

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers By
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It's 1400 on a Monday and suddenly it's gotten very quiet. Today the weather was still warm enough to work outside, so all day I've been battered by the sounds of grinders and needle guns. Super Dave Mardon, Tim Benner and Gene Jackey have been grinding away at the wasted bulkhead by the starboard breakwater. To port, Don Miller and Earl Herchenroder had been scaling the ladder to the 01 level, while back aft, Ron Mazure was chipping the section of deck that we couldn't get to because it is always under the port gangway, and Clark Farnsworth was back at the work bench banging away at a chock repair job. Now it is quiet. All I hear is the sound of foxtails against metal dustpans as the crew cleans up for the day. Smitty outdid himself with ham and scalloped potatoes.





Jack Lyons and James Conlon work to run new armored cable for the forward ventilation.



Super Dave starting the scullery restoration.

Well, we come to that time again, the official Winter Fund solicitation. While we pile money away for the drydocking and into the endowment for the future, we're still faced with the problem of funding the current day-to-day operations and paying the bills while the ship is closed for the winter and we have no operating income.

The move turned out to be Monday December 5. Chris Gardella of Donjon Marine called me that Sunday with the pronouncement, "The weather looks perfect and I have the boats available." I sent the email out to the crew, called to line up crane service and relaxed for the rest of the Sunday. When I arrived at the ship Monday morning and called to confirm the crane, I was informed that both operators had called in sick and the crane was not available. That immediately put me into a state of panic as I had no way to lift the gangways. I put in a call to **Doug Tanner** and his old friend **MartyMullins of Mullins Crane Service**. There was no answer, so I left a message and then called **Doug Tanner's** other buddy, Hank Jr. at **Flach Crane Service**. Hank answered and I told him about my dilemma, and he said he'd see what he could do on short notice. Not five minutes later, Marty Mullins called back and said he did have a crane and operator available and could be down for 0900.



Thanks Marty! Mullin's Crane service to our rescue.

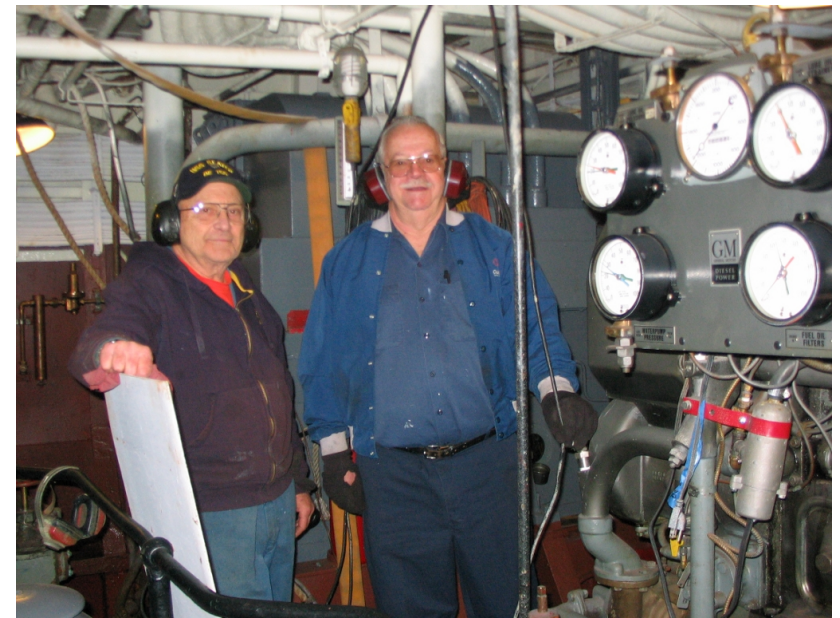


"Boats" Haggart, Walt Stuart and Gene Jackey take up on the spring line in Rensselaer.

Over the course of the morning Smitty came aboard with his "Meals on Wheels" and set up in the galley. Without Tanner or Benner, Boat's Haggart took charge of the fantail, and Paul Guarnieri handled the foc's'le. Slack water was about 1100, so while we were waiting for the tugs, we lifted the aft gangway, hauled the paint float out of the water, and took off all the wires except the two spring wires to hold her in place until the last gangway came off. Erik disconnected the communication cable, the engineers started up the emergency diesel and as soon as Larry Williams and Ken Kaskoun came aboard they shifted the load so Smitty could keep lunch hot. When the tugs were in sight they disconnected the shore tie cable and rolled it up on the quarterdeck line reel. We made up the EMPIRE to the fantail and the CHEYENNE tied up on the starboard quarter, piped "All ashore" and hauled in the amidships gangway. Chris Gardella climbed aboard to act as our pilot.



and Don Miller get the first line across on the fo'c's'le.



Gus Negus and Karl Herchenroder tending the emergency diesel generator.

