



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

PO Box 1926

Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123

Vol. 18 No. 5, May 2015

**May first marked the 71st anniversary of USS SLATER's commissioning in Tampa.** One year ago, we were in dry dock, completing week four of our 12 week overhaul. Now back in Albany and open to the public, the restoration work continues.



The volunteers from the Michigan Chapter of DESA at the SLATER.

**The members of the Michigan Chapter of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association began to arrive on 3 May.** The first order of business was the traditional Sunday turkey dinner, prepared by **Mark Zarem**. The meal was delicious and attendees included DEHM Board Chairman **BJ Costello** and President **Tony Esposito**.

**The following morning, the first order of business was a memorial service honoring the late Mike Zarem.**

The significance of the service was demonstrated by the fact that in attendance were Mike's wife **Linda**, his son **Mark**, his daughter **Megan**, his brother **Mark** with his wife **Michell**, and his brother-in-law **Bill Wasco** and his wife **Sandy**, and of course Mike's father **Ron**. Special guests included family friend **Nancy Klein**, who was **Charlie Markham's** daughter, and her friend **Marcie Walcott**. Former



The memorial service held for Mike Zarem.

SLATER WWII Crewmember and workweek volunteer, **Bill Svihovec**, came over from Connecticut.

**Mike had been a regular attendee of the workweeks with his Dad, and his death was particularly hard felt.** Deacon "Albany" **Dick Walker** presided over the service that included the presentation of the flag that flew during the commemoration to Linda. Following the service,

goodbyes were said, the family members headed home, and the crew turned to. Once again, **Chief Smith** volunteered his services to cook for the crew. He was ably assisted by **Jim Ray** and **Roy Brandon**. They served out the weeks as messcooks.



Laird Confer welding outside the aft passageway.

**Laird Confer and Butch Warrender went to work on the rot on the aft deckhouse.** The rotted bulkhead around the aft cross passageway has been a source of leakage into berthing compartment C-202L for years. They cropped out the old metal and fitted in a new piece that **Doug Tanner** had fabricated to match the curve of the aft deckhouse.

**Ron Zarem worked with Kyle and Scott Brandon, and supervised the cleaning out of the area under the amidships 20mm guns, in preparation for deck painting by the HUSE crew.** They also did a spectacular job cleaning and straightening out the muffler room. Ron took care of a trashy looking pile of wood by the trailer, too. Then storekeeper Ron went on to straighten out all the



Scott McFadden working on chipping paint.



The Michigan Crew in the stack.

uniform shirts that had been donated by **Jim Decota** over the past couple of years.

**Bill Wasko and Scott McFadden repainted the port flagbag, which was peeling badly after the long hard winter** . Nothing sticks to galvanized sheet metal in this cold. They also scaled and repainted several galvanized ventilation trunks and the whaleboat day tank. Then Scott and Bill took on another high-wire act. They climbed up on the radio direction platform and scaled and painted it. This project stemmed from a photograph taken by **Carol Venezia** on our way back from the shipyard. While passing under the bridge she snapped a shot, and everything looked perfect, except the top of the platform which was rusty and hadn't been painted in years. Well, Scott got it painted, but in the process put his chipping hammer right through the side of the platform in several places.

Further investigation was warranted. The whole platform was rotten out, so this will be the next big project for the shipfitters.

**The most dramatic job was done by Dow Clark and Mark Zarem.** Last year in the shipyard, the yard repaired some leaking exhaust pipes. We had never gotten up there to clean up and finish the painting. Dow and Mark went in and over the course of two days cleaned, reprimed, and repainted the whole cap interior. It's getting to be like a second home to them. Up on the flying bridge, 'Michigan' **Dick Walker, Mike Marko and Jim**



Volunteer snipes restoring the original machinery.

**Ader** scaled the deck at the base of the MK-52 director and the rangefinder platform. **Dick** also gave the fire control shack a good cleaning out. **Jim Parker** prepped the BT probe that **Barry Witte** donated, which will be on outside display on the BT boom.

**Bill Siebert, Gary Dieckman and Ed Wakeman** worked with our engineering gang on the lubrication of the number four main engine. **Gary and Thomas**

**Scian** made several trips into the sump to try and understand the system. The plans to get number four main are on hold. It seems the lube oil system takes suction from a skin tank located below the sump. Since we had all those tanks cleaned in the yard, we hate to put any oil back in them. That means we have to reconfigure the whole lube oil system, and figure out how to blank off that skin tank, which appears impossible because of the baffles in the tank. Some places we need to get to are inaccessible. They also did a lot of straightening up in B-3 and B-4. **Ed Wakeman** painted out the exhaust fan room that **Ron Prest** had prepped a month previously.

