

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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**Phone & Fax (518) 431-1943  
Vol.2 no.6, June 1999**

**Since our arrival at the Snow Dock, we have been the focus of a flurry of special events and visits by dignitaries.** A week hasn't gone by without something "Big" happening. Things started popping on the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend. Thanks to Gordon Lattey's old connections, we were honored to be visited by newly elected New York State Senator Chuck Schumer accompanied by Albany County Executive Mike Breslin. Norm Wason's Sea Cadets served as sideboys, also assisted by SKC Adrienne Daniels, and as bells were struck, the dignitaries were greeted with the proper pomp and ceremony. They laid a wreath in honor of our honored veterans; specifically those lost on Destroyer Escorts. The event was covered on all three local TV stations and made the Times Union. The following week we saw the usual bump in attendance that follows this kind of event.

**We hardly had time to catch our breath and pat ourselves on the back** when Governor George Pataki's Office announced that the Governor would visit the SLATER on Flag Day to present medals to eight New York veterans. The announcement came as a complete surprise and NYS DMNA Hdqtrs. handled most of the arrangements on this one. Simultaneously, we were also planning for a Flag Presentation by the Daughters of the American Revolution and a big DE Day Memorial Observance on June 19th. Planning for these events continued to take place amid the school tours and hustle of maintenance activity.

**About twenty-five members of the General Peter Gansevoort Chapter** of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution attended a ceremony on June 12th. They replaced the tattered ensign that we had been flying since opening day on April 19, 1998. The flag they presented to us is a beautiful cotton 4x6, larger and brighter than its predecessor and it has flown over the US Capital in Washington, DC. The ceremony was appropriately dignified, lead by Mrs. Peggy Gifford, Regent. In thanking the women, we noted that while SLATER is happening primarily because of a hardheaded group of seventy-year "old-salts", we will never reach our full potential without the support of the women of the community. That is why the involvement of groups like the DAR is so important to us.

**As Flag Day dawned with our new colors flying,** we awaited the visit of Governor Pataki, scheduled for 1400. For a change, the weather seemed against us, with a threat of showers looming. The awardees gathered, the sideboys gathered, and the dignitaries gathered. Ice, drinks, and a beautiful USS SLATER cake arrived for the reception in the wardroom. The color guard was in place, and the state flag ready for hoisting. The fantail was freshly painted and the brass freshly polished. At 1230 a shower started, and word came from the Governor's press office that the ceremony was being moved to the Capital. All the dignitaries and participants began to saddle up and move out. We'll never know what really prompted the next change, but thirty minutes later the call came in that it was back on for the SLATER. All hands regrouped and took their stations. By 1400 the fantail was chockablock with guests. You could hardly see for all the gleaming white uniforms and gold braid. At 1410, the car arrived, the Governor got out, greeted folks on the pier and walked down the gangway. Honors were rendered, **"New York Arriving"** reverberated over the 1MC, sideboys snapped a salute and Governor Pataki requested permission to come aboard. Our ceremonial OOD CDR Greg Krawczyk granted permission and the ceremony to honor eight valiant New York veterans began. The ceremony lasted about twenty minutes. The Governor departed, and the guests and dignitaries gathered in the wardroom



for refreshments. Again the press coverage was terrific. The one piece of irony was that above all the pomp and ceremony, the SLATER volunteers watched from the gun 43 tub on the 01 level, most still in their work dungarees, looking all the world like the pirates that they are. A photographer from the Troy Record snapped a classic shot of the crew happily clapping and waving, and it made the front page. The photo caption said that they were applauding the honoraries but Dick Smith swears that they were clapping for a pretty girl who had just climbed up into an adjacent director tub. Anyway, as the Governor was leaving the needle guns were once more the rulers aboard SLATER!

