



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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Well, those of you who saw the November Slater Signal's "On Line" internet edition saw the image of us being towed back over to Rensselaer, ungracefully, stern first. We are now safely tied up at our winter berth, undergoing, what the Navy might call, a "four month availability."



Dutch

The saddest news since I wrote the last issue was the passing of "Dutch" Hannmann (DE-530). Dutch had been fighting leukemia for over a year. Quietly dedicated, hard-headed and hard working, Dutch was one of the mainstays of the chipping crew. He often tackled the overheads with a special wooden needlegun extension tool he designed. He was in the radioroom working with the crew just a week before the stroke that ultimately took his life. The flag flew at half-mast during the crossing for Dutch. The crew held a brief memorial service after we tied up in Rensselaer, under the 40mm gun tub that he chipped, next to the 40mm spent case cage that he repaired. The previous spring his

daughter had accompanied him on the trip back across from Rensselaer to Albany, sharing that part of Dutch's life with him. How many of us are lucky enough to have raised kids who want to share that part of our past? Video of the crossing shows Dutch seemingly everywhere at once handling line on the fantail. He even remembered us after his passing, as he requested that memorial donations be made to the SLATER. His daughter Kathy thanked us for all we had given Dutch, but to a man the SLATER crew will agree, he gave more to us.



"Dutch" Hannmann DE-530 Using needlegun extension tool he designed

**So, we're back in Rensselaer, one shipmate short.** The actual move went just fine. On the morning of November 30, we woke up to an inch of snow and slick roads. The plan was to undo all the wires, cut off the water, disconnect the telephone and power, and leave at 0900 to catch the incoming tide before it turned. We headed out about half an hour early, and were immediately stopped by standstill traffic on the interstate. We backtracked on to Washington Avenue and headed downtown on the side streets. At this point I knew we had no chance of getting out before the tide

## To Stations after Head Count



changed, because with the interstates stopped nobody would be able to make it to the ship early enough to get all the wires off. It took us about forty five minutes to get to the ship, normally a ten minute drive. When we got there it was 0800 and I expected to find a vacant parking lot. Not with the SLATER crew. There were thirty volunteers hard at work, everything was going on schedule, and despite slick roads and slick decks, we were ready to go at 0900. The trip across was a little harry because of wind and high water. The wind was gusting out of the north, and because of high water, the current was flowing south too. Catching the incoming tide just meant it wasn't flowing as fast. So the question for us was keeping the brakes on.



**The tugs were the faithful old Governor Cleveland and a new comer the Waterford.** The big pushboat the Grand Erie had mechanical problems, and wasn't available. No offense meant to the Waterford, but she isn't half the man the Grand Erie is even though she is a really good-looking little tug. The word "cute" does come to mind here, but calling a sailor's ship "cute" used to be just cause for getting one's teeth knocked out at the dockyard pub, so we'll just say she has "graceful, classic lines". So the plan was to have the Governor Cleveland tow us stern first, and have the smaller Waterford pull against the wind, current, and Cleveland with a towline off the bow to be the brake. We got underway at 0900 and everything went according to plan. The Cleveland pulled us away from the dock and we headed south with the Waterford keeping us straight in the channel. This was our quickest trip to date. The tugs stopped us right off the dock, and slipped us in within four feet of last years position. Gene Krott's (CVA-60) bridge maintenance crew were on the pier with the generator and gangway to catch lines. Lines went over and were doubled, the securing wire ropes went across and were clamped in place, the shore-tie made up to the generator and powered up. Within two hours we were all secure. Practice does make perfect. Once again the Canal Corps guys handled difficult conditions and made it look easy.



One extraordinary circumstance occurred during the trip. As were coming down river, who should we see coming up river but two of Bart Brake's Empire Marine tugs heading north. As they approached, the radiophone conversation went something like this:

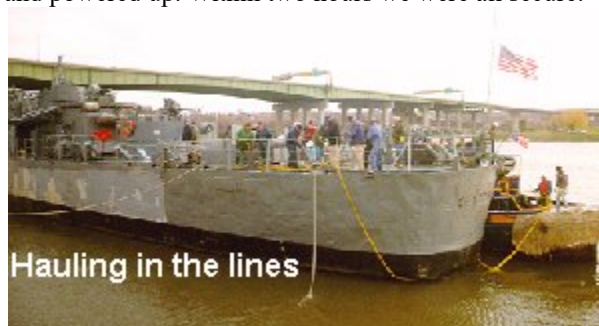
"Herbert to Cleveland; *"What's ya got Tommy?"*

"Cleveland to Bart; *We're bringin the SLATER down to Rensselaer for the winter. Where you headed Bart?"*

*"We're going up to pick up Kevin's restaurant barge and take it down River for the winter. You guys need a hand or you got it okay?"*

Cleveland to Bart; *"Thanks, we're doing fine. We got it okay"*

Bart to Tommy; *"Look's good. See you round"*.



