

# 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



**Ron Zarem and the Michigan Crew started arriving on Friday May 4<sup>th</sup>.** As always, right from the start there seemed to be great interest in who would win the coveted 'Tim's Favorite' award. The first and most obvious choice was Ron himself who has been organizing these events for 15 years, but since Ron is also a Trustee, conflict of interest regulations disqualify Ron. Ron brought two of his sons this year, **Mark** and **Mike**.





Now, if anybody deserved an award it was the shaft alley crew.

**As he did last year, Mark prepared a fantastic turkey dinner for the crew Sunday night, donated by Jack Ernes DE-148 from California.** I inadvertently created a lot of disharmony in the Zarem clan last year when I gave Pat Zarem credit for cooking the turkeys when it was in fact, Mark who prepared the dinner. Pat seems to have a way of getting credit for things he didn't do. It seems that every time something went wrong in the galley, it was Pat's fault, even though he wasn't there, right down to forgetting to bring down the cranberry sauce to the messdeck for the second year in a row.

**The logistics were handled by the galley crew led by our own Chief Bernard Smith.** If anybody deserves an award it's Smitty because the event might not have happened without him. When Tom Schriener passed away, nobody in Michigan stepped forward to replace the cook, and Smitty graciously agreed to cook three meals a day for a week to feed the hungry crew. He was supported by **Larry Stiles** in the galley and **Ron Orszag** who took care of the messdeck. SLATER WWII vet Bill Svihovec was back and made the whole week as their compartment cleaner.

**The welding team of Laird Confer and Bernie Wright spent the week working on the exhaust fan room on the 01 level forward.** As with so many of our fan rooms, they are badly rotted out in desperate need of attention. Under **Doug Tanner's** direction, they cut away all the wasted metal, scaled, Corrosealed and primed the space, and welded up several bulkhead holes. Laird certainly deserves an award, but Ron has rules about being "Tim's favorite" and since Laird had already won in 2008, he was disqualified.

**Brandon Reese**, along with the late **Dick Breil's** grandson, **Brett Bennett**, agreed to tackle the port shaft alley. Over two days they hauled out about four or five gallon pails of rust, scraped and chipped from the bilges. On Wednesday, we gave the two Confers a break and let them work with grandpa. But Brandon said he was fine going back there to Corroseal the space, so he went down with **Mike Zarem**, and they got the whole place treated with the rust inhibitor. That, to me, was certainly worthy of an award, but Ron has a lot of rules, and since the Confers had won in 2009, they were disqualified, and since Brett was a first-timer, he was disqualified.

**The mechanical crew was certainly worthy of an award.** Three-inch-gun number one had locked up in train, a crisis since this is the one the public gets to operate. We set “**Butch**” **Warrender**, **Guy Huse**, **Mark Zarem** and **Gary Dieckman** on it. Over the course of the week, they completely tore down the train assembly, cleaned it, replaced all the bearings, most amazingly, got it back together and sealed it so it won't deteriorate in the future. I let them struggle with it Monday, and it was Tuesday morning that I had a memory flash about having the tech manual on the drive somewhere. I went to our librarian **Frank Peter**, and sure enough, he found a Xerox copy of “ELEVATION & TRAIN POWER DRIVE MK 31 MOD 0-3 FOR 3 INCH 50 & MOUNT MK 26” that had been donated to us by the good folks on the SS JOHN W. BROWN about a year or so ago. I wasn't hallucinating. Needless to say, that did make the job go a little easier, and it works beautifully. Now, Gary had a leg up on everybody, because as the owner of a printing company, he had already donated the layout and printing of all the materials used in the Hull Fund Appeal, saving us several thousand dollars. But Ron has rules, and accomplishments outside the scope of the field week can't count towards the award. And, Butch was disqualified because he had won last year with **Jim Parker** for getting the messdecks scuttlebutt working. Mike Zarem skipped out early because of work commitments, so that disqualified Mike. And Guy is technically part of the HUSE group, so that disqualified him.



