

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Ship's Superintendent

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Photo: Erik Collin



It's been a really wild month. It all started where we left off last month as **Bill Welch** drove off and I was left aboard with forty angry old men. Well, the old men just got angrier. Bill left it that we would try to move the ship to Albany on Saturday. Well, the regular Saturday crew got really excited, because most of them have jobs, and can't be there for a weekday move. So, Saturday, April 28, the crew showed up in force. But for technical reasons, the move didn't come off on the 28th, so the Saturday gang went home disappointed.

Then other things started to pop, namely the Michigan field day. At the last minute we got the word out that we were still in Rensselaer. Some got the word, and some didn't. They began to arrive en masse on Sunday. About half went to the Snowdock. Of course, they were elated at the fact that we hadn't moved yet, because they sensed a little sea duty in the offing.

Dick Breil and **Ron Zarem**, Michigan DESA Chapter organizers, brought thirty-two willing and able workers. That number was dictated by the number of bunks available without anyone having to sleep in an upper berth, and the number of men **Cookie Bill Kramer** thought he could feed comfortably. The galley crew really had their act together. This time they had four guys working in the galley, **Bill**, **Paul Monaco**, **Frank Warner**, and **Jim Andrus**. Jim wanted to come really badly. A latecomer, he was told that there were no spots left. In desperation he offered to messcook for the whole week. With that offer, Dick found room for him. Talk about being totally uncorruptible! They arranged it so they could split shifts. Nobody got worn out, and by the end of the week, all the cooks were still smiling, with no cleavers having been thrown and no new dents in the galley "walls". A happy galley crew made the whole experience much more pleasant for all.

Work assignments were handed out Monday morning, and the crew turned to. One gang worked on bunks; sanding and painting all the steel frames, and polishing the aluminum frames. They completed ninety frames all together; most being steel frames from our old friend ex **USS GAGE APA-168**. **Dick Breil** led another crew that began lacing the canvases into the bunks and rigging them in C-201L, the aft berthing space that is our temporary museum exhibit. **Pat Perrella** also worked down there all week, moving DE artifacts and setting up the displays by ship in the bunk lockers. Her goal was to have the exhibit complete for the DE Commanders Organization's reunion visit on Monday, May 7th. At the same time, contractors from a local firm, Glass Doctor, had come in as low bidder on the fabrication of the cases, and they were installing the safety glass tops on the lockers. It was a crowded space for the duration of the week.

One space aft, in C-202L, **Ron Zarem** and his crew set about cleaning, masking, and getting the place ready to paint. The goal was to get the whole compartment primed and painted during the week. **Gene Cellini** and **Beth Spain** were also on hand to help them with that project.

Meanwhile, topside, the plumbing crew turned to rebuild the forward heating coil. It was fortunately warm enough so we were able to secure and drain down the heating system and begin disassembly of the forward heating coils. Experience had led to a redesign of the coils on the horizontal, and there were some leaks to fix. This was a big job as there is three-hundred feet of heating coil and a couple hundred connections to disassemble and resolder.

Finally "Michigan" **Dick Walker** and **Dave Marsh** went back up into the MK52 Gun shack on the flying bridge and spent the week scraping, painting and repairing the insulation up there. Dick had taken the fire-control computer and brought it back all restored. The space is really starting to shape up.

John Bartko made his annual major donation to the endowment fund early Sunday afternoon. So while the rest of the crew was badgered and beaten to work harder and faster, we allowed John to choose his own work station, continue at his own pace, and made damn sure he was comfortable while doing it, whatever it was!

Tuesday Morning, the first of May dawned clear and calm. A morning call to Bart told us that he planned to move **SLATER** shortly after the noon high tide. I wasn't taking any chances though. At morning muster, I told the Michigan gang not to count on it, and to start work as usual. By now, we had cried, "wolf" so often, that we didn't call any of the regular crew, and didn't bother to alert the media. Despite the silence, the word crept out, and by eleven we had a fair contingent of our regulars including **Raf, Chris Fedden, Chief Floyd, Larry Williams, Bill Coyle, Gene Cellini, Bosun Mike, Beth Spain, Erik Collin, Bill Siebert**, and several others. They all waited around the quarter-deck with binoculars peeled down river on Bart's tugs. Noon came and went. No movement.

