

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

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The month started with our Salute to the Coast Guard's birthday 2010. August 4th was hot and humid; an obvious affront to the service that mans arctic ice breakers, but in the best traditions of the service the show went on. MC **Steve Long** started the ceremony at 1100, with ordering the SLATER Color Guard, consisting of **Andy De Sorbo, Clark Farnsworth, Dave Mardon, and Don Shattuck**, with **Dick Walker** in charge, to present the Colors. **Jerry Jones** played the National Anthem on the 1MC. **Paul Czesak** then introduced the honored guests. **Bill Kraus** read the Governor's Proclamation, followed by County Executive **Mike Breslin** and Congressman **Paul Tonko** acknowledging the many roles the Coast Guard plays in protecting the Nation. **Mike Breslin** and **Paul Tonko** also cited our seven Coast Guard veteran volunteers for their work on the SLATER. The SLATER is fortunate in having seven highly dedicated Coast Guard veterans in our volunteer crew. **Joe Burke, Gene Jackey, Nelson Potter, Rick Pavlovic, and Grant Hack** were introduced by **Dick Walker** and as they came aboard they saluted **Capt. Jeff Bull**, USCG (Ret), and then "manned the rail". CAPT Bull made his remarks, followed by Assemblymen **Tim Gordon** and **Bob Reilly**. **Jerry Jones** then played "Semper Paratus" on the 1MC, and **Erik Collin**, assisted by **Eric Rivet**, who just happened to be in town visiting from New Orleans, fired the 3"/50 gun salute. **Linda Wruck** made the closing remarks and invited everyone to have a piece of the birthday cake. **Doug Tanner** came aboard just in time to join CAPT Bull in making the first cut of the cake using SLATER's ceremonial sword. The program concluded with a documentary featuring the Coast Guard Ice Breaker WEST WIND. **Gene Jackey** was a crew member at the time the movie was made.



For the second year we welcomed the Chief Petty Officers from the Nuclear Power Training Unit in Ballston Spa who used the ship as a rite of passage for the new Chief selectees from their unit. In return the selectees turned to and performed a day of maintenance aboard the SLATER. One group cleaned out the lower sound room to use for educational material storage, and they cleaned out the old storeroom under the head. Two more agile sailors chipped and primed under the starboard depth charge projector roller loaders, a place none of our oldsters can get to anymore. Gus Negus, Mike Dingmon and Gary Lubrano were in hog heaven as they supervised a gang working in the aft machinery spaces as they continued the seemingly never-ending job of cleaning and priming in the bilges. Another crew lifted out the bathythermograph boom, carried it to the work bench and scaled and corrosealed it.



...racks, all the places our regulars have a hard time getting into.

