



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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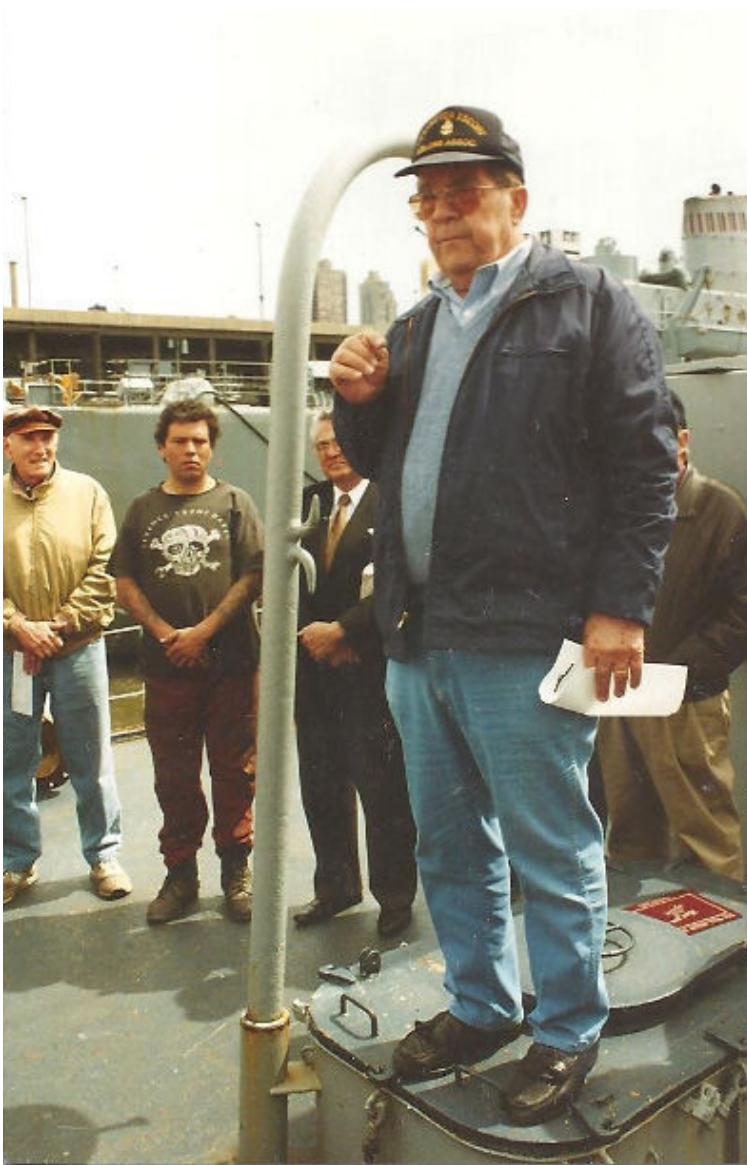
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Vol. 17 No. 2, February 2014



**Still waiting for a thaw.**

**Living in Limbo.** That's what it feels like. If you recall, my closing line of the January *Signals* was "See you next month, hopefully from Staten Island." Little did I know we'd still be in the grip of one of the coldest winters in recent memory at the beginning of March. By counting on a mild winter and setting a mid-February departure date to the shipyard, I have been accused of single-handedly causing the Great Lakes to freeze. **As I write, the pilots and the Coast Guard are telling me that they don't expect the ice to clear out until mid-March.** We had a meeting with **Paul Capel**, the head of the Hudson River Pilots Association. They are graciously donating the pilotage for the 16-hour trip downriver. **Rick Meyerrose**, the surveyor who did the tow survey to get us up here back in 1997 was back on board to do the tow survey to get us back downriver. Needless to say, having not seen the ship since 1997, he was quite impressed with the changes he saw.

**Now into the first week of March and no warm up is in sight; every week here in Albany is a week of the tourist season that we lose on the back end.** It looks like SLATER will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of her commissioning on the blocks in a drydock. We've already moved the USS HUSE work week from the third week of May to September 7th. We've canceled the April overnight encampments and tours, and it looks like we'll be rescheduling the May ones shortly.