**Laird Confer working on the forward exhaust fan room...**



**...while Garrett and Brandon assist with fire watch.**

**Meanwhile, Jim Parker got water to the wardroom pantry for the first time since 1991, and that was considered a major accomplishment.** We also now have the potential to get our ice machine back in operation. Jim also tightened up a loose long wire antenna insulator that had been annoying **Jerry Jones** for the past year and cleaned up and repaired the bridge windshield wipers. But as I said, since he won last year he was disqualified.

**Fire controlman Dick Walker was back on the flying bridge with Air Force vet Gary Headworth.** They replaced broken glass on the Mark 52 director, and scaled, primed and preserved the director air compressor and the deck under it. Again, the weather created a lot of problems for them. They work high enough up in the ship that nobody ever goes up to check on them, so we just have to take their word that they are doing anything. Lack of verification disqualified them both.



**Everyone who really knows me knows that I believe the world revolves around paint. I must have been a Boatswain's Mate in a past life or something.** We had two paint crews going. **Ron Zarem's** crew took on the aft 40mm gun tub, to finish a job they had started last year. With him he had **John Adriani** and **Emmett Landrum**. Now the weather over the week couldn't have been worse for painting. It was sunny Monday and showered the whole rest of the week. The outside of the tub was easy, but inside the arduous part of the task was scaling and painting all the 164 shell clips. Once that was done, painting proceeded slowly between rain showers. The oldest man in the crew, **Emmett Landrum**, had also come the farthest, from California. He certainly deserved an award, but had already been recognized in 2010, so he was disqualified.

