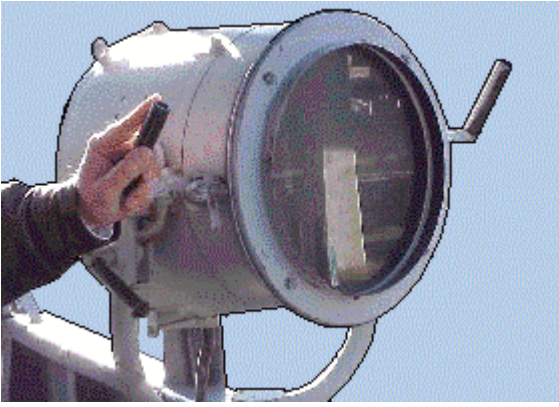


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SLATER SIGNALS

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

**Destroyer Escort Historical Museum
USS Slater DE-766
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I just got back from the annual DESA Convention in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky where I was invited to update the membership on the status of the SLATER project. My wife drove me to the Albany airport on Monday at 0400 to catch an 0600 flight. I still haven't recovered. It was a great convention, well-attended with an exciting program. The keynote speaker was **Tom Kimmel**, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel's grandson, who made a compelling case for reexamining the facts about the Pearl Harbor attack and that a great deal of important information was withheld from the field commanders at Pearl Harbor, Kimmel and Walter Short. That evening my shipmates were kind enough to keep me well-supplied with rum and coke, and following Tom Kimmel's presentation, **Dick Smith** invited me to a party with his USS EVARTS shipmates. When I arrived, Dick had brought a bottle of Captain Morgan Rum all the way from Fort Edward just for me. I was also able to gorge on all the chips and Doritos that my wife won't usually let me have at home. It was a great group of people and wonderful to be able to spend time with Dick and Mary.

The following morning dawned exceptionally early and bright. I had two missions. First was a presentation at the "First Timers Meeting" run by Earl Johnson to explain the SLATER project, our relationship with DESA, and try to solicit their support for the project. A couple had been to the ship and learned of the existence of DESA through the SLATER. My second presentation was the SLATER seminar. While not nearly as compelling as Tom Kimmel's presentation, I accomplished our goal of bringing the DESA members up to date on our progress. To try and attract as many people as possible, we entitled the seminar "Getting the SLATER Underway: Dream or Reality?" I had taken a series of slides that updated people on our progress over the past year, and focused on the possibilities of getting the SLATER underway on her own power. Much of the presentation dealt with the work that **Gus Negus** and the engineers have accomplished in the engine rooms in restoring the emergency diesel generator, the work in the high-pressure air compressor, and now the number two ship's service generator. If anything came across it's what a perfectionist Gus is. That, and the fact that we need to redouble our efforts to get the SLATER into a dry-dock.

The main thrust of my talk on getting the SLATER underway was that cooling the engines remains our most difficult problem to overcome, because of the cold winters in Albany. We simply would not want to open up any of the 25 underwater hull openings and expose the SLATER to the possibility of freeze and flood damage through the cooling valves which are now plated over. The engineers will continue work on the engines, as there is a great deal of work to be done before we get to the cooling phase. Experience with other ships has shown that the main engines can be run up to twenty minutes on internal cooling, without using the seawater heat exchanger. So there is plenty of work to do before we get to the point of actually opening up sea valves. We are also still discussing the possibility of installing a modern alternative propulsion system aft between the shaft alleys that would be coupled to the existing shafts or cooling the main diesels with modern keel coolers that would be installed during the dry-docking. During the convention, the DESA board of directors voted on two important issues that will impact SLATER. First, starting in 2005 they voted to give SLATER an operating grant, similar to the preservation grants being made by the Tin Can Sailors organization to the museum destroyers. Depending on their financial position each year it is anticipated that the initial grant will be in the neighborhood of \$8,000. Second, the DESA board voted to make space available in DESA News to publish SLATER SIGNALS.

D This means that all the members of DESA will be kept up to date on the efforts of the SLATER volunteers and their progress on the ship. More significantly, all of the 7,000 DESA members will now be subjected to my writing style, or the lack there of, each issue. Finally, President of the Los Angeles Chapter of DESA, **Earl Johnson** was elected to the DESA Board of Directors. Earl and his shipmates were responsible for raising over \$40,000 for SLATER in their recent raffle.



