



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Google is a wonderful tool. Anytime I need to know something about the twenty-year history of the project, I just type "SLATER SIGNALS" and my keyword into the search engine, and find my information. Let's say I wanted to know if I had a medicine cabinet, I just type that into Google with "SLATER SIGNALS," and I'll probably get my answer. Or, let's say I wanted to pay long overdue tribute to one of my Trustees, I just type his name into Google for a list of all the great things he has done for the ship.



Tony, Alan, Hal, Frank and BJ.

I've always been reluctant to write about the guys in suits in SIGNALS. I think that the guys who do the work deserve the credit. That's why you never hear about the great work of people like Board Chairman **BJ Costello**, President **Tony Esposito**, Treasurer **Alan Fox**, or Vice President **Hal Hatfield**, or any of the other eighteen Trustees who make up our Board. But, their depth of knowledge and range of

experience make them a vital part of our operation.

Take Hal Hatfield, for example. Hal is the longest serving member of the Board. A West Point graduate, Hal takes a lot of heat from his Navy counterparts. He did derive great satisfaction with the outcome of the most recent Army-Navy football game. Hal is

CEO of two steel fabrication companies, **Hillside Iron Works** and **Maximum Security Products**. Hillside does specialty steel fabrication and Maximum Security specializes in steelwork for prisons. As you can imagine, Hal is against the death penalty. He has a fabrication shop that could build the SLATER.

The story of how Hal became involved with the SLATER begins before the ship even arrived in Albany. Prior to our departure from Manhattan, the Director of the Port of Albany, **Frank Keane**, asked the Museum President **Marty Davis** for a copy of our liability insurance certificate. I think Marty's response with something to the effect of, "We need insurance?" **Rob Goldman** had the contract to tow the SLATER from Manhattan to Albany, and Marty reached out to Rob about where he got the insurance for his tugs. Rob's agent was **Mike Barry**, with Client's First Agency.



Mike quickly fixed us up with the necessary insurance, and became a fan of the project. Mike's the only insurance agent who expressed the idea that it might be a fun idea to get the ship underway. Mike reached out to several of his clients to sponsor the project, and Hal was one of three who came through. Consequently, when SLATER came into Albany, she proudly displayed the corporate banners

Hal was on the pier when SLATER arrived in Albany.

of **Maximum Security**, **Client's First** and two other sponsors on the fo'c's'le for the crowd on the wharf. That was the last time this Executive Director permitted banners to be displayed on the ship.

Hal soon joined the Board of Trustees, spent several years as Treasurer, and is now our Vice President. He has generously lent his firm's resources to the project. Over the years, his firm has fabricated the missing port depth charge rack, the floater net baskets, the platform for the optical rangefinder, all the bunk locker tops, the trunks for the longwire antenna insulators, the flying bridge companionway, screens and covers for the ventilation intakes, missing deck plates in the machinery spaces, and helped with the

fabrication of the bases for the missing depth charge projectors. He also has extensive computer drafting capability. He's scanned and printed a lot of needed blueprints when we were getting ready to go to the shipyard. I really don't lean on him nearly as much as I could.



One of the most critical functions he has provided over the years is storage space. During the time we've been here, we've acquired a lot of material that will be used in future projects. We would have to pay for storage space if we didn't have Hal. An example is the officers' stateroom furniture from the USS KADASHAN BAY CVE-76. Back in 2016, ever alert **Ed Zajkowski** spotted an E-bay

auction of shipboard officers' stateroom furniture that had been salvaged from the jeep carrier in 1959. It did not receive any bids on the first auction, and Ed suggested that we contact the seller to see if he'd consider a donation. The furniture included two stateroom built-in bunks that we are missing on SLATER, with the chest of drawers, safe, medicine cabinet, and sink included.

The owner, Bob Bateman, was more than happy to donate the furniture to us so we could give it a good home. Danny Statile, Bill Wetterau, and Gary Sheedy made the run over to Rhode Island to pick it up, using **Dave Mardon's** trailer. The plan will be to recreate the officer stateroom that was adjacent to the wardroom, the next time the wardroom comes up for renovation. Everything is presently in storage at **Hal Hatfield's** shop. Among the other gems in storage for the future are a spare diesel for the motor whaleboat, the correct South Bend lathe for the machine shop, several bunks and canvases, a TAJ radio transmitter and motor generator set, replacement water tight doors, and the engine order telegraph from USS PETTIT DE-253. One of my biggest fears is the day Hal decides to retire. There's gonna be a hell of a garage sale.



Kyle Caton and the Ballson Spa Sailors were back, working on the lighting on the dead reckoning tracer in CIC.

Doug has been planning a big project. We tried to remove the upper back stay to replace it, but can't do it without bringing in a crane and a basket. Doug is making arrangements with our friends at Flach Crane to do the job, on a day when we are closed to the public. That led to the idea of having the new backstay and the yardarm spreaders fabricated beforehand, so we can do everything at once. Once again, we

turned to Ed Zajkowski, who has all the blueprints. Ed was able to provide Doug with all the drawings he needed, to make up copies to send to the folks at **All-Lifts**, so the rigging can all be prefabricated. He already got **Ken Williams** at **Irby Utilities** to donate two insulators that he needs for the spreaders.

