

## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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There ♦s something special about the smell of a warship, a unique mix of burned metal, paint, fuel oil, hot machinery, electronics, baked bread and hot coffee that you don ♦t find anywhere else. For years, veteran sailors have commented on how that special smell, that tang in the air, took them right back to their Navy days as soon as they stepped aboard. I ♦ve even noticed in my years of visiting and stripping ships, that you can kind of date a ship by the smell. The WWII-era ships that saw no postwar service have a slightly different smell from the postwar ships, probably thanks to the liberal use of Cosmoline during the mothball process. And as I learned when I first visited the SLATER back in 1993, Greek Navy ships smell different than U. S. Navy ships, probably thanks to the liberal use of olive oil. Now twelve years later, SLATER again smells like a U. S. Navy ship.

I was off on Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. That was the day that our fire restoration company, Quick Response, fogged the SLATER. Education Coordinator Eric Rivet had the watch that day. For those of you who have never been through a house fire, fogging is a process in which they use a smoke gun to insert chemical fog throughout the house. The fog goes wherever the smoke went, and displaces the odor. Now, it has been a month since the fire, and to us the odor was barely noticeable. But the normal procedure is to fog, so we fogged.



The morning after, Erik Collin and I came aboard a warship that no longer smelled like a warship. I think the average housewife would be quite pleased with the way SLATER smells now. The smoky smell is all gone. In fact, I think the only time a warship may have smelled this good is down in the engineers ♦ berthing space thirty minutes before the start of liberty when the air hung heavy with after shave, cologne



**The cleaning crew from Quick Response take a break outside in the wind and cold.**

and hair tonic. In fact, it really doesn't smell like a ship at all. I venture to say that this morning

SLATER smells like a New Orleans brothel before Katrina hit. Or I should say, what I imagine a New Orleans brothel would smell like. Enough of this. I just want my old ship smell back.

**We completed work getting bids on the painting and clean up by the third week in January.** I turned all the estimates over to International Marine Underwriters and they advised me to do the clean up in the affected spaces and selected Quick Response as the cleaning firm and our regular painter, Sage Brothers, as the paint contractor. After fogging, the next step in the process is normally to run ozone machines in the affected areas for a couple of days. However, this process can have a detrimental effect on rubber, and with all the life jackets, watertight door and electrical gasketing in place, we decided to forgo that step in the process, for fear of damage to the rubber. The clean up started in the CPO mess and then out in to the passageway. **Bruce Salls** brought in an eight-person team with buckets, water and all kinds of detergents. Using the galley ranges to heat the water they proceeded to give the insides of the SLATER the best scrubbing down she's had since her crew decommissioned her. They tackled the worst areas first, the CPO mess and passageway, and then moved up into officers country. The crew was a mix of older gents and younger girls who tackled the SLATER with the same enthusiasm the volunteers have. They hauled off all the CPO bunks and mattresses to their warehouse for cleaning, to get that gear out of the way while painting takes place. As soon as the initial cleaning is complete, we will bring the insurance surveyor aboard and the contract painters back aboard to begin repainting the damaged areas. **Gordon Lattey** and **Erik Collin** have done a great job of prepping the spaces for the cleaners. Gordon has been handling dry-cleaning all the uniforms and bedding, a formidable task in itself. **Stan Murawski** has been removing and repairing damaged insulation in preparation for repainting.



**Steven Nadeau from Quick Response wipes down the overhead.**



**While co-worker Jack McGuire takes care of the furniture.**

As might be expected, our winter work program took a hit, so don't expect the forward head to be ready for spring. We have continued chipping away with **Chris Fedden, Paul Czesak, Peter Jez, Stan Murawski, Bill Haggart** and **Nelson Potter** helping with that detail in between their other jobs. **Gene Jackey** has been relentlessly pulling up ceramic tile, but this is a story for the shipfitters. Once the tile was up there was about ten times more wasted metal than we first thought, and we have to replace about ten different sections of deck and bulkhead that were rotted right through. **Clark Farnsworth** has been cutting and fabricating the pieces up on deck so **Tim Benner, Chuck Teal, Joe Breyer** and **Doug Tanner** can get them welded in. It's one of those "growth jobs" that contractors love and volunteers hate. Needless to say, we're being very careful about fire.

Another project that has gone by almost unnoticed is the fabrication of the floater net brackets. The first basket was installed in November. The second basket was completed in December. Clark finished fabricating the brackets for it; **Bill Haggart** painted it and it is now on sawhorses on the portside main deck ready to hang. Two down and two more to do.