The crew of the USS RIDDLE DE185 while visiting aboard.

It was great to get to the convention and make so many new friends and spend time with so many old ones including Dick and Mary Smith, Dori and Ed Glaser, Pat Stephens, Phyllis Gruber, Dick Briel, Ron Zarem, Bill Kramer, LaVerne Saylor, Lois Windle, Shane Davis, Walter Shaub, W.W Montgomery, John Bartko and Dick Briel and so many others. It was also great to be able to personally thank Earl Johnson and the members of his chapter for their help with the raffle. I also got to meet and spend time with SLATER board members **John Cosgrove, Sam Saylor, Marty Davis, Ray Windle and Earl Johnson** to bring them up to date on our efforts. I also had time to work with Dick Walker and

make plans for their upcoming Field Day on October 10th.

We had several reunions with us this September. Thus far we've hosted the crews of the USS OLIVER MITCHELL DE 417, USS FOSS DE 59, USS OTTER DE 210, USS RIDDLE DE 185 and the ship of two of our volunteers **Earl Gillette** and **Pat Cancilla**, the USS WILLIAM SEIVERLING DE 441. It was great having them aboard, and all made major contributions to our restoration fund. We're working with **Jamie Winters** of our convention and visitors bureau and they are presently working on several other ships in the hopes of bringing them to Albany including the USS DEALY DE1006, USS CHATELAIN DE 149, USS PAUL G. BAKER DE 642, USS TINSMAN DE 589, USS LEWIS DE 535 and USS GANDY DE 764. We would love to see them, and any ship, host their reunion in Albany because on SLATER we say, you CAN go home again. If you're interested in bringing your group to Albany, contact Jamie at the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc., 25 Quackenbush Square, Albany, NY 12207 or call (518) 434-1217.



Electricians Mike Clark and Barry Witte.

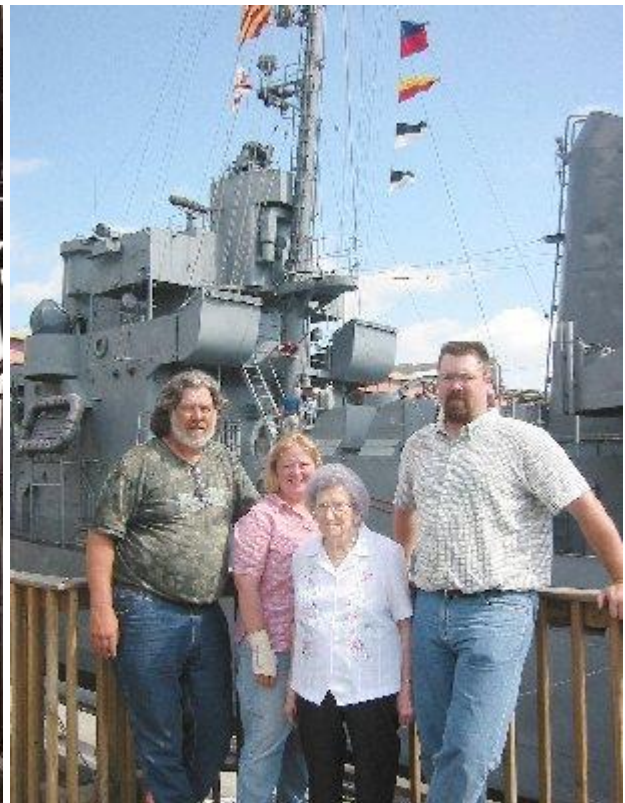


Mrs Slater cracking the bottle, 20 Feb 1944, Tampa, FL
 Mrs. James Lafayette Slater launches the USS Slater with a traditional champagne ceremony. She had never seen the ocean, she had never seen a ship - until she christened the namesake of her son, Frank, who died a hero's death in WWII.



Slater Family at Launching, 20 Feb 1944, Tampa, FL
 Paul Slater (Attended 14th Reunion 18-22 Apr 1993)

USS Slater leaving the blocks, 20 Feb 1944, Tampa, FL



Verlon Slater, her son James along with his wife Marcia, and grandson Matt Slater.