The one issue we had was that the CHEYENNE was tied up right next to our diesel exhaust, and it was blowing right into their pilothouse. They asked us to secure the engine until we were away from the dock and CHEYENNE could cut loose. We singled up, cast off, shifted colors and headed down river. Chris got right into the spirit of things and decided to conn her from the flying bridge. The tugs turned us just south of U-Haul, and then turned us again just north of the turning basin. That made for a real photogenic approach from the south, and the sun was just right so the camera bugs were thrilled. The landing was smooth, and the gangway alignment was perfect. While the deck crew got her tied up and the wires rigged, the electricians got the shore power hooked up and we called upon the engineers to rig the gangway. Everything went as smooth as it could go. We send a special "Thanks" to DonJon or Mullins for their help.

Thus, we're back in shipyard mode. The whaleboat is back down at **Scarano's Boatyard**, for the three-year check up so Rocky can give her a thorough going over and check for any additional rotted wood. Aboard ship, the winter projects are a complete rehab of the messdecks and scullery, continued work on the reefer deck, continue the amazing progress the engineers have been making in B-3 and B-4, and repaint the pilothouse. In addition, the shipfitters will tackle three metalwork projects that have been a source of topside leaking. The first is the deckhouse rot adjacent to the starboard breakwater. All the electrical stuffing tubes leading to the forward ventilation fans have rotted away and will be replaced, as well as the lower 6inch of a twelve foot section of the deckhouse, where water has been leaking onto the messdecks. The shipfitters have already cut out most of the wasted metal. The next step will be for electricians **Barry Witte, Larry Williams and Ken Kaskoun** to disconnect and pull the cables to the ventilation boxes and run temporary power for the forward supply vent which distributes all the heat during the winter. Their next project will be the galley expansion joint, and then if time permits, we'll tackle the rest of the rot in the starboard machine shop bulkhead.



Larry Williams passing Chief Smith the shore power cable.



The "Deck Force" scaling ladders in the cold.



Paul, Mike, Nelson and Don haul in the spring lines.

It was an eventful year aboard SLATER. We passed the National Landmark Committee Review and received our Permanent Charter from the New York State Department of Education. All our tour numbers and indicators were up over last year. Probably the most important thing was getting the Hull Fund Drive off the ground after years of talking about it. Maintenance-wise we finished the whole main deck, repainted the starboard boottop and the port quarter, moved the accommodation ladder, fixed the CPO Mess overhead, finished number 6 depth charge projector roller loader and made some incredible progress in the preservation of the aft machinery spaces.



The inside view of the deckhouse steel replacement.



West Point grad Mike Breslin kicks off the Winter Fund by handing Paul Czesak the dollar he lost in their annual Army Navy Game Bet.

Of major significance is change in our Board of Trustees leadership with the officer resignations of Sam Saylor and Frank Lasch. The new Chairman is **Bartley J. Costello, III**. "BJ" has hit the deck running, working to draw support for the Hull Fund Drive. He is a principal and member of the Litigation, Government Relations and Education departments of Hinman Straub P.C., a prominent Albany law firm. He was commissioned a Naval Officer and served as the Executive Officer aboard the USS Genesee AOG-8 during two tours in Vietnam. He was awarded a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" for his actions during engagements with the North Vietnamese. He has also chaired many Boards, including The Next Step, Inc., The United Way of New York State, Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese, and the LaSalle School for Boys. On November 1, 2011, he was appointed to serve as a member of the New York State Veterans Commission. Our new board President is **Anthony S. Esposito**. A former Army officer who served in Germany in the sixties, "Tony" was selected to be the first Executive Director of the State Cable Television Association. By 1984, he had become a Division President for Time Warner Cable, serving in that capacity for 11 years. Governor Pataki appointed him to the Capital District Transportation Authority, where he served for eight years, three as Chairman. In addition, he has given of his time and effort as President of the Board of the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Chairman of the Palace Theatre, and Albany County Chairman of the U.S. Department of Defense, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Our new Vice President is Gregory M. Wolanin, President of Wolanin Companies LLC. "Greg," a local real estate developer, is also Vice President and owner of the Bethlehem Construction Corporation. He has a passion for military history, having restored several armored vehicles. (We've convinced him that the ship is just a big floating tank, but he's promised not to paint us green.) Presently, he is restoring an M5A1 Stewart Tank. He has served on the Boards of the New York Military Heritage Institute and the Watervliet Arsenal Museum. Serving as the new Treasurer is **Harold Hatfield**. "Hal" is a licensed Professional Engineer (mechanical) in New York and Pennsylvania, and a seasoned design manager and consultant. He was a co-founder of Bast-Hatfield, Inc. and Maximum Security Products. At MSP, he is responsible for the overall management of all business and financial functions. Hal is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He is Past President of the Northeastern Subcontractors Association. Finally, **Stephen Greg Krawczyk** of Pasadena, Maryland was named the new Secretary. A retired Navy Captain, "Greg" has been associated with the USS SLATER since 1999 when he came to Albany as Commanding Officer of the Albany Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center. He is presently employed as a Program Analyst and Agency Support Agreements Manager with the Defense Information Systems Agency. During his years of naval service he served aboard the aircraft carrier JOHN F KENNEDY and several destroyers and frigates. He also has been a long-time volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America.

