Chairman’s Report
By Bartley J. Costello III

Albany is abuzz with the return of Slater, dressed in her dazzle camouflage new coat of paint. The return was accomplished with great flourish during the entire transit. As she sailed past the Statue of Liberty, helicopters from the major networks buzzed overhead. The media interviewed many groups and individuals, ranging from a teen who expressed the gratitude of his generation for the sacrifices of those who sailed before, to senior citizens who remembered the difficult days in the past.

These tributes included an exchange of gun salutes with West Point and rendering honors while passing Hyde Park, home of FDR, the President when Slater was launched and the father of a DE commanding officer. All acknowledging success of the plans of those who preceded us in this goal of restoring Slater, and realizing their most ambitious dreams. It is also in line with our mission of making real our heritage, and thereby creating patriotic pride in our country and in Naval traditions.

None of this complete transformation would be possible without the financial and emotional support of hundreds of individuals who contributed their funds and time to our enterprise. Our faith in you made the Board’s bold decision to move to Caddell’s shipyard easier, trusting you would support us fully. And did you ever!

After twelve weeks, from transit to the shipyard in Staten Island, into the dry dock, pierside for completion, and transit back home, we look with gratitude and pride at the result. Slater is now the sharpest ship afloat from any era. Her hull has been strengthened with new steel welded to resist the Hudson River winter and spring ice flows. Other major repairs were made and her look restored to the WWII dazzle camouflage, stunning to the eye! This was made possible by all hands working together and reaching sometimes difficult agreements. Our leader, Tim Rizzuto, brought his expertise and knowledge of the ship, coupled with his passion and untiring daily efforts. Over this long period, that included his personal relocation to the ship, his superb leadership made our time most productive.

The magnificent work was accomplished within budget, on time, and with many extras. Remarkably, it was accomplished on a handshake with this high-quality, longstanding, experienced shipyard. This is a significant tribute to Tim’s gracious, persistent manner. He always acts with integrity to secure the best result for Slater. I witnessed firsthand the respect the top management, as well as the shipyard workers, had for Tim. This resulted in their adopting Slater as their own, accomplishing their work with great pride.

We now move into the next phase of our lives and the life of Slater, knowing that our work will never be fully done, but confident we have reached a major milestone in preserving our heritage for generations to come.

Thank you to all that have made this possible. It is a privilege to serve as your Chair.
We arrived mid-Sunday afternoon on June 29. We were an excited Albany contingent of 15 joining the on-board group of 9, making a total crew of 24 to man Slater for her return to Albany. We moved smartly off the mini-bus and stowed our gear throughout the ship.

My first stop was to check in with Ed Zajkowski and review dinner plans. Ed and I made some quick decisions and resolved the meal issue. Then off to continue work activity of all sorts preparing the ship for the 0500 departure Monday morning, June 30.

In spite of it being Sunday, the New York harbor was bustling with activity of all sorts; from the largest freighter sailing the oceans to two jet skis!

Slater lay tied up at the pier and close by was our old friend for the past several months, Drydock 6, with its new vessel already in place.

Supper arrived, and we knocked off work to take a brief time out. The day was still hot so we ate on the starboard side in some welcome shade.

Back to work with nightfall quickly approaching. The crew began to stake out berthing space in the ship while some decided to sleep outside and enjoy the wonderful lighted sky of New York Harbor; truly a magnificent sight. I was joined on the fo’c’sle with four others and we had the pleasant opportunity of sleeping under the stars with a cool breeze and the music of passing-by ship engines lulling us to sleep. A most wonderful experience.

We didn’t sleep long, however, reveille began at 0430 and shortly Slater was a beehive of activity. The tugs arrived promptly and Caddell Shipyard staff was there to disconnect water and power and we were shortly underway.

Ed Z had the galley up and active and in no time was serving a tasty breakfast of pancakes and eggs.

Soon we were opposite the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island on port and the Staten Island Ferry terminals on starboard. Overhead were four helicopters from the many news organizations buzzing around us in a counter clockwise pattern.

The sun rising and World Trade Center resting in low hanging clouds and me on the bridge. I was close to heaven.

People were cheering Slater from every bridge and river crossing and park the entire trip home. Passing West Point, their military color guard acknowledged our presence with a cannon salute. We returned the salute with our own 3” gun among cheering, waving crowds on the shore. Finally arriving in Albany around 2400 I watched a docking maneuver which was a first for an old Army guy – the Pilot placed a tug on the stern between the pier and the ship so as to safely dock Slater and protect her new camouflage paint design.

A second night sleeping under the stars on the fo’c’sle with reveille at 0530 on Tuesday July 1.

Tugs arrived at 0600 and by 0700 Slater was safely at the Snow Dock and ready to receive gangways with the help of Doug Tanner and Flach Crane.

The Albany-based crew had been working the past three months on new pier mounts, gangway refurbishing and coordinating the crane availability to promptly make Slater’s return a complete reality. Dutch Apple Tours also helped by temporarily moving their vessel downstream to facilitate docking.

We did it; we, the entire nationwide team that finally made the drydock possible by contributing so much over the years.

What a lucky guy I am to be part of the team. The only sad note we had was the news that our own Gus Negus, Engineman 1st Class, passed away in Schenectady during the trip.

I had the experience of a lifetime, shared with 24 crew. Thank you Slater for giving us the opportunity to preserve your proud heritage.

As dawn breaks, USS SLATER eases up the Hudson, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The Destroyer Escort Historical Museum (DEHM) is an educational organization, chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, to increase the knowledge of the general public about naval history and heritage focusing on destroyer escorts and the men who sailed them through World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War years. The Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization funded by contributions from members, corporations, and private foundations. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. DEHM is not associated with, nor receives any regular financial support from, the national Destroyer Escort Sailors Association (DESA).
In the year 1942, enemy submarines sank 1161 of our merchant vessels.

Had Hitler’s U-boats been able to go on at that rate, Britain could not have survived, Russia could not have won, and the whole course of the Japanese war and our own fate would have been inscrutable. Both sides were aware how high the stakes were and the play was desperate. The United States threw a million and half men into the Battle of the Atlantic and dedicated thousands of scientists to the same single fight.

The Battle of the Atlantic was war under the sea unlike any that ever had been before – secret, nearly invisible, only faintly heard and then at second hand, through its echoes.

Blind men groped for each other with rays. They fumbled for each other’s throat with slide rules and graph paper. They turned dials, pushed buttons, read thermometers, prayed at frosted glass windows, humbled themselves imploringly before bakelite earphones while at a large console sort of thing a single note and its overtones – the immortal ping – were composed into a symphony of death by a young man who had to have a musician’s ear.

Then, at the end of hours, or days, or a week, there was most often no climax to the symphony, just a drifting off into silence. If there seemed to be a little oil on the surface, an apparatus known as an “oil thief” would be thrown over the side so that chemists might ascertain whether the U-boat was dead. Sometimes there was a playful, bubbling gurgle, a kind of watery death rattle, and then fatal vomittings from the bottom – upbobbing wreckage. The wreckage would be collected carefully, including broken-off pieces of men.

The undersea warfare seemed often much more like a patient, silent experiment than a battle. And indeed it was largely a battle of the laboratories – to counteract the enemy’s devices, to counteract his counteractions to your devices, to produce new devices.

An example: the acoustical torpedo. In its way, the acoustical torpedo was the weirdest weapon of the war. The rockets and the bombs were just big, blah, dumb, blind, wham-bambos. The acoustical torpedo had a fiendish little brain sitting up in its war head. It “homed” on noise. The German submarine skipper had only to launch it in the general direction of a ship and the whole wide field of sound of a ship’s propellers became an awful kind of vacuum cleaner sucking the torpedo out of the sea and into the ship. The torpedo seemed to snuffle through the water like a dog on the scent of a rabbit. Whatever turn the ship made, the torpedo could turn better; whatever speed, it could go faster. Once it got its nose caught in a little whimper on the edge of the field of sound it was sucked deeper and deeper into that field until at last it rammed unerringly for the ship’s panting heart.

The acoustical torpedo had the further devilish talent of being able to pick out the biggest target in a convoy. When a small ship was traveling within range of a larger one, the torpedo would circle hastily as if sniffing and then lunge for the larger and noisier ship.

American experts came up with 14 answers to the acoustical torpedo in a brief number of hours. I noted them down not because I understand them all, or would be allowed to explain them if I did, but simply to illustrate the ingenuity existing in our laboratories. Here they are, in the

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At the outset it was the little corvettes, shown here, and old WWI destroyers that held the line against the U-boat onslaught.

One of the fifty fourpipers the U.S. loaned England, the Town-class destroyer HMS Leamington G-19 (ex-USS Twiggs DD-127), showing the horrid conditions encountered in the North Atlantic.
Navy’s own nomenclature: 1) rotating hammer trough; 2) vibrating diaphragm – plunger and propeller type; 3) rattling chain pipe; 4) tuning fork; 5) vibrating pine cone; 6) tear drop hammer; 7) vibrating diaphragm with bellows; 8) double cone inside rattle pipe; 9) knocker with vanes inside pipe; 10) circular vibrator; 11) towing spar with propeller and rattler; 12) air bottle and pneumatic hammer; 13) 5’ x 25’ canvas sleeve; 14) tripping device.

The idea of all such devices is, as one admiral put it, “to make more noise where you ain’t than where you is.”

