

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The Michigan Fall Crew pose with the SLATER Tuesday regular volunteers.

The month started with the arrival of the Michigan DESA crew making their annual fall pilgrimage to the SLATER for a week of hard work. Earl Moorhouse led Dick Walker, Gary Headworth, Jim Ray, Roy Brandon, Ron Mazure, Guy Huse and Laird Conferon a weeklong work party that saw a lot of work accomplished. They scaled and painted the deck in the main gun director platform, scaled and painted the deck around the gun 3 tub to the gangway and under the K gun roller loaders, rolled out the hull sides amidships on the portside, repaired two watertight doors, and completed fabrication of the 20mm ready service locker cover for 20mm gun 23 forward of the pilothouse. We were going to repaint the forward port balsa liferaft, but upon lowering it to the maindeck, found it was rotted to the consistency of paper mache. **Tommy Moore** was forced to cut it up and they hauled it to the

dumpster. The crew restored the wooden grating and lashed it into one of the new Styrofoam bodies. We hoisted it up on the rack after the paint had dried. Their only complaint was the lack of a cook, so it was cold cereal and cold cuts for most of the week. **Captain Lou Renna** on the DUTCH APPLE provided some of their meals, and **Doug Tanner** came in early on a couple mornings on his way to work to fix them breakfast, but it wasn't like the old days with **Bill Kramer** in the galley. We invited them to stay for the volunteer party and partake of **Stan Murawski's** feed on Saturday night. They were so hungry by then they gladly accepted. And by keeping them till the party we got an extra day's work out of them!



Gary Headworth and Laird Confer fabricate a 20mm RS Locker Cover.



Jim Ray, Earl Moorehouse and Roy Brandon working on a life raft grating.



Guy Huse and Jim Ray chipping aft.



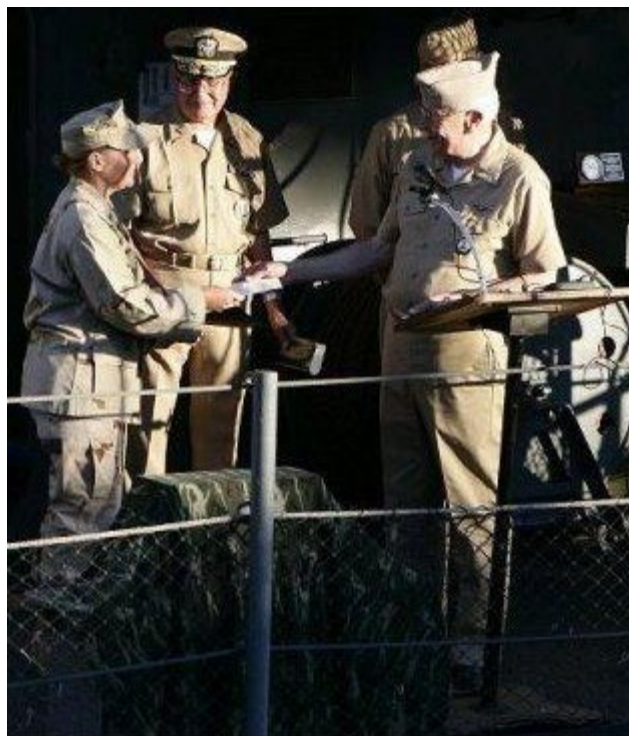
Dick Walker and Ron Mazure on the flying bridge.

The event that got them to stay was our eighth annual volunteer appreciation dinner. This is an event that was started by **Claire Osterreich** and **Frank Perrella** back in 1998 to build friendship and camaraderie among all the volunteers. Right now, locally, we have just over 100 active volunteers on our list, not counting all the out-of-towners who help. This is a chance for them to get together with each other, bring their wives, and show them everything we've accomplished over the past year. **Stan Murawski** handled food this year. Stan baked lasagna for eighty, made up salad, and even baked ten loaves of bread in the new ship's ovens. The smell was outstanding! **Paul Czesak** arranged a special

ceremony to honor **Beth Spain** following her active duty Naval service in Kuwait. Beth reported aboard in her desert camouflage and was awarded a meritorious service commendation medal by the New York State Naval Militia. Proud husband **Mark** stood by while she received the award, though there was some talk that he was the one who truly deserved a medal for staying home with the kids. Beth continues to serve and protect us. She has returned full time to her position as a boat captain with the Naval Militia guarding the Indian Point nuclear power station. It's great to have her home.



