

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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September, and we're already thinking about winter. The big project is getting the heating system ready. **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Karl Herchenroder,** and **Gary Lubrano** have been making modifications to our fuel oil storage and cleaning the burners and filters. As always, as it starts to get colder and with the deadline of the arrival of the Michigan Field Day crew fast approaching, all I hear coming from the muffler room is "Rizzuto should have had us working on this back in August instead of playing around with those stupid guns!" The deck force of **Chris Fedden, Erik Collin, Peter Jez, Jim Gelston** and **Stan Murawski** have been wrapping up scaling the fo'c's'le deck and getting that painted out. **Chuck Teal** got the WWII style helmet clips welded up in both number 1 and number 2 three-inch gun tubs, so with all the hot work done they can be painted. **Jim Gelston** is back with us following chemotherapy and has been priming up on gun two with **Stan Murawski**. Stan managed to get both new forward floater net baskets primed and painted. Storekeepers **Earl Herchenroder** and **Don Miller** are back with us, and we sidetracked them from storekeeping to chipping paint on the boat deck. So far they seem okay working outside their rate.

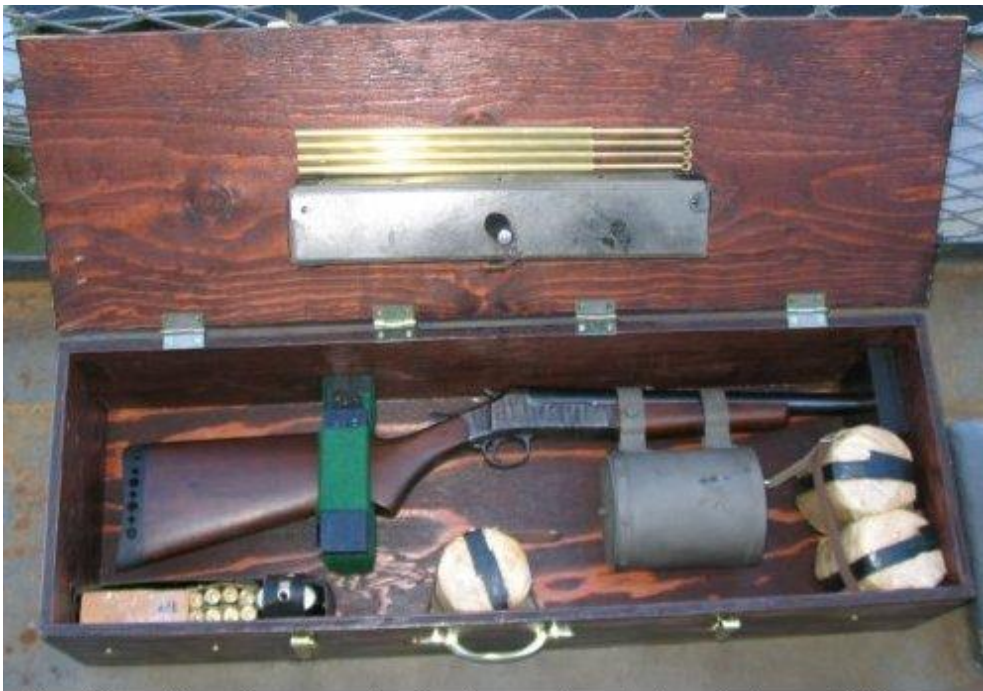


Karl Herchenroder works on heating system repairs.

Erik Collin and Chad Johnson completed restoration of 20mm gun 27 and it is a beautiful job. Even the MK 14 gunsight will work. **Rich Pavlovic** continues his restoration of gun 24 on the portside. He and fellow Coastie **Gene Jackey** continue the battle to try and get the gun free in train. Even if it doesn't move, it is looking beautiful. Back over on the starboard side, gun 25 opposite was jammed in train because of a broken locking pin. **Russ Ferrer** removed

the broken pin and freed up that gun. He's now in the process of machining a new locking pin. **Gary Sheedy** has tried to spend as much time as he can down on the reefer deck organizing and restoring his spare parts drawers. He's almost completed work on the portside storeroom and is getting ready to reassemble the refrigeration compressors. With school open **Barry Witte** is back to making new label plates for the electrical boxes. **Bob Callender, Ken Kaskoun, Larry Williams, Don Shattuck and Bill Coyle** have continued their work on the pilothouse. The whaleboat has been working fine. Gus and Karl have been exercising the boat weekly for Rocky. The engine is running fine and she's tight with no leaks. And **Clark Farnsworth** is continuing his chock restoration project. The count still stands at 15 finished, 1 in progress and 8 to go. As we say, we make continuing progress in small increments.

