

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

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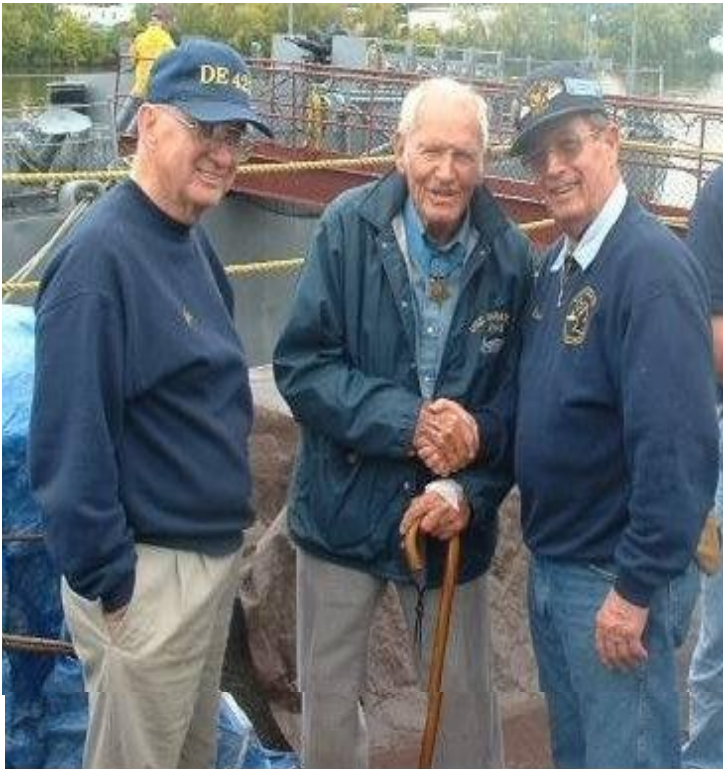
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It's kind of chilly and cloudy on Monday October 23rd. Where did summer go? The ship is crawling with volunteers. **Don Miller, Earl Herchenroder** and **Chris Fedden** are out chipping decks on the 01 level. Earl and Don are working adjacent to the stack and Chris is up on the port forward 20mm gun tub. **Clark Farnsworth** is working on patching a large section of deck in the portside aft 20mm gun tub. They were following up on a job **Chuck Teal** had started the previous Saturday when he cut out a 12"x 8" piece of wasted deck that was allowing water to drip into the fan room below. Clark laid out the replacement plate, fit it and had the piece welded in by the end of the day. **Doug Tanner** was aboard to help him lay out the job this morning. **Stan Murawski** is sanding and spot priming on the 01 level 20mm gun tubs. Down below, **Karl Herchenroder** and **Gus Negus** are getting ready to warm up the emergency diesel generator. Electricians **Larry Williams, Ken Kaskoun, Don Shattuck** and **Bob Callender** are preparing to shift the load and put the generator on line. They spent the morning restoring electrical distribution box fasteners. And the place was crawling with yellow hard hats this morning. We had about 20 workers from the **Owens Corning** plant practicing rescue procedures evacuating injured personnel up vertical ladders in the machinery spaces. They set an injured victim on the lower level of the aft engine room and practiced getting him out. We like to think that serving as their training platform is just another way that the SLATER continues to serve the community. Just a typical quiet Monday.



The Crew at the Michigan Fall Field Day take a break for a photo op.

When we left off last month, we were awaiting the arrival of the Michigan chapter of DESA and their fall field day week. They, along with other friends of the SLATER, arrived on Saturday Sept. 30 in time for the volunteer appreciation party that Saturday night. **Stan Murawski** cooked up wonderful lasagna for about seventy volunteers. As **Earl Moorhouse** said, it was a GREAT Volunteer Banquet, where the out of towners get a chance to mix with the "Regulars." Once again, Stan baked fresh "SLATER" bread in the ship's ovens, so it smelled just like coming off midwatch in the old days. The old girl never smelled so good. All the shipmates and wives who attended had a wonderful time on one of those rare occasions when we can get the whole crew together.



John Finn, center, visits with Jim Ray and Earl Moorhouse.

The following day we had a very special visitor to the SLATER. Early in the

afternoon of Sunday, October 1st, a minivan pulled up and out stepped **LT John W. Finn**, who at 97 is the oldest living Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and the only living recipient from the attack on Pearl Harbor. Finn joined the Navy in 1926. In other words, he was in boot camp about the time most of our octogenarian volunteers were born. On

December 7th, 1941, then Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Finn was stationed at Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station. When the attack began he raced to the airfield and immediately set up a .50 machine gun, which he manned throughout the attack. He fired on everything that passed within range of his gun and scored several hits despite being wounded more than twenty times by shrapnel. After recovering from his wounds, Finn went on to serve with VB-102 aboard

the USS HANCOCK CV19. He spent about an hour and a half with our volunteers and the Michigan crew describing the attack in vivid detail and reminiscing about his time in the Navy. It was a wonderful experience, and we were sure to issue him a standing invitation to the ship whenever he is in the area.

