

SLATER SIGNALS

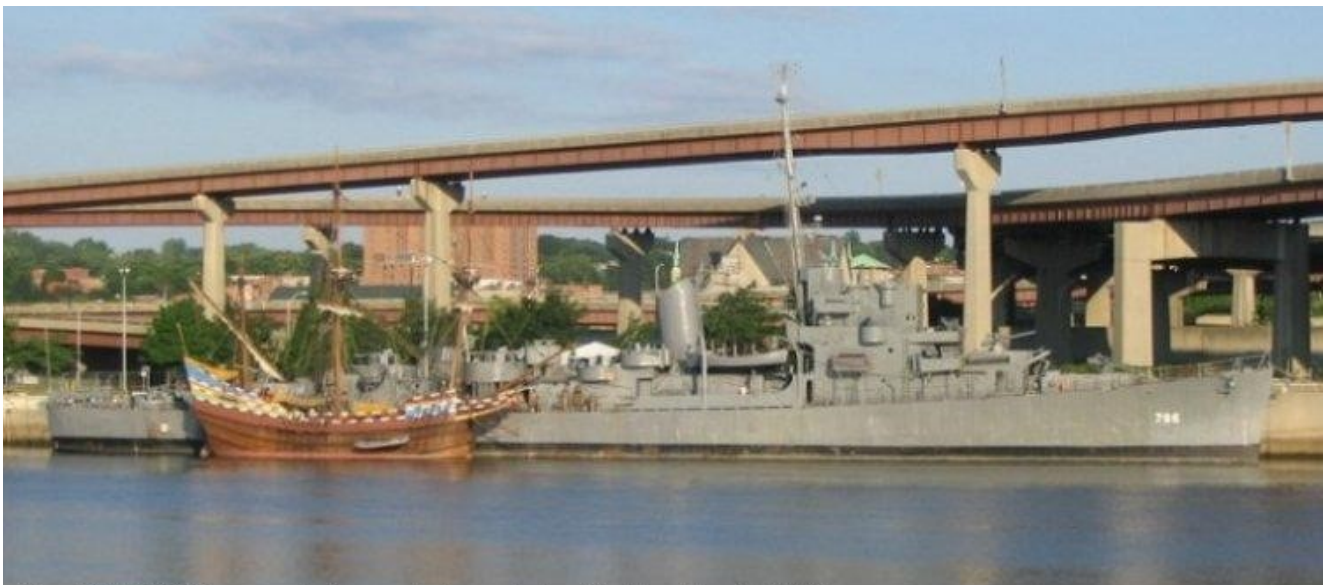
The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Ship's Superintendent

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum
USS Slater DE-766
PO Box 1926
Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123
Vol. 9 no. 8, August 2006

August. I just got back from vacation. My wife arranged to rent a bungalow down in Sullivan County, in Highland Lake where my mother's family was from. The local cemetery in Eldred contains the remains of my great great great grandmother. Anyway the bungalow arrangement included use of a sunfish sailboat, so I got sailing every day while Nancy sunned herself. As you can imagine, upon my return to the SLATER I was greeted with the usual fanfare. Responses ranged from "Were you gone?" to "I knew there was a reason things were going so smoothly," to "What do you do around here to rate a vacation?" I know they really missed me.

Coming back I had to catch up on what went on in my absence. The best part of the return was to experience momentary financial bliss. Fundraising for the SLATER is like treading water against the tide, but since my last writing we settled and received the last payment on the fire insurance from last January, have received a steady stream of donations for the November SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club, and the money from the DESA raffle has started to arrive. Thanks to the members of the Los Angeles Chapter of DESA, and the DESA membership for their participation in the event. After printing and mailing expenses and taking out the prize money we netted about \$41,000 dollars.

