



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Ship's Superintendent

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

Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123
Vol. 8 no. 5 May 2005

When we left off last month, it was five am and Stan Murawski and I had just left a U-Haul trailer full of ship parts on the pier and headed home to sleep after a fourteen-hour drive from Virginia. The following Saturday we began to offload the two tons of engine parts that included blowers, pistons, pumps and heads. The job was made much easier by the fact that two new volunteers **Ed Dunn**, an ex-Seabee and his son **Steve Dunn** an ex- EN2/c who served on the frigates **UNDERWOOD** and **GALLERY** came in to help out. **Adam "The Bull" Van Horn**, and four other RPI midshipmen **Jeff Sangillo**, **Ryan Jarvis**, **Kevin Guldner** and **John Camp** also assisted us. **Gus Negus** had so much help that he had everything stowed and the trailer returned by noon. But he took advantage of his large crew and spent the afternoon restowing his spare parts between the four machinery spaces and, in general, getting better organized.



The Michigan Spring 2005 Crew musters with the SLATER volunteers.

The following week the Michigan crew began to arrive. It threatened rain all week and it was pretty cool, but they're a pretty hearty bunch, coming from Michigan and all, so that didn't slow them down. Sunday night the cooks served up a big turkey for the crew. The galley was manned by **Paul Monaco**, **Frank Warner**, Frank's son **Steve**, and son-in-law **Mark Winger**. They did a great job keeping the crew fed. Unfortunately the younger portion of the crew, Steve and Mark, had to head back home to work on Tuesday, so we pulled **Roy Brandon** off the paint crew to fill in for them. And yes, he cleaned all the paint off his hands before he started cooking. As usual the



b Gus's beloved emergency diesel in pieces.

competition among the Michigan Crew to be Tim's favorite was intense. Monday morning at 0800 the crew turned to and started to work. It seemed everyone wanted to be in the engine rooms this year to help Gus and **Karl Herchenroder** with the engine rebuild. One of the toughest jobs was getting the broken studs out of the front of the block of the emergency diesel so they could begin reassembly. **Ed Zajkowski, Tim Markham** and **Tom and Joe Schriener** started at 0500 on Monday morning, long before anyone else was awake. My take on the story is that they had the studs out before breakfast. They were drilling them out when they found something really hard inside one of the broken studs. It turned out to be an old broken drill bit. It turns out that someone had been there before, many years before Gus. Could be part of the reason the engine shook itself apart.

Dow Clark and Stan Pachuki tackled the cooling problem in the whaleboat. As you remember, if you've been following this saga, the boat ran hot all last season. They got into the system and we figured it would take them most of the week to figure it out. They had it solved by 0930. They pulled the water pump apart and found the rubber gear was missing a couple teeth. A search was begun for a vendor to buy a new one, but it seems Rocky had one at home. That problem was solved in short order.



The next generation of shipkeepers. The future of the SLATER in the sons of the Michigan crew.



Joe and Tom Schriener welding down the bitts.

Tim Markham busied himself down in B-3 with Emmett Landrum and installing the new instrument board on the number three ship's service generator. This required fabrication of mounting brackets to install the board that Gus had beautifully restored. But the end of the week it was ready for piping in the instrumentation. The whole crew got involved with **Russ Ferrer** and the air compressors. The 3,000-psi compressor in B-3 had an oil leak and ring problems. We've bypassed the third stage so we can use it to build starting air at 600 psi for the engines. They checked out that compressor and continued reassembly of the original starting air compressor in B-1. The biggest challenge was trying to locate all the original piping that has been scattered about the space for so many years.

Welder Laird Confer worked on finishing up the bitts that Doug Tanner had started on. He proved himself quite an expert and supported the crew all week doing odd welding jobs as they were needed. He had to leave on Wednesday, so **Tom and Joe Schriener** took over and welded the completed bitts down so we can now run an aft spring line without running it under the gangway. **Ron Zarem** brought his son **Mike**, and Mike is quite an accomplished insulator and painter. He worked with **Jim Appleton** in the laundry reinsulating the compartment, and then they primed and painted all the areas that they insulated. Now all that remains is painting the deck, a project **Stan Murawski** is taking on.



Bob Donlon priming on the flying bridge.



Ron Mazure, Dick Walker and Dave Masch on the flying bridge.

