

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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You remember me? 'm the guy who comes around this time every year begging for money. Yes, once again it's Winter Fund time. Our annual campaign to help keep a volunteer warm this winter, so they can keep working on the SLATER all winter for you. We are going into this economic maelstrom in better shape than most. While we are not "Children of the Depression," we are historians by degree and pessimists by nature, and thus fiscally very conservative. We take the lessons of the past seriously and try to use that knowledge to prepare for the future. No matter how good things are, we know they can always get worse. And now, here we are, we all may be children of a depression. Because of that, we recognize that this is a most difficult time to be asking people to donate money. But, let me tell you a little bit about what you are donating to. We've accomplished a lot this past year, thanks to you.



The tugs Crow and Cheyenne push us south against the Albany skyline.

Our last tour day was Sunday, November 30th, and it snowed. After having exactly six people all day, **Rosehn Gipe** made the decision to shut down an hour early because the decks were so slick. It should be noted that Dr. **Alfred Vanderzee**, holder of the 2006 Capital District Chief Petty Officer's SLATER volunteer of the year award for being our tour guide extraordinaire, gave that last tour of the season. The next day, Monday December 1st was move day. **Chris Gardella** of Port Albany Ventures originally scheduled the move for the afternoon because they had a ship scheduled to arrive at noon, and of course their paying jobs have to take precedence over their charity work. However, the ship in question was slow in transit, so Monday morning, Chris said the ship wasn't scheduled to arrive until 1400, and could we be ready for 1100? "No problem," I said, and promptly got out an email with the revised sailing time. Then Chris called back, and asked if we could be ready for 1030. "No problem," I again replied, only I didn't bother to send out another email because I know how early our guys like to get here. As usual, **Doug Tanner** was the first to arrive, followed by **Tommy Moore**, "**Super Dave**" **Mardon**, and then "**Boats' Haggart**". The crane arrived at 0800 to lift the gangways. We pulled the aluminum gangway first, and since they were okay with hanging around until 1030, we decided to keep the aft gangway on until the tugs arrived. The rest of the crew began to drift in, and we set about detaching the camel from the ship and taking the wires off. The weather was calm, and it was above freezing, and everything proceeded at a leisurely pace. The engineers appeared and disappeared down the hole to tinker with the emergency diesel, and about 1020, the tugs were sighted coming up river.



Approaching the Rensselaer dock.

About this time I started to get a little frantic because we were still on shore power, still had the gangway on and hadn't even singled up. I noted that the diesel, which had been running, was now silent. Making every effort not to let my anxiety show I dropped into B-4 into the face of **Larry Williams** and joined a discussion about leaky seals on the water pump and engineers who didn't get the word and thought we weren't getting underway until eleven. There are always ten percent who don't get the word. Whether or not I used the words "Tanner", "fire axe" and "shore tie" all together in the same sentence, I don't remember. Larry begged for three minutes to get the generator on line and shift the

load, which I gave him. Now, shifting the load always makes me nervous. There was a time many years ago, back in my days on J.P. KENNEDY, Jr. when I actually could put the generator on line myself, but since I now spend all my time behind the word processor trying to beg money from poor veterans, all my useful skills have withered and atrophied. Suffice to say, I know what can go wrong if the load is shifted improperly, and National Grid wouldn't like it. But the diesel started right up, and within the allotted three minutes, we were on generator power. Kudos to **Larry Williams, Ken Kaskoun** and all the engineers who kept the lights on during the crossing.



Ready to start throwing lines.

scrap just astern of our winter berth. The tugs took us just south of the berth, parallel to the bulker, and then one at a time let go starboard and shifted to the port side. Then they expertly and effortlessly eased us forward into our berth. One of their guys who must have had stadiometer eyeballs positioned himself by the starboard breakwater, radioing yards off the dock to the tugs. As many times as 've been through this evolution, the finesse of the tug skippers amazes me. I don't know how they do it. And these aren't those nice modern tractor tugs. These are old single screw boats from the same era as the SLATER, when all the skill was in the hands of the pilot.

