



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Kevin Sage and his trusty paint roller on the yard arm.

Picking up where we left off, we were safely moored on the Albany side, had just survived another flood, and were open to the public for our tenth season in Albany. Shortly after our arrival, a team from Safway scaffolding contractors rigged the scaffolding for the painters by adding additional handrails and planking at every level. Then **Kevin Sage** reported aboard with a helper and shrouded the mast. We used a combination of his tarps and our tarps to encapsulate the whole mast for scaling and spray painting. Needless to say the result was pretty hideous, and I take pity on any visitors who came during that week to take pictures of our beautiful SLATER. She just wasn't that beautiful. Kevin spent a week scaling, Corroscaling, priming and painting the mast. He even managed to get the yardarms done. We are hoping that through the use of the Imron high gloss epoxy, we will be ten years before we have to repaint the mast.

The week of painting also coincided with the Michigan Field Week, an event that turned out to be a real "keel to foretop" exercise. The Michigan DESA group arrived for their 18th restoration workweek on Sunday April 29. Cook **Tom Schriener** didn't waste any time and started Sunday off with a "Thanksgiving in April" dinner by conjuring up a complete turkey dinner with mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, homemade pumpkin pie topped with homemade ice cream. We were happy to see them as usual and this time they had the largest complement ever. Would you believe *Forty-two* members showed up to make the Slater's tenth year get off on the proper course at flank speed?



This year's crew included **John Adriani, Jim Appleton**, our single biggest individual contributor **John Bartko, Roy Brandon, Tom Burrows, Dow Clark, Laird Confer, Herb Grefski, Gene Hermansen, Gary Headworth, Joe Jeffries, Emmet Landrum** coming in from California and son **Jeff Landrum** from Massachusetts, **Charlie Markham, Tim Markham, Dave Marsh, Scott McFadden, Ron Mazure, Bob Donlon, Ken Morgan, Rush Mellinger, Deron Mellinger, Stan Pachucki, Jim Ray, Dick Roy** coming all the way from Florida again, **Tom Schrinier** and his son **Joe Schrinier** who ran the galley, our old friend and shop steward **Dick Smith**, Coast Guard Quartermaster **Larry Stiles**, original Slater crewmember from Connecticut **Bill Svihovec, Charlie Vesterman, Dick Walker, Blair "Butch" Warrender, Frank Warner**, who did galley detail, **Mark Winger, Bill Wasko, Ed Zajkowski, Ron Zarem** and his son **Mike Zarem** and **Don Martin** who drove in from Oregon to join us again. This year's crew included seven sons and two grandsons: **Brandon Reese and Andrew Warrender. Scott McFadden** enhanced the "Thanksgiving" dinner with the presence of his daughters, **Sara and Morgan.**



Former SLATER crewman Bill Svihovec and the crew working on gun 2.



Rush Mellinger on the aft three-inch mount.

Repainting guns was on the agenda so we'd have all three-inch mounts looking great. Three-inch guns number two and three got thoroughly scaled, primed and repainted with Imron, so all the main battery guns looks great. **Emmett Landrum** scaled and restored 20mm gun 26, the aft mount on the 01 level portside. Another crew boarded our infamous paint float and took it around to the starboard side. There they touched up the paint on the hull, and repainted the bow section that we hadn't been able to reach off the manlift in Rensselaer. They also redid the bow number and the draft marks. **Mike Zarem** led a team in the aft head that replaced all the missing fiberglass insulation in the overhead. They were hampered a bit by our learning curve and the lack of material once we learned what we really needed, but by the end of the week, all the material had arrived and the job was complete.



Emmett Landrum from California works on 20mm gun 26.

Scott McFadden led a heavy lift and move team that remounted the 20mm ready service lockers on the 01 level, installed the DES MOINES desks into the ships office that had been sitting on deck all winter, and under **Erik Collin's** direction, did a thorough clean up of the 01 level, and stowed and discarded all kinds of lumber, trash and junk that had accumulated over the winter. When that project was completed the crew went to work priming, sanding and scaling the portside main deck house. **Dick Smith** led another crew that worked on scaling the fantail over **Pat Perrella's** museum, our last chance to do scaling over the space before she uncovered all the artifacts and set up the displays.