The reason Ed Zajkowski has all this information is that back in the seventies, he was on the scene when the mass scrapping of the World War II fleet was taking place in Philadelphia. He was quick to make friends with the scrappers, and received all kinds of wonderful trinkets. At that time, the ships were being disposed of with all their spare parts and paperwork. The paperwork was just a flammable nuisance to the scrappers, and they were more than happy to give Ed all the manuals and blueprints he could haul away. The haul included many from destroyer escorts that were being scrapped. That's how, if we have a restoration question, Ed usually has the answer.



He hates to be called our resident limey, but Will Trevor insists that SLATER is a Captain Class Frigate.



Under Gary Sheedy's direction, the Ballston Spa Sailors spent the day sorting, stowing, and cleaning B-2, the forward motor room. That space is our catch-all for everything that we don't know what to do with.

discovered by Hollywood, and he's been selling and renting various props for the upcoming **Tom Hanks** destroyer movie, "Greyhound." Examples of the items he's been renting include clinometers, lamps, alarms, outlets, a fuse box, knot meters, etc.



Doug and the shipfitters began fitting in the first section of the aft supply fan vent intake.

Later on, in the nineties, when Metro Machine started scrapping ships in Philadelphia, Ed was on hand again, hauling various furnishings off the DDGs and DLGs. Much of it went to Fall River, for use aboard USS JOSEPH P. KENNEDY JR. When he feels generous, some of it comes our way. His basement is a museum in its own right. More recently, he has gotten into the movie prop business. He's been

Doug's been keeping his crew busy in the aft cross passageway. The exterior ductwork for the aft supply fan was cut off years ago, as it obstructed the tour route. This has resulted in rain water leaking into the passageway. Doug and his shipfitters are in the process of repairing the leaks, making brackets for air filters in the ductwork, and fabricating new exterior ductwork. It will be

similar to the original, but with some modifications so it won't obstruct the tour route.

New volunteer, Vic Consiglio, responded to last month's request for a volunteer sign painter. Vic reported aboard, filled out his volunteer application, and has been working with **Gary Sheedy** to organize our collection of stencils, signs, and

compartment tags. Vic was a commercial artist, and his DE connection is that his father-in-law served aboard USS JOHN J. POWERS DE-528. I suspect, once he gets himself organized, stencils will begin to show up on the ductwork, valves, and piping systems throughout the ship.



RPI Midshipmen John Obermiller, Nathan Arntz, and Isabel Donelson worked replacing missing handrails in the aft motor room.

In addition to helping Vic, Gary did a great job working with fifteen Sailors from NPTU Ballston Spa. Under the direction of Chief **Lucas Kasper**, they spent a day cleaning and organizing B-2. The forward motor room has been our catch-all storage area for years. If we don't know what to do with it, we dump it in B-2. It's kind of like cutting overgrown brush. Every couple of years, the place

gets so clogged with junk that you can't move on the catwalks. We threw away a lot of trash, scrapped out a lot of steel we'll never use, and grouped the rest according to electrical, plumbing, diesel spares, and DC gear. Now we may be able to find what we are looking for.

Carl Camurati, Walt Stuart, and Ron Prest have been working on the never-ending task of scaling decks. The new paints don't have the bonding power of old red lead, so every winter, water seems to find its way into cracks, freezes, and lifts the paint. We're experimenting with another new product this year, PPG Dimecoat 302H, in lieu of the Corroseal. That was the primer the shipyard used on the hull, and it seemed to hold up very well.



Devon Urbano has been one of our Saturday regulars, assisting Barry Witte with electrical projects.



Off site, our volunteer machinist, George Christophersen, has been making great progress on the telescope mounts.

MK-1 bridge telescopes.



We're open for season 21! Bob Wheelock is on the first tour of the season.

fabrication in the steering gear room. Up in CIC, ET1 **Kyle Caton** and his shipmates have continued work on the special effects there. Also, Midshipman **John Carbone** has done a lot of detailing in the compartment.

Larry Williams is back, and has been working on rewiring lighting on the lower level of B-3 for the engineers. **Tommy Moore** has been sanding on the whaleboat. **Guy Huse** has been working to have the gun 31 sightsetter ready for reassembly, when the HUSE crew reports aboard on May 6 for their work week. Off site, **George Christophersen** has been fabricating mounting yokes for our

Barry Witte continues bringing the youthful element to the project by working with the RPI Midshipmen, the NPTU Sailors, and his current and former students. In preparation for opening day, **Nick Grocki**, **Devon Urbano**, and **Ken Powers** made sure all the battle lanterns we use for emergency lighting had fresh batteries. **Vince Montouri** has been doing a magnificent job working on the smoke generator



Another busy tour day, as new intern Noel explains the hydro-static detonator, with our cutaway depth charge.



