



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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We had a two week break between the Michigan Field Day week and the arrival of the USS HUSE Crew. The eighth consecutive USS HUSE Association's Slater Work Party took place 18th May thru 24th May 2008. They are the only working Destroyer Escort crew members that come to the USS Slater as a working group. Group coordinator and leader **George Amandola** is so dedicated to his crew that he took on the task of cooking for them, ably assisted by the HUSE supply officer **Dave Perlstein, Joe Coletti, and Betty Robbins**. The crew was essentially divided up into three groups. The deck gang went to work chipping on the starboard 40mm gun. **Stan Suzdak** (who volunteered on the Slater when it was tied up in New York) and **Paul Suzdak** (their youngest volunteer, Stan's grandson), **Bob Kehrer, Jaye Robbins, and Hillman Jackson** all took turns on the needle guns and got the gun mount about 75% chipped and corrosealed. Unfortunately, the HUSE gang had the same type of weather Michigan had, three days of drizzle, so the painting didn't progress as far as they would have liked.



The USS HUSE crew muster aboard.

Down below, they weren't affected by the weather, and the crew in B-4 made some real progress. Bill Meehan, Gene Hermanson, Lew Shelton, Jeff Robbins, Bill Morton and Robin Larner picked up where the Michigan crew had left off. Their task was to paint the overhead of the aft motor room B-4 with white mastic sealant paint. Working with your arms overhead is never an easy task, and this was no exception. Over the course of the week they got the lion's share of the space painted out, leaving the remainder for the regular crew to finish up. Needless to say, **Gus Negus** and **Karl Herchenroder** are particularly grateful for their efforts. The place is really starting to look like a well-maintained engineroom.

Down below the painters, in the bilge that Dow Clark had painted during the Michigan week, Guy Huse and Jeff Kehrer worked on the reassembly of the fire and bilge pump. This unit had been disassembled several years ago, and we wanted to get it at least cosmetically back together. They did an impressive job identifying parts and getting the unit back together so the next generation can get it running. They were getting ready to cut the missing gaskets when **Stan Sudzak** saw them with a razorblade and a floor knife. He was quite appalled by how primitive our technique was, and got on the phone to one of his suppliers in New York City and ordered a top of the line professional gasket cutter for the ship. It arrived aboard about three days after he left, but the crew was thrilled. If I'd known it would make them that happy, I would have tried to find one year's ago. But that's contrary to the SLATER motto, "If it's hard it must be better, so do it the hard way."



Guy Huse supervising the fire and bilge pump reassembly.



Gene Hermanson working on the B-4 overhead.

There was one final major project, undertaken by Doug Streiter and Don Bean. Doug had asked if he could come a day early, a request he probably came to regret. He was barely out of his truck when we ambushed him with an assignment that would make a strong man pale, running two hundred feet of sewer line through the four machinery spaces. He was eminently qualified for the job, knowing that sewage only flows down hill. This was in conjunction with **Doug Tanner's** project of getting the forward crew's head operational, and something had to connect the septic tank up forward to the shore connection back aft. That was a lot of pipe running through the four machinery spaces. This was a major undertaking, but they got the holes cut through the bulkheads, all the pipe down below and in place, and the pipe hangers in place. With the support of regulars **Dave Mardon, Earl Herchenroder** and **Gene Jackey**, they got the job done in three days. That really helped keep the head project on track.



Paul Sudzak chipping on gun 41 with his grandfather Stan.

1st. Michigan DESA will follow from May 3rd to May 8th. If you're interested in helping your shipmates out, please let us know.

With the departure of all the out of town help, the regulars are back to carrying the load. As I write, the shipfitters, **Tanner, Benner, Teal, Breyer, Jackey and Farnsworth** are working away on the septic system in the forward crews head and fabricating a stainless septic tank for the forward head. The electricians are wiring the septic pump that will go into the tank. The Engineers **Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, John Whalen and Mike Dingman** have been working away in B-4, painting on the B-4 overhead. , the chippers, **Earl Herchenroder, Don Miller, Peter Jez and Chris Fedden** are chipping on the forty millimeter guns. And all the tour guides are guiding lots of school kids through the SLATER. And new volunteer **Dave Mardon** was never in the Navy, but has been averaging three days a week aboard, seemingly everywhere helping everybody. **Bernie Smith** is still doing lunch for the crew on Monday, and **Gary Sheedy** is still on the reefer deck.



Memorial Day commemoration aboard the SLATER.

We remembered Memorial Day with one of the best attended ceremonies we have had aboard the USS SLATER. Paul Czesak organized an impressive ceremony with Bill Kraus as the master of ceremonies. At 1300 hours Paul welcomed the guests and the Slater volunteers posted the colors followed by the National Anthem, The invocation was led by Rev. **Earle E. Flatt. Michelle LaRock**, Deputy Director NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs read Governor **David A. Paterson's** Proclamation, and Assembly member **Bob Reilly** spoke on the significance of the day. The SLATER gun crew fired a 3"/ 50 cal three round

salute and volunteer **Chuck Lossi** played taps. DEHM President **Frank Lasch** made the closing remarks. What followed was a long, busy day for all the tour guides, a day that made us proud to be Americans. Don't forget that we will remember DE Day here aboard the SLATER on Saturday June

All these projects were supported by Roland Robbins and Derwit Cartmell who took care of the paint locker and scaled depth charges. Ernie Aeschlman took care of the machine shop and passed out tools, and compartment cleaners **Wally Brigslid and Jim Larner** kept the place shipshape while the work was going on. It was a great work week, and we thank everyone who was involved.