A major project occurred at the base of the mast. The old radio direction finder platform was thoroughly rotted out and we figured that as long as we had scaffolding up, it was time to affect repairs. **Laird Confer** worked with **Clark Farnsworth, Roy Brandon** and others to begin cutting away and replacing the wasted metal. Following their week, it was realized that the rot was a lot more extensive than we had thought and that the job would take more time than expected. We therefore decided to breakdown and return the last section of the Safway scaffolding and replace it with our own pipe scaffolding. **Doug Tanner** inherited the job and went to work with **Shawn Bevins** to scaffold and continue the repair.





Tim's favorite, Dow Clark, painting out the port shaft alley. Anyone want to argue that he didn't earn it?

But that wasn't the big accomplishment of the week. I said it was a truck to keel field day, and the two guys down on the keel in the bilges were Ed Zajkowski and Dow Clark. They went back to finish the job they had started last year, preserving the port shaft alley. Working Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, they finished scaling the space, primed and repainted it white with red bilge paint. When they finished, the space looked like the ship had just come out of the builders. It was a job no one wanted, but was critical to the long-term preservation of the SLATER. That effort won **Dow Clark** the coveted "Tim's Favorite Award" for this field day.

Of course, Tim made a small mistake by announcing the award on Tuesday, when the field day was only half over. The immediate result was a severe drop in morale and productivity, and the ship's superintendent being chased out of the chow line by an angry cook who thought he better deserved the award. I mean, this guy is a talented welder who certainly might find time to strike an arc if he was motivated enough. I mean, it's not like he's cooking all the time, and he does have helpers in the galley. I mean, look at **Doug Tanner**. He welds and cooks. In fact he plans meals around his welding. But then, the Coast Guard was always a lean outfit. However, the crew was mollified and production

resumed with the announcement that there might be several "Runner's up" who would receive awards. We're still waiting for the nominations. For his part, ever-humble **Dow Clark** refused to accept the award, writing "Please give the Tim Award to the WWII Vets that were with us. The love and devotion these men have for that ship is worth more than any of us younger guys. Thanks." On the other hand, we know that as long as the World War II guys don't have to chip the shaft alley, they are happy for him to have it.



Our education programs will be greatly improved as the American Legion came through with a new monitor for the classroom.

Another major presentation occurred during the Michigan Week. On Wednesday May 2 **Richard M. Pedro**, Adjutant, The American Legion Department of New York presented The Destroyer Escort Historical Museum with a new SONY 40" HDTV, multifunction display that delivers high-definition picture and impressive surround sound with its digital amplifier for use in the classroom. Richard had made the mistake of asking me if there was anything they could do for us last fall when the **American Legion** made their annual donation to the SLATER. The screen greatly enhances all our video presentations and will go a long way in captivating the attention of our visitors.

It also was welcomed by the Michigan crew who relaxed in the classroom following each day's work to DVDs they had brought. Richard served on the USS SCHMIDTT, APD76, so he has a real appreciation of the SLATER and what she represents. Thanks to Richard and **The New York State American Legion** for your support.



Jim Ray helping the team that patched the RDF platform on the bridge.

Doug Tanner took advantage of the scaffolding to install a ladder going up to the air search radar platform. Access to the top platform had always been difficult, and **Doug and Clark Farnsworth** fabricated brackets and a ladder to make access to this level **much easier**. This work was done at the top of the mast, but the scaffolding made it a lot easier physically and psychologically. The shrouding around the mast took away the sensation of being up high, and it was really comfortable working up there. **The last act of the Michigan crew was to remove the shrouding and disassemble the scaffolding.** Kevin

Sage was on hand with **Tim Markham** and **Scott McFadden** as all the pieces were disassembled and lowered to the 01 level, carried ashore and inventoried by **Chuck Markham**. Their involvement in the project saved us a couple of grand, and the Michigan crew had the satisfaction of unveiling the completed mast for the public. It was a great week, and these guys left the ship in a lot better shape thanks to their efforts.



Tim Markham was a runner up in the "Tim's favorite" contest thanks to his painting and climbing skills on the mast.