Monday morning the Michigan crew went to work. Michigan's Earl Moorhouse, a former Coastie, exchanged over fifty emails and spent two months organizing their fall Field Day week. He even elected to cook for the crew when no one else volunteered. Supporting him in the galley were Roy Brandon and Dave Marsh. It was just like the old hunting camp story. Nobody dared complain. They would have been the next cook. The crew divided into gangs. Steve Krupinski, Skipper of the Jersey Chapter and our only officer participant, worked with Jersey shipmates Gene Hermanson and John LaMunyon to chip and paint the boat deck. They were joined by our regulars Ron Mazure, Dick Smith, Earl Gillette, Earl Herchenroder and Don Miller. We were most grateful to get Dick Smith and Earl Gillette back out of retirement. They can wield needle guns as good as ever. They haven't lost the knack. By the time they left at the end of the week the entire boat deck forward of the stack had been scaled and primed.

One job wasn't even on the list. Stan Murawski had been out on the river in his boat last month and saw that the starboard boot top was a real eyesore. He was determined to fix the problem. Fortunately two of the field day participants were willing to help him: Ron Prest off DE-1035 was from Massachusetts, and John C. Yocum Jr., who came all the way from Florida. Between the three of them, working off the barrel float that Tommy Moore built last year, they scaled the whole starboard boot top with hand tools and primed it to ready it for painting, and then overcoated the whole thing with boot black. They were assisted on the main deck by Jim Ray who tended their lines, kept a safety watch, and did a lot of chipping and priming of the waterways while he was watching them. Frank Hackart, a former gunners mate, came all the way from Texas to participate. We teamed him up with

Larry Stiles, a former Coast Guard Chief Quartermaster who said his old 378' cutter the GALLANTIN reminded him of a DE. Together they tackled the 01 level forward around gun 2 and got the gun tub and deck scaled, primed and painted.



Don Shattuck on fire watch as...



Clark Farnsworth welds up a hole in the deck. Did we mention he's 84!

We finally got Michigan Dick Walker off the flying bridge and he worked with Butch Warrender rewiring three-inch gun number 1 to complete the mount's restoration. Gary Headworth worked around the ship cleaning and repairing the weather deck light fixtures. Welder **Laird Confer** repaired and mounted three sound powered phone boxes, replaced a rotted stanchion, and rebuilt the davit socket on the fo'c's'le hatch. And **Guy Huse** had the biggest coup of all. Over the past several months you've read about the struggle of the crew to free the port amidships 20mm gun mount gun 24 in train. **Rich Pavlovik, Gene Jackey, and Russ Ferrer** had all tried since spring. Well, it was Guy who got all their greasing, oiling and torquing to pay off. His secret was leverage. Lots of leverage. This in addition to his work on the ship's service generator and helping **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Gary Sheedy** with the heating system. He's a very patient and determined individual.



Ron Prest and John Yocum working the starboard boottop.



Butch Warrender after rewiring gun 1.



Erik Collin, Rizzuto and Stan Murawski painting the fo'c's'le.



Stan takes care of the areas the paint roller can't reach.

They put us in really great shape and we thank all of them and all of you for keeping this history alive. Since then we have continued to have great volunteer support, especially on Saturdays. One of the big reasons is the wonderful lunches **Melissa Peet** has been making. Not only has she been feeding the regular crew, but also the RPI Midshipmen who have been coming down to help Barry Witte with electrical and engineering repairs. He's had them working on the forward fire and flushing pump and rebuilding the anchor windlass controls. Over the weeks following the field day **Erik Collin** and the regulars got non-skid deck blue on the fo'c's'le, 01 level forward and the boat deck. The result is that when you stand on the bridge and look forward, SLATER looks like she's just out of the shipyard. It's a shame how she always reaches her prime just as we prepare to close to visitors for the season.



The fo'c's'le suffering from years of weather.



Repaired, restored and looking better than ever!

With the heating system under control, Doug Tanner looked around for his next project. Then he looked up. The SL radar antenna is sitting on the pier, and Doug has decided it's time to start thinking about how we'll get it up the mast. Of course that means fabricating a platform. Since the original platform was removed, we could only speculate what the original looked like. That was until I called **Ed Zajkowski**, an old friend going back to my days on the **KENNEDY**. When **SLATER** arrived in Albany back in 1997 Ed had given the museum several DE blueprints he had acquired in the early seventies in his scrounging days when the DEs were being scrapped en masse out of the back basin of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. One of the prints was a profile of a DE mast showing the elevations of the platforms. I knew Ed wasn't the kind to give up everything at once, and made a call. He started rooting around in his storage shed and came up with all the detailed drawings of a World War II DE mast complete with SL platform. He delivered the plans to us on his way over to Battleship Cove for the **KENNEDY** field day. Now if the SL platform isn't authentic, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Doug is now copying the plans, making material lists and considering scaffolding the mast come spring. The actual setting of the platform can only be done in Rensselaer, while we're alongside the pier and a crane can get right alongside the mast. Doug anticipates fabricating the platform over the winter and installing it in March when the weather starts to break.