Husband Mark and Beth cut her cake.



BM1 Beth Spain is honored for her service in Iraq.

The evening also gave us a chance to remember two of our shipmates who are no longer with us.

Ed Whitbeck, a former Seabee who served with the 13th Battalion and also was a fireman aboard the troop transport GENERAL WILLIAM HASE AP146, died of a heart attack. Ed came to the SLATER in 2000 because he "Just wanted to help out on a great project." He became one of our most dedicated chippers, putting in a day or two every week. He played a major role in SLATER's restoration since his arrival aboard. Always kind of a private person, he ate his lunch in his truck for two years before he got sociable with the rest of the crew. I went back to see how he answered the question where we ask potential volunteers to describe themselves in three words. Ed had left it blank. His last date aboard was Monday September 12th, when he spent the day chipping around the port "K" Guns. He was in great shape and seemed indestructible. When he left the ship, he said, "See you next week." Chippers are hard to lose. They don't make 'em like that anymore.

On the heels of losing Ed Whitbeck, we learned that Leo "Hack" Charbonneau died of cancer following a tough battle. Hack had served on the USS EDWARD H. ALLEN DE531 as a gunner's mate. Hack was a close friend of **Tom Beeler** and was a rigger/welder who was with us back when SLATER looked like she was going to sink at the pier. He and Tom made modifications to the mast including removing a large platform the Greeks had added and installing a top section of ladder so we could service the radar antenna. They restored the flag bags, and helped teach us how to rig the camels and the whaleboat in and out of the water. You who were with us at the beginning will remember that Hack was one of our best riggers and we could always count on him for the tough jobs. We always put him in charge, giving the orders to the crane operator, because, "He was the best."

Tom Beeler brought Hack down to the ship for the last time, a few weeks ago, to visit with his shipmates and donate his military carbine to the museum. Hack came down in uniform of the day, in full dungarees and his CAPDESA jacket. I believe Hack would have been just as reclusive as Ed, but his devoted wife **Shirley** and good friends like Tom brought him out. So the next time you're aboard, look up the mast and remember Hack.



Hack Charbonneau and Ed Whitebeck side by side the day we unloaded a depth charge shipment.

We also were saddened to learn of the passing of our guide Charlie Havlick. Charlie had been with us for six years as a tour guide, having served as an electrician's mate on the USS ORLECK DD886. We remembered them the night of the volunteer appreciation dinner with our flag at half-staff, a eulogy, and a volley from the number three three-inch gun. It was a fitting tribute to three fine sailors. However, as we lose faithful volunteers such as these, new folks step forward to take their places. As I write, new volunteers **Don Miller** DD672, **Earl Herchenroder** US Army, **Grant Hack**, a former Coast Guard EN, **Steve Long**, an SM 2 from USS BOUTETOURT APA136 and SHADWELL LSD25, and **Jim Hewitt** have joined our ranks to preserve the SLATER.

Key Bank sent twelve volunteers down to the ship for their "Neighbors Make a Difference Day" on October 6th. Key Bank executive Tom Geisel supervised while his crew touched up the white paint and painted out the deck in berthing compartment C-201L where we had installed the septic tank last winter. They also painted out the new floater net basket, the two fantail 20mm ready service lockers, cleaned shelves in the gift shop, and installed the upper gear drive on gun 31. That last task was a major accomplishment done under the supervision of **Russ Ferrer**. The upper unit of the train gear drive on gun 1 had worn out, so the crew removed the upper train drive from gun 2. Using the barrel of gun 2 as a crane they lowered the gearbox to the main deck and installed it, so gun 1 now operates on manual drive. The worn drive was hoisted back to the gun shack for future disassembly and hopefully new gears. This evolution has involved almost all hands at one time or another, but it was the crew from **Key Bank** that provided the beef for the big lift and the final installation.



