



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

**Destroyer Escort Historical Museum  
USS Slater DE-766  
PO Box 1926  
Albany, NY 12201-1926**

**Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123  
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Underway for Albany.

**As I write, there are a mere five days to go before our scheduled opening on April 4th.** As always, out of chaos has come order and everything is coming back together ever so nicely. The snow birds are coming home and, despite the wear and tear of winter, the ship is looking better than ever. The “winter that wasn’t” gave us the advantage of being able to get back across to Albany earlier than most years. With no ice on the river and no snow pack to speak of up north, I contacted **Chris Gardella** the first week of March about the availability of tugs for a move. Chris set everything up for Sunday March 11th, at the ungodly hour (for us, at least) of 0700. This meant we had to muster on the pier at 0530, which was truly zero dark thirty that morning. Keep in mind that this was the night that the clocks went ahead an hour, so nobody got much sleep.

As is the usual case, Tanner got to the ship before I did and had the gate unlocked and the coffee on. He had eggs warming in the galley for those who arrived early before they ran out. As the crew staggered in, we set about removing the cable clamps and wires by flashlight. The boys on the foc's'cle got smart and parked a car with its headlights shining on the bollard to give them some decent light to work by. Tanner took care of the fantail and “Boats” Haggart and Paul Guarnieri took care of the fo's'cle. It was the familiar drill of getting the heaving lines ready, pulling in the gangway netting, disconnecting the phone line, disconnecting the water line and then getting ready to single up.



**Marianne Cummings Donovan and Board Chairman BJ Costello on the bridge during the move.**



**The tug CHEYENNE comes alongside to ease us in.**

**Karl Herchenroder was the only engineer aboard and he set about getting the emergency diesel generator ready to run. Mark Gardiner worked with him, but at 0645 with the tugs in sight we had to give the order to cut the shore tie and take in the power cable. All hands were ordered topside and we went cold and dark. That didn't deter Karl and Mark. Working by flashlight they continued to prep the engine for starting with a hand from Barry Witte. As they worked on below decks, we made up the little EMPIRE to the fantail with Denny Donovan at the helm. Les brought the CHEYENNE alongside and made her up on the port bow. By this time we were singled up, so we chased all the volunteers who weren't riding the ship off and pulled in the gangway. The shore crew cast off the last lines just about the same time that the emergency diesel sputtered and started up. The CHEYENNE went astern to pull the bow out and we were underway for Season 15.**

Normally, we don't permit any visitors on the move. It's working crew only, but on this trip we made an exception for our new Board Chairman BJ Costello. BJ asked permission to bring along Marianne Cummings Donovan, whose father was an electrician's mate aboard USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS and was killed during the Battle of Samar. Marianne joined us for our dawn cruise and she hoisted the steaming ensign when we shifted colors. We were honored to have her and BJ aboard.



**Coming up against the new fenders...**

**During the course of the trip across, the deck crew repositioned and faked down the mooring lines, and removed all the chaffing gear.** We had the good fortune of having little wind for the trip across, though about an hour after we tied up, there were white caps on the river. The tugs brought us into position with little difficulty, the heaving lines were thrown and lines run across. It took about half an hour to get her lined up perfectly for the gangways. Of course, it being Sunday morning it was impossible to get a crane to lift the gangways, so we had rented a 32' aluminum pick to allow access to the ship until the gangways were set. The crew worked until about 1400 doubling up and rigging the wires. They were back at it Monday morning at 0900. The Albany Water Department provided a crane and Butch, the operator, to set the gangways in place, making access a whole lot easier. "Boats" Haggart and Nelson Potter busied themselves rigging chaffing gear and Doug took a crew and lowered the fenders and tweaked the mooring wires to adjust our position a little south of where we landed. **Boats, Nelson, Angelo Bracco, Walt Stuart, and Paul Guarnieri got the snaking repaired, gangway netting was rerigged, the accommodation ladder dropped, all the rigging gear cleaned up and stowed.**