The Michigan crew continued working as before. As the afternoon wore on, the regulars gathered on the portside amidships growing increasingly weary of waiting and hostile towards the mis-management. Each ring of the phone brought a new rush of adrenaline. At 1400, some of the regs had to start leaving because of the arrival of school buses at home and other commitments. I finally called Bart at 1430. He was waiting for a guy who was supposed to show up at eleven about the generator. As of yet he hadn't shown. The crew began to give up. Beth left. Bill Siebert left. Gene left. Chris left. Mike left. Pretty soon, most of the experienced line handlers were gone. At about 1600, **Frank Lasch** came aboard to see how things weren't going. The crew at the gangway implored him to get the "Sup" off his ass and get things moving. In true Frank fashion, he moseyed up to the office and two minutes after he sat down, the phone rang. It was Bill Welch. He said to me, "He finally showed up. You still want to go today?" All I could say was, "Let's do it."

Frank left the ship, telling the crew how it had taken a little effort, but he'd gotten things straightened out. I told the Michigan gang to knock off maintenance work, and we split them up into a special sea detail. Larry got ready, and the cooks were none too happy as they had chickens in the ovens, and we were about to cut the power. The decision as to who would stay on the pier to handle lines and drive over was difficult, but those with video cameras were the first to volunteer. Among them, **Ron Zarem, Tim Markham, Russ Ferrer, and Erik Collin**. The waterline and the gangway came aboard. The tugs made the usual hookup with the **HERBERT** on the stern and the **EMPIRE** in the bow. Lines were cast off, and we backed away from the pier at 1645. It was a perfect afternoon - sunny and calm. Colors were shifted properly, and cook **Bill Kramer** sounded a blast on the ship's whistle as we got underway.



The trip across was a really nostalgic trip for the Michigan gang. One could only wish for every DE sailor to have that experience once again. The wind picked up a little, but was nothing to worry about. The arrival was a little ragged. Here's where the lack of experienced line handlers showed up. Of thirty-two men in the Michigan gang, there wasn't a bosun's mate among 'em. As **Erik Collin** video taped from the pier, Raf and I made several perfect heaving line throws, only to have the lines fall short because they weren't made long enough. Once Erik turned the camera off I know I made every shot. The weather was forgiving, and eventually we got all the lines across and doubled up. They were so short handed on the pier that even **Nancy Buxton** was pressed into service to catch lines. That was a problem when it came to lifting the aluminum brow, but we got it and hauled it across. **Larry** and **Bill Coyle** got the power hooked up so they could finish the chicken, and soon after the waterline was connected. As soon as all the soft lines were made up, we took a break for

dinner. We put on the wires after we ate and by 2030 everything was secure and the tailgate party commenced on the pier. It was a perfect day. We got a full days work out of the Michigan gang, and the ship moved to boot! The following day **Bob Cross** had **Jimmy** and the Albany Water Department Crane on hand to set the steel gangway in place. We were ready for visitors on the Albany side.

The Michigan gang departed Saturday morning, May 5th. That Saturday was also a landmark maintenance logbook entry for the engineers and electricians. In the afternoon, **Barry, Gary, Gus** and **Larry** put the emergency Diesel generator on line, and had **SLATER** on generator power for an hour. It was a little too late for Kramer's chicken dinner, but it marked the culmination of four years of hard work by a whole lot of people. As Barry said, "Now if you ever have to drop an anchor, at least you can get it back up."

Sunday, the Northern Illinois DESA Chapter arrived. This first time group included DE vets and sons from Illinois, Wisconsin, and a southeastern part of Illinois called New Jersey. **Earl Johnson** showed up from Long Beach, and with chairman **Vic Schaedel** and **Keith Larnar** tackled plumbing. They replumbed the fresh water lines in the forward engine room and ran fresh water into the scullery on the messdecks. **Jim Larnar, Bill Ried, Sheldon Elliott** and **Dallas Kobriger** continued working on the bunks, chipping paint in C-203L, and repainting chairs. Their crew also included a locksmith: **Bill Archibald, Jr.** and his Dad completely restored the doors to sickbay and the ship's store. The anticipated contingent of females did not show up, so there was no one they could con into cooking. They lived off Bill Kramer's leftovers until Wednesday, interspersed with trips to the truck-stop diner. **Vic Schaedel** and **Jim Larnar** finally had to take matters into their own hands, and with no volunteers, began doing the cooking themselves. It was tough, but nobody starved to death.