Doug Tanner and Tim Benner patching the hole above the waterline in B-1.



Jack Madden clearing away cobwebs before the first tourists come aboard.

We had expert help from another source. Back during the summer we had a visit by **Hank Kuzma**, who is employed by Naval Sea Systems Command as a damage control specialist. Hank was impressed enough with SLATER that he asked if he could come back and organize our repair lockers. We never turn down free help, so we said of course, figuring, like so many, we'd never hear from him again. Hank was different. His offer



The restocked Shoring Chest sits next to the repainted Foam Generator.

became a promise. He enlisted the aid of his friend **Ken Carter**, and they spent four days aboard while living in a motel at their own expense. Ken, in particular, eats, sleeps and breathes damage control. Ken has served with thirteen ships and shore stations over a thirty-year career and retired in 1986 as a Chief Warrant Officer-Ship Repair Tech. He continued to work with NAVSEA as a damage control specialist, so he is nearing fifty years of Naval related service, with extensive experience in the areas of Damage Control, Firefighting, Chemical-Biological and Radiological Defense and Survivability. In short, he knows about damage control.

During their four-day stay, Ken and Hank performed many tasks to upgrade the SLATER's DAMAGE CONTROL DISPLAYS of WWII equipment. They started out by touring the ship to determine what was onboard and where it was stowed. Next they moved everything out of Aft Repair 3. They assembled and staged all equipment from the



DC Equipment in Aft Repair 3 cleaned, restored and (we hope not) ready for use.

various storerooms. Most of the equipment had to be reconditioned and restored to its original condition as much as possible. For the next three days they hauled equipment, scraped, wire-brushed, ground, chipped, sandblasted, painted, oil-coated, lubricated, cleaned tools, gas mask, breathing apparatus and the spaces. They then assembled as close as possible the complete WWII DC Equipment Inventory of Aft Repair 3. To restore the locker, everything was removed, the space cleaned, and then they had to arrange and remount all the restored equipment in an organized layout. This included installing new brackets, hangers and hooks. They organized the equipment for each function and provided a toolbox or bag for most of the items. Some equipment was placed on shelves. The Shoring Chest, Duplex Foam Proportioner, Mechanical Foam Nozzle, one All Purpose Nozzle, Spanner Wrenches, Telephone Head Sets, red devil blowers, P-250 pumps and eductors equipment were arranged in the passageways near Repair 3.

After all equipment was reconditioned and restored, they took and indexed photos, and took an Inventory, which has been compiled and sent back to us for the locker. With those two pros aboard we felt like we were going back into commission. It was great to have these two experts aboard and we hope to continue our relationship with them. For those of you who are interested, Ken maintains NAVSEA's DC historical website.

Gordon Lattey reached another milestone in his restoration efforts. Working in conjunction with **Cliff Woltz** and based on photographs taken aboard the USS STEWART in Galveston, they sketched and had the fiddleboards made for the wardroom table. For those of you not familiar with fiddleboards, these are wooden covers that fit over the wardroom table with holes cut out for the plates, bowls and cups so that the dishware doesn't slide off the table in a heavy sea. They don't keep the food from sliding off your plate, but they will keep your plate from sliding off the table. **Joe Breyer** has fabricated racks for them in the forward passageway, and they provide another dimension of life on a DE for tour guides to give visitors a better understanding of just how tough life was on these ships. Gordon has also purchased enough blankets off E-Bay so that every bunk in the forward berthing spaces now has a white wool Navy blanket. The rest of the crew continues to make progress, too. The shipfitters are in the process of mounting their first floater net basket aft on the starboard side. Three more to go. The engineers have solved all the problems with the emergency diesel generator and the whaleboat diesel, so all the engines that are supposed to be working are actually working! Knock on wood. **Doug Tanner and Tim Benner** were working out of the whaleboat checking out the hull on the starboard side when they found a soft spot about a foot and a half above the waterline and poked a quarter size hole in B-1 behind the wireway. They put a temporary doubler over it until that dream day when we can get into a shipyard. The worst corrosion is at the full



The Fiddle Board stored in the forward passageway.

load waterline, and since were riding so light and high, well, let's just say we're riding on slightly better metal at the light waterline.