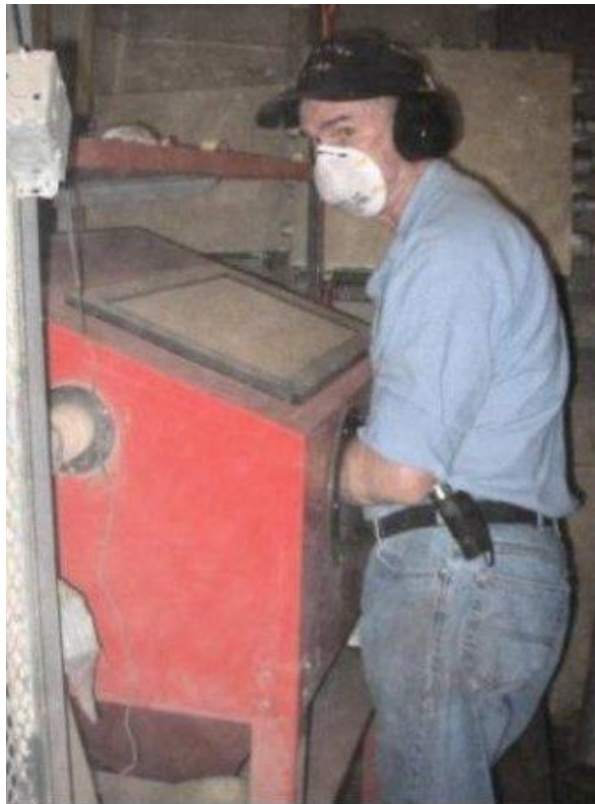


The HALF MOON moored along side and dwarfed by the SLATER.

The replica sailing ship HALF MOON stayed alongside us for about a month. They left on Friday August 18th to prepare for their fall classroom season, traveling up and down the river bringing the story of Henry Hudson's exploits to life. They were good company and it was nice having them alongside. The contrast between old and new gave new meaning to the story of the evolution of ships, as we were able to interpret the story much more easily with an actual 17th century sailing ship moored alongside. We look forward to having them back.



Radioman Joe Breyer working on an amplifier.



Chuck Teal works in the sandblasting booth cleaning up 20mm gun parts.

Parts continue to flow in from all directions. This month the engineering gang was the biggest beneficiary. **Herb Dahlhaus** was a port engineer with **Gibson and Cushman Dredging** out of Bayshore, Long Island. Back in the sixties, when they were buying engines for their dredges, they bought government surplus from the Boston Metals Company in Baltimore, Maryland. At the time, Boston Metals was one of the biggest scrappers of Destroyer Escorts, and Herb tells that they had a warehouse full of DE engines, generators, compressors and motors. Herb picked out a bunch of GM engines for his company's dredges. Now, forty years later, the dredges are being scrapped and the DE parts are coming home. Herb arranged with his boss, **Jim Haney**, to donate the unneeded parts to the SLATER. On July 20th Herb and **Marty Newman** drove up from New York with an overloaded pickup truck that contained a true windfall for us. Enough spares to keep the emergency diesel generator running for years to come. The list was impressive and included two fresh water heat exchangers, a lube oil heat exchanger, a complete fresh water pump, a large assortment of gaskets, piston rings, injectors, a fuel pump, a governor, two starter motors, and two original 2 Ingersol Rand 600-pound starting air compressors. These spare parts to keep our Cleveland 3-268A Emergency diesel generator set running well into the future are getting very hard to find. The whole crew turned to help Gus, Karl and Gary stow the parts in the machinery spaces until they are needed. All the emergency diesel spares are in the SLATER's aft engine room with the emergency diesel generator where they will be in storage until we need them. Some of the parts will be used to restore our inport generator in the forward motor room down the road.



Craig and Josh apply a fresh coat of paint to our collection of helmets.



Melissa prepares fantastic lunches for the crew!

Greg Krawczyk continues to help us from Maryland. The Maritime Commission instituted the PMARS program, a computerized system for loaning and tracking the high value artifacts such as clock, chronometers, and navigational instruments. Using the system we put in for binoculars for the sky lookout chairs on the flying bridge, three Hamilton Navigational chronometers for the chartroom, and clocks for the machinery spaces and one of the special radio room clocks marked for the time to monitor distress frequencies. These were all approved and Greg went to their warehouse to pick these items up for us. He also checked out a load of engine room parts that MARAD has available for donation, but that turned out to be all "Victory Ship" steam engineering spares. Anyway, the engineers have gotten enough this month. The plan will be for Greg to transfer the gear to **Gordon Lattey** while Gordon is down for one of the Navy football games. Of course, having the real chronometers means we have another winter project to reckon with, extending the charttable in the charthouse to include a chronometer well so we can place these beautiful instruments on display.



Electricians Ben Waxman and Barry Witte on the messdeck refurbishing electrical parts.