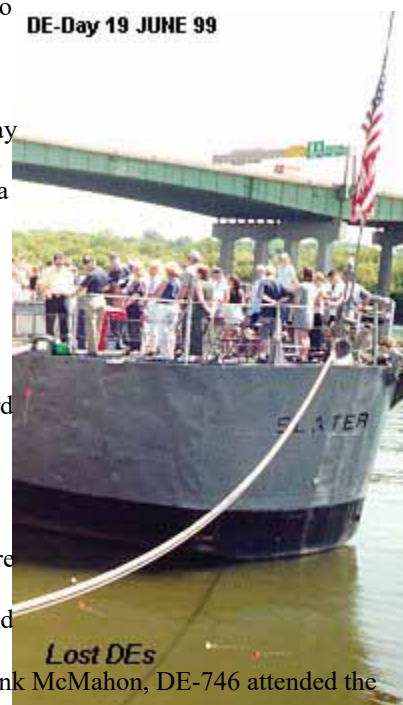


DESA Exec Dir, Ralph Freese  
DE-Day 19 JUNE 99



**The following Saturday was DE Day.** Pat Perrella had been planning this event for weeks; to honor all the Destroyer Escorts lost in action and strengthen ties between DESA and the SLATER. The weather was beautiful as DE vets from all over the region gathered on SLATER that Saturday morning. Albany Mayor Gerry Jennings paid us a surprise visit. He arrived unannounced, and took a tour of the ship and was updated on our progress. At 1100 Troy's own Uncle Sam Chorus began the ceremony singing several patriotic songs in extraordinary Barbershop harmony. CAPDESA's Bob Donlon & Don Justus led the Pledge of Allegiance, Colors were posted, and DESA Executive Director Ralph Freese was piped aboard as the featured speaker. Albany DEHF 1 st VP Frank Lasch made the opening remarks and introduced Ralph. Ralph reflected on his life experiences in the Navy, with DESA and the SLATER. Following Ralph's remarks, honors were rendered for all the DE's lost in action. As each DE's name was read, the ship's bell was tolled, and a carnation dropped into the Hudson and saluted by CAPDESA members. The entire family of Frank McMahon, DE-746 attended the

DE-Day 19 JUNE 99



Lost DEs  
McMahon, DE-746 attended the

event as he was honored during the memorial observance. Our thoughts were with all the men who went down with those ships as well as the 4 departed CAPDESA members and our own volunteers McMahon & Roger Oesterreich DE-680. (Pat would also like to thank everyone who assisted in her DE Day efforts supplying chairs, food, & ceremonial details to help arrange the event. It was wonderful to have so many guests share this special day with us & we appreciate the long journeys made by many.)

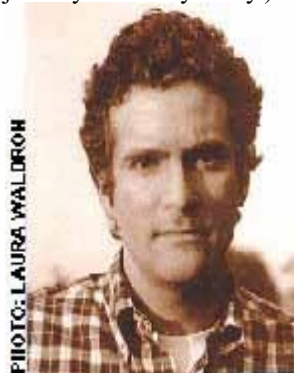
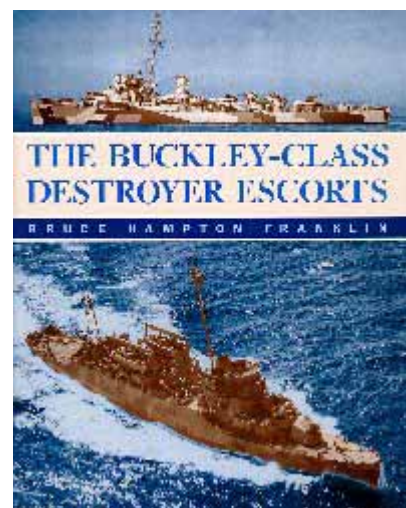


PHOTO: LAURA WALDRON

Bruce Hampton Franklin

**After the memorial service, Bruce Hampton Franklin was introduced.** Bruce has just written an excellent book on the BUCKLEY class DE's, dedicated to his father who had served on DE-200. Bruce hosted a book signing in the wardroom for this very first presentation of the book. The book was literally "hot off the press" having arrived in Albany from the Naval Institute Printers only the day before. Frank and Pat Perrella had ordered 75 copies as a donation for resale in the gift shop, and many were sold on DE day. We hope to have Bruce and his gracious wife Laura, back on future occasions .



**Another memorable event following the service was the signing of DESA's Year 2000 Convention contract** by Ralph Freese and Robert Huber of the Holiday-Turf Inn on Wolf Road. Michele Vennard, President of the ACC-VB was also on hand for this signing which took place on SLATER's fantail. This Convention will bring over 300 DESA members to the Albany area along with their wives and family members for a week of touring, dining and visiting the SLATER; the DE they brought back to "her home port" in 1993. You can be sure the Albany Crew will be pushing to show them their dream was not in vain and that their Destroyer Escort is becoming a ship worthy of its' Historic Naval Ship designation.

**Michele Vennard and Gina Mintzer of the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau** have just put together a large mailing to all the Destroyer and Destroyer Escort Reunion Coordinators they could find. If you are a reunion coordinator interested in bringing your crew to Albany, give us a call and we can hook you up.

**When the SLATER first arrived in Albany**, the XO of the Navy Nuclear Power Training Unit at Ballston Spa, CDR Chris Wenz was an active participant. He had hoped to get sailors of his detachment involved in SLATER's restoration. For various reasons that never really materialized. Chris is now planning to retire in July, off the SLATER on July 9 th . ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE INVITED. One of Chris's sailors was a chief hull tech, awaiting reassignment. Apparently they had this Nuclear Certified welder pushing papers or something, and someone suggested that his talents might be better utilized on the SLATER, pending his reassignment.

**Thus, shortly after our arrival at the Snow Dock**, Chief Roy Cannode crossed our quarterdeck for the first time. We sent Roy up to the flying bridge to tie together all the work that had been done by the Michigan volunteers and the Naval Reservists up to that point. This involved completion of the enclosed companionway over the ladder well, installation of the watertight door, completion of the raised platform for the raised grating, and fabrication of handrails and ladders. Working a couple of days a week around his Navy duties, in three weeks he has the job 90% completed. Quiet and unassuming; all the old timers have been super impressed with Roy's progress while working largely alone, the quality of his work and commitment to the project. He is a Sailor in the best traditions of the Old Navy, the kind of guy you want leading the repair party when everything is going to hell. Roy was last seen at the top of the stack, welding up the holes that we we're gonna patch with bondo.