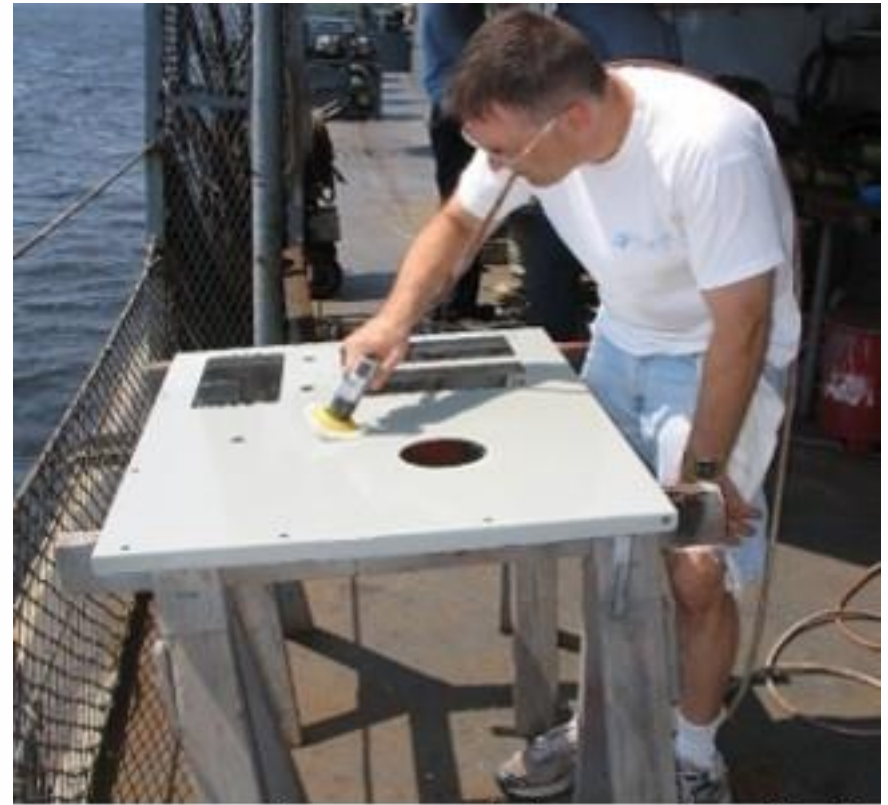


CPO Selectees worked hard leaning the bilges a

The most significant work was done by two selectees who went to work down on the reefer deck and scaled and Corrosealed the deck of the last reefer that Gary Sheedy is planning to restore. This evolution had been holding up Gary's progress all summer. At least that's what his latest excuse was. The following Monday, **Don Miller** and **Walt Stuart** primed the space. Gary was so overjoyed when he came in the following Saturday that he gave me several hugs over the course of the day, manly hugs to be sure, but hugs of joy nevertheless. It's so great to be able to make at least one person on this ship happy. No more excuses for Gary. The preservation is done and it's time to start putting the reefer deck back together.



Barry Witte and his crew are making progress on the B-3 switchboard.



Here, Barry gives one of the panels a final buffing for an extra smooth surface.

Boats Haggart has been using anybody he can get his hands on to help with lifeline turnbuckles. His usual helper is Paul Guarnieri. His project to replace all the non-Navy turnbuckles with the Navy standard is about 70% complete. The shipfitters, Clark Farnsworth, Gene Jackey, Super Dave Mardon, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal have made considerable progress on number six roller loader, despite the absence of their leader Mr. Tanner, who has been out of town this month. George Gollas was back in town to spend a day helping Barry with the B-3 switchboard restoration and even stayed to help with an overnight. Chris Fedden and Ron Mazure completed the chipping on the fo'c's'le and the area is in the process of being primed and painted. Barry Witte finished the overflow alarm in the forward head, so we're just waiting for Doug to get back into town to bless it and Benner to christen it.

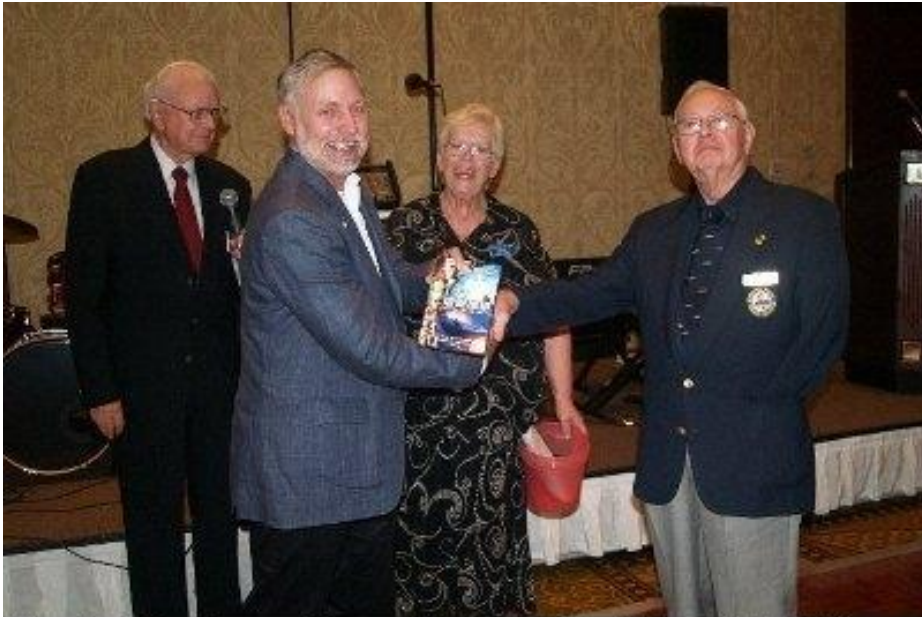


High School student and summer volunteer, Kyle Gicewicz, has been working on refurbishing our four fuel oil intakes.



Dave Mardon, Tim Benner and Barry Witte have been making progress on the number six roller loader fabrication .

Katie Kuhl and her most recent intern, Alena Kryukovskaya, a SUNY Albany student working on her Master's in Information Science, have been hard at work on multiple Archives and Special Collections projects. Not only have they been continuing to consolidate and organize the museum's extensive reference archive collection, Alena has also volunteered to re-catalog the entire library located in the briefing room. Furthermore, this dynamic duo has been developing an oral history webpage to add to the USS SLATER website, allowing any interested person with a computer to have access to the numerous oral histories which have been collected by the SLATER's volunteers and staff over the years. Their efforts have been invaluable to the DEHM's mission to become the premiere research center for destroyer escort history. In addition, Frank Peters has been cataloguing all the documents donated by the late Marty Davis, relating to the acquisition of the SLATER and the founding of the museum and putting them in chronological order. This will give us the most complete history of the Museum we have ever had.