Gordon came up with a very valuable donation for us. A buddy of his was cleaning out his basement and turned up an official USN line-throwing gun complete with rods. Spools of line and cartridges. That was a piece of gear we were missing on SLATER. Gordon turned it over to tour guide **Glenn Harrison**. Glen was enamored with the piece and took it to **Taylor and Vadney Sporting Goods** in Schenectady. The gun drew a crowd of spectators upon its arrival and Taylor and Vadney agreed to donate their services to restore the gun. The original box was constructed of fiberboard and was damaged beyond salvage so Glenn is constructing a wooden box for the gun and accessories. Based on the restoration Glenn did on some of the navigational instrument boxes, we know it will be a work of art.

Other guns continue to get a lot of loving attention.

Rich Pavolvik has continued work on the twenty-millimeter gun that won't train. Over the past three months Rich has tried every lubricant known to man to try and get gun 24 to train, but to no avail. He even thought of putting a chain fall from the gun mount to the mast to break it free, but was talked out of that. We're sure something would break free, but we're not sure what. He has temporarily given up and is devoting his time to restoring the gun in the stationary position. He has yet to try the biggest wrench we have on board, **Doug Tanner**. Since Rich is Coast Guard and Doug is Coast Guard, it should be a perfect fit. In

Next month marks the beginning of reunion season on the SLATER, and this year we're hitting the ground running.

Crews from the following ships will hold their reunions aboard the SLATER in September: USS GUNASON DE795, USS WEBER DE675/APD75, USS HUBBARD DE211/APD53, USS SNOWDEN DE246, USS KLEINSMITH DE718/APD134, USS RHODES DE384, USS CHARLES J. KIMMEL DE584, and the Gearing-class can USS AGERHOLM DD826. Getting these veterans together on the SLATER is one of the most important reasons we're here, so we're looking forward to having them aboard. As always, if you want to plan a reunion in Albany, Jeanne Toth at our Convention and Visitors Bureau is standing by to help you out. Call her at 800-258-3582 ext 106.

Don't forget the Michigan Fall Field Day. The Michigan Chapter of DESA, along with other friends of the SLATER, will start to arrive on Saturday Sept. 30. Monday will start at 0800 with turn to and work assignments. We have work all lined up. Bring your work clothes, be ready to chip and paint or weld if you are welders. You can sleep in the same rack as you did on your ship if it's open. We will bring our own cooks and eat our meals on the mess deck. The chow costs will be split depending on how many meals you are with us. The gang will leave after 1600 Friday. If you want to bear a hand for all or part of the week, give Coordinator Earl Moorehouse a call at 248-549-1907

the meantime **Erik Collin** has begun restoration of twenty-millimeter gun 27 on the portside opposite from where Rich is working. They have completely disassembled the mount and are giving it the same loving treatment they gave to the forward three-inch gun mount. Back on that mount, gun 31, even the shipfitters have gotten sucked into ordnance work. All the stuffing tubes in the base of the gun were rotted out, so **Doug, Clark, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal** removed the center plate with all the stuffing tubes and made a new one. Now it's up to the electricians to run new wiring. In the meantime Doug continues to remind me that we better get the shipfitters off the guns and on to the maintenance of the furnace and heating oil system because it's going to be winter again before you know it. And we all know that only too well. Meanwhile, Clark Farnsworth has been fabricating the original style battle helmet brackets for the mount 31 gun tub. **Stan Murawski** painted out the forward floater net baskets, and **Chris Fedden, Peter Jez and Gene Jackey** have been scaling and priming the fo'c's'le deck for repainting. And **Erik Collin** got the bridge deck and the main deck portside all painted out.

Gary Sheedy has tried to spend as much time as he can down on the reefer deck organizing and restoring his spare parts drawers. **Barry Witte** has occupied himself testing submersible pumps and continuing the battle lantern restoration project. **Bob Callender, Ken Kaskoun, Larry Williams, Don Shattuck and Bill Coyle** have continued their work on the pilothouse windshield wipers and they got the illumination going again in the magnetic compass binnacle. And back down in the aft engine room, after getting all the parts stowed, **Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder and Gary Lubrano** have been busy doing continuing maintenance on the emergency diesel generator.