Laird Confer welding up a davit socket.



The Jersey crew scaling the boat deck.

The Capital Area Chief Petty Officers Assn. (CPOA) Chose the Navy Birthday, Friday October 13th to host their annual luncheon aboard the SLATER. The CPOA was well represented. Chief **Art Dott** was the Master of Ceremonies, Senior Chief **Steve Riedel** was the Guest Speaker and Master Chief **Jack Ryan** gave the Invocation. The lunch provided by the CPOA was prepared by Chief **Bernie Smith**, Senior Chief **Sean Robbins**, and Senior Chief **Ed Seney**. Chief **Clark Farnsworth** stopped working at noon to watch the ceremony with his good friend Chief **Ken Lamp**. It was Chief **Dan Miller's** first time onboard the ship. This year the CPOA initiated a new award, honoring a "SLATER Volunteer of the Year."



Now, it's a generally accepted fact around here that the maintenance guys are the chosen favorites, and if you're a tour guide you don't get squat for recognition. You can spend the day leading unruly middle school kids around the ship in the hot sun, and what do you get? More kids to lead around in the hot sun. Those maintenance guys run in terror when they see a school bus drive in. Who makes all the money for the ship to buy all that paint and welding rod anyway? Let's have a little respect around here. So because of that and the fact that all the maintenance guys regularly get their names plastered all over this newsletter, The CPOA chose to honor a tour guide, someone who has been with us since the beginning. A veteran sailor who, following his service to his country, rose from his humble beginnings as an aviation ordnance man to become a PhD and a professor of economics. An individual who is modest, unassuming, and most of all loves small children. A volunteer who is so well respected that **Mayor Jennings** himself came down to present the award. Yes, you guessed it. Our own **Dr. Alfred Vanderzee**.

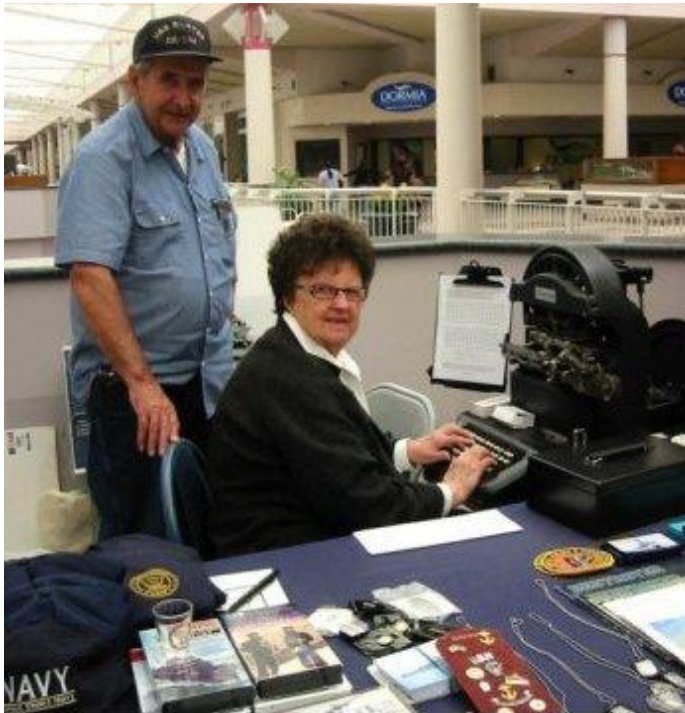


Guest of honor Al Vanderzee cuts the Navy Birthday cake.