We had mentioned to Guy Falkenheimer that we were moving on the morning of the 30th. We don't know for sure if it was just coincidence that put Bart's boats abeam of us just as we were making our landing or a case of river people continuing to look out for the SLATER. In any case if things had gotten tough, Bart was right where he needed to be to help out. For that we want to express our thanks. Our thanks also go out to; the New York State Canal Corps tugs, who had everything under control; the Department of Transportation Bridge Maintenance Gang; the Albany Water Department for the use of Jimmy and the crane; the Coast Guard volunteers from the Saugerties Station; and all you volunteers who pitched in to help out.



**The play isn't over till the fat lady sings, and the ship ain't moved until the camels are out of the water.** Remember the camels, the sixteen two-ton camels? Well, Wednesday, 1 December was camel day. To make a cold story short, it was eighteen degrees when we reported to the Snow Dock Wednesday morning, with a brisk wind blowing out of the north. We played around with the crane for about an hour rereaving the hook to handle the weight, and getting the drum to feed right. Raf, Tom Moore and one of Gene's guys went down on the camels. We made our first lift at ten am. Shackles and wires came off. It was a lot easier with camels that float and Tom's boat. Raf was quite the camel herder. The current seemed to push them right into lifting position one after another. One after another, the hook ups were made and camels lifted on to the Snowdock. Gene Krott's crew stacked them into position, and by 1230 we were done. What took two days last year took two and a half-hours this year. It seems practice does make perfect. It was a whole lot worse thinking about the job than actually doing it. By noon it was a balmy 25 degrees, so Raf and Tom decided to go for a scenic boat ride. But that's another story.

**We remembered Pearl Harbor aboard the SLATER.** Dan Hornick of Albany County Executive Mike Breslin's office contacted us about holding a memorial aboard the ship. At first they were a little disappointed that the ship wouldn't be in Albany County on Pearl Harbor Day, but would in fact be in Rensselaer County. However, they decided that the SLATER's deck was the best place to honor Pearl Harbor Day from, and at 0755 on December 7th, the time of the start of the actual attack 58 years earlier, the memorial began. For a cold December morning, it was very well attended by veterans from all branches of service. In addition to Mike Breslin other dignitaries included Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings, Rensselaer Mayor Lynn Ganance, State Senator Neil Breslin, Albany County District Attorney Sol Greenberg, and other local dignitaries. At the center of the occasion was Albany resident, Andrew Bovitz a Pearl Harbor Survivor of the USS West Virginia who later went on to serve on a DE. The event was well covered on the noon and evening TV news as well as the Times Union, but the important thing was taking a moment to remember the event that caused SLATER to be built, commissioned, and serve.

It would also be appropriate at this point to express our sympathy to our friends from our sister service who wore Army green. This includes West Pointers Hal Hatfield, and Mike Breslin, our friends at DMNA and all our regular volunteers including Mike Gurney, Tim Benner, Russ Ferrer, and the rest. We felt your pain at the outcome of this years Army-Navy Game. The SLATER got a little more airtime during the game as Cdr. Greg Krawczyk's lead cheer aired on local television here in the Capital Region.

On board work goes on as it always has and always will. As of this writing the gang is just finishing up radio central, and it's received a prime-coat of paint (*yes it really is that yellow*). As soon as the painting is finished we'll move all the radio gear out of the Captain's Stateroom and begin work in there. We have several projects going. The electrician's are working on the wiring in CIC, as we get ready to restore that space. Work is also going on in the officer's staterooms, and the aft head where the ceramic deck tile is being chipped up.

**A major crisis occurred when the controller on the main air compressor failed.** We couldn't chip. Barry Witte and Scott Dessingue cannibalized a pump controller to get the compressor back on line. In the meantime, Gary Sheedy began repairs to the B-1 compressor as a backup. He has replaced all the valves and most of the piping on the forward starting air flasks, installed a new controller, and is just about ready to go. We're all concerned that he's getting a little too comfortable down there in the forward engineroom. He moved down his stereo and speakers and put a sign on the hatch "Rockin B-1, the Choice Duty Station." A Vietnam Vet, his taste leans heavily towards early sixties rock. If you like Elvis, it's the place to be.