**Karl Herchenroder and Gus Negus working on the train gear drive from gun two.**

**Gus Negus and Karl Herchenroder have been pulled out of the engineering gang for ordnance duty.** In order to get numbers one and three three-inch guns working in train and elevation, we stripped gun number two. One of the winter tasks has been rebuilding the train gear drive for gun two. The lower section of the unit, which had been on gun three, has two broken helical gears. These are being remanufactured thanks to **Jack Bertsch**, the owner of **Polymer Conversions** out in Buffalo, who knows a

machinist willing to do the job. The upper part of the drive, which was originally on gun one, failed because all the roller bearings disintegrated. Gus and Karl have spent a month in the gun shack disassembling the unit with all the love they normally lavish on the engines. They are in the process of getting replacement bearings and hope to have the unit back together for opening day. All they can say is that at least it's warmer in the gun shack than the engine rooms. The gun shack is right forward of my office.



**Ken Kaskoun and Bob Callender splicing in a new 1MC cable outside the CPO Mess.**



**Jim Hewitt works on opening a cable-way to allow removal of old cable.**

**The Electricians have had the lion's share of the repair work.** We ordered four rolls of armored cable from Houston to replace the damaged lighting, power, and communications circuits. **Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy** and the **RPI Midshipmen** have been on the job Saturdays, and **Ken Kaskoun** and **Bob Callender** have been working Mondays and Wednesdays. **Barry** also has developed a night team with **Gordon Lattey, Paul Czesak, Karl Herchenroder** and **Gus Negus**. They have been pulling cables Wednesday nights as the "through bulkhead" cable pulls are the most difficult, and can realistically get done only when there is no other work going on in the vicinity. They have restored regular lighting to the forward passageway, even replacing a Greek jury-rigged fixture with an authentic one. They also restored lighting to the starboard head and got the long run for the 1MC cable in the anchor windlass machinery room pulled. Paul got the 450-Volt receptacle box off the bulkhead for cleaning and restoration. Ken Kaskoun and Bob Callender have been working to replace the sound powered phone circuits during the week.



**Gary Sheedy and Barry Witte replace burned cables.**

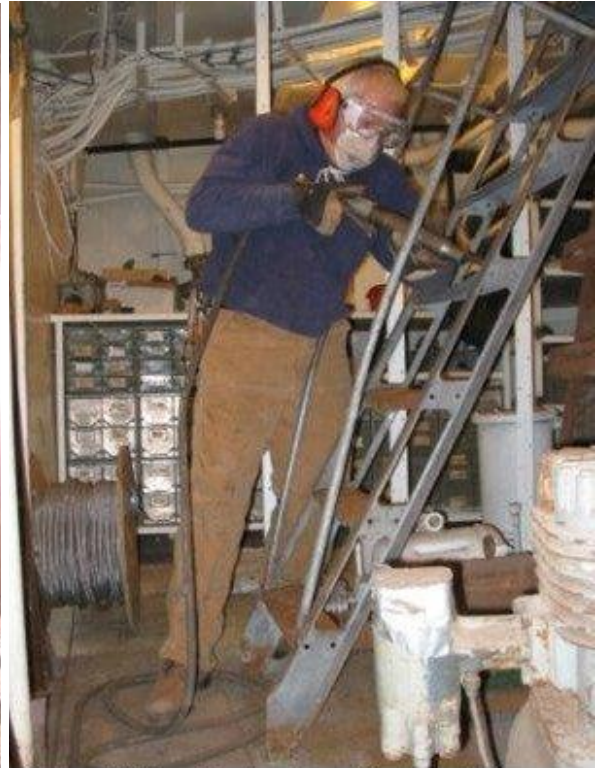
**In the wake of the fire, we formed a safety committee with Erik Collin as chairman and Paul Czesak, Ken Kaskoun, Chuck Teal, Doug Tanner and Barry Witte as advisors.** They are reviewing our safety manual, rewriting procedures, inventorying equipment and purchasing gear we are deficient in. I was left off because I'm too interested in how to get the most production for the least cost. Paul had been bringing in all the safety publications and material he accumulated from his days with Travelers Insurance, and the ship has lost about six inches of draft as a result.

**One little bright light in the restoration tunnel is the purchase of an engraving**

**machine by a local school for an Industrial Technology Program.** Barry tested it out and sure enough, it makes perfect original-style labels for the electrical boxes. He did several in the anchor windlass room and those tags make the boxes and the whole compartment look brand new. Barry is looking forward to training students on the use of this machine, with the SLATER being the beneficiary of their effort, as we restore electrical boxes throughout the ship. And through it all, **Gary Sheedy** has not given up trying to make progress on the reefer deck restoration. He had **Nelson Potter** chipping his ladder for two Saturdays. Just aft of him Bob and Ken have begun chipping paint and repairing the door to the IC workshop just below the messdecks.