**With the volunteer of the month award gone to Roy, the runner up is Tom Moore.** Tom has tackled chipping, sanding and repainting the stack, working off an extension ladder. All the postwar sailors are excited because when Tom needle gunned the stack cap and applied the Coroseal, they thought we were repainting the cap black. Sorry troops. That's a violation of WWII camouflage instructions. The U-boats will spot us coming over the horizon. Anyway, Tom should have the stack finished by the end of the month, eliminating another big eyesore.

**Third runner up goes to Gene Cellini.** Gene is another new volunteer who served on a sub tender, and is a union mason and painter. Gene had two weeks between jobs, so he brought his power painter down to the ship and helped the crew finish painting the forward superstructure. This guy really knows how to lay down paint quickly and neatly.

**The award for Nancy's favorite maintenance guy goes to the Monday electrical crew.** They ran a cable from the amidships IMC microphone aft to the ticket booth, and installed a handset there. As the ticket booth is the center of command and control or "Nancy's Bridge" on visitor days, the ability to use the PA system from this location is an important asset. We suspect the announcement; *"Will a tour guide report to the ticket booth"* will soon become a regular part of our routine.

**Finally, honorable mention has to go to Barry Witte**, Barry's student helpers, and Gary Sheedy who completed rebuilding the aircraft warning lights. At the masthead, if you missed the significance. Barry figured that during the DE Day ceremony was the best time to work, because no one was wandering around under the mast, a target for a falling bolt. Russ Ferrer has joined us as a new welder, helping Roy Cannode on the Flying bridge and Clark replacing scuppers. Chuck Teator continues to supply us with spring water for the coffee, Joe Logiudice continues plugging away on the T-21 grant, Ray on the mess benches, Les selling jeep raffle tickets, Annette selling everything else, and so on. You guys chipping under that depth charge rack, don't worry, someone will notice you someday. We never mention Frank Lasch. He's the boss here in Albany, so we figure he doesn't need a pat on the back. However, Frank has been wrestling with a massive board reorganization. Based on the DEHF by-laws, Frank realized that we haven't had a quorum since February 1998. Frank is



Cdr Barry Witte, Fulectrical Team

working to fix that along with Tom Owens and it's taken a lot of time and effort. Thanks for trying to keep us legal.

**Don't forget Slater Crew -we're back on shore power** so turn off the lights and don't run equipment if we're not using it. Keep the visitors comfortable, but spaces not open to the public should be dark if not occupied

**We want to welcome aboard a new tour guide, Charles Minor.** Charles is an ex-carrier hospital corpsman, and wears the sharpest uniform aboard. That carrier duty shines through! He was just what the Admiral ordered for DE Day and quickly hoisted the flags for the event, posted the quarterdeck watch and very skillfully pinned the corsages on Mrs. Freese, Mrs. Franklin, and Frank McMahon's three daughters before giving each a smart salute!

**Finally, the SLATER angel of the month is Claire Oesterreich.** Claire played hooky from work one Tuesday to paint waterways with Raf. Dave Riffley was down in the engine room and came up lamenting that the other two cylinder liners in the Emergency Diesel looked like they had hairline cracks. If you've been following this saga over the past year, you know how disheartening this is. We mentioned that the last one cost \$500, from Hatch and Kirk, and that Pat had donated it. Well, Claire overheard the conversation and said, "Well if Pat can buy one, I'll buy two." The competition among the "ANGELS" is getting pretty fierce. Anyway, it took our engineers about three months to pull the first cylinder liner last year. This time Tony and Dave pulled two liners in two days. It's either a hell of a learning curve or Claire's motivation.

**In line with promotion,** we need any of you planning a trip up or down the Thruway to stop and pick up some brochures. We need to keep the eight rest areas to the north, east, west and south of us supplied, so if you're going on the road stop by and we'll give you about fifty. Joanne McFadden is also requesting the assistance of volunteers to place brochures in any motels near their homes. She has called several and they are more than willing to display SLATER's brochure. Another request comes from Roy Gunther: He is looking for a few large pieces of closed cell Styrofoam. The kind used for packing in air conditioner and appliance boxes. He wants to break it up and put it in two camels that could use a little more buoyancy.

**Our last bit of interesting news is that Slater Signals can now be accessed online.** DMNA Webmaster Michael J. Stenzel added a link so it can be downloaded and printed in homes all over the world. This file is in a .PDF format, which is a compressed document that is easier to exchange over the Internet. He has also provided the download link for the .PDF Reader software that is a free program. All of this is really a lot easier than it sounds - sort of an advancement along the lines of the Morse Code carried into outer space so don't despair, just check with any computer guru to learn how to use this handy tool. If you haven't visited us "online" the website address is: <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/slater/index.html>