Verlon Slater, Frank O. Slater's sister-in-law, her son James along with his wife Marcia, and grandson Matt Slater visited us this month. **Jim Kuba** videotaped an interview with her in the wardroom as she recounted her memories of Frank, the family, and the SLATER's christening. She is the last surviving family member who attended the SLATER's commissioning. **In 1944, fourteen members of the James Lafayette Slater family of Fyffe made the two-day trip to Tampa, Florida, for the christening and launching ceremonies. Only PFC Thomas Slater, who was serving as an MP with the army in North Africa, could not attend. They went from Fyffe to Lookout Mountain in Cartersville, Georgia, where the three-car convoy headed south on U.S. 41. They spent the night in Valdosta, Georgia, then headed out the next morning early for Tampa. We will always be Ernest Lands, Jesse Whitmire and Bob Kennamer, furnished and drove their own cars for**

the family. They were sharecroppers tending a farm on "halves". Only after Frank's death could they afford to buy their own home place, with the insurance money.

We got a lot of help from the volunteer crew at Key Bank. Their "Neighbors Make a Difference" volunteers day was Tuesday September 13th. The team leader was **Alan LaBrecque**, a Lead Business Systems Analyst, and also an excellent, hard working trim painter. The weather was perfect as their crew was "deployed" to service with us. They know we rely heavily on volunteer organizations to help in the restoration of the vessel. That's where they came in. Their objective, however, was to repaint the exterior of the gift shop residing on shore. They had a fantastic crew... people were climbing ladders, laying out tarps, taping off signs, moving deck furniture, painting in details with brushes and rolling on the paint! We worked along side them and aided in direction of what needed to be done. It was a beautiful afternoon and they were able to completely paint the entire exterior of the gift shop in 3 hours! When they finished at 1615, **Dave Floyd** gave the team a private tour of the ship, as a reward. Our thanks to all who helped make this a fantastic job and a fun-filled afternoon!



The volunteers from Key Bank pose with Dave Floyd after painting the gift shop.



USS HORNET CV12 veteran Andy Desorbo working on the gun 2 ammo passing scuttle.



Chris Fedden chipping on the portside main deck.

Several of our crew deserve special recognition. The SLATER annual volunteer appreciation party will be held this year on Saturday, October 9th starting at 1700. The choice of date is for several reasons. First, our own Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class **Beth Spain** has been activated by the Naval Reserve and is about to ship out with her unit to Kuwait. Hopefully she'll be aboard so we can say good-bye and wish her luck. We wish her a safe return from this deployment. The event will be **Dave Floyd's** going away party as he is moving to Washington, DC because he says I work him too hard. We will pipe him over the side with the whole crew acting as side boys down the main deck. Please leave the rubber hoses at home. Third, the **Michigan Crew** will be arriving the following day to start their fall field day week, and I'm hoping by throwing a party I can entice them into coming a day earlier to get an extra day's work out of them. Finally, another other guest of honor will be **Dick Smith** who recently received the Historic Naval Ships Association Bosun Marvin Curry Award in honor of his volunteer effort on the SLATER.



Beth's last day--for a while.

Pat Perrella has really played a major role in bringing us closer to the traditional Albany museum community. She has worked closely with the prestigious Albany Institute of History and Art as part of their "The Greatest Generation Goes to War" Exhibition. On exhibition through February 13, 2005, three complementary exhibits explore diverse aspects of the World War II experience, for those on the home front and at the front lines. *World War II Navy Art: A Vision of History*, communicates the drama of war in 32 remarkable paintings by artists who recorded their battlefield experiences. *Navy WAVES: The Women of World War II* depicts the lives and war efforts of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), whose duties included everything from patching bullet holes in a naval flying boat to performing engine checks on a seaplane. Both exhibitions are from the U.S. Navy Art Collection. Drawn from the Albany Institute's collections, *POWERS OF PERSUASION: World War II Posters* explores how advertising was used to promote patriotism and mobilize the American citizenry on the home front during World War II. Commissioned by the U.S. government, American artists created vivid paintings and posters urging Americans to support the war effort.