Ken deenergized the shore tie, disconnected it and snaked the cable aboard. Doug supervised lifting the gangway. The two old Bushy tugs CROWE and CHEYENNE made up to the starboard side, and the deckhands came aboard for a check to see that everything was clear. When they gave the word, we started letting everything go from aft to forward. At 1030 they pulled us away from the camels and were underway for the 22nd time since the SLATER came to Albany. The trip down was sunny and breezy. There was a large orange cargo ship, the PACIFIC BULKER, loading



The forward spring line goes over.

We gently touched the wall fenders, got the forward spring over and worked into it. The gangway line up was just about perfect. One by one, we got the remaining lines across with "Boats" on the fo'c's'le and Tanner on the fantail. The tugs headed south for their next job, and we rigged the gangway, doubled up, and began adding the wires to hold us in against the ice. The wind died down, and the sun stayed out, so it was a pleasant afternoon for December in Albany. Our Monday cook Chief "Bernie" Smith delivered meals on wheels, bringing in a big pot of

chili and a pan of cornbread for the crew that was eaten on deck outside the galley. Things went so smoothly that I didn't even know when we shifted to shore power and secured the generator. I did find out the extent of the engineers' water pump problem when I went into the CPO mess to make coffee the next morning and found they used all our bottled water to keep their engine cool. The "can do" spirit of this crew is still unbelievable. And it still worries me when I see guys who are supposed to be on

"Light Duty" trying to pull their weight by pulling on lines. 'm talking about you Clark, Don, Jim, Ernie, Tom and Bill. Last names are omitted here so you can say to your wives, "He means the other Bill." Over the next few days SLATER was buttoned up for the winter. Guns were covered, safety net rigged under the gangway, circulators rigged to prevent ice buildup between the ship and the pier, and all the water tight doors closed below the second deck aft as a precaution in case we are holed by ice. We think we've done everything we can do to protect her until spring, but we need your help to keep these guys warm all winter. Please support the Winter Fund again this year.



Hooking up the shore power in Rensselaer.



"Boats" Haggart straightening up.

We gave the crew a day to rest, and were back at it Wednesday to take out the Camels (the sixteen waterlogged wooden floats that hold us off the wall on the Albany side into deep water). If the weather for move day had been good, the weather for camel day was perfect. Sunny, calm and it must have touched forty. No ice and snow this year. **Tommy Moore, Larry Williams** and myself handled the river chores of unshackling camels and moving them into lifting position while **Doug Tanner** supervised the pierside part of the operation with **Tim Benner, Gene Jackey, Bob Callender, Ken**

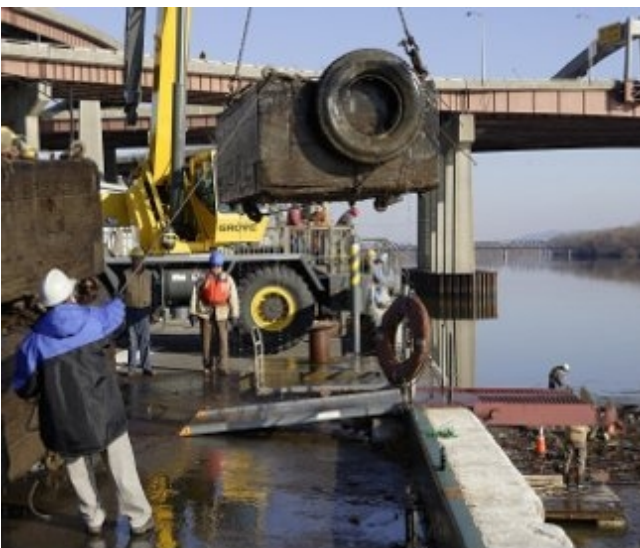
Kaskoun, Clark Farnsworth, Chris Fedden, Paul Czesak, Walt Stuart, Karl Herchenroder, and a bunch of guys who didn't sign the logbook and therefore get no recognition here. With Jimmy on the crane we had all sixteen out and the crane headed back to the shop by 1230. No strain, no pain, and nobody fell in. It's hardly even news anymore.



