



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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My return from a two-week vacation and the return of the fireboat JOHN J HARVEY were the two big events for this month. I got back from San Diego to heat, humidity and learned that it had rained almost every day I'd been gone. While steady progress had been made on all fronts, the opportunities for painting had definitely been limited. More on that later.



The HARVEY making her approach.

The big event of the month was the visit of the HARVEY. This was her third visit, and you'd think I'd have learned not to wait until the last minute to look for fenders. I was sure Lou Renna would have a pile of tires behind his shed. Sure enough, he'd cleaned up a few months ago. A few frantic calls an hour before her arrival yielded nothing, so Gene Cellini volunteered to go down to the truck stop and see what he could find. He came back with two tires that made perfect fenders. He and Mike Muzio got them rigged and we were open for business. The HARVEY arrived on Tuesday August 19th with fire nozzles streaming. It was great to see old friends **Huntley Gill, Tim Ivory, Jessica Dulong, Bob Lenney and the rest of the crew again.**



The HARVEY comes alongside.

We had read a New York Times article that talked of the dire condition of the boat and the need for immediate grant assistance. Like we don't know about that. We immediately became concerned that they might have to cancel the trip. Well, it turned out that on the short term the article was much more dire than actual conditions warrant. They had no intention of canceling and arrived right on schedule. These guys are upset because they only have three of their five main propulsion diesels operating. Hell, that's still three more than we have. Let's go!

As you may remember, the HARVEY pumped water to firefighters for 80 hours at the World Trade Center during and after Sept. 11, and became a national hero and the focus of a children's book. The boat is now 72 years old, and it needs about \$700,000 in repairs. Huntley Gill and John Doswell, two of the eight owners who combined to spend \$28,000 at a silent auction in 1999 to save the fireboat, said they are seeking government grants. We know how that goes. They've got their problems as we have ours. Three of her five engines have mechanical problems. No. 3 engine cannot function because of flooding and will require a complete overhaul. Number 5 has generator problems. One of her propellers is dinged up. A few pounds of metal have been lost from the right propeller, causing the shaft to shimmy limiting her speed. And of course, her plates are getting thin in some spots. But her ability to move and pump makes her an inspiration to us.

The Tuesday stop was a quick visit to unload visitors in Albany before heading up river to an overnight in Troy. She was back the next morning for 1100. All the SLALTER visitors got to tour the HARVEY for free and we scheduled free thirty-minute day trips for 1300, 1500, and 1630. The HARVEY crew offered to host a barbecue for the SLALTER crew, so that night we gathered aboard for salmon, steak and salad. Of course, the crew thought the best part was the beer on tap and the wine bar, so it was a tough struggle not to keep them all from jumping ship. The next day several of the SLALTER crew took advantage of offer for a cruise down river and rode the HARVEY to Catskill. It was a wonderful visit and we look forward to seeing them again next year.



The view from the HARVEY.

We've had several August Reunions in the summer heat. The **USS BARR DE576/APD39** group was aboard for a memorial service. She was one of several ships that had their fantails blown off by the German acoustic torpedos that were attracted to the screws. She later saw action as an APD and went to the Pacific. Aboard **SLATER** the crew paid homage to their seventeen shipmates who lost their lives aboard when the torpedo hit.



The USS BARR Reunion.



Channel 13 covered the USS BARR Reunion.

The following day we were overwhelmed by the crew of the USS KRETCHMER DE/DER329. This ship saw additional postwar service as radar picket DER and wasn't decommissioned until 1973, so they had a lot of men who served aboard her. Their turnout was about one hundred and twenty people, so in terms of sheer crew size, I do believe that they could have been a match for any other single ship reunion we have had aboard. We also hosted the **USS BELET APD109**, a late war ship that was commissioned as a destroyer transport. That was another group that was disappointed that we had no LCVP's aboard. We do the best we can. For all these ships Bosun **Mike Muzio** was available to pipe them aboard.



Mike Clark working on alarm wiring.



Don Bulger working on the engine annunciator
the flying bridge.

