

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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As I write this it is Monday July 23rd. All over the ship projects are underway. Up on the flying bridge **Gene Jackey** is grinding away at an annoying doubler plate that was installed by the Greeks many years ago, certain that we will find rotted metal under it. Alongside **Gene**, **Earl Herchenroder** and **Don Miller** are scaling the deck of the flying bridge. On the next level, right above my head, **Clark Farnsworth** (Remember our ninety-year-old shipfitter?) is out on deck grinding on the breakwater watertight door that is under repair. Unfortunately, he was violating safety protocol and wasn't wearing a dust mask. I went below and got one for him with the words, "How am I going to get another 20 years out of you if you don't take care of yourself?"



On the flying bridge Tim Benner is hard at work patching holes in the deck.

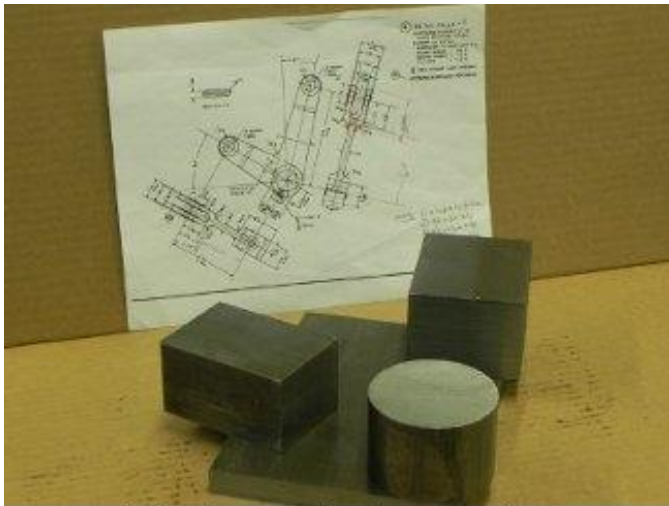


Bill Wetterau repaints the meesdeck fuel hatch covers.

Chris Fedden and **Super Dave Mardon** have been up on the 02 level replacing wasted bulwark supports outside the pilothouse. The Greeks already did this once, so this is the second time for that repair. John Thompson is in the machine shop sorting hardware, and he just sent Dick and Maralyn Walker on the road a second time for a wire wheel for the bench grinder. The first one they bought was too big. Down in the Chiefs Quarters, Bob Callender is totaling up the volunteer hours in the log book and Don Shattuck is sitting across from him to make sure he gets it right.

Walt Stuart has been touching up the paint on the fantail. The entire brain trust of **Gary Sheedy**, **Gary Lubrano**, **Rocky Rockwood**, **Gus Negus** and **Mike Dingmon** were in the whaleboat completing the installation of a new volt meter and wondering why the battery was dead. **Karl Herchenroder** couldn't take the intensity of the experience and retreated to the engineroom where he started needle gunning the lube oil circulating pump in B-3. After they solved the whaleboat problem, Gus, Mike and Gary all followed Karl down to B-3 where they continued tracing the lube oil line to number four generator. Because we certainly do not want to run the diesel without lubrication on the generator. Of course, this naturally involved archivist **Frank Peter**, working back in the supply office, checking to make sure we didn't have that diagram aboard. Since we don't the problem now goes to **Ed Zajkowski** in Pennsylvania. Our NPTU Sailors **Jonathan Chou**, **Cassidy Overby**, **Alex Garcia** and **Nate Gerrish** are back in B-4 corrosealing under the fire and flushing pump and number 2 main drive motor.

Jim Gelston is winding clocks so the crew will know when it's time for lunch. Lunch for the crew will be rib eye steak with corn, baked potato and salad, and it was free. You can tell **Chief Commissaryman Smith** is honest. Every couple of months Smitty takes the surplus lunch money and gives the crew a free meal. Most commissaries would never admit to a profit. That's a typical Monday aboard USS SLATER



From original Navy drawings and an assortment of steel blocks to...



George Christophersen's fantastic machine work for the starboard depth charge rack.

As hot as it was this month, these guys kept coming out to work. We talked last month about the depth charge release mechanism that **George Christophersen** fabricated in his son's shop over in Connecticut. George made three more trips over this way and the installation is now complete and the unit has been painted. It works just like the original. Work on the flying bridge and 02 level forward is progressing slowly. We're glad to have **Joe Delberta** back who has been tour guiding and assisting with the welding on the bulwark supports outside the pilothouse. Joe returned after a year-long foray that took him to Louisiana and North Dakota. Gary Sheedy has gotten his electrical storeroom down below the reefer deck all cleaned out and organized so he can find what he needs when he needs it. Over the years we have collected an amazing assortment of vintage electrical spare parts to support the continued restoration of SLATER. **Erik Collin** and his gang completed scaling and repainting the deck in the aft three inch gun tub. And, **Bill Wetterau** has proved himself a very neat painter as he has been all over the ship doing touch up work.