Monday, May seventh. The first complete work day for the NI DESA Chapter would have made that a full day by itself. But we also had the long anticipated visit by the Destroyer Escort Commanders Organization. This group has donated in excess of ninety thousand dollars to the **SLATER** Endowment Fund. They were holding their 53rd Annual reunion in NYC and planned a train trip to Albany to visit the **SLATER**. **Frank Lasch** orchestrated a beautiful event that included properly piping 24 former CO's aboard complete with sideboys, bells and announcing the names of their former ships over the IMC. **Greg Krawczyk** handled the duties of ceremonial OOD, with **Mayor Jennings** and **Bob Cross** greeting each CO as they came aboard. [ATTENDING WERE: Arthur E. Allen - USS STADTFELD DE-29; Lewis M. Andrews Jr. - USS SIMS DE-154; Mrs. R. Channing Barlow (widow)- USS NEUENDORF DE-200; William H. Bell, Jr. - USS ULVERT M. MOORE DE-442; Horace E. Bent - USS LOESER DE-680; William E. Biggerstaff - USS FAIR DE-35; T. Nash Broaddus - USS CATES DE-763; Godfrey Cheshire, Jr. - USS HAROLD C. THOMAS DE-21; Ralph G. "Pat" Coburn - USS EMERY DE-28; Hiram S. Cody, Jr. - USS DECKER DE-47; George W. Egan - USS ACREE DE-167, USS BARON DE-166; John F. Floberg - USS BIVEN DE-536, USS GOSS DE-444; Walter Gadsby, Jr. - USS BLAIR DE-147; Virgil E. Gex - USS NEUNZER DE-150; Stuart L. Kadison - USS WILLIAMS DE-372, USS EDWIN A HOWARD DE-346; William J. Klein - USS ROLF DE-362; Fred B. Korsmeyer - USS HUBBARD DE-211; Mrs. Katherine McCoy - USS ENGSTROM DE-50 (widow of CO Donald W. McCoy); Robert W. McCullough - USS PETERSON DE-152; Donald McKinlay, Jr. - USS ROBERT E. PEARY DE-132; A. Philip Merrill - USS EDWARD C. DALY DE-17; James M. Mertz - USS STURTEVANT DE-239; J. Ross Pilling, Jr. - USS GARFIELD THOMAS DE-193; Harold V. Richard - USS STADTFELD DE-29; Ralph Scamell - USS FOWLER DE-222; Richard E. Warner - USS GEORGE DE-697, USS KENDALL C. CAMPBELL DE-443]

It was a wonderful morning that included a full turnout of **SLATER** volunteers who made the ship come to life for these former Captain's. These DECO men who led us during those difficult days of WWII have continued to lead the way with their generosity and concern for the last remaining DE afloat in the United States. Even though they have FINALLY become "the Old Men" they were affectionately called by their crews, their presence still brought a deep measure of respect among everyone who attended the event and had the opportunity to meet these distinguished gentlemen and their families. It was a very special day in particular for **Don Shattuck, Bill Ried,** and **Johnson McRorie** who got to meet with their former commanders on the deck of the ship they all now call home. Completing the culmination of months of effort



**DECO COMMANDERS
USS Slater fantail
7 May 2001**

**Back I-r; Hiram S. Cody, Jr., Fred B. Korsmeyer, Ralph Scamell
William H. Bell, Jr., William E. Biggerstaff, T. Nash Broaddus
Robert W. McCullough, J. Ames M. Mertz, Ralph G. Coburn,
Harold V. Richard, Walter Gadsby, Jr., Lewis M. Andrews, Jr.,
Arthur E. Allen, Godfrey Cheshire, Jr., William J. Klein,
J. Ross Pilling, Jr. Front I-r; John F. Floberg, Virgil E. Gex,
A. Philip Merrill, Donald McKinlay, Jr., George W. Egan,
Stewart L. Kadison, Horace E. Bent, Richard E. Warner.**

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by the curatorial crew, Pat had the new DE museum space decked out with our artifacts for these special visitors to inspect. That space is becoming the highlight of the SLATER tour.





Cdr George W. Egan, USS ACREE DE-167 & USS DECKER DE-47



Mayor Jennings on fantail with Hiram S. Cody, Jr., USS DECKER DE-47



Cdr Lewis M & Mrs Andrews USS SIMS DE-154 & Mrs Polly Cody in Wardroom

The ship tour was followed by lunch at the Fort Orange Club and a briefing for the CO's on our status and future plans. And in a flash, they were boarding the train in Rensselaer, with that part of the special day over. But that wasn't enough for **Frank Lasch**. Just to keep the day interesting, our quarterly Board of Directors meeting of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum followed the luncheon. The thrust of the board is to get the endowment fund drive rolling, with our goal of raising two hundred dollars a man from the DE veterans and another 1.6 million from the Albany Community. In addition, the Board has voted to formally establish a museum in New York by creating a New York educational corporation, moving the Foundation from Florida to New York. Storekeeper/volunteer coordinator, **Dick Walker**, was elected to the board, but we're not sure whether it was "because of" or "despite of" his Coast Guard pedigree. The one area of heated debate at the board meeting was over whether the phrase "Destroyer Escort" should be hyphenated or not. You can see where I stand on that issue. Anyway, talk about a full day.