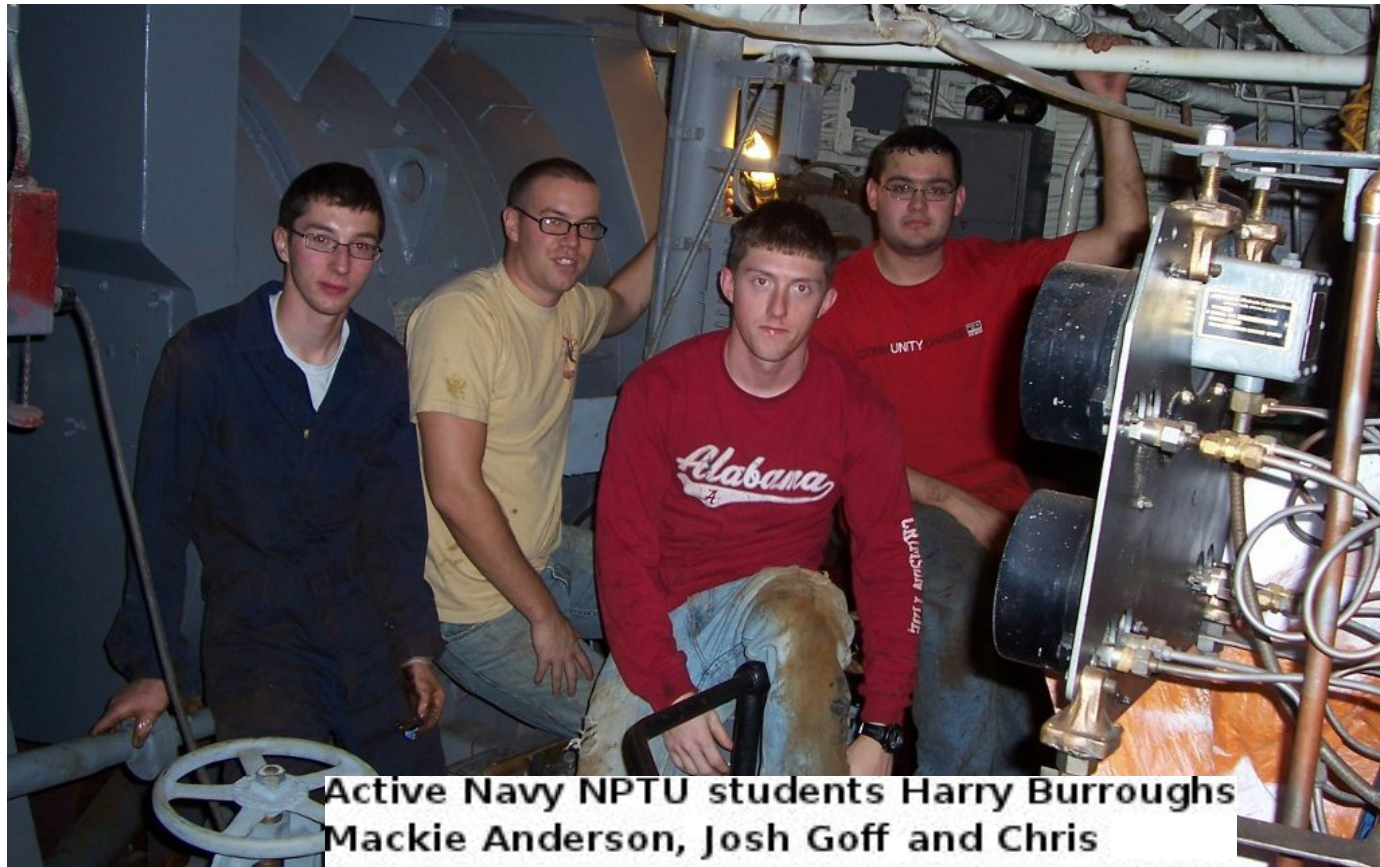


**Gary Dieckman and Butch Warrender putting new bearings on the gun 1 gear shafts.**



**Scott McFadden and Bill Wasco painting the pilothouse.**

That left the bridge crew. Scott McFadden, Bill Wasko, Mike Zarem, Marty Cole and Ron Mazure put on a stellar performance in spite of the weather. They managed to scale, Corroseal, prime and paint the entire bridge face superstructure from the 02 level to the flying bridge, all the way around and including the overhead under the flying bridge lookout chairs. An Annapolis graduate, former officer and gentleman who doesn't mind getting dirty, Scott kept his team sober, took advantage of every break in the weather to finish a job I didn't think they had a chance of finishing. They also found time to insulate the outboard bulkhead of the electronics shop below the messdeck, and did a lot of scaling on the pumps and the Sharples lube oil purifier in B-3. But Scott came within a hair of losing the award when he started bragging to people he had it in the bag on Tuesday afternoon. Ron has always referred to Scott as his "Bastard Son" and that might have disqualified him right there on the nepotism issue, but since the parentage is uncertain, we won't dig any deeper into the issue. Bill, Mike and Marty would have shared it with Scott if they hadn't left a day early. And Ron will chip anything, but he hates painting. That left Scott, and two other things worked in his favor; the fact that the award has never gone to an officer and the fact that I heard a rumor that even his wife Joanne didn't think he had a chance.



**Active Navy NPTU students Harry Burroughs Mackie Anderson, Josh Goff and Chris Ketcham have boldly gone where no SLATER volunteer has gone before--the B-4 bilges.**





**The volunteers from the USS HUSE Reunion Association.**

**The paint hadn't dried and the bunks were still warm when the USS HUSE crew began to arrive. George Amandola's crew has evolved into a well-oiled machine where everybody seems to know their place before they get here. The crew was supported by cooks **John Malvasio** and **John Nicotra** with **Joe Colletti** in the galley and **Wally Bringslid** on the messdecks. **Ernie Aeschilman** was the compartment cleaner, but worked over the whole ship, sweeping and swabbing decks, cleaning corners, wiping down bulkheads and cleaning hatchways. Roland Robbins and Bill Meehan always take over the paint locker, and I wish I had those guys in Albany year round. The first thing they do is resurrect all our hard stiff paint brushes that get dumped in thinner from previous jobs. They mix the paint, issue the paint, restow the paint and clean the brushes, making painting a whole lot more efficient.**



**We originally tasked the mechanical crew with repairing gun 2 which was jammed in elevation. Doug Streiter, Anthony Amandola, Guy Huse and Brandon Easley took on the job. As it turned out, the bearings were still good and the job didn't require the major disassembly required for the train on gun 1. They had it operating well by Monday night, leaving them free for other tasks. They went on to do a complete lubrication of gun 3. The ordnance work finished, Guy returned to working on his fire pump in B-4. Doug and Anthony went on to tackle plumbing problems. Those of you who remember those old Navy sinks with three spring-loaded handles may recall that repairing them was a bitch, if you could find the gaskets and O rings. Doug and Anthony went through all our leaking faucets, and made a bunch of extra gaskets and by the end of the week, none of our sinks were leaking. And, our regular crew certainly appreciated the extra washers that Doug left for us.**



Memorial Day 2012 aboard USS SLATER.