A couple of people who have been working behind the scenes for us are my old friend Ed Zajkowski, Tin Can Sailor Executive Director Terry Miller, and his archivist Kathy Cichon. Tin Can Sailors has received donations of several thousand Navy equipment manuals and they are in the process of organizing them, cataloging the DD and DE manuals for their archive, and making the non-destroyer manuals available to museums. Ed has been reviewing the lists of manuals available for donation and recommending manuals for us to take in our collection that relate to equipment aboard the SLATER, even though the manual in question may be for another class of ship. In addition, **Terry Miller** loaned us several valuable manuals that relate to CANNON-class DEs, including manuals on the refrigeration plant, the AC electrical distribution system, and the Interior Communications Switchboard.



Two World War II Vets, Coastie Joe Burke and Navy Gunner's Mate Bill Scharoun.

Eddie Z has also undertaken another home project for us. We loaned him a microfilm reader and copies of the CANNON-class blueprints on microfilm. He had previously indexed our microfilm, so now when we have a research question, we call Ed and he digs into the problem for us. Unfortunately, many of the drawings were badly photographed and they are illegible, but there is always some information to be gleaned from them to keep us as close to historical authenticity as possible.

Another researcher who's working for us from afar is Chris Wright, the editor of Warship International Magazine. Chris spends a considerable amount of time doing research in the National Archives, and whenever he stumbles upon a new DE photograph, he sends a high resolution digital copy to us. The images he sends us make our quarterly TRIM BUT DEADLY newsletter a much better publication. Eddie Z also makes sure these images go up on the NAVSOURCE website, so you can see Chris's work there.



Sheedy on the reefer deck.



Barry Witte captured this poignant image of an unidentified reminiscing in CIC.

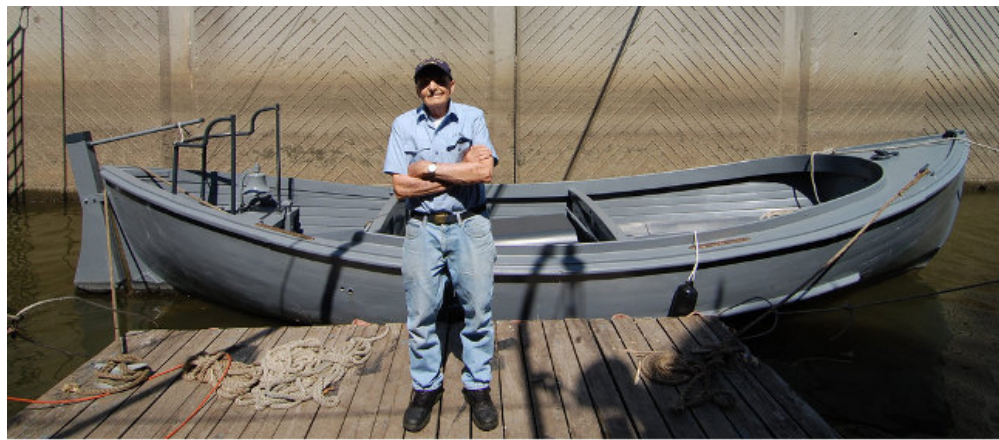


Museum Chairman BJ Costello and the USS GENESEE AOG-8 Reunion Group.

Administratively, a lot of effort went into the New York State Consolidated grant application that was due July 16th. We are trying to get the state to match the Hull Preservation Fund money you all have donated privately. If they do this, that will give us the funding we need to push this project forward. The 88-question online application was an all hands effort. I responded to the technical questions, Rosehn handled the budget and

financial questions, and Heather handled the Museum questions and put the whole thing together. Now, we can only wait and hope. We've been putting these applications in since 1999, but this is the first time we've ever been able to put forward a sizeable financial match.