A big donation was a Clemco commercial sandblaster. Back in the spring during the USS WATERMAN reunion, **Vince Finigan** came aboard and observed the crew needle gunning. To help us out with ship maintenance, he had the manufacturer Clemco send us a commercial sand blasting pot and the accessories. It's a beautiful piece of equipment we could never afford and it shows that help comes from everywhere! **Gordon Lattey** did go to Annapolis for a Navy football game, and he connected with **Greg Krawczyk** to deliver three beautiful Hamilton Navigation Chronometers, two pairs of binoculars and six clocks including the special radio room clock marked with the times distress frequencies were to be monitored. **Geoffrey Bullard** has already checked all this gear out and is scheduling an overhaul and lubrication program. Thanks to Greg and **Pete Wagner** of the Maritime Administration for arranging for this gear. **Glenn Harrison** brought the line-throwing gun aboard after it was beautifully restored by Taylor and Vadney Sporting Goods in Schenectady. Glenn constructed a wooden box for the gun and accessories and even went so far as to polish the rods and rounds.



The line throwing gun lovingly restored to mint condition.

This was the month for reunions with 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 USS AGERHOLM DD826 joining us aboard. Some interesting meetings took place at these reunions. In the "it's a small world" department--**Jim Saladin** from Nevada

was a radioman that served aboard USS JACCARD and USS COONER. He remembered **Rocky Rockwood** from his days on the COONER, and the two of them had a chance to get together. Jim was

part of a special "Huff/Duff" team that rotated through five destroyers and DEs over the course of the war. He's promised to write us up an essay on the technical aspects and operation of the gear. During the GARFIELD THOMAS Reunion, the USS KLEINSMITH Reunion Coordinator **Don Connelly's** wife Peggy approached the THOMAS crew to ask if they had known her father **Ed Boylan** who was an electrician's mate on the THOMAS. He was the movie projectionist, so of course everyone knew him. That led to a wonderful sharing of stories. And **Jim Bush** of the USS FRENCH and LOY came all the way from Idaho and spent two days going over every nook and cranny of SLATER with his younger brother Bob who had served on the carrier BOXER. And **Fred Slagle** off the USS RABY came up to visit with a pack of kids and grand kids from Georgia. They told Rosehn that the family offered to send Fred anywhere in the world he wanted to go, and he wanted to come see the SLATER. **Paul Czesak** spent the morning with the family and gave them the red carpet treatment. 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.



Members of the USS RHOADES reunion meet for coffee in the SLATER CPO quarters.

I attended the DESA Convention, which is always a great place meet old friends and make new ones. This was a special convention for me, because it was held in Dearborn, Michigan and hosted by our friends from the Michigan Chapter of DESA. You'd have to have been living under a rock for the past eight years not to know that the Michigan Chapter and SLATER share a special bond, based on all the work and support Michigan has given the ship over the years. My chauffeur from the airport was one of our biggest boosters, **John Bartko** of the USS O'REILLY. It was great to be able to have a little spare time to spend with John. **Dick Briel, Ron Zarem** and all the folks in Michigan put on a great convention. Ron invited me to the USS BROUGH banquet and I got to sit with one of their former skippers



Dropping carnations into the water in memory of lost shipmates.

Garette Lockee and his wife. The highlight for me was giving a presentation on the progress aboard the ship at the Thursday night men's gathering. As always, **Dori Glaser**, **Phyllis Gruber** and **Pat Stephens** got me all set up and Pat loaned me her PowerPoint projector and got me through the computer technicalities. We reviewed the fire, recovery, the June flooding, parts scavenging and the progress we have made this past year.

The meeting was the first screening of our new DVD "Saving the SLATER." This documentary is a production by **Fred Antico**, a professor with the Communications Department of the College of Saint Rose. Fred began work back in 1998 documenting the restoration and preservation of the SLATER shortly after the ship arrived in Albany. Over a nine-year period he brought his camera and communications students to the SLATER several times a year to teach video production techniques while documenting the story of the USS SLATER's preservation. In 2006 Fred assigned the final production of the video to graduate student **W. "Andy" McIlwraith**, who was charged with producing, writing and directing the final version of the documentary. This past summer they donated the completed documentary to the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum to benefit our ongoing effort to save the SLATER. Featuring the SLATER's staff and volunteers, the video captures the color and spirit of the volunteers who have resurrected this historic naval ship in honor of all who built and served in destroyer escorts. **Christopher Platt** narrates the documentary and it features still photography from the U.S. Navy Archives and **Richard** and **Catherine Andrian**. The video is twenty-five minutes in length, and all sale proceeds go to the restoration and preservation of the USS SLATER. It was well received at the convention, and we are planning to send copies to all the DESA chapters to be shown at their local meetings. As a side benefit, Fred donated several hours of raw video of interviews with our volunteers and veterans with us, including several that have since passed away. Some of the footage dates back to 1998, and is an important addition to our project history. We thank everyone involved with the production of the tribute to the SLATER's volunteers and supporters.