However, the laboratories could only provide part of the answer. Men in battle had to do the rest. A whole new tactic of defense had to be evolved and special skills developed to use the noisemakers. For example, there was always the danger that an acoustical torpedo circling in the trap of a noisemaker would hit another ship in the convoy by accident. For another example, experts could actually pass the torpedo from noisemaker to noisemaker until it cleared the target area.

On the German side there was the race against our radar and the elaborate sonar devices with which the ping was evolved into a symphony of destruction. The ping is an underwater sound wave; when it strikes a solid object it returns an echoing ping. The Germans spent a long time trying to develop a rubber for coating their submarines which would absorb the ping. They did get a rubber so sound-absorbent that men in a room lined with it could not understand each other’s words. Then they developed a glue to fasten the rubber onto their subs. German workmen got some of the glue on the soles of their shoes. They tore the soles from the uppers trying to free them from the U-boat hull. The rubber and the glue were wonderful—but still the ping kept echoing back to the last day of the war. The Pillenwerfer – an underwater gun to shoot chemical pills giving off a noise that bent and agitated the ping - was a more effective counter.

Our radar drove the Germans crazy. The first answer they tried was the “Flying Dutchman” – a cross between a helicopter and a kite. It was attached to a drum in the conning tower. The U-boat made speed into the wind to send the kite aloft. Once air-borne, an engine-driven horizontal propeller kept it up. The pilot had a walkietalkie. There were two things wrong. The first was that the pilot was so busy keeping his Flying Dutchman aloft he did not have much time to keep a lookout. The second was that there was no way to retrieve him hastily in the event he spotted an airplane and the sub had to crash-dive. Generally he was just cut loose to fall helpless into the sea. This made him a morale problem.

The Germans then came up with radar decoy balloons. These were hydrogen-filled and had tinfoil strips on them to reflect radar waves. They were attached by about 30 yards of catgut to a sea anchor. An expert radarman seeing on his screen a pip that traveled with the wind and at about the wind’s speed could guess it was a decoy. But nobody could be sure. It might be a sub crafty enough to travel with the wind and with the wind’s speed. So these balloons had nuisance value right up to the end.

The Germans’ radar could pick us up no sooner than ours would spot the sub, and then things became like...
a brawl in a western movie where both sides draw simultaneously. So the Germans evolved a “search receiver” with which they could detect the location of a radar set ten to 20 miles farther away than the radar could spot them.

Then we sent to war a new kind of radar – the S-radar. A feeling almost of panic spread through the Nazi fleet. Their search receivers couldn’t detect the S-radar. The Germans had tried to develop a detector using infrared rays and they thought that where they had failed we had succeeded. For six months they barked up this wrong tree, developing a paint to coat their submarines that would make them invisible to infrared rays. Meanwhile Nazi skippers were afraid to use their search receivers or radar, and ship sinkings fell steeply. Eventually the Gestapo in a spy raid in Rotterdam found a set which broke the secret.

“The Germans would do something and we’d do something back,” said Admiral “Killy” Kilpatrick, Chief of Staff, Atlantic Fleet. “Then we’d do something and they’d do something back. The whole war went that way with both sides like boxers trying to think up and work out the answers with a face full of leather.”

Throughout the critical four years Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll commanded in the North Atlantic. Admiral Jonas Ingram succeeded him. Admiral Ingram reflected, “When I look back on the whole thing I’d say that what we won on was the ability of American boys to learn faster than Germans how to become expert in using the stuff scientists put out.”

The Germans made three revolutionary developments in undersea warfare, each one of which was designed in turn to seal victory.

The first of these was the Wolf Pack. Submarines on patrol made rendezvous until they outnumbered the escort vessels of a convoy. Then they lunged.

The airplane was our answer. Heavy land-based, radar-equipped bombing planes drove the Wolf Packs out from both shores of the Atlantic, where the pickings were thickest. But then the packs clustered in mid-Atlantic, out of land-plane range, and made their kills.

The escort carrier was our answer to that. “We got the Bogue and rushed it out on an experimental basis,” Admiral Kilpatrick said. “Baby carriers didn’t have the speed to keep up with a fast convoy. They made their 16 and 18 knots all right, but they had to stop and turn into the wind to launch and take on their planes. That was time lost they couldn’t make up. What we did was send the Bogue up to wait at the switch and pick up a convoy as it drew out of range of the land-based air. A complicated timetable—well, I guess it was the most complicated and finely drawn timetable ever made – took care of the speed problem eventually. There should have been escort ships to protect the carrier, but we didn’t have the escort ships and we couldn’t wait for them. The war was slipping out of our grasp. So we just had to cross our fingers, and you can imagine how the Fleet felt when the Bogue sailed on its first mission. And how the men on the Bogue felt.”

The first baby carriers scored hysterical successes. They took the Nazis by complete surprise and found submarine crews feeling so secure that they were using the middle Atlantic as their private beach for sun bathing and swimming. A crash-diving submarine is helpless before an airplane in what the Navy calls “those sacred seconds” before a relatively safe undersea level is reached.

The initial Nazi reaction to the baby carrier was an incomprehensible error so profound that, our own men say, it cost the Germans the battle. In panic and with Teutonic
stubbornness, they decided the sub should fight it out with the airplane!

Admiral Doenitz called in all the submarines and bristled them with AA guns. Yet in six months in 1943, 150 Nazi subs were sunk and the back of the Wolf Pack was broken. And all the time the Nazis had the answer to their problem sitting “fat, dumb, and happy,” to use the Navy phrase, right in front of their nose – the escort carrier itself lying helpless for at least three hours out of every 24 as it launched and took on its planes. They never made a successful attack on a baby carrier until the closing months of the war.

The great victory of the little flat-tops was not won “just like that.” Three things went into it: thought, skill, and willingness to die to make a kill.

A long campaign of trial and error was endured before the ideal attack by an airplane against a sub was developed. The most minute instructions were drawn up. An enormous variety of skills was required of pilots and their crews, from radar and sound-gear reading to the astute reading of the enemy’s intentions in the last moments of the attack. The Navy insisted fanatically on the development of these skills.

Example: On April 15, 1943, an airplane of Patrol
Squadron 83 at the end of its tenth hour on patrol stumbled over a German submarine. When the plane was still one half mile off, the sub made a crash-dive. There was no time for correct tactics. The pilot just threw himself on the sub. He made a 60-degree dive from 4000 feet. He disabled the sub, forcing it to the surface and kept harassing it in the face of its ugly anti-aircraft fire until a second plane from the squadron could come up and destroy it. Then, with gas running low, he photographed the enemy survivors swimming in the sea and flew more than 300 weary miles back to his base. There were no medals waiting for him there. Instead, there was a chilly critique of his unorthodox methods which concluded: “While there is no denying the attack was effective, the end attained should not be permitted to obscure the means employed.”

In other words, do it our way, or don’t do it at all. And this policy, says Admiral Ingram, paid off. It paid off in reducing our casualties and in increasing our kills.

Under the heading of bald, brass-bowed courage: During the night of August 5, 1943, Lieut. J. M. Erskine, skippering a Mariner plane on patrol out of Trinidad naval base, spotted a sub and made an attack with the aid of flares, reporting damage unknown. Such attacks were rarely successful. If the flare was bright enough to light up the target, it generally was bright enough to glare up the pilot’s eyes and throw off his judgment of distance.

Erskine spent the rest of the night making what is known as a “gambit” – keeping out of periscope view so that the sub might be tempted to surface, yet remaining in radar contact so that he could pounce if it did.

But that was a wise old, tough old German down below there and he knew about gambits and stayed underwater. At dawn Erskine, running low on gas, was replaced by Lieut. A. R. Matuski. For seven and one half tedious hours, Matuski plied back and forth and around a square of ocean, figuring how he would maneuver if he were a sub skipper who had been down so and so many hours in such and such currents and this and that kind of sea, and making his gambit accordingly.

Matuski was a boy who knew his business. At 1321 hours (1:21 p.m.) Trinidad naval base got a sub contact report from him, giving longitude and latitude, adding, “I am going in to attack.”

“1330,” he radioed, “sub damaged, bow out of water, making only about two knots.”

“1335: sub bow sank.”

“1337: no casualties to plane or personnel.”

“1348: Damaged. Damaged. I am on fire.”

Silence.

Matuski and his crew died. Apparently in their eagerness to keep the wounded sub under observation they had gone too close.

Continued next issue.
We opened Season 17 on Friday the 4th of July, 2014.

Collectively, we did it! Since 2010 we raised $1.3 million, laid out a work plan and got USS SLATER towed to the shipyard. We blasted and painted the hull, surveyed her, reinforced the waterline and other suspect areas, and did about 500 other odd jobs around the ship. Then we painted her up in camouflage and brought her home looking unique and better than ever.

A great deal of credit has to go to President Steve Kalil and VP of Engineering Joe Eckhardt of Caddell Drydock and Repair Company for operating a shipyard with the highest level of integrity. There was no contract, only a priced-out work list, payment schedule and a handshake. And, there were no surprises. The price quoted was the price we paid. I can’t imagine a better shipyard experience. It turns out that repair work with no contract is a common practice at Caddell’s, a testament to their integrity.

Yard management worked closely with us arranging for us to live aboard for the entire time. It was as good as it could be in the shipyard.