But everybody who knows me knows all I really care about is paint. And boy, we got some painting done. **Dick Walker** led his crew of **Ron Mazure, Bob Donlon and Dave Marsh** up to the flying bridge and they spent the whole

week scaling, priming and painting, and with **Gary Headworth's** spray painting expertise, by the end of week they had the whole area repainted with the exception of the deck, and they managed to get that primed. The 01 level area forward of the bridge around gun two was looking disgraceful, and **Ron Zarem** tackled that with **Tom Burroughs**



Ron Zarem and his crew priming the 01 Level forward.

and **Roy Brandon**. They spent the week scaling and painting, and sprayed out all the haze gray and rolled out the deck. By the end of the week the whole area looked like new. We also chopped up the old rotted balsa rafts that were stowed in the aft rack and carted the debris off to the dumpster. We then brought aboard the four new Styrofoam replicas and painted them out over the course of the week and mounted them on the racks in time for Friday's big event.

The most miserable project would have to be scaling under the twenty-millimeter gun tub 42 on the port side. This is the raised tub adjacent to the stack overhanging the main deck, so the job meant rigging scaffolding and working overhead to take all the paint down to bare metal. This rotten job went to **Scott McFadden and Dave and John O'Leary, Jr.** Their

Dad **John O'Leary** couldn't make it, but convinced

his sons that this was important enough to him that they needed to come and work on the SLATER. And work they did. They scaled the whole underside of the tub, corrosealed, primed and painted it with epoxy paint. Scott had to come and go because of school requirements, but Dave and John had to stick with the job the whole time. So for that reason, this year they share the Tim's favorite award with each other and their father who talked them into coming.



Regular Chris Fedden chipping under gun tub 25.



The O'Leary brothers priming under the gun tub 24.

There are a couple other people who deserve to be mentioned. Charlie Markham came with his son Tim. Charlie has a difficult time getting around, but we've always said that when you get too old to work off a bosun's chair, you're still welcome on the SLATER, because you've done your time and served your country. Charlie came and insisted on helping clean up, and spent the week sweeping up after the chippers and keeping the washroom and the berthing and messing spaces clean. **Ron Zarem** gave Charlie the task of keeping the sinks clean. The sinks were spotless all week. Ron accused Charlie of roping them all off and making the whole crew share one single sink in an effort to keep the washroom cleaner. Charlie came close to being my favorite because he was the only one in the crew who didn't give me any grief all week. Special mention goes to **Emmett Landrum** who seemed to be everywhere helping everybody and pitching in where ever needed, but since he was my favorite last year he was disqualified.



Ron Zarem, Cdr Hartley's daughters and Emmett Landrum.

As has become tradition, Monday the Michigan crew invited all the SLATER regular volunteers to eat lunch with them.

Tuesday was a special day for the crew. There were four members of the USS BROUGH crew aboard with the Michigan unit. One of the strange events in the history of the USS BROUGH is that on her shakedown cruise off Bermuda in 1943, her captain **Lieutenant Commander K. J. Hartley** was killed on the foc's'cle by a freak wave when he went forward to investigate storm damage. To pay homage to their first skipper, The BROUGH crewmembers invited their Captain's two surviving daughters **Sue Angel** from California and **Sabina Duke** from Nevada to lunch in the SLATER's wardroom on Tuesday, May 3rd. They were given a tour of the SLATER by Ron Zarem and interviewed by **Joanne McFadden** for an article for DESA news. Also, **Kumi Tucker** was

on hand to do a piece for Channel 13, the local NBC affiliate. It was a moving event and one that makes us so proud that we were able to preserve a DE. This is why we do it. That afternoon photographers **Richard and Catherine Andrian** arrived to take the annual group shot of the Michigan crew.

That same day documentary filmmaker John Bell came aboard to film some footage for a documentary he is producing on the old USS PERRY, DMS17. The PERRY was sunk off Anguar on September 13th 1944. She was an old fourpiper, and I'm abnormally sentimental about fourpipers, because there aren't any left. John located the wreck of the PERRY with the help of survivor **Larry Tunks**, who felt the official records were wrong. He and his team made a dangerous



USS PERRY after hitting a mine.

dive on the wreck and brought back amazing video of the PERRY. He had been in touch with one of our members, naval historian **CDR E. Andrew Wilde**, who suggested that if John were looking to recreate shipboard scenes, the SLATER might be a good place for him to do it. John came aboard with a load of camera gear and set up shop in the CPO quarters. That Tuesday night, John shared his video with the Michigan volunteers and gave an impromptu seminar that was a most interesting exchange for them. The following day we recreated several scenes for John, including the crew eating in the berthing space on wooden tables with crockery fourpiper style, using the "younger" members of the Michigan crew as actors.