**Joe Stout and John Meeker** completed repainting the starboard bulwark and waterway, and they painted the two hatches to the storerooms under C-203L. **Laird and Butch** helped them get gaskets installed. **Dow Clark, Ed Zajkowski, Bill Wasko,** and **Mark Zarem** got the scaffolding hauled aboard. **Ron Prest and Thomas Scian** got the crawl space under gun three coated with Corroseal. **Guy Huse** installed the new seats on gun two, after a difficult fight getting the supports freed up. **Ron Mazure** spent the week in his usual spot, chipping in the steering gear compartment. And, **Tom Burrows** took care of the compartment cleaning.

The next gang to arrive on the scene was eighteen volunteers, under the umbrella of the **USS HUSE Reunion Association**. They arrived on Sunday, 17 May. In the absence of their regular cooks **John Nicotra** and **John Malvasio**, **George Amandola** manned the galley to provide meals for all of our volunteers. Local volunteer **Dave**



Smitty preparing food for the volunteers.

**Newton** assisted George in the galley. It was largely thru Dave's efforts and input that good and plentiful meals were provided to our crew. He, in essence, saved the day meal-wise. Dave has offered to join us each year and cook for our work parties. **Wally Bringslid** served as mess cook in support of the galley. In addition to setting up the mess decks for each meal and cleaning up afterwards, he also took care of the visitors' lavatory and observation deck.



Robin Larner and Jan Schweiger working on the flying bridge.

The main project for the crew was **scaling, priming, and painting the 01 level deck from the breakwater to the aft 40mm mount**. Nearly everyone was involved in that project. Those who were assigned other projects joined that effort when their initial assignments were completed. The 01 deck crew, **Robin Larner, Jan Schweiger, Sue Streiter, Joe Delfoe, Ernie Aeschilman, Dennis Tracey**, and his Dad, **Edward Tracey**, worked on chipping, sealing, and priming.

Robin and Jan also managed to get the inside of the companionway painted out on a day it was too wet to paint outside. The paint crew was later beefed-up with the addition of **Anthony Amandola**. **Anthony** had been grinding weld joints down there with **Brandon Easley**, who erected scaffolding for work to be done on the ship's mast. Then a master pipefitter **Hank Ward**, off USS OTTERSTETTER DER-244, completed a water cooling system project for the ship's generator and joined the happy crew chipping and painting the 01 deck.



**Happily, after chipping, sealing, priming, and cutting in, the final finishing coat of nonskid paint was completed at 1700 hours on Thursday, our last day of work.**

The second main project was the upkeep of the K-guns. This difficult and arduous task was assigned to **Marc and Paul Suzdak**, who worked tirelessly on this project. They were able to complete this entire task and had the K guns ready for spray

painting by one of the regular crew members in the stockroom that he organized. —

around those K guns and depth

charges continues to be difficult and time consuming. Keeping everyone in paint and clean brushes was **Bill Mehan**. Bill would mix the very expensive special epoxy paint now being utilized on SLATER. This requires a two-part mixing process and, after being mixed, must be used in a short period of time. So, in addition to cleaning brushes, he had to judge how much paint to mix and when, in order to keep the deck crew supplied constantly, alleviating any wait time.

**Guy Huse worked on the number two three-inch gun, freeing up some of the moving parts that had become inoperable.** Keeping the crew's quarters, washroom, and passageway clean and neat for the benefit of our work party, as well as for tourists coming to the ship, was **Stan Dickstein**. Who, when finished with that work, would join the 01 deck crew whenever he could. **Doug Streiter**, a talented mechanic, was asked to complete a number of housekeeping projects that contribute to the health and safety of the volunteers. In addition, Doug fabricated fittings needed for the ship, as well as searching out parts in the local area.

**We received several significant donations this month. Ed Zajkowski.** He brought up his mint condition BT probe that he purchased off Ebay last winter. It's an amazing instrument. We've been looking for one of these for years. **Joe Delfoe** returned a portable fog horn that he took home last year for restoration. He did a truly museum-quality restoration job.