When we last left you, our loyal readers, we were safely on the blocks and the 4,000 psi pressure wash had punched three holes in the hull. Things weren’t looking good for old SLATER. The following day, in conference with estimator Joe Eckhardt and our surveyor Rick Meyerrose, my original spec for an SPCC commercial blast went out the window. They both agreed that a “very light” sweep blast was in order or we wouldn’t have any hull left. A brush blast as they called it. The blasters went to work on the hull below the waterline. They had discovered about ten small holes needing to be repaired, but after blasting everyone agreed that the hull was in much better shape than had first appeared. While the blasting began, the tank cleaning crew began to clean and gas-free all our fuel oil tanks. We had originally planned to clean these tanks in Albany, but Mother Nature intervened and froze our fresh water line. So, the work fell back on the shipyard. This work normally would have been done pierside with a short run from the ship to the vacuum truck on shore however, in drydock, the hose runs are much longer and the process goes more slowly. The forward tanks were cleaned in two days without difficulty.

The tank cleaning crew started on the aft tanks under C-201L when they decided that they needed to shift to the engine rooms because one of the holes they blew in the initial 4,000 psi washdown was the day tank under the forward ship’s service generator. That’s when the cost began to escalate. When we got the yard estimate for tank cleaning we didn’t figure in the four main engine sumps and the two generator day tanks. All of these are skin tanks, and to avoid the possibility of punching a hole into them and dropping any oil, they had to be cleaned. Since lube oil is much heavier than diesel fuel, the lube oil tanks are harder to clean. Thus, it took three additional weeks of sump cleaning in the machinery spaces before the tank cleaners could

An event almost 20 years in the making, USS SLATER is floated off Drydock No. 6 at Caddell Drydock and Repair Company on Wednesday 18 June 2014.
return to the after fuel tanks and voids. The addition of the six engine sumps was a time-consuming, and thus an expensive, add-on.

I have to express the deepest admiration for the tank cleaning crew. And, I’ve learned that you do not want to be the smallest man in the crew. When you’ve seen a man crawl into a 24” manhole and then hear the sound of the scraper cleaning the inside of the tank, and see the buckets of black oily muck that come out, you have to ask, “Where do we find such men to do this work day after day?” The same goes for Tony Mathews, our marine chemist, who entered each tank and void to certify it safe for hot work.

The sandblasting of the hull and freeboard continued in April. There is only one word that can describe this experience at that point. Gritty. With four blasting nozzles going full-bore seven hours a day, despite our best efforts to keep everything buttoned up, there was a fine dust coating on every horizontal surface. The yard set me up with an office about 500 yards from the ship, right near the gate to the east yard. The office had Internet, the ship didn’t. From the office was about a 400-yard walk to the drydock gangway, across the gangway to a vertical ladder. If the tide was high you stepped right on to Drydock Number 6. If the tide was low you would climb down the ladder, take a few more steps down and you’re on the drydock floor. You hang a right along the back end of the drydock, right again to go past the rudders and screws, and climb a scaffold stairway up 26’ to the maindeck, just forward of the starboard “K” guns. I made the climb more times than I can count. When the blasting was finished, a coat of primer was applied and the yard crew hung a series of angle iron brackets from the hull to support the plank staging from which the doublers would be hung. The steel plate began to arrive from the roll shop and the process of reinforcing the waterline began.

I really wasn’t prepared for the mess that sandblasting makes inside the ship, despite our best effort to seal up the doors and ventilators. We spent the first week throwing sheets over furniture, tightening porthole dogs and taping up around doors. Dirt was everywhere. Take a couple barefoot steps down any passageway and your feet would be black. Barry Witte warned me but I didn’t get it. I should have sensed something a few weeks earlier before the move when Jerry Jones began wrapping all his precious radios in plastic. He’d been through a yard overhaul. I never had. It’s a painful process.

For our part, we planned to keep four volunteers aboard every week. Our goal was to do a cosmetic cleaning and repainting of all the storerooms and magazines that were now empty of junk due to the requirement that the interior of the ship be available for fire watch. The first week Gary Sheedy and Ed Zajkowski stayed aboard and started work. The second week it was Guy Huse, Ron Prest, Gary and Ed again. The third week it was Ed, Gary Dieckman and Wayne White. The fourth week Gary left but George Amandola and Bill Wetterau joined the crew with Ed and Wayne. They’ve been prepping and painting the storerooms forward before we fill them back up again with all our “junk.”

Then we had a major shift in priorities. Eddie Z made a significant discovery in that one of the design characteristics of

Hector Sosa supervises as his crew lifts another steel plate into position on the port side.

We will always have the utmost respect for the tank cleaning crews of Union Maintenance. You don’t ever want to be the smallest man in the crew.
WWII DEs is that the bilges in the aft magazines are decked over and the false deck is welded in place. There is no way to maintain the bilge below. Our guys started cutting into it, and the condition of the bilge below was a disaster. A couple frames were rotted right out. We knew we had to address this in the yard, because it would be most unfortunate to put an air chisel through the bottom back in Albany. So we instructed the yard to cut away the false decking, clean and preserve the bilge, and install a removable lightweight fiberglass decking. Another expensive add-on, but totally necessary for the long-term preservation of SLATER.

By this time, the add-on list of things that needed to be done in the shipyard looked like this: Repair hull as needed, grind out 25 sea chests quarter-inch blanks and replace them all with 3/8” ABS steel blanks. Clean up and re-pack outside stern tube shafts. Install valves on shaft alley packing glands. Weld on draft marks over doubler, open one sea chest for the aft ship’s service generator and place steaming out connection. Repair scuppers as needed, cut out the false deck and clean and preserve 10 voids under aft magazines. When the new valves were fitted on the shaft glands, we hooked up a hose to a large shop vac and blew air through each shaft tunnel for several days to try and dry them out, and thus stabilize them without pulling the shafts.

There were several more items that were more convenient to do in shipyard. These included scarfing off the broken accommodation ladder support, opening up port for sand blast cabinet exhaust, finish welding on port 40mm shell cage since it’s right by our gangway, installing a missing section of mast ladder, hydroblasting the waterways and snapping tie down bar, spot blasting the main deck aft, moving the practice loading machine to original position, repairing some rot in stack cap, repairing the wasted steel under the searchlight platforms, fabricating a gaff on stack for the battle ensign, and repairing the dent in the port bulwark, including removal of the Greek davit pedestals. There were also three watertight doors that needed repair and at that point it looked like the final tally would be $1.5 million, so dipping into the endowment seemed inevitable.

The yard was great to work with and the people most accommodating and friendly. Our on-site supervisor Hector Sosa’s answer to almost everything was, “No problem.” Marine surveyor Rick Meyerrose, who did the initial survey of SLATER to tow her to Albany in 1997, made it a point to stop by whenever he was nearby doing another survey, to offer his guidance and set up the hull gauging so we would know how much metal was left in those pits. And special mention to “my old friend” Ed Zajkowski who took on the duties of chief commissary steward, ship’s cook and even did my laundry for me. Ed and his blueprints signed on for the duration. He called it, “My last big adventure.” We both kept reminding each other that this wasn’t a weekend sprint. This one was a marathon.

Shipyard Vice President in Charge of Engineering Joe Eckhardt deserves special mention for his patience in dealing with us and our 0600 drop-in meetings as our primary administrative contact. Each day I got an estimate of how much we had spent. I first dealt with Joe when he was working for GMD at the old Brooklyn Navy Yard back in 2000. I sent RFPs to all the regional shipyards because I thought the big grant was just around the corner. Joe was the only one who responded to my initial RFP. Little did I know that fourteen years later I would be doing the project with private money that we raised ourselves.

Joe was an Army vet who did occupation duty in Korea. In 1960 he was returning home aboard the troopship GENERAL WILLIAM MITCHELL AP-114. As the MITCHELL headed into the channel, she put her bow into the passenger liner SUSQUEHANNA. The MITCHELL was drydocked for repairs and a new bow in Yokosuka, and Joe was held in limbo watching the repairs. As the new bow was fabricated and set into position, Joe decided that this shipyard stuff was pretty interesting. Upon his return to the States he got a job at the Bethlehem Steel shipyard in Hoboken and worked his way up becoming a member of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (SNAME). His experience and advice has been a great asset to us during this overhaul, as has been the support of our Marine Surveyor on the project, Rick Meyerrose. Rick went over the hull inch by inch with audio gauger Kevin Desousa of ABC Testing. They pinpointed all the thin spots and Rick is writing up a report detailing the recommended repairs. In essence, the hull is in much better shape then we thought after we blew those three holes through with the initial pressure wash. Rick identified 15 areas of thin plating for deteriorated welds that needed to be addressed below the waterline doubler.

Meanwhile, all had not stopped in Albany. Doug Tanner and his shipfitters made repairs to the gangways and the crew made repairs to the shoreside structure, aka trailer. A lot of carpentry skills not normally needed aboard SLATER went into the effort. The Herchenroder twins and Don Miller did most of the carpentry. On April 7th BJ Costello and Heather Maron gave a presentation to the men’s group at the Terrace at Beverwyck in Slingerlands. They were warmly welcomed by Paul Woods, who not only coordinated the talk but, more importantly, had facilitated our provisional charter in the early days of the Museum. Heather has been enjoying the opportunities to schedule these presentations, which often bring the ship to audiences that might not otherwise know about it or be able to visit. She is also taking advantage of the ship’s absence to complete much needed organizational projects related to our archival material and collections.