**Tim Benner welds in replacement bulkhead in the forward passageway.**



**Nelson Potter chipping the reefer deck ladder.**

**This month, we received a material donation that has been over a year in the making.** While scouting for parts out in Nevada, **Peter Papadakos**, Executive Director of the **Gyrodyne Helicopter Historical Foundation** found a load of old dummy 3"/50 caliber ammunition and hedgehog projectile heads that were on their way to scrap. He contacted various historic naval ships to see if they would be interested in having them. We were among the lucky beneficiaries. When we agreed to accept part of the consignment, he began the process of getting the material transferred from the Government to his Foundation for eventual loan to the SLATER. At his own expense he moved the material from Hawthorne to his warehouse, and crated it up for shipment east. Our material was sent to Battleship Cove in October with a load of material for the JOSEPH P. KENNEDY JR. that included two ASROC missiles, so it was a pretty impressive looking tractor-trailer load heading east on I-70.



**Hauling ammo onboard is the highpoint of every sailor's day!**



**Tim Rizzuto counts his new found loot.**

**When the truck arrived at Battleship MASSACHUSETTS, Ed Zajkowski, Rich Angelini, Chris Nardi and the crew from Battleship Cove unloaded the truck and stored our material on their pier.** Chris gave me monthly updates as we made plans to move our portion from Fall River to Albany. In January, Steve Whynot and Gene Byers agreed to use Gene's truck to haul the load west. The truck arrived around noon on February 4<sup>th</sup>. We fed the KENNEDY guys lunch and set to work loading ammunition. We increased our ammo load by 69 three-inch projectiles and 23 hedgehog projectile heads. The three-inch rounds were all stowed in our forward magazine. They look much more realistic than the wood and solid brass training rounds we've previously received. We also received two more complete hedgehog rounds that were in the crates. I don't know if these were intended for me, but I will be happy to care for them until the rightful owner identifies him or herself. We stowed the hedgehog projectiles on deck by the launcher covered with canvas until we can get the hedgehog locker cleaned out. Our intent is to set up the display with the heads on the bottom of the pile and the complete rounds on top. If I live long enough we hope to fabricate tail sections for the 23 heads they got for us.

**Our only problem is that we had intended to leave the hedgehog locker unrestored, so people could appreciate the condition of the SLATER when we got her from Greece.** It's the last unrestored compartment available for public view, save the machinery spaces and lower magazines. But now with all this ammo, the potential for a really excellent exhibit will probably be too great to resist and we'll end up restoring the locker. Again, we thank everyone who had a hand in making this acquisition happen. You can't get this stuff at Wal-Mart. And we'll try and be more careful and not set fire to any of it!



**The Education crew is gearing up for our ninth season in Albany.** Paul Czesak and Eric Rivet will hold the annual Spring Tour Guide Refresher Classes on March 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The



**RPI NROTC students John Camp and Kevin Guldner at work in B1 repairing the bilge pump system.**

emphasis for this year's training is safety for our guides and their groups in the wake of the January fire. As always, pizza will be provided. Eric is also looking for new part-time tour guides to bolster our excellent guide staff. He's looking for high school and college students ages 16 and up, especially those who are interested in helping out with the

Overnight Camping program. If you know anyone who would enjoy climbing steep ladders in the summer heat, send them Eric's way. Finally, the SLATER is offering something new in March: Boat Safety courses! The sessions will be taught by volunteer **Clark Farnsworth**, and will be held on March 11, 18, and 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 to 12:00. The classes are available to anyone over the age 14, but space is limited so reserve your spot soon. To receive your certification, you must attend all three sessions. NYS requires anyone who operates a personal watercraft to take this course!

**I got the January financial statement from Rosehn, which showed, as of January 31<sup>st</sup>, \$1,002,167.76 in cash assets, including our Endowment.** That means, thanks to your generosity and a decent stock market we are a million dollar company. But don't worry. Always the optimist, Rosehn said, "Don't get too excited. The way you're spending the winter fund money, you'll be back below nine hundred and ninety thousand before you know it." Finally, **Maralyn Walker** tallied up the volunteer hours for 2005 and we had a total of 19,092 hours given to the project. Her note to me says that that's not counting the time **Les and Annette Beauchaine, Al Van Derzee and Jack Madden** spend selling dog tags at Crossgates Mall, or all the time **Richard and Catherine Andrian** spend taking pictures and putting the "Trim But Deadly" together, or all the time **Sam Saylor** spends on membership renewals, or all the time **Frank Lasch** spends trying to find our next million dollars. It takes a lot dedication to keep this old ship afloat, and fortunately we've been blessed with plenty of dedicated friends.

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