The USS HUSE Reunion Association at the SLATER.

**And, over the past year, Jim Decota has been purchasing medical artifacts to make our sickbay complete.** He brought about 20 boxes of instruments, glassware, and bottles to the ship a couple months ago. Erik Collin unpacked it all, and got it out on display, making our sickbay one of the most authentic in the historic fleet. Our guys also participated in the open house at the Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Philadelphia. Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy, Dan Statile, and Eric Altman spent a day and a half making removals from the ex-USS BOULDER LST-1190. They came back with 62 aluminum bunk frames, welding cable, the log desk Gary needs for aft steering, a drill press, several IC alarms, valve hand wheels, and brass locking hardware for our joiner doors that exactly matched what was missing.

**The regular local volunteers were not idle during this time period. Angelo Bracco** had finished sewing up the straps for the life raft, so Boats and his crew lashed in the grating that Steve Dull made for us a year ago, and they managed to get the 200-pound raft hoisted into position number four, portside aft. Danny Statile and Super Dave got the plate bolted into gun three, so at least that is now watertight. Gary Sheedy is now working on the smoke generator vent, as part of his ongoing steering gear room restoration project, and he got the chemical warfare stowage space insulated.

**Walt Stuart** gave the anchor windlass room a good cleaning out. **Bill Holt** has taken over for **Rich Pavlovic** as keeper of the 20mm guns. He's been working his way around the ship, wire-brushing, corrosealing, and painting. And, we tied up the big buoy tender, USCGC KATHERINE WALKER, when she spent a night alongside, so her crew could experience Albany liberty.



Ray Lammers, resotorer of electrical fittings, working on the SLATER

**Each month now, it seems we are saying farewell to another one of our volunteers, and this month the flag flew at half mast for Ray Lammers.** The crew fabricated a steel box for him, on legs with a lid. Each week Ray would fill the box with paint remover. The electricians gave him a pile of electrical boxes and fittings that needed repainting. Ray would soak them in paint remover, clean all the old paint off them, and repaint them so they looked like they just came out of the factory. The electricians loved Ray for his attention to detail and support of their effort. No one has ever come to take Ray's place. His box still sits on the starboard side, awaiting another Ray Lammers.

**It was a sad day for us aboard USS SLATER in 2008 when Ray decided he was no longer able to volunteer.** My wife and I would occasionally run into him at Hannaford, doing our Thursday night shopping, He was always wearing a Navy ball cap, either USS SLATER or USS TATUM. Google Ray Lammers and USS SLATER to get a sense of his contribution to our ship. We are much better off for the time he gave to us.

**Finally, this month we say farewell to our longtime shipkeeper and database manager Erik Collin.** Erik started with us in 2000, as a maintenance volunteer. In 2004, we put him on staff with two diverse responsibilities, the role of shipboard custodian and our IT/database manager, due to his computer expertise. As our database manager, Erik basically built our computer network from scratch, and managed to keep





Jan Schweiger chipping paint on the 0-1 deck.

our hand-me- down obsolescent hardware running long past its prime. He installed the PastPerfect software and developed the systems to manage all our membership and donation records. With the software installed, he was responsible for the daily posting of dues and donations, generating thank you letters, and generating renewal letters. Erik also kept track of additions, deletions, and address changes.

He was responsible for website updates and improvements, and posting our monthly online newsletter SLATER SIGNALS to the web, too.



Erik Collins with Herb Trettin, EM2, USS PUEBLO PF13, USCG

**With regards to the ship, Erik had a unique perspective and focus on detail. He developed several exhibits that are unique to USS SLATER.** Enlisting the help of volunteers like **George Christophersen, Jack Bertsch, and Stuart Scace** , these projects included the fabrication of new shoulder rests for the 20mm guns, making over 100 rounds of dummy 40mm ammunition for display, creating authentic-looking replica detonators for the depth charges,

and constructing replica fuses for our hedgehog projectiles. Erik instituted our ability to do 3" gun salutes, which drew a lot of public and media attention. Thanks to his attention to safety, he has supervised the firing of over 100 salutes, without one misfire or accident. Erik's attention to cleanliness kept USS SLATER one of the cleanest ships in the historic fleet. With RPI students, Erik also created a special display of radar simulation and sound effects in our Combat Information Center that makes this space one of the most exciting points on our tour. Our Museum is a better place for the years Erik spent with us.

**See you next month.**