BJ Costello and Rosehn were delighted to visit the Albany Times Union headquarters to accept the “Capital Region Gives” prizes. TU Publisher George Hearst and Community Relations Coordinator Charmaine Ushkow presented the $5,000 check. In addition, the Museum received credit for $5,000 worth of advertising in the Times Union. Thanks to everyone who voted for SLATER in the contest! And Heathfer, Rosehn, Erik, and BJ Costello were proudly in attendance at the 2014 Albany County Executive’s Volunteer Awards; a big congratulations to our Richard “Dick” Walker, who was honored as an award recipient! I had nominated Dick for the 2014 Albany County Executive’s Volunteer Awards but, sadly, was down in Staten Island when the award was presented.
main deck to the waterline in ten spots down the length of the
ship. And, Barry Witte asked our loyal RPI Midshipmen to ride
the paint float around the ship, marking the waterline with alter-
nating orange and white spray paint marks. We had three photos
showing the waterline at the bow and stern draft marks and the
sonar dome. These measures became critical in making sure the
plate line ran straight and true. We marked the waterline after
hours. The yard had Rogers Surveying verify our measurement
so the project could progress without delay. In the end, the plate
line looks perfect, and the weight of the additional plate and
anodes must have been equaled by the amount of waste oil and
water that we pumped off the ship during tank cleaning.

Replacement of the old sea chest blanks continued as the
pitted quarter-inch blanks were replaced by three-eighths
plate and seal-welded by ABS certified welders. The volun-
teers continued cutting and stamping out neoprene gaskets for all
of our fuel tank manhole covers. Thursday of that week Board
Chairman BJ Costello organized a VIP tour consisting of him-
self, NY State Senator Diane Savino, and Assemblyman
Michael Cusick, representatives for this area of Staten Island.
The day was gray and rainy. Shipyard President Steve Kalil

Thankfully, BJ took my place in introducing Dick, outlining the
invaluable contributions he has made to the ship. Heather,
Rosehn, and Erik went out of their way to attend the ceremony
as well, to show their appreciation for someone who is always
looking for ways to help. To illustrate how much he does for us,
we had a hard time finding a picture of him to provide to the cer-
emony coordinators, because he is always on the go working
behind the scenes.

May began week five of our adventure and found Gary
Sheedy, Walt Forney, Wayne White, and Ed Zajkowski
aboard. On May 1 we celebrate 70 years since USS SLATER
was commissioned. The anniversary went uncelebrated as we
were in a drydock far from home. At this point we made the deci-
sion to try and have the yard rebuild three of our worst watertight
doors, and replace the glass in eleven of our most battered port-
holes. A crane lifted the doors ashore and the crew hand-carried
the portholes down the ladder. The shipyard machinists finished
repacking the propeller shafts in the shaft alleys, so that item was
checked off the list. The most critical evolution of the week was
re-establishing the waterline. This was critical to the placement
of the top of the doublers as the line moved aft. In Albany, as an
afterthought, I had Erik Collin measure the distance from the

Work progresses as the “ice belt” marches aft along the starboard side.
accompanied the group as we made the quarter-mile trek to the east yard. I assumed that Diane would take one look at the ship on the blocks and say, “That’s nice, can we go home now?” But, she surprised me and turned out to be a real trooper, asking to come aboard and take the full tour of SLATER at her worst. She even climbed into a bunk and asked great questions throughout the tour. All I can say is that as spunky and adventurous as she is, I’d like the opportunity to vote for her.

That week we also got the word that SLATER’s wartime engineering officer and Trustee Emeritus Cliff Woltz passed away in Houston. A major force in all the SLATER reunions over the years, and a wealth of knowledge about life aboard SLATER during the war, Cliff was a presence who will be forever missed by our organization. The ensign flew at half-staff for a week in drydock in his honor. At the end of the week Barry Witte came down with two young helpers, Eric Altman, a mechanical engineering student at Clarkson, and Midshipman Tulsa Scott, a nuke engineering sophomore at RPI. They cleaned the glass on the port and starboard sidelights and restored the electrical portions that have had no attention for a decade or more. On a tip from Ed, they traced some piping and found out that the sea chest that we opened up to cool the ship’s service generator will also feed a firepump, so there is no need to open up any others. This was confirmed in the CANNON Class piping book and a system tracing in the B3 bilge. Barry, Tulsa, Eric and Gary Sheedy traced out the power lines for the 20mm gunsight compressors on the 01 and 02 levels forward. This has been a mystery fuse box in the pilothouse for as long as we have had SLATER. They looked into restoring the light fixtures in the shaft alleys, which are severely corroded, but since the yard will not let us do any hotwork ourselves this will be an Albany project.

They left me with a Greek sea chest blank in the CO’s cabin that was eaten clear through. There was evidence of water in many other sea chests, proof that the concern about freezing damage to these sea chests in Albany may not be warranted, since it is now obvious that many of the sea chests were subjected to very cold temps before we brought heat on to the ship in early 2000s. I kept the plate as a souvenir to show at the HNSA meeting. The bad news is that it proves that much of the pitting occurring in SLATER has happened since she came to the U.S. More concern about cathodic protection is a must.

Week 6 arrived with Ed Zajkowski, Gary Sheedy, Wayne White, Steve Kalil, Bill Wetterau, Ron Prest, and George Amandola aboard. Ed made his bi-monthly trip home to do his laundry so George covered for Ed in the galley and did quite well for himself. Bill Wetterau sanded and repainted raft number 1 and then painted out the ship’s store. When he finished painting, he and Sheedy installed the new door on the ship’s store. Sheedy then busied himself polishing urinals until bronchitis pretty well knocked him out of the picture. New volunteer Steve Kalil scaled and primed the starboard 40mm shell cage, an area that hasn’t seen a paintbrush or needle scaler in 16 years. Though coming down with bronchitis himself, Ron Prest worked oppo-
the continuing march of the platework, and the yard completed restoration of the port spray shield following removal of the Greek davit supports. Bill Haggart completed rigging raft number 1, lashing in the gratings and the canvas bands around the raft. Heather went home midweek and took bronchitis patient Gary Sheedy with her. Ed and Wayne fabricated several main deck tank vent clamps used for holding fuel oil tank vent pipes. The yard removed both rudder drain plugs and the rudders were full of water. Leaks in rudders will be patched. They also took the galley vent apart for scaling and painting and put that back together.

Week 8 started with Memorial Day Monday, which the yard took off. There were only two volunteers aboard that week, Ed Zajkowski and Bill Haggart. Ed and Bill gave the ship a thorough topside washdown Sunday. Ed went home on Tuesday and as soon as he left, the yard set up to brush blast all the completed welds forward of frame 70. That completely covered the deck with sand grit again. The final plates were fitted and welded in on Wednesday and after that all the welders turned to production welding to complete the job. As each section was completed the staging was rapidly disassembled so blasting and painting could continue as soon as possible. Thursday was the annual Caddell company picnic, which we were invited to and thoroughly enjoyed. The anchor chain received its first coat of paint prior to being turned over and then another coat was applied. The chain locker and the depth charge storage magazine were power washed, dried and primed. All the aft compartments were now ready for painting. Ballast tank C-10W was also ready for its first coat of primer. That Saturday, May 31, the last welds were completed on the doublers and all the staging was disassembled to make way for sandblasting of the new welds and hull painting.

Our onsite supervisor Hector Sosa kept pushing his crew and took his responsibility very seriously. He was always there to rig a plate or to pull on a chain fall when an extra hand was needed. Laborer Roy was in more places at once than any person has a right to be. One of the most cheerful faces on the dock, the guy moves more weight for his size than should be possible. His brother-in-law, Harry, was the primary crane operator. He shared Roy’s good humor and is most often found perched in the cab of “Big Betty,” the huge floating crane that is married to Drydock 6. We complained about our climb up to SLATER’s main deck, but none of us envied Harry’s climb to the top of “Big Betty.”

The welders, Vincent, Luis, Fred, Paco, Julio, Danny, Rodriguez, and Lopus did a great job lifting, fitting and welding plate. The first welders I got to know were Vincent and Luis, as they were working the section closest to the gangway. I knew Vincent as “The Hammer” because of the hours he spent wielding a big hammer as he and Luis formed the new plate to the contours of SLATER’s battered original shell. Coming down on the port side were Frederico and Rodriguez. There were two Marcos. The younger Paco the welder was one of the most professional looking and focused people in the dock. There was something special about the way he carried himself and the pride he took in his appearance. He rarely joined with the antics of the rest of the crew. He just welded. The elder Paco was a laborer and spent hours grinding and cleaning up the welds. We got to know Julio and Rafael really well as Hector assigned them most of the jobs on the main deck and above. Ed developed a special relationship with Julio. Julio didn’t understand much English and Ed doesn’t speak a word of Spanish, yet Ed would point, Julio would nod, and do the job just the way Ed wanted. I also went into the experience figuring that if I could learn the names of the workers, I could also learn a new word in Spanish every day. That lasted about a week, and I learned about four words. I communicate through Hector and everything works well, though I’m still trying to figure out what “Loco Gringo” means.