The new gangway keeps coming closer to reality. This will be a real asset, as it will allow visitors to exit the SLATER directly on to the deck and into the gift shop. **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Russ Ferrer, Clark Farnsworth, Hack Charbonneau, Chuck Teal and Red Hume Gary Sheedy and George Erwin** have all had a hand in making Doug's vision a reality. They have combined their resources to try and wrap up this project to have it in place for the September reunions. The hanger/saddle/steps on the seawall are complete; the deck roller the gangway will ride on has been fabricated, modified and modified again. The necessary modifications have been made to the aluminum gangway, giving Doug a chance to practice his tig welding. We moved the quarterdeck desk forward to make more room for the landing and as soon as we swap some lifelines around, we should be ready to lift it into place in a couple weeks. Then we can get back to work on the chocks and the rangefinder platform on the flying bridge.

The shore side head is almost complete. Again, it's an incredible pooling talent that his making this happen. **Gordon Lattey's** helpers, electrician **Terry Ryan** and plumber **John Maguire** have everything wrapped up except the sink and the commode. All the plumbing is in. Gordon crawled under the deck himself to cut and glue up the PVC drain lines. Naval reservist **Ken Kallen** did up the sheet rock on the interior and built the handicapped ramp to the restroom. **Gene**



Dave Floyd and Jerry Jones promoting us at the Schenectady Air Show.

Cellini has had what the rest of the crew can only describe as an incredible burst of energy. Gordon and **Dennis Nagi** were spackling the sheetrock in the restroom when Gene happened by. He shook his head at the way the whole exercise was going and said, let me show you how it's done. Gene finished and spackled the interior sheetrock, sealed and painted the interior, then he sealed and painted the exterior of the land head. That was like two weeks of solid work out of the guy. The whole shore side facility is starting to look like one cohesive structure. **Dennis Nagi** is wrapping up the interior trim and floor.

It looks as though one lucky soul will be able to christen the head just about the same day that the new gangway goes up. And that's the race. Which will be finished first, the head or the gangway. Will the toilet flush before or after the first person walks across the new gangway? The suspense is unbearable.

On the high tech side, Thanks to Erik Colin and Barry Witte, we have all the ship and shore computers networked, so any computer can access the database of another computer. This has made life a whole lot easier for us bureaucrats. We're fighting the continuing battle with Verizon to try and get a DSL high-speed Internet access line to the ship, which would free up our second phone line. Lou Renna at the Dutch Apple has it, a hundred yards away, but they're telling us we can't get it. Something is wrong. The City is helping us try to persuade Verizon to give us this most useful communications tool.



Roy and Rocky take care of the whaleboat.

With the whaleboat now in the water, Larry "Rocky" Rockwood and Roy Gunther have done all the tweaking they can do. Last Monday they invited a few lucky crewmembers for the seasonal test run. I wasn't invited. The boat ran fine and bobs up and down proudly under the gangway tethered to the fantail

and the seawall, in the water where she belongs. They check their baby dutifully every week, keeping her clean and dry. With the boat out of the davits, they are now working on touch up painting, and on restoring wooden blocks on the davit guys and doing a complete rebuilt of the big blocks for the boat falls. These were all getting pretty rotten.

Erik Collin has been plugging away at the deck painting. Working with **Stan Murawski**, they got the whole fantail painted and are working on the portside waterways. The only area that remains to be done is the starboard side main deck. Here, **Dick Smith, Chris Fedden, Ed Whitbeck and Earl Gillette** are chipping away. The shipboard electricians **Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callendar and Larry Williams** have been working on the sound powered phone circuits on the secondary conning station. They have been replacing a rusted out sound powered switch box with one of the CAVALLARO replacements **Ray Lammers** has restored.

The most pleasant surprise I had coming back from vacation was the condition of sickbay. They had the place looking beautiful, right down to the pretty blue medicine bottles in the rack that Stan bought off E-bay. The final addition was picking up the big autoclave that we had salvaged from the USS GAGE APA168 about ten years ago. This piece of equipment had been in storage in Virginia for several years, before trucking it to Albany in 1998. It was stored at the Port until they tore down the shed, then **Bob Cross** kept it at the City water tower until we were ready for it. **Paul Czesak** picked it up this month, and **Larry, Don Shattuck, Dave Floyd** and the big guy **Tom Moore** got it aboard and managed to get it down the ladder and into sickbay. That's the last big piece of gear to make the space complete. Thanks also to **Tom Moore, Ken Kallen, Stan and Erik** for their work in the thankless task of trying to keep the camels clean.