**We lost our founder and shipmate, Senior Chief Gunner's Mate Sam Saylor.**

**In the middle of all these preparations, something that is happening all too often these days, SLATER's ensign flew at half mast on Monday March 3rd to mark the passing of Trustee Emeritus and Senior Chief Gunner's Mate Sam Saylor. Sam passed away on Saturday March 1st following a long illness.** For those of you new to the project, Sam was one of the key individuals responsible for bringing the SLATER back from Greece. Working with the late **Marty Davis**, Sam was a driving force in bringing the SLATER home. Sam was born September 21, 1926 in Washington D.C. He enlisted in the Navy on September 21, 1943 and after training at Great Lakes and Treasure Island, reported as a plankowner to USS CONNOLLY DE 306 as a GM 3/c. He remained aboard serving in the Pacific until she decommissioned in 1945.

**Sam remained in the Naval Reserve and was called up for the Korean War, where he was sent to Japan to recommission USS ALBUQUERQUE PF-7.** He remained with her for the duration, and remained an active Reservist, retiring with the rank of Senior Chief Gunner's Mate. In civilian life he started out as a pressman at the Government Printing Office, and rose to become Acting Public Printer under both Presidents Carter and Reagan. A former President of DESA, Sam located 170 of his former shipmates, and his CONNOLLY crew have been among the staunchest supporters of the SLATER. Sam is survived by his wife LaVerne and daughter Linda, who lives in Omaha.





On February 13th we celebrated the 70th anniversary of USS SLATER's launching.

**I don't know how Sam first became aware of the SLATER's availability in Greece. Sam and Marty visited the USS KIDD in Baton Rouge while I was there in the early nineties to see how we did things down there.** While visiting, they related their plan to bring an old destroyer escort back over from Greece. They even went so far as to ask if we would be interested in mooring their ship alongside the KIDD in Baton Rouge. By that time I'd been in the historic ship business about fifteen years, and I'd heard all kinds of crazy plans to preserve ships. I wrote those guys off as two more lunatics. I knew they didn't have a snowball's chance in hell. **The red tape required to save a ship from the Navy is unbelievable.**

**Talk about bringing one in from overseas, and you triple the problem.** Sam and Marty were undaunted. Sam tackled raising the money and Marty tackled the bureaucrats. They created the Destroyer Escort Historical Foundation as a not-for-profit educational corporation to support the ship. At the time DESA was a last man organization at the time and they saw the need to create an organization that anyone could join to support the ship in perpetuity.

**When the great day came and the SLATER arrived in New York, no one expected her to look as bad as she did. They asked me to come up and do a survey of the ship. I came up to Manhattan the October after the ship arrived.** The ship had been pretty much gutted inside except for the machinery spaces and I went compartment by compartment listing all the parts she would need to make her complete again. I developed a task list and material list to do a 1945 restoration. She gave new meaning to the word scow. But I guess I look at neglected destroyers the way most people look at lost puppies. I want to adopt them all. Sam and Marty sensed that and tried to get me to leave the KIDD and move to New York. My response was that two weeks was enough. You couldn't pay me enough to live in New York City.

**But a lot of people live in New York and loved that ship.** The SOLDESA Chapter, CONNDESA, and members of the Garden State chapter took SLATER under their wing and cared for her for four years doing an incredible amount of work. Guys like **Lou Yacullo, Teddy Prager, Paul Albers, Phil Prainito, William Smith, Bill Humienny, George Craig, Earl Gillette, Ron Frankosky** to name just a few, and a host of others did the lion's share of the chipping and the ripout of Greek modifications. And we must not forget the ladies who were right on board with their men. I knew where a lot of the parts they needed were, from all my years of scrounging for KENNEDY and KIDD, so I spent the next four years as a volunteer helping them to locate the parts they needed. Then I started to have a personal stake in making sure the restoration went correctly, and parts went where they were supposed to go. Sam certainly encouraged my input.



Sliding down the ways at Tampa Shipbuilding.

**In the spring of 1997, the Intrepid management decided that the USS SLATER did not fit into their scheme of things.** About that time some of the Manhattan volunteers wrote to **Governor Pataki** seeking help in finding a permanent home for the USS SLATER. The letter was forwarded to the Division of Military and Naval Affairs and ended up on the desk of the late **Kevin Lynch**. He contacted **Mayor Jennings** and asked about bringing the SLATER to Albany. The City kept an open mind and a group went to Manhattan and toured the ship. The group came back to Albany and reported that the SLATER was a do-able project and would be great for waterfront development.

**Marty made several trips back and forth to Albany over the spring, summer and fall of 1997 and in October of 1997, the ship was moved to her present home in Albany. Sam remained active as Chairman of the Board until 2011 when he was forced to resign for health reasons.** In recognition of the role he played in helping to establish the museum, he was voted a Trustee Emeritus by the DEHM Board of Trustees. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Laverne and Linda. My great regret is that Sam did not live to see USS SLATER up on the blocks, being preserved for the future visitors to enjoy. Very few of us are fortunate enough to leave such a tangible legacy to the next generation as Sam has left us with USS SLATER.