Cdr Richard E. Wagner, USS GEORGE DE 697 and USS KENDALL C. CAMPBELL DE 442 with daughter Katie Burke



Frank Lasch, Albany DEHF Board Skipper addresses USS F C DAVIS DE-136 Survivors

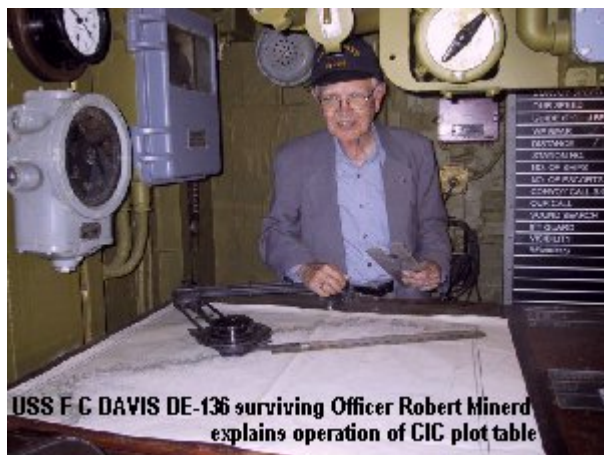


Welders Plaque presented to USS SLATER

The following Saturday, things were jumping again. The crew of the **FREDERICK C. DAVIS DE-136**, the last DE sunk in the Battle of the Atlantic, came aboard. They held a touching memorial service on the fantail, attended by several former crewmembers of the **HAYTER DE-212**, including Tour Guide **Alan Fox's** Father Sam. **HAYTER** was the DE that picked up the **DAVIS** survivors and casualties following the sinking. The U-Boat that sank the **DAVIS** also got off a shot at the **HAYTER** while she was stopped hauling the **DAVIS** crew aboard, so there is a close bond between these men. That



Genuine "ping-jockey" Arthur V. Huntley, USS F C DAVIS describes Sonar Equipment to Dr Fred Cardwell



USS F C DAVIS DE-136 surviving Officer Robert Minerd explains operation of CIC plot table

morning the **SLATER** was also honored to receive a plaque from the American Welding Society designating the **SLATER** a historic welded structure, another reason to be proud and a testimony to the men and the women who built these DE's so well and so fast. **Doug Tanner** had worked hard to secure this honor for the **SLATER**, and the plaque will be displayed in the DE Museum Space. Then that evening, **Adrienne Daniels** and **Raf** chaperoned our local Sea Cadet Unit for an overnight training event that included forty-five cadets and parents. That went off without a hitch.



USS FREDERICK C. FAVIS DE-136 survivors present Memorial Wreath for fallen shipmates.



Mrs Melva Strock Young, widow of Arthur D. Strock, RT 1tc KIA on DE-136 with ribbon from memorial wreath



Dr Frederick Cardwell presents photo of his father, Walthin M.H. Cardwell F1tc, KIA DE-136 to SLATER DE Exhibit



Earl & Nelda Carpenter scan names of F C DAVIS shipmates KIA on the DE Memorial Roll of Honor in SLATER's Wardroom



Sam & Alan Fox with USS HAYTER DE-212 shipmate attending F C DAVIS Memorial



These 3 Officers were only ones to survive F C DAVIS sinking Rudolph Kip, Jr., Robert Minerd & Phillip Lundberg

visit USS SLATER Pilothouse

We also welcomed crews from **REUBEN JAMES DE/DER153** AND **CRONIN DE/DEC 704** , with more reunion and school groups scheduled so our season is back in full swing. We created a "Lucky Bag" locker outside the CPO mess, primarily to have a place to put **Claire's** old empty brownie pans. The crew is working on topside touch up painting, repainting the decks, and trying to complete the aft crew's quarters. The wind is coming from the south and the mooring lines are a little slack. She slid about eight inches forward, so tomorrow it's time to tighten up the lines and pull her back aft. We're back to normal. **See you next month.**



Harvey Lawless RM3, Edsel Johnson CS3
Kim Kimball CDR (Engr Off), John Kramber RM2