**as the shore crew stands by to catch lines.**



**Army ROTC Intern Mike Forstner painting the deck in the scullery.**



**Dave Jeffries works cleaning the reefer deck coils as Doug Tanner and Dave Mardon repair a watertight door.**

**Over the course of the month, the regular crew began wrapping up most of the winter projects. The shipfitters, Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Dave Mardon, Earl Herchenroder and Chuck Teal, finished up the scullery and remounted the dish washer. They also finished up the repairs to the radio direction finder platform with an assist from Gary Sheedy and Barry Witte, who ran all the cables that cross from CIC up the mast. In their spare time, they reactivated the fresh water and sewer systems and got all the heads and galley back into operation. Kevin Sage was back aboard and did the spray painting in the pilothouse, the main deck armory passageway and the messdeck. Erik Collin got all the supplies and material that was scattered about the forward end of the ship restowed on the messdecks, and the place put back together. The hedgehog projectiles have been remounted and are complete except for the stenciling. Rocky and Dave Jeffries completed the wood work on the whaleboat and are in the process of repainting, so she should be ready to go into the water earlier than she ever has. Herb Marlowe returned all the bedding he laundered at home over the winter. Chris Fedden, Gene Jackey Tom Cline, and Don Miller took all that bedding and got the after crew compartments back together, fart sacks on the mattresses, cases on the pillows and completed the hinges on the lockers in C-201L. Marine John Thompson continues his work keeping the machine shop organized and sorting hardware. Dick Walker is on hand every Monday to buy more new paint and hardware for the crew. Frank Peter is back aboard the ship working on the archives down in the supply office. Ken Kaskoun has been chasing an elusive light problem on the third deck forward. Clark Farnsworth has been repairing the starboard breakwater hatch. Ron Mazure pulled out all the damage control gear stowed in the aft passageway and scaled and Corrosealed the deck. Down in the engine room, Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon and Gary Lubrano continue their work on the overhaul of number four main engine. I am now convinced that the engine will run one day. They have been making repairs left over from her days in Greek service, going through the cylinder heads one at a time. Gary Dieckman generously offered to buy them two sets of head gaskets and they are in search of an injector setting tool for a GM-278A engine. If you have such a tool lying around your shop or ship, would you mind loaning it to our engineers?**



RPI Midshipmen stowing the gun covers...



and scaling the gun three tub.

As part of our effort to get ready for opening day, Erik Collin and Heather Maron organized our first ever “Ship Shape Overnight.” The weekend was kind of a mini-Field Day in which volunteers were invited to stay aboard the ship to help get her ready for spring, and tour guides were invited for refresher training. The event proved to be not only productive, but an entertaining evening as well. Volunteers and crew members were given the opportunity to spend all of Saturday, March 24th aboard the ship assisting with restoration and maintenance, followed by a well-planned evening of activities, and overnight aboard the ship, and breakfast in the morning. Slater volunteer, Chief Bernie “Smitty” Smith and Chief Art Dott started the weekend off right by serving a lunch of steak and potatoes; this proved to be just the fuel necessary to keep the crew working throughout the day. We were joined by our old friend Ed Wakeman, retired ENC, who spent the day working with “Boats” Haggart and cleaning in the aft motor room. And new volunteer George Christiansen worked plumbing up the scullery sink and adjusting dogs. Bob and Thomas Scian were back aboard cleaning for Erik, and have been here almost every weekend contributing a great deal to our clean up effort. Liz Leviton brought the RPI NORTC crew back aboard. They set up the awning on the observation deck, cleaned and restowed all the casualty power cables, and uncovered all the guns and stowed the canvas covers.



Thomas Scian folding drop cloths.



The crew enjoying lunch on the messdecks.



**Clark Farnsworth welding up a chock.**



**Thomas Scian and Erik Collin admire the restored hedgehog projectiles.**

**SLATER's regular crew and volunteers were joined by a division of Sea Cadets from the Seattle AOE-3 Det Division who had traveled all the way from New York City.** Under the guidance of their Lieutenant Melva Cordova, they did the lion's share of the cleaning forward. Towards the end of the long day, some of the staff and crew met up in the Briefing Room for a few rounds of "SLATER Jeopardy," which was co-hosted by Erik Collin and Paul Guarnieri. Some of the guides-in-training impressed the room with their already extensive knowledge of the ship, and were even able to handle a few questions about the SLATER's staff! Following another great meal, again cooked by Smitty, the overnight crew once again convened in the Briefing Room for the much anticipated viewing of "Battle Under Orion;" this was the Japanese movie that was filmed aboard SLATER. Although Erik had some technical issues in the beginning of the screening, the popcorn he had popped in the galley kept everyone patient enough for the duration. As expected, some of the acting entertained the crowd, while seeing the ship in action allowed for greater appreciation of why the restoration process is so important.