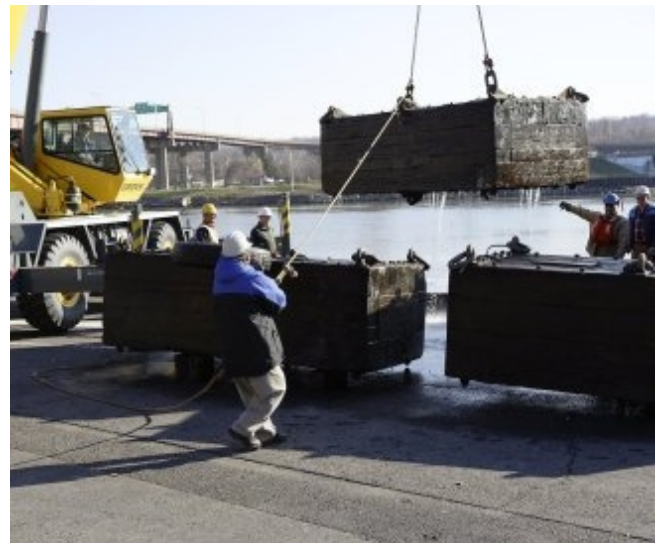
Running the bow lines.

Paul Czesak and the SLATER Color Guard were present to remember Pearl Harbor Day in a well attended ceremony at the Joseph E. Zaloga American Legion Post. This winter, we busy ourselves by getting back on the forward head project and try to have that ready for spring for our youth group overnight campers. We also will create a workshop opposite the head with a ventilation system to support the sand blasting cabinet and a spray paint booth for detailed restoration projects. **Erik Collin** has several improvements planned for the CIC display, and out in California, **Tom Horsfall** is working on the operating TBL

transmitter that will be coming our way to make the radio room more complete. And we will be moving forward with the restoration of the of the aft engine room, B-3 and the aft motor room B-4, as we work to get these areas ready for public visitation, cleaning and repainting the engines, motors and generators. The electricians will be working on the aft distribution board and the ship's service generator in B-3 so we will have the capability of generating power with two generators. Erik has a special project in the works, having authentic looking depth setting mechanisms cast for all our depth charges as a donated project. To keep all these projects going, please help support the Winter Fund.



Hauling out the camels...



still requires some manpower.

We've had a great year restoration wise. The upper level of the aft motor room looks like it did when the SLATER was new, thanks to the many long hours by the field day crews and our regular engineers. The forward crew's head is about seventy five percent complete thanks to the work of our shipfitters and the HUSE crew running the sewer line through the machinery spaces. Topside, we now have both our depth charge racks, all the "K" guns and roller loaders on the starboard side are now properly mounted, and we have all our floater net baskets full of replica floater nets. The whaleboat is back and better than ever. The topside repainting of the ship with long life Imron Epoxy paint is nearly complete. Inside, restored spaces like the chartroom, the lower sonar room, the logroom and the aft damage control locker are complete in every detail and never looked better. And how many historic naval ships can boast a working passive sonar system. Your donations made this happen.



Bob Cross

One of the ways we have continued to preserve DE History is helping authors such as Robert F. Cross, author of the presidential biography, "Sailor in the White House: the Seafaring Life of FDR." Bob has been writing a new book telling the stories of the DE sailors in World War II. He has been working on the new book for five years, is under contract with the Naval Institute Press and is working on the final few chapters now. This is the Last Call to WWII DE sailors who have memories of their days at sea they would like included in Bob's book. Bob is especially interested in recollections from sailors who were aboard the USS Samuel B. Roberts, USS Dennis, USS Raymond, and USS John C. Butler during the Leyte Gulf battle, or aboard other DEs involved in Pacific theater operations. If you would like to speak with Bob about your days at sea, please send your name, address, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, your telephone number to us at DEHM, PO Box 1926, Albany, New York 12201-1926 or email us at info@ussslater.org This is the last chance to be included in what we hope will be the definitive book for DE sailors serving in WWII.