Rich Pavlovick working on his 20mm gun.

Between giving tours and promoting the project at fairs, Master Chief **Dave Floyd** and **Andy Desorbo** continue their work on 20mm mounts 21 and 22. Dave manned a SLATER display table



Engineer Larry Lachance looking for a pipe fitting.

along with several other members of the crew at Saratoga, and the Schenectady Air Show. **Bob Lawrence and Frank Beeler finished the forty-millimeter mounts, cleaning and painting the recoil**

springs and painting the water jackets. Now it's back to preventive maintenance on the three-inch gins. **Rich Pavlovic** pulled the entire heavy splinter shield off port side gun 26, cleaned it, painted it and remounted it. The gun is one of those works of art. And volunteers help us from afar. One of **Sam Saylor's** shipmates off the CONNELLY, **Walter Shaub** made us a complete set of covers for all the MK 14 gun sights and is now working on shell bags for all the 20mm guns from his home in Pennsylvania. And working from even further than Pennsylvania, **Greg Krawczyk** is making plans to ship a major load of equipment to us from Korea in September.



Al Vanderzee explains the K Guns.

Another distant helper has been Bill Camp. Bill has been working through the Navy Department and the National Archives to get us additional blueprints of CANNON class DE's. Working with his son **Barry Camp, Samuel Morison and Raymond Parzych**, Bill has gotten us all the microfilm, the original specification book for the machinery and the electric plant, and a pile of blueprints. The day he stopped off to deliver the prints, Bill also fixed the muffler on Benner's donated lawnmower (Benner wouldn't cover it under the warranty) and chipped some deck with Smitty and Whitbeck.

Through the heat, the tour guides continued to educate and entertain the visitors. Alan Guard, Chuck Lossi, Dan Goldstein, Bob Bull, Tom McLaughlin, Bill Schroun, Bob Whitney, Claire Oesterreich, Chris Soulia, Alan Fox, Argus Carriger, Sarah Morehouse, Jim Kuba, Dennis Morrissey, Jack Madden, Bill Goralski, Doug Schultz, Bob Dawson, George Erwin, Mike Millian, Pat Cancilla, Al Vanderzee, Frank Perrella, Joe Bergman and Eileen Parfrey, Eric and Julie Weidman, Kira Zaikowski, Jeremy Hoyt, Peter Schick, Chuck Marshall, Les and Annette Beauchaine and a bunch more who will remind me that I neglected them continue to man the gift shop and interface with the public. We're looking forward to the return of our favorite BM2 **Beth Spain** who had her two weeks active duty in San Diego, followed by vacation time. In her absence, **Nancy, Rosehn and Eric Weidman** have held the fort down and kept things running smoothly. We're ready to institute our youth group Scout camping program, so if you have a Boy or Girl Scout group in the area and are interested in camping aboard, give us a call.

Kudos also to Al Vanderzee for his continuing work organizing our speakers group. Many reunions have requested someone from our organization to talk about the SLATER at their banquet, and Al's team of **Jack Madden, Dick Walker, Gordon Lattey, Dennis Nagi and Tim Benner** are always available to fill this need. If you want a speaker for your group, or are interested in speaking on SLATER's behalf, give Al a call at 477-7463. We have many reunion groups coming this



The summer guides relaxing between tours on the veranda.

fall including USS Enright DE216/APD66, USS Pavlick APD70, USS Dortch DD 670, one of the heroes lost at Samar the USS Samuel B Roberts DE 413, USS Holton DE 703, USS Newman DE 305/APD 59, USS Thornhill DE195, USS Witter DE636, USS Mc Nulty DE 581, USS Raby DE 698, USS Haverfield DE/DER 393 , USS Poole DE151, USS Peterson DE152, USS Gandy DE764, USS Brough DE148, another can that survived Samar the USS Heermann DD 532, USS Chilton APA 38, USS Edgar G. Chase DE16, and USS Inch DE146. It should be an exciting fall and we look forward to welcoming all these shipmates aboard.

See you next month.



With the HARVEY alongside.