The lube oil strainer assembly was leaking and they removed, rebuilt, replaced and tested the system. The fuel pump, drive and fuel block were all leaking and removed. They replaced these parts with the pieces removed from the USS KITTIWAKE last year. The fuel pump removed was well worn and leaking at the packing gland. After reassembling with the used parts they increased the fuel pressure from 45 to 90 psi. They also removed the old fuel filter, as they couldn't get replacement elements, and the fuel strainer, which was disintegrating. In order to insure we were getting quality fuel to the engine they installed a new filter assembly, donated by Atlantic Detroit Diesel in Albany. They made up a new bracket, fuel lines, and fittings and mounted everything to the engine. After a test run, all systems were leak free and the engine ran fine with no visible smoke.



Gene Jackey grinds rough spots on the gun 1 tub.



Barry Witte prepares one of our recently obtained submersible pump for testing.

The whaleboat was launched on Saturday, August 26th. We let her set in the falls for a couple of days before hauling her around to the quarter and tying her off the accommodation ladder. **Rocky** completed three months of painstaking work on the whaleboat that included recaulking seams, sanding, painting, repairs to the rudder, and making a new bracket for the bell. He was assisted by **Gene Jackey and Ken Kaskoun**. Some people probably believe that the restored whaleboat is more valuable than the SLATER. I mean, not every sailor can relate to a destroyer escort, but almost every sailor who served the fleet between 1917 and 1970 was hauled ashore in a wooden whaleboat at one time or another. In the process of restoring the boat Rocky found three frames that have begun to dry rot. We missed them the first time around and will plan to replace them this winter. We have had Scarano's look at it and the



The pump prepares to to over the side.



Tour Guide Greg Sleasman is prepared for any fire that may break out on the fantail.

estimate on the repair is \$5,700 so we're shopping for a grant to cover that cost. But as it stands now, at the end of the season, we will take the boat down to Scarano's for hauling, winter storage and work, rather than haul her back aboard here. We figure we'll have to load the crew into the boat and haul everybody up to the restaurant barge for a "Dungaree liberty lunch" before it gets too late in the season. We just need to find somebody with deep pockets to pay for lunch!

We have several new volunteers with us who look like they may be keepers. Melissa Peet-Van Loan works as a dental hygienist and she loves to cook as a hobby. One day she found herself cleaning **Stan Murawski's** teeth. Always the promoter, Stan got to talking about his favorite subject, the USS SLATER. Melissa asked if the USS SLATER was looking for a volunteer cook. Never one to hesitate, Stan said we sure were, and that would give **Doug Tanner** more time to weld. That fact the Melissa is cuter than Doug probably had nothing to do with it. Melissa said she would be aboard to cook lunch for the crew that coming Saturday. Now remember our rule about how we expect fifty promises before we get a keeper. We'll damn if Melissa didn't show up Saturday and cook lunch for us, and has been with us every Saturday for over two months now. That's another reason we're all gaining weight. As for Doug, he'd taken it well, and remains content to cook breakfast and get more welding done instead of stopping to prepare lunch. Now all grown up sea cadet **Larry Case** is back with us and tackling a tough job in the aft motor room. He is working on the reassembly of the fire and bilge pump in B-4. We suggested to him that since the pump, strainer and ancillary piping was disassembled,

he had access to the bilge. And that since we'd never have that kind of "easy" access when the pump was reassembled, we suggested he scale and prime the bilge pocket before putting the pump back together. Just don't chip too hard. Larry agreed and he's now spent every Monday for a month hauling buckets of "SLATER rust" out of the bilge. Wildwood School also sent a group of volunteers on Tuesdays to help Erik with painting. **Craig, Josh, Jen, Connie** and **Jo** got our picnic tables repainted, and we appreciate their help, not only with the painting, but keeping the water coolers full and iced down all summer.

Our overnight tour guides have had a busy couple of weeks. Last week we hosted the Saratoga YMCA and Boy Scout Troop 50 from Sauquoit, New York. Special thanks go out to volunteer **Glenn Harrison**, who spent both nights aboard ship in addition to his normal Wednesday shift, and all this with a bum foot from a chainsaw accident. If I didn't know any better, I'd say he's bucking for a promotion. Or a raise.

See you next month.



Need something to do on your 73rd birthday? How about giving SLATER tours like guide Bob Donlon.