Clark Farnsworth and Gene Jackey fabricating the new 40mm spent case chute.



While Doug Tanner cuts away the old 40mm spent case chute.

**This waiting period gives us more time to think of preparations we haven't made.** We started looking around at all the gear and furniture that has been sitting in place but that never was properly secured. With that in mind we've welded down a lot of file cabinets, book cases, and miscellaneous equipment. And, we've undertaken a few projects. We are chipping and restoring the old ship's store in the amidships passageway, repairing the shelving and replacing the battered door. We are addressing a 16-year-old eyesore right where the public comes aboard the ship. The overhead of the port 40mm spent shell cage has been rotted ever since the ship came over from Greece. Since it was right adjacent to the gangway, we could never address it. This winter, despite the cold, **Doug Tanner, Gene Jackey, Dave Mardon** and 92-year-old **Clark Farnsworth** tackled the job and are replacing the whole overhead of the shell chute.



Barry Witte teaching RPI Midshipmen the art of running armored cable.



Topside we've shoveled a lot of snow.

**Barry Witte and the RPI NROTC Midshipmen have continued to work on the bilge drain system.** Thanks to Midshipman First Class **William Gregory's** leadership in keeping some RPI crew coming in week after week, we are reaching a new attendance/participation record for them. The work is cold and dirty. Besides the motor room dewatering project, which is now complete, they have helped add another functioning submersible pump to our inventory as well. Along those same lines, **Guy Huse** has been traveling up every Monday and Saturday to work on the B-4 fire and bilge pump. **Boats Haggart** and his deck crew have been tending to the mooring lines and making preparations for the move.



**Suffice to say, they ship has been riding beautifully here at the Snow Dock, with no undue strain at all on the wall.** And despite the fact we haven't had any running water for a month, Smitty continues to keep the crew well fed on Saturdays and Mondays. **We've continued to have the support of the Sailors from Naval Support Activity Saratoga Springs.** They have completed offloading all the material that is going to go ashore, cleaned out magazines, restowed all our inert ammunition, and have done a lot of general cleanup so we'll look respectable when we hit the shipyard. They have also been sorting tubes and when we needed shock mounts for the radio gear, they knew just where to look.



The Sailors from NSA Saratoga Springs cleaned out the forward magazine.



Jerry Jones and Mike Wyles wiring up the TBL transmitter.

**The radio gang has finally caught on to the fact that we might be moving some day.** Jerry Jones, Joe Breyer, Bob Kibbey and Mike Wyles have finally got the TBL transmitter into operating condition. They thought they were ready to go, and when they cranked up the motor generator it acted like the 2 KV generator field wires were not connected, and that was because the field wires were not connected. The cable was lying on the deck, neatly tucked under the m/g set where they couldn't see it. It is the only copper colored braided RG-8 cable and is the only original cable from 1942. It still has the original friction tape and black lacing from 1942. So tests have been successful, and they are back where they were when the motor generator burned out two years ago. Jerry reports that he called 'NERK DE NZYF' on 4285 kilocycles but nobody answered; "Don't nobody guard the old Navy freqs no more?" That's one of those inside jokes for radiomen.

**Their shipmate Stan Levandowski has been slowly recovering from his cancer treatments, but is still very weak.** Joe and Mike took the time to contact Stan on the Elecraft K2/10 low power QRP transceiver Stan donated and they had a great conversation with Stan, giving him an update on our progress, all in Morse code. They then turned their attention to securing all the loose radio gear that is on the shelves but has never been bolted down. The NSA Navy guys located shock mounts in the storeroom and Jerry has been restoring the mounting frames. One by one the receivers are all being properly mounted in place and secured for sea.

**While the winter is our off season, Heather is in full gear with educational and curatorial activities;** she is currently working with volunteer Nelson Potter on an exhibit for the local Clifton Park Library.



**This photo of the Monday crew made us a finalist in the Capital Region Gives contest.**

**This month the Times Union newspaper ran the second round Capital Region Gives Contest.** After readers have cast their votes, six finalists will move on to a final vote beginning March 20. We will send the link out to everyone on the SLATER SIGNALS list and post it on Facebook, but the important thing is that all of you need to be looking for the link to vote and then share it with all your friends. At stake is a \$5,000 cash prize and \$5,000 in free advertising. The second place finisher receives \$5,000 worth of free advertising. The winners will be announced April 10 in a Capital Region Gives special section, a comprehensive Times Union project to help the community connect with local nonprofits. Readers can cast one vote per computer.