Tours have continued even as the temperatures have been rising. On July 11th, **Ken Kaskoun, Glenn Harrison, Floyd Hunt, Dave Pitlyk, Julianne Madsen, Vince Knuth, and Joey Price** did an excellent job of maneuvering two large camp groups through the ship. **Matt Wong, Julianne and Jamie Brinkman** have kept busy constantly refilling our two water coolers between battles with the ever present cobwebs. Thursdays have presented themselves as the busiest day of the week, so **Joe Burke, Bill Scharoun, and Bob Dawson** have certainly proved themselves this season! One of the things we often hear is how far some of visitors travel to visit the ship, so I would like to take a moment to point out some of our regular tour guides whom make quite the trip; **Leo Baehler** travels from New Jersey, while **Tom Cline** travels from Binghamton every Sunday. Speaking of long distance travelers, we also have **Bob and Thomas Scian** coming in from Monticello every Saturday. Having said that, now I'm sure **Tim Benner** will want special recognition for driving in from Glens Falls. We also hosted the USS GENESEE AOG-8 reunion this month. Board Chairman **BJ Costello** brought a group of his gasoline tanker shipmates aboard to show them what life was like on the destroyer escort. I have a little connection to that ship in that I graduated from SUNY Geneseo and used to walk the banks of the Genesee River regularly.



Rocky and the whaleboat.

“Rocky” Rockwood tried to pay back a debt this month. For as long as Rocky has been taking care of our whaleboat, the good folks at Scarano Boatyard have been extremely generous to us with their time, space and materials. Rick, John and Eric really seem to appreciate that there aren’t many boats like our whaleboat around anymore, and there aren’t many Sailors like Rocky taking care of them. To show our appreciation, Rocky presented Scarano’s with a framed copy of the Len Tantillo print “Contact,” commissioned by Gordon Lattey. This is the painting we have been sending major donors to the Hull Fund, albeit, unframed. The print depicts SLATER in action in the Atlantic, and it is a small token compared to what the Scarano brothers have done for us.



Jackie Domin of Senior Spotlight newspaper interviewing Joe Breyer and Jerry Jones as they insulated the TBL armature.



We try to repay a debt as Tony Esposito, "Rocky" Rockwood, Tim Rizzuto, Rick Scarano, John Scarano and Eric Everson admire Len Tantillo's print "Contact."

We were paid a nice compliment in Metroland newspaper this month in their “Best of the Capital Region” Edition. They listed USS SLATER as the “best living history museum” with the description “A previous winner for best floating museum, this heroically restored World War II Destroyer Escort recently achieved National Historic Landmark status. But aside from serving as the most extant example of a crucial Naval military strategy, the Slater bustles with activity on a par with better-known living history museums: conducting tours, sailing its whaleboat, firing its rare weaponry, and being manned by Navy personnel—only now they are veterans doing expert repairs rather than servicemen engaged in war duties.” We also received a nice write up in the **Senior Spotlight** in which reporter **Jackie Domin** came down on a Saturday morning and interviewed the crew to tell the story of the volunteer effort aboard SLATER. Needless to say, I was a little concerned when I saw her having coffee with **Tanner, Benner, Sheedy** and **Mardon**, and she still wrote nice things about us. Thanks for being on your best behavior guys. I know it was an effort.



The month of July started with a visit by the Historic tugboat WENDY B. This fifty foot tug was built in Canada in 1940 as an icebreaking tug. She did harbor duties in Halifax during World War II. She had the distinction of being sunk three times and salvaged three times. The last time was in the St. Lawrence Seaway where she sat on the bottom for twenty years before being discovered during a dredging operation. She was salvaged one more time and rehabilitated for service. She found her way through the NYS Canal down to Washington, D.C. where her current owner

David Beckmann found her. It seems she had been piloted south by David's grandmother. It was love at first sight and David bought WENDY B and went down with his brothers, cranked up the GM-671 that hadn't been run in five years, and they sailed her north through the inland waterway. They are now planning the restoration of the ship, so we welcome another historic tugboat to the Hudson.

Regarding Paul Czesak, our Admiral spent a month at Ellis Hospital in Schenectady due to a Lyme disease infection that resulted in kidney failure. He was then moved to St. Clair's Hospital on June 28th for some rehabilitation. He then returned to Ellis following the onset of pneumonia. He has since been resent to The Avenue Rehabilitation Center in Schenectady. **Glenn Harrison** commented, "Even the witness protection program doesn't move people around that much!" Paul will be in rehab until he is able to walk again, and he thanks all his shipmates who have been by to see him. Finally, SLATER's flag flew at half staff to mark the passing of two of our shipmates this month. We had the sad news that Paul Czesak's USS KEARSARGE shipmate Dick Kemner passed away this month. For years, Dick has kept our coffee mess supplied with donated coffee, his way of supporting our effort. Quiet and unassuming Dick has left his legacy in the form of the coffee grounds that the SLATER is probably sitting on at low tide. We sadly say goodbye to another SLATER friend. And finally, we lost one of our original tour guides this month with the passing of Alan Guard. Alan had served as an officer aboard the ULVERT M. MOORE DE442 under Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. and was one of our original tour guides when SLATER first arrived in Albany. We'll miss them both.

See you next month.