To complement the artwork, we have loaned the Institute several of our most valuable artifacts. The artifacts displayed in the Institute's Entrance Gallery are our photo of Frank O. Slater, the NAVY CROSS (replica) posthumously awarded to Frank Slater's family. From the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS DE-413, keys to the carpenter shop, from the USS SAMUEL S. MILES DE-183, an original radio communication announcing the death of President Roosevelt, from the USS PILLSBURY DE/DER-133 her service ribbon board from the bridge, from the USS UNDERHILL DE-682 the purple heart presented to survivor **Donald J. Kruse** MM2/C, from the USS RALL DE 304 the control stick from the kamikaze that hit the RALL, from the USS RALL and engraved plaque from **Robbin Fontana** SoM 1/c Okinawa, 12 April 1945 'ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE - This Picture Really Happened', from USS GENDREAU DE-639 a general alarm contact maker, and from USS ATHERTON DE-169, the commanders had from German U-boat 853 that was sunk by the ATHERTON. Our heartfelt thanks to **Pat Perrella** who does such a great job of managing our museum collection and who always knows where everything is.

In a crew of extraordinary volunteers, one man received a letter and deserves special recognition. We recently received the following letter:

Dear Sir or Madam,

This is to acknowledge the exemplary efforts of **Mr. Al VanDerzee, tour guide EXTRAORDINAIRE** of the DE 766. On Friday, August 20, my fiancée and I took my parents to tour the ship. My dad will be 90 in March of 05 and my mom will be 85 in November of this year. Dad is visually and hearing impaired but is as sharp as a tack. Al introduced himself, welcomed us and began the tour. His voice was clear, loud and distinct. He took special precautions with my parents and guided them through the ship as if they were his own family. He also took time to answer our questions. His enthusiasm and passion for the history of the 766 made the tour very exciting and educational; we truly felt like we were the crew of the ship during the war. We were extremely impressed and emotionally absorbed with his personal tales of WW II and how they related to the history of the ship. We also would like to commend the fine efforts of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association that has dedicated themselves to restoring the DE 766. You have all done a great job! Stephen and I are considering becoming volunteers to help with the restoration and refit of this ship. Thank you very much for a great day at sea.

Sincerely, Christina Radz and Stephen Benya

Al served as an aviation ordnanceman with VC-5, the Navy's first carrier based strategic nuclear squadron. He went into the Navy in 1950, so we're still wondering about those personal tales of WWII. But his effort shows that our tour guides don't get the credit they deserve around here. Thanks to you all.

The crew has continued their efforts to make the SLATER the best she can be. The shipfitters and the boat crew finished the coxswain's stand in the whaleboat. They are continuing work on the chocks, and making preparations for winter. We are finishing up chipping and repainting the main deck and the foc's'cle. We're looking forward to some help from Michigan the week of October 10th to help wrap up the exterior painting for the season. **We've had a lot of fun with animals this month.** First, a huge snapping turtle made it's home on the aft camel for several days. Despite temptation and rumor, **Doug Tanner** never did make turtle soup for lunch. A few days later I got called to the quarterdeck in the middle of the FOSS Reunion. There was an angry looking pit bull sitting under the depth charge rack daring anyone to ask for his ticket. You never know what to expect around here. **Bill Coyle** cordoned off the fantail, and by the time I got to the trailer both Nancy and Rosehn had called animal control. They responded within minutes, and hauled the dog off to the brig. Finally, the week before I headed out to the DESA convention, I saw a small crowd gathered forward of the port breaker around 1400. There were examining a rather smelly looking bloated object in the water blown up like a small blimp. We'd had a lot of rain, and there was an abnormal amount of drift hung up on the camels including our new smelly friend. The harbor police were called in and after poking at it with a long boat hook to determine that it wasn't human, they determined that it was a dead pig and volunteered to come back the following morning with the police boat and tow it out into the river. I called **Tommy Moore**, knowing how much he enjoys water sports, and enlisted his aid to help the police move the carcass before the smell drove us all ashore. Tommy responded, "I'm busy tomorrow, I'll get it now!" dropped whatever he was doing and was at the ship in fifteen minutes. He put up his extension ladder, climbed down to the camel, put the paint punt into the water, paddled over to the carcass and towed it out to the middle of the river. By the way, it turned out to be a bloated beaver. Takes all kinds of talent to maintain the SLATER, and we're fortunate to have somebody for every job.



The visiting pit bull.



Tommy Moore.

See you next month.