**Thanks to those of you who wrote letters of support for the Times Union Capital Region Gives Contest.** We were one of four entrants in the Arts and Culture category. By utilizing our email list and mobilizing our supporters through Facebook we received over 1,500 votes and were able to inch past “Patriot Flight” to win by 100 votes. **Frank DeSorbo** of Patriot Flight wrote, “Hello Tim, congratulations are truly in order for anything that gets the WW II & Korean War Veterans some attention. Between the two of us we brought that message to 90% of the people. I'd rather believe that we are doing our best for these Veterans and there is enough history and money around, we just have to keep trying.”



**In another long term education project that has finally come to fruition, for the past two years, Trustee Greg Krawczyk has been scanning the USS SLATER's deck logbooks into his computer and converting them into searchable pdf files. Erik Collin got them posted to our website this month, so if you're looking for information on an event that happened on USS SLATER or want to know what the crew was doing on any given day go to the "History" pull down menu. The files posted are one month each. If you open the files with Adobe, they are searchable.**

**As part of her ongoing efforts to reach out to keep our educational programs going year round and reach out to our local community, Heather Maron visited the Terrace at Glen Eddy in Niskayuna.** The residents of this senior living community in attendance appreciated the engaging, educational presentation, which included some history of Destroyer Escorts, their

**Your support of the Winter Fund continues to be most generous.** We were particularly gratified to receive a sizeable donation from **Sharon Mardon**, wife and caregiver to our own **"Super Dave."** All donations are acknowledged with a letter that includes a line required by the IRS that no goods or services were exchanged in return for this donation. Some of Dave's shipmates questioned as to the appropriateness of including that line in the letter to Mrs. Mardon, as in the case of Dave, we have been providing adult day care services for him for several years now, allowing Sharon to be able to relax at home knowing that Dave is supervised and well cared for. We'll let the IRS make that call.



**"Super Dave" Mardon putting his time into the 40mm spent case chute in the nice warm shop.**



**Jerry Jones and Mike Wyles wiring up the TBL transmitter.**



**Along those lines of generosity, I received this message from Patrick J. Campbell, LT, SC, USNR (Ret), who served as supply officer aboard USS LLOYD APD63. A strong supporter of the project, Pat wrote “Tim, I’m paying back a major MARKER! My mom taught me that as we go through life, we continually gain “Markers” and that we forever carry the internal obligation to pay them back.** The life forming experiences that I gained as the Paymaster of the USS LLOYD APD63 in 1956/57 left me forever indebted to my Supply Division team, to my **Chief Paul Beacham, to Captain Barney Gallagher, XO Paul Diamantides,** and to the ship’s crew, all of whom taught me leadership, understanding, patience, and how to be infinitely flexible in working with others, ...factors which have proven to be of immense value in the operation of my own businesses, as well as in my personal life.

The marker for this kind of experience is self-imposed, the worst kind, a marker that demands constant attention, and can never be paid back in full. I am using this opportunity to make a major dent in paying it back. On behalf of the USS LLOYD and all of its sister ships, I am sending \$75,000 to the Slater Hull Fund, so that we may maintain this symbol as a remembrance of our past, as a tribute to our ship mates who made us what we are, and for the education of the future.”

**Once USS SLATER is actually in the shipyard and on the blocks we will be turning to you one more time to try and push the Hull Fund over the top so we don’t have to take money from the endowment.** The latest figure we have for the whole project is \$1,217,000. That doesn’t include contingencies. The concern is we will find something we haven’t anticipated. And, that is why we are reaching out to you one more time in the hope you will make another donation. The Hull Preservation Fund as it stands now will not be enough to cover the complete cost of drydock. With that in mind we will be reaching out to you, our 3,000 national members, as well as foundations and corporations, one more time to raise the remainder of the funds. Since the drive began in 2010 over 2,000 individual donations have been received for this project.

**I said this last month but it bears repeating.** Looking back on our 2013 revenue, we received exactly \$1,000 in government funding from a City of Albany Arts Grant for public programming. Other than that, every dime we’ve spent this year came from earned income and contributions, plus all the donated services that keep us in the black. The upcoming drydocking is being funded totally by your donations. USS SLATER exists because you want her to exist. I know the Garden State Chapter sent their end of the year donation in eleven months early because, as Gene Hermanson said, “I know you need it now.”

**See you next month**