



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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The Coast Guard paid a visit when USCGC HAWSER out of Bayonne tied up for the night alongside.

**I don't want to jinx this, but I probably will. This has been a winter for the record books.** We all have the sense that the other shoe is about to drop, but regardless, it's half over and every day is one day closer to spring. The temperatures have remained quite moderate. The river is frozen north of us, and there have been some ice jams to the south, but the area around SLATER is still ice-free. In fact, we've only had to run the circulators for two nights so far this season, and only the inboard port side circulators at that.

**This has caused a fair amount of pain for the long-suffering Gary Sheedy.** Working aft in the steering engine room and laundry, Gary has set his restoration area up with all kinds of electric heaters. So he can make it absolutely balmy on the coldest days. In past years, with weeks of sub-zero temperatures, the crew was lined up, begging Gary for a chance to work back aft. There were even rumors of bribes and payoffs for a spot on one of Gary's needle guns. But, with the moderate weather we've had this season, the desire to be "Gary's best friend" hasn't been quite so intense. Guys like **Tim Benner**, **Super Dave Mardon**, and **Earl Herchenroder**, who would normally be sidling up to Gary about now, have been content to stick with **Doug Tanner** on the outside project. It's all been kind of disheartening to a guy who believes in his heart that, "Electric heat brings friendship."



New volunteer Nate Shakerley scaling in the steering gear flat.

To be sure, not everyone has abandoned Gary. He still has his corps of dedicated chippers. On Saturdays, **Nate Shakerley, Ken Powers, and Thomas Scian** are usually on hand to scale a few square feet. Every Monday he has **Ron Mazure** on a needle gun. On Tuesdays, it's **Ron Prest and Bill Wetterau**. Ron had said, "See you in the spring" back before Christmas. He was anticipating that the stress of his drive from Massachusetts wouldn't be offset by the pleasure gained

by cramming his body into a steel shelf, and scaling for seven hours. But, the anticipated snow never came, and the winter driving conditions never happened. As for Bill, he's much closer, and usually comes Thursdays, too. Unfortunately, Bill's wife may be taking a job in Denver, and we may be losing one of our best men.



Gary Sheedy and Matt Clifford are making great progress in the laundry.

**Welder Matt Clifford has been working with Gary on Saturdays in the laundry.** They have been installing pipe hangers, shelving, stuffing tubes, and replacing wasted frames. One of their most impressive accomplishments has been the modification of our boxy postwar electric dryer, by making it look like the original Hoffman Machine Corp. tumbler dryer. It is a work in progress, but when finished, it will be a work of art. Thomas has been restoring and polishing valves and plumbing fittings for Gary, too.



Before and after views of Thomas Scian's valve restoration.

**With the colleges back in session, Barry Witte and Tulsa Scott have their crew back.** With **Jimmy Lenden, Ed and Shaun Sutton, Nick Grorcki, Nick Starasining, and Paul Naumann** back aboard, Barry continues to use his experience, and the SLATER as a training aid for these students. Having



RPI Midshipmen sorting fire hose.

done a repair of the amidships expansion joint to stop a leak in the machine shop, he presently has two projects going. He and his crew are restoring and installing the electrical boxes and fittings needed in the steering gear compartment. They have also been sorting and organizing the damage control equipment. One of the biggest issues we have is fire hose. Depending upon whether the hose was scavenged off a navy ship or a merchant ship, there are two different types of thread, iron pipe thread and national standard thread. Color-coding the hose appears to offer a solution.



Doug Tanner's crew installing the new store door as part of the trailer renovations.

**However, the big project is the trailer renovation, under the direction of Doug Tanner.** By the end of January, the main support beam on the street side had been replaced, right around the south end of the trailer and back past the store door. To some, it appears that his helpers **Earl Herchenroder, Dave Mardon, and Tim Benner** spend the whole day standing around watching Doug work, but those in the inside know it's a team effort. Earl is often the first one on the scene, setting everything up for Doug, while everyone else is drinking coffee. Their latest

accomplishment was the replacement of the store door, which had deteriorated to the point of being beyond salvage. An entirely new frame had to be built, because there was no decent wood to screw the hinges and locks into. The work will continue along the east side to replace the main support beam. Then, the issue of replacing the skirt has to be resolved. Doug continually reminds me, "This trailer job is a lot like work." Not exactly what he signed on for when he volunteered to restore a ship. Fortunately, the weather has been more than kind to them. So far.



Ken Powers and Boats Haggart rigging a new block and tackle.

running and have postponed that project for now. A major issue is that, as designed, the engine takes lube oil suction from a skin tank under the engine, and having just cleaned those tanks in the shipyard, we don't want to reintroduce oil into a seventy-year-old single skin tank.

**The engineering gang, Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon and Ken Myrick got their battery problems sorted out on the emergency diesel generator.** They checked out the battery charging system and found that not one of our four battery chargers was working. **Tom Lee** of Advanced Battery donated a new float charger, and volunteered his time to make sure the system was working properly. Over the past couple of months they reviewed the cost and effort of getting the main engines

**They re-piped the fuel lines for both the three-cylinder and eight-cylinder generator sets to give positive pressure, making it easy to fill the engine day tanks from the furnace oil tank in the muffler room.** They changed the lube oil in the Ingersoll Rand LP air compressor in B-4. They winterized all the engine cooling systems in the three-cylinder and eight-cylinder generator sets, and added antifreeze and purged trapped air from both the standard and bypass cooling systems. They also completed the



Engineers Mike Dingmon and Ken Myrick tweaking the cooling radiator on the new HP air compressor.

installation of the water-cooled high pressure starting air compressor (600 psi) in B-1. This makes starting the B-3 ship's service generator a lot easier. To cool the compressor they installed a new liquid cooling system that included an air-cooled radiator, expansion tank and circulating pump in B-1 above the compressor. Their next project is to install a backup low pressure air compressor in B-1 to keep the chippers going, especially when the work crews come in the spring.