The DESA Convention with President Tom Kidd, Tim Rizzuto, Ladies Auxiliary President Phyllis Gruber and Maryland Chapter President Bob Rigger.

While all those guys were working in the heat I was off gallivanting and partying at the annual Destroyer Escort Sailors Association in Warwick, Rhode Island. At least that's what the crew thought. It was great to see so many old friends and supporters again. The event always gives us a chance to update our DESA friends on our progress. There are way more people than I can single out here, but we are especially indebted to **Steve Hoback** for the generous donation he arranged through his firm, **Dealers Financial Services**, and to **Phyllis Gruber** and the members of the DESA Ladies Auxiliary for helping the SLATER through their annual quilt raffle. I took advantage of the convention to visit my old friends at Battleship Cove and visit my first restoration project, the JOSEPH P KENNEDY JR DD850. I also spent a day in Boston, where the National Park Service has just put the museum destroyer in drydock, talking to their surveyor **Joe Lombardi** and trying to prepare for the day we can do the same for SLATER.

Speaking of DESA, the members of the SOLDESA chapter made their annual sojourn up to Albany to see how we are taking care of their ship. Teddy Prager, Betty Dalton, Phil Prainito, Marty Newman, Sophie Knudson, Williard Darrel, Jerry McClosky, Bill Smith, Jeanie Gracey, Joe Iadevaio, Greg Smith, Ciara Smith and Coral Smith all made the journey from Manhattan and enjoyed a bag lunch on the observation deck, with a few hardy souls heading below to the messdecks to eat despite the heat. This is the group that put so much of themselves into the initial restoration of the ship during those first four years when she arrived from Greece and lay alongside the INTREPID. They seemed well-satisfied with the progress we are making. Teddy had the sad news to report that one of their own,

Willard Darrell, former BT/2c of USS KEPPLER DDE765 passed away the Tuesday after the visit, for him, his last visit to the SLATER. We're glad we could be there for him.

Our friends, the Tin Can Sailors are holding their annual ALBANY/UPSTATE NY BULL SESSION on Saturday, September 11, 2010 at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 1228 Western Ave., here in Albany. Anyone interested in attending should call for reservations at (518) 489-2981. Be sure to ask for the TCS Rate of \$86.00 plus tax which includes breakfast. Our resident author Bob Cross will be speaking to the group and signing his latest book on DEs "Shepherds of the Sea" at 1500 that day. The program will begin at 1100 and last until 2200 following dinner. Feel free to bring your memorabilia and if possible an item for the raffle. That same day at 0930 we will be holding our annual Patriots Day Commemoration aboard the SLATER, so you can make a whole day out of it by attending our ceremony and then heading out Western Avenue to spend time reminiscing with your Tin Can Sailor shipmates.

While meeting the demands of giving non-stop tours and working on restoration projects, volunteers stepped up to help **Admiral Czesak** with our annual presence at the Altamont Fair. **Linda Wruck** rounded up and worked with the usual suspects at the fair over the course of six days and nights. Thank you **Gene Jackey, Jack Madden, Bob Bull, Heather Maron, Herb Marlow, Don Shattuck, Clark Farnsworth, Bill Haggart, Katie Kuhl, Alena Kryukovskaya, Chris Soulia, Fred Sirois, Tom Beeler, Tom Reilly, Jim Gelston, Jim Kuba, Mike McEnteggart, Floyd Hunt, Andy DeSorbo, Nelson Potter, Super Dave Mardon, and Glenn Harrison** for meeting and greeting all fair-goers. We are happy to report that **Smitty's** new and improved tent withstood the horizontal torrent of rain that makes every fair, a fair.



New volunteer Bill Wettreau painting davits.

Several new faces have joined our line up of regulars. New maintenance volunteer Bill Wettreau is an electrical engineer who seems to keep finding himself with a paint brush in his hand. Tour guides Penny Hutton and Mike Paulmeno are college students who bring a passion for history and some experience with museums. We broke them in early with their first overnight on August 28th. Kudos to Penny and Mike for a very successful first time out! Thank you Grant Hack, Tom "Stretch" McLaughlin, and Jack Madden for seeing to it that everything went smoothly! One hiccup did occur; Grant and Linda, accompanied by Penny and Mike, went into the bowels of the B-2 engine room compartment to see why the timer for the ships' running lights did not kick on. George Gollas was also on hand to assist in Operation Where-Is-The-Timer. After much study and crawling around, we flipped the switch. Success! Since you all are probably asking yourself, let's just say it....How many staff does it take to flip a switch?