The sub-contractor Union Maintenance’s workers had their own personalities. They were the ones responsible for the cleaning, surface preparation and painting. I truly enjoyed working with Matt Kelley, and his good nature. As I’ve said before, I have the utmost respect for the guys who crawl into the tanks and voids and do the dirty work no one else wants to do. After the tank cleaning, Manny and Chris moved aboard to do the spray painting. Manny operates the sand blasting tanks and spray equipment and mixes all the paint. Chris and Oscar were the ones who went into the tanks with an air supplied system and had my utmost respect. I spray painted compartments in the days of alkyls and, as miserable as it was back then, I wouldn’t want to be doing it with epoxy.

It was the Tuesday after Memorial Day that a crew of three from the subcontractor Union Maintenance reported aboard to continue tank and bilge scaling. The crew leader was one of my favorite people, who I only know as “Big John from Trinidad.” I know this because I asked if his accent was Jamaican and was promptly corrected. He had two teenagers with him and I was skeptical. I climbed down a tank they were working in. Much to my surprise, John was in the tank scaling and I had no idea how he fit down the manhole, except perhaps, with a liberal application of Vaseline or some other grease. The teens seemed to be holding their own which was surprising, but I took it in stride. There are exceptions to every stereotype. It wasn’t until late in the day that I learned that these two kids were identical twins Jared and Liam Kelly, the sons of Paul Kelly, one of Union Maintenance owners. They were both studying management in college. Neither sounded too excited about making this a career, but this was their summer job for a couple years and they handled it like pros. I realized I truly had the “A-Team” cleaning our bilges.

Work progressed in Albany as Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Super Dave were reinforcing the supports for the aft gangway. Erik Collin repainted the seawall, mooring bollards and the gangway, and was engaged in recording and thanking the hundreds of you who have responded to our final Hull Fund solicitation. I didn’t envy Rosehn and Heather who spent a good part of their days explaining to irate visitors why SLATER was not at the dock and open for tours. Or, explaining to the guy who said, “Why can’t you just fix it in Albany?”
On May 5th, Heather Maron visited Beacon Pointe Memory Care in Clifton Park to give a presentation to the residents. In attendance were veterans, as well as a former school teacher who had visited the ship on a field trip with her students several years ago. She enjoys the opportunity to encourage dialogue about WWII frontlines as well as homefront experiences. With the ship away, Heather also has been utilizing the time to tackle reworking aspects of the overnight program. Her goal is to incorporate more hands-on activities, and is always looking for suggestions and volunteers to help. If you’ve had a positive experience with an overnight event, either aboard SLATER or another historic ship, feel free to contact Heather to see how we can improve.

In addition to fabricating the draft numbers, one student at Colonie Central High School made another significant contribution. Welding student Nicole put the finishing touches on a bike rack just for us. Last fall tech teacher Chris Hanley asked if there were any special projects that his students could work on in their spare time. We casually mentioned that there has been the need here for an appropriate compact bike rack. Nicole procured a worn-out rack from the Middle School and proceeded to downsize and refurbish it to meet our specifications. Then, going the extra mile, she added her own version of SLATER’s silhouette, complete with a wave. Thanks, Nicole! Now our visitors arriving by bicycle will have a secure place to park.

The month of June began with our ninth week in the drydock. We had Ed Zajkowski, Wayne White, Ron Prest, Thomas Scian, Bill Haggart, and Gary Dieckman aboard that week. By this point the steel work was pretty much complete and the ship was turned over to the subcontractor Union Maintenance for final sandblasting and painting. The yard crew began cleaning out the drydock and working on the rudders. Union Maintenance blasted and primed all the new weld work on the doublers and they painted out the chain locker and primed ballast water tank C-10W. The yard also removed the capstan for blasting and painting. The volunteers worked on using Epoxy on the snaking tie down bar to keep rainwater from streaking the hull, as a stopgap, until permanent repairs can be made. That week it rained all Thursday morning so the yard worked under the hull out of the rain bolting on the magnesium anodes and they painted out the white in the depth charge magazine. The volunteers cleaned in compartment C-201L, and then trashed the place as we worked to fix a split drain line we discovered. That same afternoon the volunteers raised both anchors and chain with our windlass.

That weekend the only SLATER guy getting a paycheck, me, and Eddie Z both took the weekend off. Brandon Easley and Joe Delfoe joined the crew for the weekend. Boats Haggart had a new person to tell his sea stories to in Joe Delfoe, a DE Vet off MAURICE J MANUEL. Ron Prest and Wayne White got the 2 seats primed/bolted in on the flying bridge. We tightened the chain stoppers to snug up the anchors. Joe and Brandon did chip-
ping along the port side main deck. They spotted the three restored watertight doors and 2 scuttles on the 01 level. **Harry Rodriguez**, the crane operator lifted them aboard without us knowing it.

They got the 3 doors re-hung on the galley, hedgehog locker and gear locker. Boats got the absentee pennant flying and made breakfast and lunch. Down below the yard crew got the entire boot top roughed in and started the cutting in on the bottom edge on port side. They got up to the start of the port roll chock with the cutting in. They came back Sunday to finish the rest of the cutting in on the bottom side of the boot top.

On week ten Steve Klauck and Bill Wetterau stepped in for Ron Prest and Wayne White. The big event of the week was fleeting SLATER on Wednesday the 9th. Fleeting is the process of sinking the drydock so the ship floats, moving it forward four feet and setting it back down on the blocks so the areas of the ship that were obstructed by the blocks can now be sandblasted and painted. We were scheduled for 0800 but intense rain all morning set it back to noon. Our water and sewage were secured for most of the day. The ship was floated for leak checks by us. We checked every space, tank and void three times and Thomas Scian checked all the engine sump tanks. No problems except issues with the stern tubes and the problem of a pinhole leak in a water tank. By 1500 we were back on the blocks ready for work the next day. Ed commented that fleeting a ship is as boring as watching grass grow.

The leaky stern tubes were a result of an attempt to seal them with Splash Zone Epoxy. Following the fleeting, the decision was made to seal the stern tubes with a steel enclosure welded to the hull and shafts. The yard crew came with new devices to seal the stern tubes from letting water enter. These were preformed 3/8” metal pieces that, once welded, will be a solid barrier to protect the ship. A solid weld around the outside of the tube, a solid weld around the shaft and all pieces welded. We placed a pipe nipple on the flat piece for testing. The entire tube was pressure tested to 1.5 pounds. Not to worry though. The whole process is reversible if we ever find a benefactor with deep enough pockets to get the ship underway. The volunteer crew worked on doing multiple tasks inside the ship including insulation repairs and preservation in storerooms.

At the same time, yard workers Oscar, Gustafo and John Thomas began laying out the camouflage pattern on the port side hull. The camouflage effort is primarily a result of Ed’s dedication and Oscar’s skill. Ed spent a month working from SLATER’s original photographs as he painstakingly laid out the plans in two large 13’ drawings. Shipyard painter Oscar used magnets to hold the drawing on the drydock wall and, working off the basket of a JLG man lift, transferred the lines to the ship. We didn’t understand how he could be so accurate without the

Here is our year end unaudited financial statement for 2013. We present it prior to the release of the audited statement to get it to you in a timely manner. In addition to this statement, we recorded 17,391 volunteer hours in our quarterdeck log book, and that doesn't count all the hours that Trustees and volunteers worked on our behalf off-site. We continue to encourage you to consider bequests to the Museum so that the legacy of the destroyer escorts will live on. We will continue to make every effort to see that your donations are spent carefully and wisely. As you will see in the statement, it is you, our members, who remain the backbone of this project.

Statement of Financial Position -- December 31, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
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<td>Checking/Savings</td>
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<td>Total Current Assets 50,392.66</td>
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<td>Fixed Assets less depreciation 452.08</td>
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<td>Total Other Assets 2,479,862.11</td>
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<td>TOTAL ASSETS $ 2,530,254.77</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
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<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY $ 2,530,254.77</td>
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## Statement of Activity for the Year Ended December 31, 2013

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contributed support</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual &amp; business contributions</td>
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<td>Hull Preservation Fund</td>
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<td>Winter Fund</td>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td><strong>Total Contributed support</strong></td>
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<td>Ticket sales</td>
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<td>Merchandise sales</td>
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<td>Overnight camping</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous revenue, interest &amp; dividends</td>
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<td><strong>Total Earned revenues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salaries &amp; related expenses</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries &amp; wages</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Professional fees &amp; contractual services</td>
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<td>Utilities, waste services, storage</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
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| Net Operating Income                                                  | $65,609.33     |
| **Endowment**                                                          |                |
| Contributions                                                          | $32,312.00     |
| Dividends & interest                                                   | 47,357.10      |
| Realized gain (loss)                                                   | 3,673.08       |
| Unrealized gain (loss)                                                 | 136,105.69     |
| **Total Endowment Revenue**                                           | $219,447.87    |

| Net Income                                                             | $285,057.20    |
drawings for reference while he was suspended in the air until he showed us that he had photographed the drawings with his smart phone and thus had a ready reference in the basket. We old guys would have never thought of that. The resulting hull camouflage is a tribute to their combined creative skills and dedication.