Danny Statile finishing the welding under gun three.



Larry Williams bids farewell to Ron Mazure as Larry heads to Florida for the winter.

Under gun three, Danny Statile has completed welding up the metal plates that cover the holes in the berthing space overhead. He is now working on metal brackets to hold our surplus pipe, bar, and angle, so it can be stowed under gun three. The snow birds, **Larry Williams, Angelo Bracco,** and **Bosun Walt Stuart** have flown south. Without his right hand man, **Bosun Bill Haggart** and his deck crew of **Bill Holt, Tommy Moore,** and **Paul Guarnieri** got the whaleboat blocks bagged and secured, to protect them from ice. They've been working forward to organize the windlass room, taking inventory, sorting and stowing gear, and moving gear that we are never likely to use into the hold below.

**Chief Smith** and **Doug Tanner** continue to keep the crew fed. That's a real challenge, with no running water on the ship this time of year. **Jim Gelston** keeps the clocks wound, and **Cathy Wheat** is a regular every Saturday, functioning as our only compartment cleaner. That's one of the most important jobs on the ship.

Over in the office, **Rosehn Gipe** and **Shanna Hopson** have kept busy with the now familiar winter activities. There was the year-end inventory of store merchandise, closing out the books so we can be ready for the 2015 audit, and getting the annual winter fund solicitation out. This was followed by the fourth quarter *Trim But Deadly* newsletter, getting the overnight



New volunteer Cathy Wheat has been keeping things tidy for us.

program notice out, and then the library pass program. Finally, they are tracking accessions, writing grant applications, and scheduling tours, speakers, and overnights for the coming season. Shanna is planning the guide refresher program and luncheon for sometime in March. Expect an email with details soon. She is also fondly looking forward to the day that restoration in the Special Collections space is completed and is working on a plan for creative storage and display of our many artifacts. **Claire Burgon** has been keeping up with the memberships, donations, and thank you letters. And, they have received an assist from **Dan Coletta**, a former student of Barry Witte's, who is now at SUNY - IT. He is helping us install the computers that were donated to SLATER through Russ Padden last December. While Dan is off at school, Midshipman **Paul Naumann** has inherited the IT job.



George Christophersen's replica 40mm projectiles.

**Off site, machinist George Christophersen in Connecticut continued manufacturing valve parts for us.** In addition, he has undertaken the task of replicating dummy 40mm projectiles for all the empty 40mm shell cases that we have, so we can get them on display. His polished completed shells are works of art. He's also working on repairing a wasted 20mm magazine drum.

**Three of our stalwart volunteers celebrated birthdays this month.** Both **Doug Tanner** and Super **Dave Mardon** caught another year. But, the most significant event was our senior Chief Shipfitter, **Clark Farnsworth**, turning 94 years old. His birthday was Sunday, January 10. The old Chief can still navigate the messdecks ladder, and make his way forward to the Joe Pot in the CPO Mess. We also want to send our thoughts and prayers out to **Chris Fedden**. **Chris** is a former radioman that helped put FRANKLIN and



The crew helped Clark Farnsworth celebrate his 94th birthday.

ENTERPRISE out of commission and then served in EUGENE A. GREENE DD-711 right after WWII. He's also one of our original volunteers going back to 1998. **Chris** has been a chipper, painter, shipfitter's helper, and storekeeper over the years. He is undergoing chemo and radiation treatments for cancer, so keep him in your prayers.

**We can't thank you enough for your continued generosity to our annual winter fund solicitation.** Each day the envelopes continue to flow in, containing the all-essential contributions that keep our volunteers going through the winter. If you haven't made your contribution, think about pitching in to give these guys a hand. You can donate online through PayPal. Just click on the donate button on [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org). Or, you can print out our donation form, mark it "Winter Fund," and mail it to us at USS SLATER, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY 12201-1926.

**Finally, social media is a fact of life in modern marketing, and we keep up our Facebook page, like everyone else.** But, that doesn't mean we really understand it. The weekly cycle of daily posts includes volunteer pics on Saturday and Monday, random pics of shipboard life on Tuesday and Wednesday, a throwback Thursday about the project history to show how far we have come, and a cheerful liberty call weekend pic for Friday afternoon. On Sunday we look for a significant date in destroyer escort history for "Remember a Ship Sunday." If a post gets 100 likes and reaches 1,000 people, we think we're doing well.

**So, we were kind of awestruck when a pic of a guy asleep in a berthing space with the caption, "Wake up, you got the watch," got 383 "Likes" and was reposted by 206 people, for a total reach of 32,000 people.** That's practically "viral" by our standards. We have quite a following in Taiwan and Greece. But, the most significant aspect of the post was this comment on shipboard life by **David Abernethy**. He expressed what it means to be an enlisted destroyer Sailor more succinctly and eloquently than we've ever heard. In case you missed it, it deserves to be repeated.

"I remember hitting the deck for mid watch. I hated the man who woke me in the middle of my dreams, but he ran away before I could hurt him. My clothes were humid and smelly, but I pulled them on and stumbled through the moving, red lit racks of my shipmates, up the ladder and to the galley for coffee. Oh God!--thank you for coffee. Up on deck is where I woke up and began to pay attention, because I was now the man who was responsible to those men asleep beneath my feet. Never before, and not often since, have I been so abused, so put upon, so trained, so trusted, and so responsible for people's lives. God help me, I miss being so necessary."

**And maybe that's what it means to be part of the USS SLATER effort, "Being so necessary."** Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates. Please be as generous as you can to help us keep the volunteers warm this winter.

**See you next month.**