That afternoon several members of the Rensselaer Polytech NROTC unit came aboard to play the role of the PERRY crew so the Michigan guys could get back to work. Gordon Lattey was prop master and decked them out in period uniforms, life jackets and helmets. We filmed them going to general quarters, manning a three inch gun, and a scene in the pilothouse as the PERRY hit the mine that did her in. Tour guide and midshipman David Athay played the role of OOD, as he ran his first command into a minefield and lost his ship. John called about a week later to say that the results were very good and thanked us for our efforts. Considering that we started putting the whole shoot together late Tuesday afternoon for filming on Wednesday, it just reinforces my belief that planning only complicates the issue.



The original SLATER shipmates muster on the fantail at their reunion.

That Friday was a big day for us. As the Michigan crew was preparing to depart, the **USS SLATER WWII Original Crewmembers** were arriving. This was the twentieth reunion of the SLATER crew. Since the ship has returned from Greece, they come back to her every other year. This year 24 original crewmembers were among the sixty persons who attended the reunion. Friday, they spent the morning roaming her passageways and reminiscing and sharing their stories with our present day crew. That evening they returned for what has become a very special event for us. Each reunion they host a special volunteer appreciation reception to thank our volunteers for the work they have done in preserving "Their" ship. It was a major event with almost 200 people in attendance, one of the biggest events we have held aboard. **Don Norris** and his wife **Vivian** had the responsibility of pulling together the arrangements for the tents, menu, caterer, and all the little problems that go with such an event. It was a wonderful evening watching the original SLATER crew relate their experiences to the present day SLATER crew and the stories of the ship were passed from generation to generation. Even **Mayor Jennings** was in attendance. **Eric Wiedman** made the night special for the SLATER Crew by presenting each member with a copy of his master's thesis on the history of the SLATER based on three years of research and spending time interviewing the crew. The following evening my wife, Eric and I were invited to attend the SLATER banquet to enjoy their company and bring the crew

up to date on our plans. We had a delightful evening sitting with former engineering officer **Cliff Woltz** and his daughter Cathy. We have since learned that Cliff suffered a fall upon his return to Houston, but is recovering nicely.

We have several of the crew on the binnacle list. Pat Cancilla was hospitalized for a series of tests, but we understand from his daughter Janice that nothing serious has shown up. And **Clark Farnsworth** is recovering from knee replacement surgery, but has already been back to the ship twice, the first time with a walker and the second time with a cane. He says he'll be back to doing bench work in a couple of weeks. That's what he first told us when he reported aboard seven years ago. He's done a whole lot more. And finally new volunteer **Steve Dunn** broke his foot in an unfortunate encounter with a front-end loader, so we wish him a speedy and full recovery.



Rocky working on the whaleboat flooring.

We want to thank all the members of DESA. We received an \$8,000 donation for them which is being used to help pay for safety gear including the new life rafts, life rings, fire extinguishers, and some much needed new mooring line. We also want to thank all of you General Electric contributors who helped us make the GE matching program. We received a check for \$1,990 to help us make our budgetary goal for the year. Finally, special thanks to **Edward Tempany** of the USS ELDRIDGE, who came by to make us the recipient of a life insurance policy he has carried for years. It's another way to help make us stable and get us to a much needed future dry-docking. Thanks to our accommodating tour guide crew and Rosehn's marketing efforts, our April attendance was up fifty percent over last year. And remember that we lost a week in Rensselaer before we could move the ship. School tours and overnight encampments are booking in and, despite the price of gas and the economy, things are looking pretty good for the

SLATER at this point. We have several more big events coming up. The USS HUSE crew will be coming aboard the third week of May to pick up where the Michigan guys left off, and they're pushing hard to try and show up with more guys than Michigan. Even if they don't, that's a great effort for one little DE. We have our annual spring Board of Directors meeting scheduled for June third. Then we have the Second Annual USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club dinner scheduled for June fourth, and a Navy Change of Command Ceremony and a Commemoration of the Battle of Midway scheduled the same Saturday. I'll be doing a SLATER presentation at the Capital Region Tin Can Sailors Bull Session on June 11th, and thanking them for their \$5,000 donation. Finally we end the month of June with the CAPDESA DE Day Ceremony on Saturday June 18th. Sometime in there Rocky wants to get the whaleboat lowered and hoisted aboard backwards so he can paint the starboard side without hanging out on a sky hook. He and Roy Gunther are fabricating a new oak rudder for the boat and then looking forward to a late June launching. There's a little bit going on. **See you next month.**