Another dramatic moment occurred when I was standing outside the galley and I heard John Thomas screaming profanities from the dock floor. Now John Thomas is not the kind to use profanity unless seriously called for. A look down revealed that Ed’s precious, one-of-a-kind 13’ portside drawing had blown off the dock wall into a pool of water. Ed retired to his stateroom, presumably to console himself in a bottle of whatever was available. I raced down to the dock floor and helped John lay out the drawing over a grating and weigh it down with scrap metal to dry it out and keep it from being blown apart. It survived the experience as a battered artifact testifying to our shipyard struggle.

The end of week 10 marked the conclusion of all below-waterline work. Nothing was left now but camo and deck painting. The camo pattern was fully laid out on the port side, ready for colors 5-H and 5-N. Painting was held up due to high humidity. Ron Frankosky worked aboard cleaning up in C-203L. Ed fixed a huge “Last Supper” as Boats Haggart, Steve Klauck, Wayne White and Bill Wetterau left that Friday. Week eleven began with a surprise visit by Mary Habstritt and one of her volunteers from the Coast Guard buoy tender USCGC LILAC. They appeared on the drydock wall and we invited them for dinner in the middle of a torrential rainstorm and gave them the traditional SLATER tour. Monday it was all about painting as the contractors completed the pale gray and haze gray on the portside and laid out the pattern on the starboard side. We made the decision to do the superstructure painting ourselves to save time and money and the volunteers painted out all the pale gray on the fo’c’sle and the portside forward deckhouse.

That Monday we were still in drydock as the yard workers finished the portside painting, including the hull and draft numbers, and we got our name back on the stern. Eddie Z, Ron Prest, John Burroughs, Bob and Thomas Scian worked on painting the main deck house. They finished the pale gray on Monday and haze gray on Tuesday. The camouflage design was completed on the port side, and it was beautiful, a work of art. The old girl looks like a kid again with her new makeup. The hull was so new and good-looking, it seemed a shame to put her in water.

On Wednesday June 18th, around noon, the yard flooded the drydock and we were floated out. We made a last check of all the tanks, bilges and voids as she floated off, but no problems...
were found. After 11 weeks we were starting to feel like we had grown roots to the drydock. The Caddell yard tug and two assist tugs provided by Henry Towing moved us west one slip to floating pier “B” where we moored portside to. It didn’t take the yard long to get us our electrical and water back. With 90% humidity and 60% chance of rain in the morning, it was a less than perfect day for painting but Bill Wetterau, Ron Prest, Gary Dieckman, Thomas Scian and John Burroughs continued cutting in the superstructure camouflage under overhangs. By that Friday the volunteers had finished camouflage on the main deck house and moved up to the 01 Level. That Saturday Barry Witte brought aboard volunteers ENS William Gregory, Steve Bologna-Jill, Jesse Futia and George Gollas. Working with the week 11 crew, they provided the youth and muscle to finish the superstructure painting. We used a modified 32/3d pattern, leaving some areas haze gray that were just painted last year, including the stack and pilothouse exterior.

The week wrapped up with Bernarda “Bernice” Thomas and her diligent crew of ladies doing an outstanding job of cleaning three months of shipyard dirt and grime from all our living and display spaces. Meanwhile, fire hoses and applicators went back in the racks, display gear came out and decks were being cleaned for painting. The high point of the week was when Barry Witte presented Ed with the “Meals on Keels” award for keeping us alive for the past 11 weeks. The end was in sight.

Week 12 was spent preparing for departure. The yard continued deck painting and we did camouflage touch up. We had some out-of-town guests, Charles Stone and Joe Scott. Charles’ father and Joe’s great-grandfather served as an MM on USS MELVIN R. NAWMAN in WWII. Charles and Joe made the pilgrimage all the way from Spokane, Washington to see SLATER, and booked their flight months ago when we were sure SLATER would be home by now. Rosehn Gipe brought them down from Albany and it was only fitting that John Burroughs should be their guide. John had served aboard the NAWMAN as an officer in the fifties. Talk about customer service and ‘what are the odds’ of them finding a guide off their ship. Thursday Wayne White reported back aboard. Ed Zajkowski, Thomas Scian and John Burroughs spent the day touching up the camouflage, and Thomas completed restoration of the aft head porthole.

In the midst of all this activity, the Marine Corps League, Department of New York notified us that we had been selected to receive their Chairman’s Choice Newsletter Award for our publication, “Trim But Deadly.” Our Board Chairman, BJ Costello, graciously agreed to accept the award at the League’s annual convention.

The entire plan for the trip home began to gel late in the week. Rob Goldman of NYS Marine Highway planned to use the tugs MARGOT and FRANCES to move SLATER north. Departure was set for 0500 Monday morning, June 30th, with arrival in Albany scheduled for late that evening. The pilots were lined up. The yard completed deck painting that Saturday afternoon. We celebrated our last quiet evening in the yard with a small nucleus crew. Around noon on Sunday Tony Esposito arrived with a small bus with the riding crew that brought our total to 24 for the trip home. Everybody settled in that evening for 0400 reveille. As we prepared to get underway, the only people on the dock were two yard electricians tasked with cutting the shore tie and making sure we didn’t try to steal the shore power cable. The engineers cranked up the emergency diesel generator, we shifted the load, cut loose the shore tie, water line and gangway, let go all lines, and pilot Tim Newman of the Sandy Hook Pilots Assn. eased us away from the pier and into the Kill Van Kull.

At sunrise the colors were hoisted at half-mast in honor of Merrill “Gus” Negus, our longtime engineer who had passed away the day before. It was like a scene from a movie when engineers Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon and Ken Myrick came into the ship’s office to relay the sad news. Gus was one of the most competent engineers ever to report aboard, back in 1999. Gus was chiefly responsible for getting the emergency diesel generator running, and his attention to detail in the engine room restoration earned him the nickname “Rembrandt.” His death came as a real blow to us because he should have been with us in B-4, standing his watch. Now his watch is over.

As we sailed past Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty towards the Battery, New York City was just waking up to a sight that hadn’t been seen since 1945, the sight of a destroyer escort in camouflage paint making her way up the Hudson. We drew some attention as all the major news networks had their helicopters flying over us and we made the national news. At Yonkers we changed pilots and our old friend Paul Capel arrived to bring the ship into Albany. Ed Zajkowski, our technical consultant turned cook, continued to keep the expanded crew fed all day. The voyage was without incident, which is the way all voyages should be. We exchanged cannon salutes with West Point and fired a few other times to the delight of crowds ashore. A check of our Facebook page shows how popular we were with hundreds of people posting photos and many chasing the ship for miles. We are particularly indebted to volunteer Bill Maloney who, in addition to chasing the ship that Monday, provided weekly documentation of the entire drydock process, giving us a complete photo record of the work in progress and the faces of so many of the yard workers we came to know.

For the trip home RM 1 Joe Breyer handled our radio traffic. Unfortunately, the trip occurred on a Monday following amateur radio “field day” weekend. This is by far the ham radio event with the highest participation. Hams across the country go to vacant fields to erect various antennas and communication centers powered by portable generators and simulate emergency communications for 24 hours. After a grueling weekend of radio, few hams are motivated to get back on the air for a while. The result was a disappointing 36 contacts. We had expected to be inundated with a pileup, which did not materialize.

The evening grew hot and humid as we approached Albany. We reached the Port around 2300. Paul looked over the situation and elected to tie up on the Rensselaer side, just south of our traditional winter berth. This last minute change caused
We secured the generator and nobody got much sleep that night in the humidity. I slept on deck for the first time since the overhaul began. We were up at 0500 and Ed made his last breakfast. I called Rosehn just before 0600 and she was already in the office. She made some hurried media calls and Paul got us underway at 0550. As we eased upriver the port seemed to explode with activity as three large barges and ships all got underway at the same time. The volunteers we had left behind were all waiting for us. Doug Tanner had arranged for Flach Crane Service to have a rig waiting on the wharf to lift the gangways. It took Doug about an hour to have the gangways, water and sewer hooked up. Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy, Larry Williams and Ken Kaskoun got the electrical service and communications cable hooked up. The media attention we received was wonderful. We set about resetting the displays and emptying out the shore PODs in anticipation of our July 4th opening. We’ve got a lot of lost time to make up for, but with this momentum, we think we can do it.

Looking back over the experience, the whole evolution has led to a lot of sleepless nights. I spent a lot of time hoping that we are spending this money as prudently and carefully as possible to ensure that this ship will continue to honor our veterans and educate the public for another 70 years. That led to a lot of sitting topside and walking the decks, but that is actually a benefit of this experience. The warm nights are beautiful with the ship traffic in the channel, the Bayonne Bridge lit up red, white and blue, and the bright lights of the New York City skyline to the east. There’s also something special about wandering into the galley at 0300 looking for midrats. The radio was always tuned to WCBS oldies, so there was always good music. We never turned it off. The coffee was always hot and, despite the fact that it was 22 hours old, it tasted pretty good. I usually settled for a piece of cheese, but if I was really lucky I beat Thomas and scored a leftover piece of one of Eddie Z’s peach or apple raisin pies. Then it was back to the captain’s cabin, the space I occupy, which meant getting underway for the home berth an hour before we were expected. I probably should have notified Rosehn, but I didn’t.