As soon as the Michigan crew left town, the regular crew picked up the pace to get the SLATER ready for our next big event, the return of the USS SLATER World War II crew for their 22nd reunion. **Pat Perrella** made a special effort to get the museum compartment all spruced up, cleaned and reorganized for the summer tourist season. Above her, **Chris Fedden, Don Miller** and **Earl Herchenroder** finished chipping the quarterdeck area so the whole fantail can be repainted. **Erik Collin** repainted the deck aft of the fantail 20mm guns. **Clark Farnsworth** and **Gene Jackey** repaired the gangway handrails on the aft gangway that had been damaged by winter dumping and plowing on the Snow Dock.

We've been the recipients of more scarce artifacts. **Greg Wolanin**, affectionately know aboard as

"Tankman" has located a source of scarce MK6 ashcan style depth charges. The source is apparently a surplus dealer out in Montana who originally got the charges out of the ordnance depot at Hawthorne, Nevada. The wonderful thing about these cases is that they are not filled with concrete, and thus are easy to move, and won't have the internal corrosion problems of the charges that are concrete filled.

This was a common practice for loading drills to simulate the actual weight of the depth charges for practice. Thus far we have received ten of the rare artifacts. The teardrop MK9s are much more common. The MK6s have been sanded, primed and painted, and **Eric Rivet** cut the proper stenciling to put on them, right out of the "Identification of Ordnance" tech manual. Our next step is working to find a benefactor to construct the port depth charge rack, the site where these ashcans will be displayed. We repaid another old debt regarding ASW. With regards to the acquisition of the QJB sonar set last year by the National Association of Sonarmen, **Bob Donlon** delivered the plaque he had made up for the appreciation in acquiring the QJB SONAR gear originally installed on the USS Loeser DE 680. The plaque is to be placed in the classroom for all to see, since the upper sound room where the gear is located is not on the general public tour route. Thank you to all who contributed to the sonar project in any way.



Mort Reed proudly holds his plaque.

The original SLATER Crew arrived aboard on Friday May 18th for their annual reunion, tour of the ship and a catered box lunch on the Observation Deck. This year's attendees included former Executive Officers **Harold Poulsen and Colton Wagner, Cliff Woltz**, reunion coordinator **Don Norris, Bill Svihovec, Floyd Martin, Tom O'Neill, Duane Cosart, Bob Davis, Marvin Cash, Ed Lavin, and John Reynolds, Mort Reed, Mac Herstell.** Also present were SLATER wives **Anita Kunst and Agnes Elze**, and a large contingent of SLATER kids and grandchildren. They were all impressed with the effort the local volunteers had made in restoring the ship and went out of their way to show their appreciation.

There was some nice coverage by local media including a visit by **Vince Gallagher** who interviewed several former crewmembers. **Mort Reed** explained that "This is our 22nd reunion, we have one every year, and getting the camaraderie and so forth, and seeing the old shipmates...it's a great experience,"

"We practiced and drilled every day on the ship, wherever they were going to be assigned to their quarters, what their job was, they did it over and over again so you got so you could do it almost blindfolded," said veteran **Edward Lavin**. Lavin was almost killed in a fire that badly damaged the number 2 ships service generator, and finally explained to volunteer engineman **Gus Negus** why the serial number on the block of the engine didn't match the serial number on the crankcase. The block had been replaced after the fire. Harold Poulsen recalled the days before satellite navigation and GPS when not seeing the sun and stars meant navigation by dead reckoning. "We had some pretty bad times. At one time we went eight days and never saw the sun, never saw the moon, or any stars. The Slater traveled from Cuba and Guantanamo Bay across the globe to Japan and the Caroline Islands." We are indebted to Harold and his son Keith for donating a PowerPoint projector to the Museum, an item we have been in desperate need of for a long time. To all of you who have been loaning us your projectors, you are now off the hook.



The original SLATER crew returns home once again.

It was great having them aboard, and the month is only half over. We now look forward to the arrival of the USS HUSE Crew workweek and our annual Memorial Day Remembrance, as well as continued school tours and overnight encampments, and another run to the James River Reserve Fleet. We'll keep you posted on our progress. **See you next month.**



Our first reunion of the season, the USS FRAGMENT.