**Rain didn't effect Brandon Easley and Anthony Amandola in the starboard shaft alley...**



**...or Ron Frankosky scaling pumps in B-3.**

**Tuesday, Brandon and Anthony went in another direction, down into the starboard shaft alley.** I had been joking since the beginning of the week about finding someone to scale the starboard shaft alley. Brandon, having never been in the Navy, but being the youngest and fittest member of the crew just assumed that sending someone to “Shaft Alley” was another one of those bad Navy jokes he wasn’t clued in on. When he found out I wasn’t joking and saw the condition of the space, as well as what Brandon, Garrett and Brent had done on the portside, he agreed to go in with a needle gun. Not wanting to be left out of a dirty job, **Anthony Amandola** agreed to go in with him. They spent all Tuesday down there and did a great job prepping the space for preservation and painting. We had one scare when one spot near the keel seemed to continue to slowly fill with water. However, it turned out that it was water trapped under the scale coming to the surface. When we got it clean, it finally dried out. Unfortunately Brandon had to leave Wednesday, but if the HUSE crew gave a damn about who was “Tim’s favorite,” it would have to be Brandon and Anthony for tackling that miserable job.



**Ron was everywhere, seen here painting floats with Lew Shelton.**

**The crew kept several paint projects going. Ron Frankosky, Lew Shelton, Jan Schweiger and Gene Hermanson** worked on the replica floater nets. They took the five nets out of the baskets, repaired the deteriorated floats and repainted them flat black, another difficult job in the rain. **Gene Hermanson, Derwent Cartmell and Jim Larner** went to work scaling and priming stanchions on the 01 level. **Hillman Jackson** worked with **Jaye Robbins, Roland and Bill** to scale the aft three- inch gun tub and get it ready for painting. Up on the bridge, **Joe Delfoe** worked with Jan Schweiger to prep the inboard bulkheads and flagbags for painting. Down on the main deck, **Robin Larner** worked on the inboard side of the port breakwater, again, chipping and painting.





**Hillman Jackson scaling in the gun 3 tub...**



**...while Robin Larner does some spot sanding on the quarterdeck.**

**For three days it looked like, paint-wise, the work week was going to be a washout with none of the jobs completed.** But Thursday dawned bright, sunny, dry and beautiful. The crew really turned to, and given one day of great weather, managed to get paint on all the surfaces they had prepped in the preceding three days. **Ron Frankosky, Lew Shelton and Jan Schweiger** got the inboard side of the bridge bulwark and the forward 20mm gun completed and top coated with Imron Epoxy. They also managed to get all the floater net floats painted flat black. **Robin Larner, Gene and Derwent** got the inside of the port breakwater spray shield top coated. And **Roland and Jaye Robbins** with **Bill Meehan** got the exterior of the shield around gun number three painted. It was a great effort on their one good day.

**Special kudos goes to Guy Huse, for staying over for both weeks.** He worked on both gun mount projects. In B-4 he rerouted a water drain line that had been dumping water into the bilge into a new collection bucket. He got the priming tank for the fire pump priming pump Corrosealed, primed and mounted and began working on the connections. He forgot a couple of packs of tofu sausage in the bottom left of the Chiefs fridge, and we've put them in the freezer for his next visit. And special thanks to Jan and Robin, who as the only female participants this year outworked many of us guys. George told them that next year they each have to bring along another female friend who works as hard as they do.