Bob wants to speak with as many sailors as possible; however, time is short and he cannot schedule any additional interviews after February 1, 2009. So contact us today. Your support helps keep this history alive.

And the SLATER continues to serve a new generation of Sailors. The Destroyer Escort Historical Museum has received a United States Naval Academy (USNA) Dean of Admissions Certificate of Appreciation. The commendation recognizes the cooperative spirit of the staff and volunteers of the USS SLATER in welcoming USNA functions aboard. For each of the past five years, selectees of each Naval Academy incoming class from this area have met each other in the Wardroom of the USS SLATER. They have been introduced to Naval custom and tradition by participating in a formal dinner in the wardroom, prepared by local alumni and served by current Naval Academy midshipmen who are home on leave.

The SLATER also welcomes aspiring USNA applicants as volunteers with the maintenance and tour guide staff. The SLATER hosts midshipmen from nearby NROTC Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for shipboard familiarization, engineering systems training, firefighting and damage control training. All of this is graciously offered by the SLATER's staff at no cost to the U.S. Navy or any other Federal agency, nor has the Museum received any federal money in any form. The USS SLATER continues to serve the United States Navy regardless of the fact that she was stricken from the rolls of U.S. ships over 50 years ago. Your support helps us serve the Navy today.



Another winter aboard SLATER.

So, now is the time we look to you to help us continue the progress the volunteers have accomplished. Sixty percent of our income continues to come from donations. It is a critical part of our income. In economic times like these, it becomes even more difficult than ever to ask for your support. Again, we would ask that if you can afford it, please donate one hundred dollars to help us get through the winter without dipping into our savings. If you find yourself in such financial straits that you cannot afford to donate anything, we understand and still want you to feel a part of the SLATER family. Just let us know and we will keep you on the mailing list. This organization stands for comradeship, companionship and compassion. If you are in a position to donate more, we would encourage that, to help make up for others who may not be in such a fortunate position following the economic downturn. I have always tried to lead by example, and ever since the Winter Fund drive first started back in 1998, pledged that I would be the first one to contribute. To all of you who are ahead of the curve, anticipated my plea and already donated to the 2009 Winter Fund Drive, we thank you. To the rest of you, please take the time to fill out the enclosed donation form.

Contribute to the USS SLATER 2009 Winter Fund. We are proud of the fact that SLATER has become "Every DE to every DE Sailor. We are proud of the fact that so many of you now look upon SLATER as your ship, no matter what the name and hull number was of the ship you served on. We are equally proud of the fact that so many of the sons, daughters and grandkids of DE veterans are now joining up, as they are the future of the Museum.

And for the tech-savvy, consider changing your search engine to Goodsearch. It's easy and it doesn't cost a thing. When you select us as your charity, money is banked every time you search the Internet. We've tried this out the past few months and we really did receive a check in November from Goodsearch. If only half of our members used Goodsearch just once a day, we would receive over \$5000 at the end of the year! The money comes from the advertising on the site. Just go to goodsearch.com to select DEHM and download the icon right to your toolbar. But right now the Winter Fund is the most immediate way to help. Once again, it's time to help keep a volunteer warm this winter.

If you are reading this on line, make a couple extra clicks and print out the last page of the newsletter with the Winter Fund donation form. Place the form with your donation in an envelope and mail it to USS SLATER Winter Fund Drive, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY, 12201-1926. Once again, it's time to help keep a volunteer warm this winter.

Thank you and Happy New Year