And, then there was “My Friend Ed Zajkowski.” Barry Witte wrote that “Ed Z needs to be recognized as the volunteer of the year.” I saw how he has basically taken ownership of the day-to-day operations of the drydocking, freeing you to manage the more ‘executive’ type matters.” I’m not sure about the phrase “Executive Type Matters,” unless doing dishes and hauling trash counts. My role here must be akin to a father’s role during the birth process. Watch, worry and wait. But I can’t express how much Ed being here has meant to the process. He was a true advocate for the ship and my conscience, in addition to his culinary skills and covering the ship for me every weekend. I got a lot of grief for the eight weekends I went home because the “Paid Guy” goes home while the “Volunteer” was stuck on the ship.

While all the work in the yard was going we made a last solicitation to all our members for Hull Fund donations. We can’t thank you enough for the support and encouragement you have given us through this evolution. We are now in a position most historic ships will envy. The drydocking project is complete, paid for by you and we still have $1.5 million in our endowment fund. The success has enabled us to add many items to the work list that we were hesitant to add before. Included among them were scaling and preservation of eleven of the worst deteriorated skin tanks, magazines and voids, scaling and painting the chain locker, blasting and painting the anchor chain, replacing two wasted chocks, pulling the capstan and sandblasting the inside of it, replacing the glass in eleven portholes, and purchasing 1,800 feet of new mooring line. Our mooring line is all 15 years old. The original budget for the project was $1.2 million. When we add in the towing, bilge cleaning in Albany, and the incidentals, it will be just a little over $1.4 million. The total amount was covered by your donations without having to dip into the endowment.

We believe we couldn’t give USS SLATER a better 70th birthday gift than this. I still can’t believe that over four years we raised a million dollars and managed to pull this project off. It’s an incredible accomplishment and a tribute to all you members. There’s something special about the spirit of this ship that enabled this to happen. It’s an intangible combination of patriotism, humor, toughness and a stretch back to the youth of our supporters. I think John Burroughs summed it up best in the shipyard when he observed, “Navy makes men out of boys, SLATER makes boys out of men.” We’ll keep doing that for everyone who comes across our gangway.
Dear Tim & Slater shipmates,

I was pleased to see so many donations made to the Slater in memory of Gus. He loved working on the ship and especially enjoyed the whaleboat. He loved to talk and would bend the ear of anyone who would listen to him. I was a captive audience at home and I'm sure I know as much about the Slater as any of you.

My heart aches as I miss him so much, but it makes me smile knowing how much he enjoyed working with you guys. I wish you happy memories and continued success with the ongoing restoration. I'm sorry Gus was not around when the Slater came back to home port. I know he would have loved to have made the trip.

Thank you to all who came to the wake and sent cards. It was very comforting to me and my family. The picture and the remembrance of Gus in the Slater Signals touched my heart. I will continue to follow your progress as I have done before. I hope that all of you enjoy the Slater as much as Gus did.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann
Loving Wife

April 23, 2014

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter of April 7 concerning the Hull Preservation Fund and that the Slater is already at the shipyard in Staten Island. I am enclosing my check for $5,000 to the DEHM Hull Preservation Fund in memory of my father, LCDR Charles B. Brown who, as you know, was the Commanding Officer of DE-242, USS Tomich, during World War II. He would be very proud of what you have been doing for the Slater. I think that I told you that he took me on board the Tomich in, I believe, 1944, when she went from the Brooklyn Navy Yard to New Jersey to reload her ammunition and explosives. Being only 7 or 8, it made for a super “show and tell” story at school. My mother was a plank owner when the Slater was first brought over from Greece.

We will be in Burlington, Vermont on April 8th and had planned on stopping by the Slater on the way home but I guess that she will still be in Staten Island at that point. Hopefully, we will be able to come up and see her later this summer. Thank you for all that you have done for the Slater.

Sincerely,
C. Bennett Brown, Jr.

April 29, 2014

Tim,

I’ve been following the saga of drydocking Slater through the website and linked articles. I have to confess to getting a little choked up when reading about the crowds of people watching the ship and waving flags as she travelled down the Hudson. It’s such a tribute to the sweat and toil (and $$$) of the volunteers over the years, and I have to think that those people who took the time to go down to the river did it as a tribute to the service of SLATER’s WWII crew, and all those who served on Destroyer Escorts. It’s just gratifying to know that Americans still care.

Maybe the enclosed check will pay for a hull rivet. I wish it could be more.

Good luck with the repairs.
Buzz Surwilo
Montpelier, VT

4/28/2014

Dear Tim,

Thanks for your kind words about Dad in your recent letter updating us on the dry docking activities for the USS Slater. As I discussed with you during my call to you in March, my father wanted us to remember him by providing a contribution to the Slater. My sisters and I hope our attached contributions will help allow you and your team to continue your great work in providing meaningful insight of naval history through your presentation of life on board a DE. As noted on the envelope, I would love to have one of the prints of the Slater on “Atlantic Convoy Duty.” Please reduce my contribution by the associated $200 value of the print.

I have not forgotten my trip to Albany with my father to see the ship several years ago at one of the last USS Slater reunions. I was thoroughly impressed with the results of your team’s restoration and preservation activities.

I hope to bring my family to Albany this summer to provide a glimpse of Dad’s shipboard life during WWII. I look forward to hearing about your continued progress on the ship through the quarterly newsletter.

Best wishes,
Keith Poulsen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Dear Rosehn,

Yesterday we received the dog tags we ordered. Please accept my thanks for them. If someone else made them, please pass along my thanks to them. It has been the most difficult thing in our lives to have to learn to live with Eli as a memory and not as our lively companion. These tags will help us with that in a small way, and I pray you all will be blessed. I do not remember the name of the fellow who was there when we were on our overnight, but he was an older fellow who took the time to tell the kids all he could. I remember Eli, as one of the youngest ones there, really hit it off with that gentleman. Eli was always filled with questions and the fellow took the time to answer him and establish a rapport with him. What a wonderful thing the impact of small kindnesses can be. Please give our thanks to all your crew just for working at what you do.

One set of the tags is now with Eli’s ashes. I believe he would want to be marked that way. The others are for me to carry.

Every blessing to you all.

With gratitude,

Father Rich Dibble

Ed. Note: Elijah Dibble passed away on November 4, 2013, hours after sustaining injuries in a bicycle-car collision in front of his home. He was 11 years old. In 2012, he had visited SLATER with his Cub Scout Pack on an overnight encampment.

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May 9, 2014

Thank you for the information concerning the Slater! I get a little nostalgic when I see pictures like the one shown in your letter! I was a Sonarman 1/C and a “plank owner” of the USS Peter Tomich DE 242 and served on it throughout WWII for just short of three years. Took convoys across from Halifax, Nova Scotia and stateside ports to various places in England, Scotland — the Mediterranean, etc. Our war ended with us tied up at Saipan waiting for the invasion of southern Japan. Even though I only know we can’t keep all those old, worn out ships, I still hate to think that my ship (and my home for nearly three years) was put through the metal grinder at Green Cove Springs, Florida!

Just a thought regarding our fundraising need for the Slater; as much as I would love to have the large picture, I have been retired from any sort of a job for many years and can’t afford the $1000 tariff for it. However, I think there may be enough of us still alive who would pay to have the name or number of their DE put on a smaller version, probably an 8x12 or 12x14 inch copy of that picture of a Navy DE underway protecting a convoy in heavy seas. That picture with DE242 on the bow would sure look good in my house!

I want all my grandsons and five great-grandsons to see that picture — I know exactly what the word “Contact!!!” means to a DE sailor!

I thank all of you for keeping our memories alive!

Arthur O. Miller

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May 12, 2014

Hello Tim and Slater Crew,

I was glad to receive your latest letter, it sounds like you are going big time, all the way to Staten Island. I continue to receive your magazine, Trim But Deadly, and it keeps me informed. I’m glad to hear that you have much younger ex-sailors doing the scrape and paint on all parts of the Slater.

To all of you volunteers, I know it has been the goal to get the SLATER in dry dock, now you will be able to continue to receive visitors and have them go way back in time.

I am limited in what I can do and thankful I was part of the crew. When I need a lift I think back on the metal parts I could scrape and repaint like new, I’ll be in Dry Dock myself one day.

Good luck to all,
Ray Lammers SC 2/c
At 89 years

Ed note: Ray Lammers of USS TATUM was one of our most dedicated volunteers for ten years.

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May 8, 2014

John Del Giorno of WABC-TV/Total Traffic & Weather Network sent us this photo that he took from NewsCopter 7 as we headed up the Hudson.
May 14, 2014

Dear Mr. Rizzuto,

We re-commissioned the Sturtevant in August 19, 1951 at Green Cove Springs, FL for the Korean conflict and held our first reunion in June of 1990. Now, 16 reunions later, with our last reunion held this past week with only 10 crew members, we decided it was time to quit. It was with reluctance that we decided and voted on that the remaining account to be split up and passed on to those who could best use and were in need. Please process this check as soon as possible as we would like to close our account.

Regards and thanks,
Ted Prager President, Jereline Clarke Treasurer, and Clinton Bjornson Secretary
USS Sturtevant DE/DER 239 Reunion Association

May 14, 2014

At the recent reunion of the USS Walter B. Cobb, we tried to think of a special way to thank one of our shipmates who has been of great help to our group. Jim Burton handles our website, mailing labels, Cobb Grams and any other task we ask of him. Therefore, please accept the enclosed check in the amount of $100.00 for the Slater Hull Fund to honor and show our appreciation to Mr. Burton.