Paul Czesak and the members of the Joseph E. Zaloga American Legion Post once again organized a wonderful Pearl Harbor tribute. Cathy Dorn played patriotic music and the dining room filled to capacity. Post Commander **Peter Ubrich** delivered the opening remarks just prior to the USS SLATER and Christian Brothers Academy Color Guards parading the colors. The Reverend **Charlene Robbins** did the invocation and **Jerry Perry** recited the significance of the POW-MIA table. Our own RADM Paul Czesak, NYNM introduced the Pearl Harbor Survivors **Charles Ebel, Bill Langston, Adolph (AJ) Krenn, and Edward Bartholomew** and acknowledged the three who passed away this year, **Steve "Tex" Danish, Nicholas Elacqua, and John Sloboda**. Our traditional Master of Ceremonies Steve Long called everyone to order as Harvey Martel and Mark Blank recited President Roosevelt's address to Congress. The keynote address was given by **Dennis Ryan**, son of a Pearl Harbor survivor and General Counsel for the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. The event was well-attended by our local dignitaries including Albany County Executive **Mike Breslin**, Albany Mayor **Gerald Jennings**, Rensselaer County Executive **Kathy Jimino**, Colonie Town Supervisor **Paula Mahan**, State Senator **Neil Breslin**, State Assemblymen **Bob Reilly** and **Jack McEneny**, Watervliet Arsenal Commander Colonel **Mark Migaledi**, and MCPO **Thomas DeRouville**. Following the speeches the Zaloga Post Rifle Squad fired three volleys and CDR **Steve Stella**, Albany Police Department (Ret) played TAPS. Following the ceremony the Post put on their, now traditional, Pearl Harbor Day breakfast and included the also traditional SOS.

It should be noted that the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association decided to disband this year due to declining membership. A press release I received told of the disbanding, but it contained an anecdote that was even more significant. Within the press release was the story of **Harry R. Kerr**, the director of the Southeast chapter, who said there weren't enough survivors left to keep the organization running. "We just ran out of gas, that's what it amounted to," he said from his home in Atlanta, after deciding not to visit Pearl Harbor this year. "We felt we ran a good course for 70 years. Fought a good fight. We have no place to recruit people anymore: Dec. 7 only happened on one day in 1941." The fact that this moment was inevitable has made this no less a difficult year for the survivors, some of whom are concerned that the event that defined their lives will soon be just another chapter in a history book, with no one left to go to schools and Rotary Club luncheons to offer a firsthand testimony of that day. As it is, speaking engagements by survivors like Mr. Kerr - who said he would miss church services on Sunday to commemorate the attack - can be discouraging affairs.

I was talking in a school two years ago, and I was being introduced by a male teacher, and he said, "Mr. Kerr will be talking about Pearl Harbor," and one of the little girls in the class asked, "Pearl Harbor? Who is she?"

Such ignorance of our past makes the continued observance of Pearl Harbor Day and the preservation of ships like USS SLATER even more important.

And that is why we need your support. We're back to where we started, the annual Winter Fund Appeal. I've been amazed at how many of you have contributed to the 2011-2012 Drive since October. Despite the fact that the formal appeal is contained here, over \$5,000 has been raised by December 21st. I owe a debt of gratitude to **Dori Glaser** for the plug she gave the Winter Fund in DESA News. I'm just getting around to making my annual contribution myself, and I usually like to be first, but this year many of you are ahead of me. I would certainly like to see everything going into the Hull Fund, but the fact is that we still have to pay the electric bill, the insurance, the winter staff, buy the steel, acetylene, welding rod and paint, print and mail the *Trim But Deadly* and pay for the heating oil so the volunteers can continue to work through the winter. The fact remains that, when you exclude the special programs like the endowment and Hull Fund, 60% of our operating income still comes from your donations, while the other 40% comes from ticket and store sales. Your donations are as important as ever. Thus, I would ask that you indulge me again, and please give as generously as you can to the Winter Fund. Again, I would suggest a \$100 donation if you can afford it. That's a goal we should all strive to reach. Including me!

Please click the "Donate" button on the home page and donate to help us through the long cold winter. For those of you who prefer to write a check and send it "Snail Mail", you can use this donation form. Help the USS Slater volunteers through the winter by donating.

See you next month.



**Help keep a volunteer warm this winter.
Please donate to the Winter Fund.**