Our dedicated volunteer curator Pat Perrella.

We were honored when Pat Perrella was honored by the Historic Naval Ships Association with the Henry Vadnais, Jr. Award for 2005. This award is given to an outstanding curator in the organization, and anyone who knows her knows she has made an outstanding contribution to the SLATER. Her citation read in part, "Pat came aboard SLATER in 1998 providing administrative support and played a key role in establishing our first Destroyer Escort Day Memorial Service. She helped develop the ship's monthly publication SLATER SIGNALS. She handled all the computer work in producing and mailing the newsletter and paid the costs for the first two years." Pat brought me into the computer age by donating the hardware to the museum and teaching me how to use it. Pat eventually turned her attention to the neglected effort of collection management. By 2001, the ship restoration had progressed to permit consideration of museum exhibits aboard the ship, initially in the after crew berthing compartment. She oversaw the conversion of the space by utilizing the existing lockers for artifacts. The following year the decision was made to move the display space aft to reduce the threat of water damage from the head above, and to provide more space. Pat converted the supply office into a curatorial office and the after officers stateroom for object storage. Teaching herself collections management and curatorial procedures with the help of area professionals and publications, Pat has been incredibly dedicated and meticulous in her museum duties.

She has established a record on every museum object to include photographs, detailed catalog entries and accountability. There seems to be no task too complicated, too technical or too menial for her to accomplish. She has developed such skills and knowledge of the collection that she was invited to present a seminar on the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum to the prestigious Albany Institute of History and Art, one of the area's leading museums. Pat Perrella has played a vital role in the development of a professional museum on board SLATER." I can honestly say that without Pat Perrella, we would not have a Destroyer Escort Museum aboard the SLATER. **Paul Czseak** was present at the annual HNSA conference to accept the award on Pat's behalf.

The only reason I wasn't there to accept the award for Pat was that the DESA convention was being held in Orlando over the same dates. Since DESA is our parent, and so many of our contributors are DESA members, I felt it was important to be at the DESA convention and bring them up to date on the progress we have made since last year. **Paul Czesak** put together a beautiful PowerPoint presentation and **Erik Collin** made a brief video to document all the progress we have made in the past year. I am like a grandparent showing pictures of his grandchildren when it comes to SLATER. I have the potential to bore you to tears in my excitement. However, the group at the seminar wanted to see them all, so I am most appreciative. I'm indebted to DESA webmaster **Pat Stephens** who provided the PowerPoint projector and got me straightened out when I couldn't figure out the unfamiliar technology. It was great to see so many old friends and make new ones. We truly hope one day to be able to bring the DESA group back to Albany to see first-hand the progress we have made on SLATER thanks to you.



In memory of all our departed shipmates.

Remember the special performance by Master storyteller Jay O'Callahan about his uncle Father Joe O'Callahan, chaplain aboard the USS FRANKLIN when it was hit by Japanese dive bombers in March 1945, on November 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the American Legion Zaloga Post on Everett Road. Tickets are \$10 in advance and are available at the SLATER office. Also, sadly, winter is fast approaching, and worse, that means I'll be coming at you with our annual Winter Fund Appeal next issue. Try to put a few extra bucks aside to help us get through another winter. These guys are working their hearts out for you. Now, if you hate getting solicitations as much as I hate asking, you can consider yourselves forewarned. Thanks for everything and...

See you next month



Chippers!