Most Sincerely,
Kristi Adams

June 2, 2014

Tim,

Am enclosing my donation for the Hull Preservation Fund. Glad to hear she is finally on her way to dry dock although a bit earlier than planned. Hope there will be plenty of photographic documentation as I find drydocking one of the most fascinating aspects of ship repair and maintenance. Be sure to include as many photos as possible in the Slater News of her progress. Am very much looking forward to the finished product.

Jim Nehnevaj

June 3, 2014

Dear Tim,

Debated sending another check, but no better cause. So, what the HULL. Hope to see you and the ship very soon.

Art Dott

June 11, 2014

Hello Tim,

It has been a while since we have communicated. Enclosed is a check for $28.00. It came from the USS Slater Donation box that I set out at our Military Displays. I have several friends that have Military Vehicles & Weapons and I have the Mothball Fleet Displays. Some donate because of a father or grandfather who served here or because they may purchase a DVD of the fleet. This year I had DVDs, photos, and refrigerator magnets. I read in this past “Trim But Deadly” newsletter of a sailor who used to volunteer on the Slater and had moved to Tampa. He is living in the birthplace of the Slater. She was built in the Tampa Shipyards. Next October, of 2015, we will be holding the 75th Anniversary of the Navy Base here in Green Cove Springs, Florida. If anyone is interested, you may give them my contact information. Thank you for what you and all of your volunteers do.

Your Friend,
Frank Haggard
101 Joey Drive Box 504
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043
Tel (904) 772-5250
Email: honty-donty@hotmail.com
It could be 1945, but the wind tower gives it away. USS SLATER spent two weeks pier side while we completed deck and topside painting.
Hull Fund Donations

$1 to $25

$251 to $500
Robert M. Comly * Harvey Jacobs USS INDEPENDENCE CV62 * John B. Madden, Jr. PT304 * Donald Newman * Eric O’Brien * David Savell * Gary White *

$1,000 +
Rhodes Memorial Fund * John Whalen *

$10,000
Estate of Sally P. Snure USS CRONIN DE704 *

Lang * Donald Leyoldt USS DEALEY DE1006 * Robert Lowe USS HILBERT DE742 * Russ Padden USS NESHOBA APA216 * William Scharoun USS OSMUS DE701 *

$1 to $25

$1,000 +
Rhodes Memorial Fund * John Whalen *

$10,000
Estate of Sally P. Snure USS CRONIN DE704 *
The night before departure USS SLATER rests quietly alongside Floating Pier B at Caddell's. Thomas Scian photo.
$101 to $250

$251 to $500

$501 to $1,000

$1,001 to $5,000
Neal M. & Joan W. Allen USS DARBY DE218 & USS SNYDER DE745 * John P. Cosgrove USS GENDREAU DE639 * Charles Kieb USS RHODES DE384 * RADM & Mrs. Martin Leukhardt, USNR (Ret) USS DANIEL A. JOY DE585 * Mitch Matthews USS JOHN C. BUTLER DE339 * Frank McClatchie USS NEIL A. SCOTT DE769 * CDR Barry Witte, USNR (Ret) USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CVN73 *

$10,000
George Christiansen USS ROBERTS DE749 & USS JOSEPH K. TAUS-SIG DE1030 *

$100,000
Estate of Sam Saylor GMCM USS CONNOLLY DE306 *
Memorial Donations

Frederick W. Biermann, USS ROCHE DE197  
Thomas Biermann
Bill Branham, USS SWASEY DE248  
Don & Natalie Walden
Charles B. Brown, USS TOMICH DE242  
C. Bennett Brown, Jr.
John R. Cann, USS JACOB JONES DE130  
William Cann
John H. Case, USS HEYLIGER DE 510  
Kay Case
Johnny Clayton, for Father's Day USS Bowers DE637  
Mrs. Johnny Clayton
James E. Everin, USS EMERY DE28  
Carol Everin Gerrish, Dorothy Everin
John O. Gautreau, USS RANGER CVA-61 & US AIR FORCE  
Jerome & Marilyn Rivet
Robert L. Goggins, USS COLLBAUGH DE217  
Willis & Mary Gunder
Paul C. Huelsenbeck, USS PARKS DE165  
Margaret Rich
Waldo Hutchins  
Sarane Ross
Don C. Johnson, USS KENDALL C. CAMPBELL DE443  
Don V. Johnson
Werner E. Johnson, USS SLOAT DE245  
Muriel C. Johnson
Robert W. Kanady, USS MOORE DE 240  
DESA Garden State Chapter, DESA Philadelphia Keystone Chapter
John R. Kessler, USS WARD DE243  
DESA Garden State Chapter
Donnell Lorenz, USS RHODES DE384  
Arthur Heiderman
Bruno Mancinelli, USS GRISWOLD DE7  
Mary Mancinelli
Johnson McRorie, USS EDWIN A. HOWARD DE346  
Marie McRorie
Gary Moffat, USS HANK DD702 & USS NORRIS DD859  
DESA Garden State Chapter
Michael Patrick Murphy, US ARMY  
Henry Ward

Honorary Donations

Helen Andersen-Virum for mother's day, USS GENDREAU DE639  
Dale & Mary Dickinson
Robert C. Black, USS BROCK DE234/APD93  
Barry D. Black
Jim Burton, USS WALTER B. COBB DE596/APD106  
USS WALTER B. COBB crew
Henry Gadomski  
Joe Herkenham
In tribute to USS GUSTAFSON DE182, South Atlantic, WWII.  
Richard Wiringa
Frank Heckart, USS LERAY WILSON DE414  
Sheryl & Tom Skufca
Captain Kinney & the USS BRONSTEIN DE189 crew  
Clinton Gantt
Harold Mankin on his 90th birthday, USS HILBERT DE742  
Margaret Mankin
Edwin Michaelis, USS BLESSMAN DE69  
Henry Michaelis
USS NEVADA BB36  
Evelyn Haschert
John Virum for father's day, USS GENDREAU DE639  
Dale & Mary Dickinson

Endowment Fund Donations

$1 to $25
Henry Harman USS MENGES DE320 * Gardner Roberts USS OBERRENDER DE344 * William A. Wood USS DEALLEY DE1006 *

$26 to $50
Hans Funk USS GREENWOOD DE679 * Nat Gayster USS CLARENCE L. EVANS DE113 & USS ROBERTS DE749 * Frank Scherl USS ROY O. HALE DE336 *

$100 to $250
Julius Bozeman USS O'TOOLE DE527 * Richard Conroy USS PARKS DE165 * Bob & Marie Doli USS WALTER S. BROWN DE258 * C. S. Lovelace USS LAKE DE301 * Dave Mardon * Claude T. May USS SWEARER DE186 * Gerard Ward *

We apologize.

Normally we feature photos of many different DEs each issue, but so many good images came out of the shipyard we decided to dedicate this entire issue to USS SLATER. We'll get back to featuring the other 562 DEs next edition.
Winter Fund Donations

$1 to $25
James Cantrell * Selwyn Harlow USS PRICE DE332 * Weldon Hoyt USS PALMER * Robert Nolte USS FISKE DE143 * Sally Rogers USS SCROG-GINS DE799 & USS MARTIN DE30 & USS STANTON DE247 * Catherine Walker USS PAVLIC DE669/APD70 *

$26 to $50
Derek Canavan * Stanley Dickstein USS SLATER DE766 * Cathy Lempa USS SLATER DE766 * Dan Zachary USS LEHARDY DE20 * Channing Zucker USS ST PAUL CA73 & USS DUTTON AGS22 *

$51 to $100
Don Arnold USS PAUL G. BAKER DE642 * John Breeze * John Coffin

USS WILLIAM C. COLE DE641 * Jim Hart USMC * Hawthorne Ordnance Museum * David M. Jalbert USS ROBERT F. KELLER DE419 * Sotirios Koutsoukos A/T AETOS D01 * Michael Poncsak *

$101 to $250
David Buchli * CDR Pat & Mrs. Adriana Grillo USS KYNE DE744 *

$500
Mitch Matthews USS JOHN C. BUTLER DE339 * Clifton Woltz USS SLATER DE766 *

$1,000
Elizabeth Kaido *

FALL WORK WEEK DATES
If you are serious about working on USS SLATER, there will be two USS SLATER Work Weeks this fall, and readers are encouraged to volunteer. You supply your bedding (or sleeping bag) and toilet gear. We supply the bunks & grub (approximately $10/day) and work. Rags, buckets, paint brushes and rollers are always encouraged. A limited number of spaces are available.

The USS HUSE Veterans will be aboard Sunday, September 7 - 12, 2014. If you have not already done so, contact George Amandola at 610-789-5105 or email gamand@aol.com or Dave Perlstein at 561-368-7167, email dbp14@hotmail.com with the subject header SLATER WORK PARTY in order to confirm. You don’t have to be a HUSE former crew member to participate.

The Joint DESA Michigan Chapter/USS SLATER fall work week will be October 5-10, 2014. If you want to sign up, contact Dick Walker at 616-676-1392 or email CascadeWalker@cs.com, or Tim Rizzuto at 518-431-1943, email tim@ussslater.org You don’t have to stay all week, and we won’t work you harder than you are able.
This sums up our whole experience and it isn’t “Photoshop-ed.” This is real. Kevin Oldenburg captured this encounter at Dutchman’s Landing. From raising the money, through the overhaul and return to Albany, we thank you all.