**Jerry Jones, Mike Wyles and Joe Breyer have reason for cautious optimism.** They hope we will really be participating in the annual HNSA Museum Ship Amateur Radio Event, this year scheduled for June 2nd 0000Z to June 3rd 2359Z. Last year, SLATER's historic radio transmitter type TBL-8 had just been installed and was undergoing initial shakedown testing. This last really major piece of equipment was the main high frequency communications radio transmitter, type TBL. This was found on the USS CLAMP about five years ago. A volunteer group from the San Francisco area, led by Tom Horsfall removed the 850 lb, refrigerator-size transmitter and its 1000 lb motor/generator set from the ship by sheer muscle power. After several years of TLC by Tom, the transmitter was restored to operating condition. An excellent video of Tom and this transmitter can be seen on YOUTUBE. It was shipped across the country and reinstalled to original Navy specifications in SLATER's radio room. Just at the beginning of the much anticipated HNSA radio event, the oscillator stopped working, caused by a shorted tuning capacitor. After that was repaired, a serious problem occurred. The 1600 volt winding in one of the two generators shorted and burned. The original manufacturer, Bogue Electric Co., is still in business after some 120 years, and they graciously offered to honor the original 70-year-old warranty on their generator! It was shipped to New Jersey, and sadly, they determined that they and their subcontractors no longer have the obsolete technology to repair it.

Then, we were contacted by **Tom Aschenbrenner**, who is the radio and radar “guru” at the submarine museum ship USS COBIA SS245 in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. They have, miraculously, a NOS (new old stock) armature which they have agreed to send us. They are also making good progress getting our first RAL receiver operational. So, the chances are fairly good that we will be on the air during the museum ship radio event using SLATER’s call sign WW2DEM (World War II Destroyer Escort Museum). We hope to operate on 20 and 40 meters CW and 75 meters AM phone. We have quite nice QSL cards to confirm radio contact with WW2DEM, so we are keeping our fingers crossed.

**As we announced last month, we received the word that the Secretary of the Interior had signed off on our official designation as a National Historic Landmark.** The actual date of the award ceremony has yet to be announced. We received a \$500 grant from **Stewart's Foundation** from their Holiday Match Program, and **Heather Maron** received a GO! Grant from **Museumwise** to attend New York State's "Museums in Conversation" conference to be held in Albany in April.

**Voting is underway for the Albany Times Union's Best of the Capital Region 2012.** The ballot is so cast your vote for USS SLATER! We were also surprised to learn that the travel website [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) lists USS SLATER as the number 2 travel attraction in Albany. If you've visited the ship go to their website and write your comments about the SLATER at [www.tripadvisor.com/](http://www.tripadvisor.com/)

**Finally, for those of you living in the Mid-Hudson area, do you know of any Vets down in this area?** Honor Flight is planning a trip to Washington D. C. on May 8<sup>th</sup>. There are 100 spots available and they have 60 applications so far. 100 World War II veterans from six counties will fly at no charge to Washington, D.C. to visit the World War II Memorial. Steven Nicoli, who is president of the Hudson Valley Honor Flight, has been spreading the word and enlisting help from individuals, businesses and veterans groups to sponsor the 40-minute flight and trip to the memorial. The Honor Flights have been successfully taking place throughout the nation, all with the intent of sharing with the veterans the monument they helped build. Also, Nicoli is seeking 25 "guardians," people who will pay their own way to assist the veterans in making them comfortable for the flight and the daylong trip. Veterans and prospective guardians can call Nicoli at 518-728-9659 or Walden Mayor Brian Maher at 518-667-2949 or Gregory Donovan, senior analyst at Jet Blue Charters.

**It's last call for Field Week participants.** Our SLATER spring work weeks are set for this May. The Michigan Field Week will be May 6 to 11. If you want to participate, email Ron Zarem at [zman148@michiganx.net](mailto:zman148@michiganx.net). The HUSE group will be aboard the following week, May 13-16. If that week works out for you and you want to give us a hand, contact George Amandola at [Gamand@aol.com](mailto:Gamand@aol.com) We can always use all the help we can get, and sons and grandsons are welcome, though we require that youngsters be at least 12 years old to participate and must be accompanied by an adult relative. We open for the season on April 4th. We look forward to seeing you back aboard for Season Fifteen in Albany.

**See you next month**