**Prime Coat in Radio Central, Dec 99**

**Finally, we're about two working days away from having the heating system on line.** Bill Schroeder and his apprentices from the Albany Local 7 Pipefitters Union completed installation of the piping and heating coils before the class ended. Now Russ Ferrer, Doug Tanner, Tom Moore, Tim Benner and Barry are all working to complete the system. It's really interesting since they hardly ever see each other or work together. We are in the final stage of checking for leaks. We put 20 pounds of air on the system last night and had five pounds left in the morning. So we've still got some small leaks. The tank is full of oil and we're almost ready to go. The system should heat the whole superstructure and second deck forward. It will be a welcome break from the cold. No more hauling kerosene. Our thanks to all who have worked to hard to put the system together.

**Some of our SLATER volunteers have been on the move this month.** Frank and Pat Perrella attended the 13th Annual SOLDESA Pearl Harbor Day Memorial Service and were invited to speak about SLATER's progress during the program. They were presented checks for SLATER's Endowment Fund from the SOLDESA members and the Ladies' Auxiliary and were given Certificates of Appreciation by the SOLDESA Chairman & Auxiliary Chairlady, Marty and Rhoda Newman.

Joanne McFadden, Public Affairs Coordinator was getting a little bored with SLATER'S stationary position so she decided to head for the REAL SEA - - - - - CDR Greg Krawczyk, commanding officer of the Albany Reserve Center, arranged for Joanne to go on a "media embark" with 13 other journalists aboard the USS EISENHOWER, USS WASP, and the USS MOUNT WHITNEY. There were several Albany-based reservists serving aboard the command ship MOUNT WHITNEY to



support the Joint Task Force Exercise. Joanne had an opportunity to interview and write about them for the newspaper. The highlight of the trip (right up there with flight ops on IKE)), was landing in an LCAC with the marines at Camp Lejeune. Her first question to Tim was, "When can we take SLATER to sea?"



The venerable SLATER Cap

**Joanne also wants us to remind everyone to wear your SLATER hats.** They are greatest form of "free" advertising we can offer. She had given her father, a Navy veteran and bald southern Californian, a SLATER hat to wear. He is getting quite a reaction from it with people engaging him in conversation and others "nodding like they want to salute him or something." One man, a retired judge whose last name is "SLATER", wanted to know how he could order hats for his family. We can credit publicity committee member Dick Walker with this idea as Dick wears his SLATER hat regularly.

**It's still too early to tell about the success of the SLATER Winter Fund Drive.** As I write this, the November SIGNALS

with the appeal has arrived at my house and I've already written my check, but CPO Art Dott beat me. He was the first to contribute, three weeks before the drive started. We also received a hefty contribution from the CAPDESA Chapter just as the November SIGNALS was being mailed. We're counting on the rest of you to help us with a financial boost to get us through the winter while the restoration work is going full-steam ahead. There are still lots of Slater "Pin-Ups" and "Chipper-Dale" calendars available so don't hesitate and be left out, get those contributions mailed soon.

**I'm just about out of space, and there's a ton more.** Chuck Teator's volunteer breakfast, Larry and Ken's success with the sound powered phone system, Mike Stenzel has completely updated the website, Erik's progress with tile chipping, Ray's box covers, Roy's commode, the Naval Reservists gave us a big hand this month, and Les, Annette, Don, Eric, Julie, and Nancy are all at Crossgates Mall selling dogtags to give us some winter income. And then there's Christmas. The elves (or maybe it was the SLATER angels) came in and decorated the CPO mess for Christmas. But, of course, Larry Williams got the blame. Gary Sheedy came in, too one look at the Christmas lights strung up gaily in the overhead and yelled, "How many times we gotta tell that guy to keep the wire runs straight and parallel, and run them in the cableways!" Ah, Christmas on the SLATER - we hope your holidays were as enjoyable as ours and we'll see you next year with the full Y2K January report - something that was not even conceived back in the 40's !



**SLATER Santas send Holiday Greetings from the CPO Mess.**  
 l-r; Dick Smith DE-5, Larry Williams DE-246  
 Tim Rizzuto Ship Supt, & Bob Callender DE-744

**HAPPY NEW YEAR- 2000 - FROM ALL OF US AT THE USS SLATER DE-766.**

