. They perfectly exemplified what it means to welcome a stranger, lend a helping hand, and set the example. Each one added something to my workday that truly allowed me to enjoy being part of the SLATER crew.

Lastly, I want to thank Barry Witte for taking me under his wing throughout this whole experience. The amount of knowledge that I have gained from him, professionally and personally, within these last two weeks is unmatched by any other teacher, mentor, or coworker that I have encountered. For all future Midshipman, Naval Officers, and/or volunteers looking for an amazing opportunity, please talk to Barry about volunteering aboard the USS SLATER. With an open mind and right attitude, the experience can be an unforgettable one, as it was for me."



have one of these that you want to donate?

**For as long as USS SLATER has been on display in Albany, during the summer we have maintained two 3-gallon galvanized water coolers on the tour route.** We picked this style because they look like they were made in 1944. After all, we're about authenticity. Filled with cold water every morning, they are available to keep our visitors hydrated. Well, the time has come to replace the coolers and they are no longer available commercially.



With a little help from his shipmates, Clark Farnsworth got a boat ride.





After his boat ride, Clark went right back to work.

**Finally, by now all our regular readers should be familiar with our oldest active volunteer, Chief Shipfitter Clark Farnsworth.** He was famous for his 1998 statement, "If I go down to the ship, I'm going to work, not drink coffee all day." Well the fact is he's kept himself so busy over the years that he never found time to take a whaleboat ride. Each Monday Larry Williams, Ken Kaskoun, Rocky Rockwood and Mike Dingmon exercise the whaleboat. Well, on Monday, July 13th, 93-year-old Clark finally took his boat ride. Assisted by his shipmates, he made it down the accommodation ladder into the boat for a trip down to the port. He must have enjoyed it, because the following Monday he was at the head of the line to get another ride, this time with one of his old USS LEYTE shipmates. I was afraid that one boat ride had turned the Chief into a slacker, but as soon as they tied up, he made it back up the ladder and went right back to work in the machine shop. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org)

**See you next month.**