A group of kids on one of the 40mm guns, their favorite stop on the tour.



Tour guide Chuck Teal explains the 311 50 gun to a group of visitors.

In an ongoing effort to connect with the educational needs of Albany schools and network with museums, Linda created the *Museum in a Bag* program. Original sea bags are packed with variously-themed lessons in civics and government and sociology. Carefully selected groupings of documents and artifacts support and represent the lesson units taught in the classroom. Homeschoolers will also benefit greatly from use of the *Museum in a Bag* program. The new program is free. While working on the program, Linda contacted the Director of Education, **Ms. Tab Broyles**, at Colonial Williamsburg. A great discussion on mass appeal with a specific focus led to Ms. Broyles' suggestion that Linda contact CW's very own consultant for social studies content. The consultant turned out to be none other than **Mr. Bob Van Amburgh**, the Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Albany! **Mr. Van Amburgh** served as Albany's Instructional Supervisor of the Social Studies for 38 years!! Wow, you just never know who you'll meet, and how it will come about. In the blink of an eye, Mr. Van Amburgh contacted Linda inviting her to a meeting. Together, Linda Wruck and I walked "up the hill" to meet with Mr. Van Amburgh for a wonderful talk about schools, content, and outreach.



Finally, we want to extend our sympathy to Earl, Karl and Natasha Herchenroder and the rest of the Herchenroder family at the loss of Michael after a long illness.

And I do not like the regularity of this, but we lost another of our close shipmates this month, Al Van Derzee. Al died suddenly at his home on August 20. He was only 78, too young by our standards. He had just been back to visit a couple weeks prior assuring his shipmates that he would be back giving tours soon. Al was raised in Rensselaer, N.Y. and attended St. Johns. He graduated from Siena College with a degree in business. Later he earned both a master's and a doctoral degree from SUNY Albany. He was employed for over 30 years by the New York State education department. After retirement, Al was a professor of economics at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, N.Y. for many years. Al served in the Navy during the Korean War as a nuclear ordnance man attached to the Navy's first nuclear attack squadron VC-5. In his later years, he volunteered his time on the USS Slater and in 2006 won the Slater Volunteer of the Year award. He was also the athletic trainer for LaSalle Institute's football team from the 1970s up until the late 1990s. Al also coached the LaSalle Middle School basketball team for several years during that time.

Al never lived down a letter of appreciation he received from a visitor who referred to him as our "Tour Guide Extraordinaire." The letter received back in 2004 said,

"Dear Sir or Madam,
This is to acknowledge the exemplary efforts of Mr. Al VanDerzee, tour guide EXTRAORDINARE of the DE766. On Friday, August 20, my fiancée and I took my parents to tour the ship. My dad will be 90 in March of 05 and my mom will be 85 in November of this year. Dad is visually and hearing impaired but is as sharp as a tack. Al introduced himself, welcomed us and began the tour. His voice was clear, loud and distinct. He took special precautions with my parents and guided them through the ship as if they were his own family. He also took time to answer our questions. His enthusiasm and passion for the history of the 766 made the tour very exciting and educational; we truly felt like we were the crew of the ship during the war. We were extremely impressed and emotionally absorbed with his personal tales of WW II and how they related to the history of the ship. We also would like to commend the fine efforts of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association that has dedicated themselves to restoring the DE 766. You have all done a great job! Stephen and I are considering becoming volunteers to help with the restoration and refit of this ship. Thank you very much for a great day at sea. Sincerely, Christina Radz and Stephen Benya"



Tour guide Extraordinaire Al Vanderzee.

Al had a passion for watching Notre Dame football games on his portable TV on weekends between tours. His lack of patience with small children was legendary, but he always bought them souvenirs at the end of his tours, probably his way of making up for threatening to feed the "troublemakers" to the sharks lurking in the river. He was a wonderful story teller. Among his favorites were the time, as an airman recruit, he was called to the base commander's office. Upon arrival, the orderly smirked at him and told him to enter. Inside he found his mother chatting with the full captain, checking to make sure that the Navy was treating her son well. On another occasion he went up for a hop in a, unknown to him, partially mothballed TBM avenger. Unaware that the hydraulic oil had been drained from the ball turret and replaced with cosmoline, Al was able to rotate the turret just enough to block his exit hatch before it froze. Upon landing, his extrication from the turret was covered by the local media. Of course, Al told these stories with a flair that I can never match, and for that and for a host of other reasons, he will be missed by the crew.

See you next month