Following a bout with a stomach virus Tim Rizzuto receives a warm welcome at the DESA convention.

We are the beneficiaries of another video effort. **John Boardman** served aboard USS PARLE DE708 between 1961 and 1965. He shot a great deal of 16mm color movie film. He scored the film and had it transferred to DVD this past year and is offering it for sale to benefit DESA and DEHM. It's the kind of thing that keeps us motivated on the SLATER and reminds us how important it is to keep this effort going. If you'd like to obtain a copy of John Boardman's DVD, write him at PO Box 2294, Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts 02557.

At the DESA conventions I always get a lot of questions about the relationship of the SLATER to DESA. The way I always explain it is to say that in the late eighties a movement began in DESA to secure an actual destroyer escort for posterity. By that time, the only available DEs were in Foreign Service. At the 1992 annual convention in Buffalo, the membership voted to raise the \$290,000 in small donations needed to pay for the costs of bringing the SLATER home from Greece. It was at this time that the DESA Board realized that a "Last Man" type of organization could not run the affairs of the USS SLATER, a museum ship that was supposed to last in perpetuity, forever. In 1993 the Board of Directors of DESA voted for and established a new organization, the Destroyer Escort Historical Foundation or DEHF. DEHF was incorporated as a not-for-profit educational corporation that anyone with an interest in preserving DE history could join. It was charged with maintaining and operating the SLATER. Several DESA Board members took on roles in the new organization. With the relocation of the ship to Albany, the organization was reincorporated as the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum and granted a provisional charter by the New York State Department of Education. DESA remains a veteran's association, dedicated to promoting comradeship among all DE sailors. DESA was our parent, but now DEHM is a separate educational organization using the SLATER to educate the public about the Destroyer Escort Story. We keep alive the history, spirit and technology of these vessels and the men and women who built and manned them from WWII through Korea, the Cold War years and Viet Nam.



The rule is: "You shoot it, you clean it"!

We presently have four full time employees and about 100 local volunteers who we usually see about once a week. On the staffers, **Erik Collin** is our shipkeeper, data base manager and computer whiz. He types all those thank you letters that I sign. **Rosehn Gipe** is our business manager, promoter and accountant. She answers the phone when you call to book a tour.

Eric Rivet is our education coordinator who schedules all the tour guides, and runs the reunions and overnight camping program. And me. They're still trying to figure out what useful function I perform coordinator who there. Our backbone is the volunteers putting in 20,000 hours a year.

In terms of DEHM's fundraising, we have three separate efforts going on. The restoration money goes into the general operation of the ship to supplement the income we make with our ticket and gift shop sales. Presently it takes about \$350,000 annually to operate the ship. About one third comes from sales and two thirds from donations. The income from membership dues and donations to the Winter Fund that helps us get through those long cold winter months is also used to support the operation of the ship. Aside from general operations, we have the endowment fund. Knowing that we won't have DE veterans with us forever to support us, we are working to build a three million dollar endowment. That principle will not be spent. For now, as long as restoration contributions and memberships continue to come in at the current rate, the interest continues to accumulate back into the fund. In the future, the interest will be used to support our annual operations. Unless otherwise specified, all memorial donations go into the endowment fund. The only way we would ever touch the principle would be if some unforeseen catastrophe made it necessary to use the money to save the ship and the project. When donors ask me what fund they should contribute to, I reply with the question, "Do you want us to save it or spend it?" But, remember, we must balance our donations. As much as we'd love to save everything, it takes a lot to maintain SLATER in her present, restored condition and open to the public.



Josh and Craig did a great job painting the picnic tables.

We also have the two issues of funding dry-docking the SLATER and building a permanent mooring. We have estimated the cost of the dry-docking at \$1.3 million and the dock at \$700,000. Based on the experiences of other historic ships, we feel that both of these are very grantable projects, for which we have been writing grants for the past nine years. We continue to approach both government agencies and private foundations looking for that "sugar

daddy." When the big grant comes through, it will no doubt not be enough and we will come to you again with our hand out to put us over the top. But the professionals all say that you shouldn't announce a fund drive until you have half the money pledged. When we get that pledge, I'll drop you a note.

Finally, We held our annual September 11th memorial service to remember the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The ensign was at half staff as Paul Czesak read the President's announcement of the attack followed by TAPS and a gun salute fired by Erik Collin from the after three inch battery. And by the time you read this **Earl Moorhouse** will have brought 20 more volunteers together for the Michigan Fall Field Day week. They will start to arrive on Saturday Sept. 30 in time for the annual volunteer dinner. Monday will start at 0800 with turn to and work assignments. We have work all lined up. Thanks for their, and your, continued help and support.

See you next month