**We also hosted our annual Key Bank “Neighbors Make a Difference” Work Day on Thursday May 24<sup>th</sup>.** Eleven bankers showed up and with the help of **Bill Wetterau**, finally finished painting the starboard side main deck that has been in primer since last November. The also restowed and touched up paint on the floater nets and did a lot of trim painting.

**The regular crew gets short shrift this month because of the influx of reserves.** The big news is that Rocky got the whaleboat back from Scarano’s Boatyard and she looks beautiful. And, needless to say, the engineers are still working on main engine number, the shipfitters are still working in the forward exhaust fan room, the NPTU Volunteers are still in the B-4 bilges and our chippers are still chipping the 02 level forward around the pilothouse. Tour guides are still guiding tours, Smitty is still cooking, Jim Gelston is still winding clocks, and contributions continue to come in for the Hull Fund as we sit moored as before.



Evening Colors.



**And once again, the Key Bank volunteers were a big help to us.**





Looking over the completed model of USS SLATER are Steve Seligman, master model maker, Gene Griesau, Alumni Association member, Midshipman Mike FitzGibbon, SLATER volunteer, Philip LaBatte, Alumni Association member, Frank Hughes, local Alumni Association Chapter President, and GordonLattey, SLATER volunteer.

**Stephen A. Seligman.** When Seligman began the project he had no real idea that it would be the USS Slater. “I began searching the various websites for information a inspiration,” he said. He discover the Slater’s site and traded e-mails with us. Then, on a trip to the University of Connecticut, Seligman got sidetracked to Albany. We took Seligman for a keel to foremast tour and turned him loose with his camera. Several hours and more than four rolls of film later, Seligman ha firmly decided that the model would be USS Slater. All during construction we continued to trade plans, manuals and hundreds of pictures to assure the accuracy of the most minute parts and pieces.

**Gordon Lattey** scored a PR coup by arranging an unveiling at the US Naval Academy Museum of a recently constructed model of U SLATER. On hand to greet the intricately detailed model that was three and a half years in the making were volunteer members of the Museum; **Greg Krawczyk**, Midshipman **Michael FitzGibbon** and **Gordon Lattey**.

Representing the Naval Academy’s Alumni Association, NY Capital District Chapter were **Frank Hughes ‘80**, chapter president, **Phil LaBatte ‘64** and **Gene Griesau ’75**. The Slater model was built by master ship modeler

**For Naval Academy Plebe FitzGibbon the unveiling was like a homecoming.** He had spent several years volunteering aboard the Slate while a student at Colonie Central High School prior to entering the Academy. At Colonie one of his teachers was Barry Witte, who is also a volunteer aboard the Slater. Witte also happens to be the Naval Academy's Blue and Gold Officer; a graduate who assists prospective midshipmen in making the decision to apply for admission.

**Our best wishes and prayers go out to Trustee Emeritus Paul Czesak and his family.** One of our most dedicated volunteers; Paul has served as the organizer of all our ceremonies for the past twelve years, and has always been there for his shipmates. Paul was taken to Ellis Hospital the last week of the month with what they believe are complications from Lyme disease. As I write he is still in ICU and we are wishing him a speedy recovery.

**Finally, we remembered our veterans at our 15th annual Memorial Service on Monday, 28 May.** The main organizer of the event couldn't be with us. **Paul Czesak** is in Ellis Hospital undergoing tests. In his absence, the crew turned out in their dress whites. **Tom DeRouville** served as OOD and Steve Long as our Master of Ceremony. **Ken Kaskoun** led the SLATER Color Guard as **Boatswains Mate Bill Haggart** welcomed dignitaries **Assemblymember Jack McEneny, Former Albany County Executive Mike Breslin, Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino, Frank Commisso Sr., Frank Commisso Jr. and CDR Bill Kraus** aboard. All had touching thoughts of the significance of the day and thoughts about veterans they had known who had not come home. Dick Walker served as Chaplain, and Jerry Jones arranged the music. The high point as always was firing the gun by Gun Captain Erik Collin and his crew. And, our thanks to Ann Morrow who got a great promo in our Metroland weekly newspaper about the event. It was a special day to remember our veterans, though in truth, every day is Memorial Day aboard USS SLATER.

**See you next month**