The dates have been set for the upcoming Field Day Weeks. Michigan will be back in the fall from September 28th to October 3rd. The date for the 2008 annual SLATER volunteer dinner will be Saturday September 27th. The USS HUSE crew will be back in the spring from April 26th to May

21st. The Members of CAPDESA, **Bob Donlon** and **Paul Czesak** will remember the heritage of the destroyer escorts at 0900 for the eleventh consecutive year here in Albany. We hope to see you aboard.



Anthony Renna showing the production team the view from the river.

Late word is that the SLATER will be closed to the public between August 15th and August 29th. A motion picture company, Destiny Productions, has chartered the ship during that time period to use as a backdrop for a motion picture they are filming, and yes, it will be a big help financially. We did a great deal of soul searching, concerned that veterans of the war in the Pacific might feel a sense of betrayal that we were allowing the SLATER to be used as a backdrop for a Japanese movie about World War II. However, Japanese producer **Shohei Kotaki** went so far as to present us with a copy of the script to review, to help us understand that his goal is to honor the veterans of both sides. His script was an honest,

balanced and fair treatment of the waning days of the Pacific War, and an engagement between two veteran captains who were both war weary of seeing the needless loss of life. Much as we are concerned that American schools no longer teach World War II history, Sho is deeply concerned that the Japanese have ignored this history, and sees making this movie as part of an effort to draw attention to a part of Japanese history that they wish to ignore. Not to allow them to do the film would in essence be holding a sixty-year grudge, and we feel that as a memorial, USS SLATER must stand for more than that; that two nations who were once bitter enemies can come together as allies. We feel that any media effort by any nation to help tell the destroyer escort story is part of the mission of the Museum, and we must support that effort. And perhaps, maybe as a result of Sho's effort, American motion picture producers will stand up and take note of our history. For our part, we will work with Destiny Productions to make sure that the film is as historically accurate as possible. We've all watched Navy movies for years and complained about the technical inaccuracies. Now we have a chance to help make sure that one is done right.

The Japanese film crew came back to do location scouting the week of June 1st. Things must be going well because every time they come back they bring more people with them. On this trip they focused on taking pictures of the ship and its equipment. Erik gave them a thorough tour of the ship and answered many of their questions about the workings of the K-guns, depth charge racks, and his specialty, CIC. They also took a cruise on the Dutch Apple so that they could examine and photograph the ship from the river. All along, the director and producers have assured us that they intend to make their film as authentic as possible. What really made believer's out of us is when we came across one of their crew measuring the diameter, height and distance between the stanchions on the main deck. When asked what he was doing, he told us he was making a scale model of the ship for the movie. If he's measuring stanchions, it's sure to be a highly detailed model. We are here at their disposal to insure that level of attention to detail carries through for the rest of the film.



The first depth charge rolls into the new port side fantail rack.



Clark Farnsworth welding on the septic tank for the forward head.

With regards to a production on a smaller scale, Rick Ianello of the Albany Guardian Society approached us several months ago about doing a fundraising video for the SLATER. He wanted to make use of unused footage that our public television station WMHT had left from two segments they did on the SLATER last fall. **Jim Filete and **Dave Wennberg** were the editors who selected the footage and put the film together, and they did a remarkable job. They recently handed us the first rough cut, and it will be tears to your eyes. Our plan is to send copies out to all the DESA chapters in the hope they will use the DVD to reach out to civic groups in their local areas to pass along the story of the SLATER and DE history.**



One of our original guides, Les Beauchaine, Tour Guide Glen Harrison surrounded. makes friends on every tour he gives.



While all this is going on, we still have to remember that our primary reason for existence is education and giving tours. We had our first reunions aboard. The USS KNUDSON APD101 crew was aboard and we also had almost 100 former crewmembers and family from the destroyer

USS GEARING DD710 aboard. It's great to see the Tin Can Reunions coming to Albany to visit the SLATER. Despite the downturn in the economy and rising gas prices, attendance for April through May of 2008 is significantly up over the same period last year. Part of the increase is due to the fact that we were able to open on April 9 this year, compared to April 18, 2007. The rest may be attributed to more school field trips, overnight campers, general public visitation, and excellent weather. We've also been the beneficiaries of a lot of great local media coverage this spring. All the TV, radio, and newspapers have been extremely helpful in spreading the word, and we want to thank them all for their support. Rosehn recently figured up our attendance so far this year and discovered that we're up 20% over this time last year. With all the tours the guides have been giving, they didn't need to do any math to figure out the numbers are up. Two weeks ago we had school tours scheduled at 9:30, 10:00, 10:30 and 11:00. The 9:30 and 10:00 tours both showed up at 9:45, the 10:30 got here at 10:00 and the 11:00 arrived at 10:15. So we had about 150 kids all show up within 30 minutes of each other. But **Les Beauchaine, Bob Dawson, Joe Delberta, Russ Ferrer, Bill Scharoun** and **Lou Sussman** got all four tours through the ship and back on their buses on time. Hopefully they'll pass on their expertise to our newest guides, **Samantha Hall** and **Katelyn Cubeta**.



Don Miller scaling on the starboard forty... with help frm Earl Herchenroder.

Finally, another long awaited project is coming to fruition. After a winter of coordination between **Hal Hatfield, Andy Desorbo** and **Frank Wasko**, a boom truck from Maximum Security Products appeared on the wharf. Aboard the truck were all the prefabricated components to assemble the missing port depth charge track. We shanghaied **Lou Renna's** welder **Bob Bareis** to assemble the pieces. This is a family thing for Bob since his dad served on a DE. It looks like in about a month, the SLATER will have one of the last missing pieces of topside equipment, and all **Greg Wolanin's** depth charges that are scattered around the ship will finally have a home. We continue to progress.

See you next month.