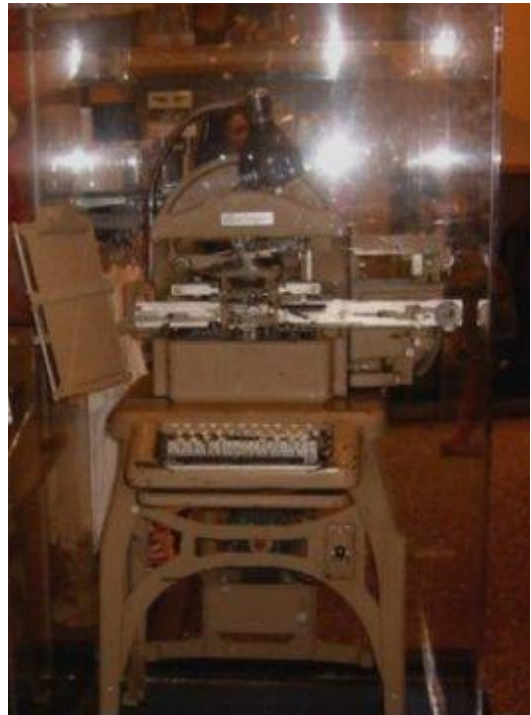
Al's acceptance speech was a typically brief and to the point, "I deserve it!" For those of you who don't know Al's service record, he was a nuclear ordnance man attached to the Navy's first nuclear attack squadron VC-5. If I tell you more than that he says he will have to shoot me. Among the highlights of Al's career were a visit to Norfolk Naval Air Station by his mother. It seems that in doing the security checks to get Al cleared to handle nuclear weapon, the Atomic Energy Commission sent representatives to Al's old school to check him out. Among those interviewed was his old coach at St. John's school in Rensselaer, Father McManus. Of course the AEC agent wouldn't tell father McManus why he was being questioned, so Father McManus immediately got on the phone to Al's mother and reported

that Al must be in serious trouble. Mrs. Vanderzee, by all accounts a very determined, protective and forceful woman, got on a train and headed for Norfolk to find out what Al had done. To this day Al doesn't know how she did it, but she got herself on base, past the armed marine armed guards protecting a nuclear activity and into the Squadron Commanders office. Captain Haywood invited Mrs. Vanderzee to tea, and finally convinced her that Al was not in any trouble. He even gave Al liberty and arranged for a navy chauffeured car to take them to dinner and back to the station. Needless to say, Al had a tough time living that down on base.

Another highlight of his career was trapped in the turret of a TBM when the pilot told him to rotate the turret, unaware that the system had been mothballed and cosmolined. He got his picture in the local paper for that one. On another occasion he was photographed next to an atomic bomb, in an obvious breach of McCarthy-era security. And finally, on one occasion when his mother couldn't reach him she paid a personal visit to the base commander, a fourstriper, to make sure that the Navy was taking proper care of her son. Al's mother is long since passed away, which is probably a good thing for me considering my reputation for abusing volunteers in general and Al in particular. I certainly would not have wanted to face the wrath of Al's mother, who was not the least bit intimidated by real Navy Captains. The truth is, Al has been giving the SLATER two days a week ever since the project started and we are truly richer for having him with us.



Les and Annette Beauchaine punching out dogtags...



and their counterpart at the Smithsonian.

Two other volunteers who are equally deserving of such an honor are Les and Annette Beauchaine. Last year's nominee for the prestigious Jefferson Award, Les made sure he was on hand to point out to Al that the Jefferson was much more widely recognized than the Capital Area CPO award. Who are we to argue? This is the time of the year when we always start to look towards Les and Annette to get us through another winter with their dogtag machine that they operate at Crossgates

Mall. They continue to be a major source of income for us through the Christmas season punching out tags on their antique Addressograph machine. The fact is that their machine is such an antique that one has been preserved and is on display in the Smithsonian Institute. I would also like to squelch the rumor here and now that the Smithsonian was in contact with us about acquiring Les to go on display with their antique machine. We wouldn't part with him for any price. They will just have to settle for a wax sculpture of him to display with their machine.



Doug Tanner played tour guide for our local chapter of The American Society for Non Destructive Testing.



Brandon, Moorhouse and Ron Mazure in the galley.

Just before Columbus Day, Kim Hart of Cablevision News in Wappingers Falls visited us with her videographer. They spent the morning interviewing staff and volunteers and filming the ship for a featurette called "Out and About." Maybe some of you in that area saw the finished product. That kind of publicity is helping push the overnight camping program full swing. Plenty of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are becoming overnight crewmembers. In addition, the Brewster High School NJROTC is scheduled. Our overnight crew staff intends to put these kids through the paces and give them a real taste of shipboard life.

We finished up reunion season this fall with visits from the crews of the DAMON M. CUMMINGS DE643, the McCOY REYNOLDS DE440 and last, the USS GILLIGAN DE508. The GILLIGAN had the unlucky distinction of being hit twice, first by a twin engine "Betty" kamikaze at Lingayan Gulf that killed twelve shipmates, and then by an aerial torpedo on 27 May 1945. That would have been the end of GILLIGAN but fortunately the torpedo did not explode. She went on to do post war reserve training service from 1950 to 1959 until being scrapped in 1973.

Finally, it's time to brace yourselves and hide your checkbooks. Next month we'll talk about the year in review, all we've accomplished, and what we plan for next year. Then, before you have a chance to catch your breath, I'll be asking for your Winter Fund Donation. I go back to the first sentence of this edition. It's getting chilly here in Albany, and it's not going to warm up for a long time, but that won't stop us from taking good care of your destroyer escort.

See you next month