The Saturday crew, tour guides Mitch, Charles, Paul, Andrew, Evan, and Noel, standing by for action.

Well, first month in and we've cannonballed into our 21st season! We don't waste time with dipping our big toe in, to get used to the water. April was very busy for our education department, with scheduled tours of school groups, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Ukrainian Scouts, as well as two overnights with Cub Scouts Packs 128 and 125, and presentations in Cohoes, Kinderhook, and Oneonta.

Most of Shanna's time has been filled with getting our new tour guides ready and qualified to conduct tours on their own. You'll be comforted to know that a lot of training and shadowing other tour guides goes into the making of a SLATER Guide. Each of them are required to give Shanna a tour before she sends them out with the public. New volunteer tour guides this year are **Carl Camurati, Greg**

Healey, and Richard Wallace. Our new college interns are **Lorna, Alex, Noel, and Patricia.** All four are attending the local University at Albany, a part of SUNY.



Paul Guarnieri and the rest of the tour guides have had some very busy days.

Healey, and Alan Fox aboard. **Don Cushman, Rich Wallace, Carl Camurati, Bob Herbst, and Dan Healey** are aboard on Thursdays. Fridays are manned by **Ken Kaskoun, Charles Starks, and Herb Marlow**, and Saturdays are manned by **Paul Guarnieri, Will Trevor, Mitch Lucas, and Charles Starks**, pulling double duty. Of course, rounding out all days of the week are our returning interns: **Paul, Merissa, Evan, and Austin**. We have 28 tour guides ready to see you this season!



Volunteer Mitch Lucas prepares to explain the workings of the 3 inch gun and the hedgehog projector.

We are fortunate to have so many returning tour guides this season. Many of them have been here from the beginning of SLATER's tenure in Albany. The Intern Supreme, Andrew, with his workforce of Art Dott, Grant Hack, Tom Cline, Bill Goralski, and Dave Pitlyk, manages Sundays. On Wednesdays, you'll find Mike Marko, Bob Wheelock, Greg

Thanks to their efforts, and all the great reviews we have been garnering on TripAdvisor.com, SLATER moved from number three to become their number one tourist attraction in Albany. We are rightfully proud of that accomplishment. If you are on social media, make sure you follow us to see our progress! We're on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!

We lost another shipmate this month. Boatswain's Mate Mike Muzio. Mike had been employed for 28 years at

Tagsons Papers in Mechanicville and retired in 1995. He was a decorated veteran of the US Navy and had served in World War II and the post-war Navy. Among his ships were USS ELDORADO AGC-11 and JOSEPH P. KENNEDY JR. DD-850. He had spent a number of years in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, before returning to this area in 2016. Mike has been immortalized aboard SLATER by **Jerry Jones**. When we needed the perfect voice to record for our 1MC announcements twenty years ago, Jerry chose Mike. Now Mike's voice continues to be heard several times a day, piping reveille, sweepers, chow, and liberty. He will never be forgotten aboard SLATER.

Finally, as mentioned before, my friend Ed Zajkowski was back this month with his friend Rick Espenshade. Gary Sheedy went to great lengths to prepare after officers' country for Ed, including, I've heard, a mint on the pillow. If you read last month's issue, you read about how Gary badly needed a medicine cabinet for his after officers' country restoration project. Ed was faced with the decision of selling his medicine cabinet to the movie, or giving it to his friend Gary Sheedy. After assuring Ed that I did not have a spare medicine cabinet, he reluctantly brought it up with him and gave it to Gary for restoration.



Phil "The Cat" Catalfamo is one of our unsung heroes. This WWII vet served as a gunner's mate on USS CHAFFEE DE-230, in the Pacific. Two or three times a month, he stops by with coffee and pastries for the crew

Rick and Ed were scoping out future welding projects, including replacement of the wasted 20mm foot rails. In anticipation of the Japanese use of suicide boats during the planned invasion of Japan, modifications were made to the 20mm guns, so they could depress and fire lower on the water. The gun shields were cut down six inches, and two 6" concentric steel foot rails were added for the gunner to stand on.

They are badly wasted aboard SLATER. Doug had two fabricated at **American Boiler**, and **Hal Hatfield** fabricated the remaining seven sets. Hal has them in storage. I took Ed and Rick up to look them over, and Hal did a great job. While we were there, I took them around back to show them all the destroyer parts we had in storage. As **Mike**

Arnold unlocked the cage, the first thing Ed spotted was the medicine cabinet from the KADASHAN BAY.

The words Ed Zajkowski uttered are not suitable for a family publication. Sheedy observed, "Ed's known you longer than any of us, and he still trusts you?" Regardless, Sheedy has already repainted the cabinet and welded it to the bulkhead. I guess I should have Googled it.

Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

See you next month!



Charles Starks demonstrates ammo handling.