



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Saturday November 18, 2006. I was standing in the aft passageway as **Glenn Harrison** played the Star Bangled Banner over the IMC. Outside, twenty-five Girl Scouts were raising the ensign for morning colors under the supervision of another volunteer tour guide **Grant Hack**. I noted that one of the mothers was taking pictures of the ceremony and when it was over I asked her if she could email me copies for this edition. It turns out that she was one of the Scout leaders, and when I asked how she slept, she said, "Better than in the Sheraton." She mentioned that she had done macramé rope work and was most admiring of **Nelson Potter's** fenders, and she'd also sanded and varnished wooden blocks at Mystic Seaport when she was in college. Of course my next question was, "Why aren't you volunteering with us?" Watching these kids enjoy the SLATER with their parents as they saluted the colors, cleaned their compartment and searched for sickbay really drove home the importance of our mission from an education point of view. This will be our last youth group overnight encampment of the season.



Volunteer tour guide Grant Hack explains the pilothouse to overnight campers.



Tom McLaughlin supervises chow for the Girl Scouts.

We're winding down for the tour season and gearing up for the winter work this fall. As I write, **Joe Breyer** and **Tim Benner** are draining down the fresh water system as per **Doug Tanner's** instructions. We've made arrangements to have the crane lift the gangways on Monday November 27th. I called **Chris Gardella** at **Port Albany Ventures** and we'll plan to move the ship, as soon after the

gangways are pulled, as tugs are available. Back to Rensselaer and the Port-a-John. Then we'll pull the camels and secure the Snow Dock for the season. The primary winter project this year will be restoration of the aft main deck passageway from the machine shop to the aft cross passageway. We will remove the original linoleum on the deck, chip up the last of the ceramic tile out of the aft shower stalls and see if there is any deck left under it, and make repairs as needed. We will repair and replace missing insulation, weld up a bunch of missing brackets to hang damage control gear, and repaint the whole passageway. It should look beautiful by spring.

Saturday November 11th was a special day for us aboard the SLATER. We remembered Veteran's Day with a ceremony at 1000. **Bob Donlon** described it better than I could when he wrote that, "The pennants on the mast, the Union Jack on the bow and Old Glory on the stern blew at right angles from a stiff breeze that swept up the Hudson River Saturday, November 11, 2006 during a brief ceremony held at 1000 hours aboard the USS SLATER DE 766 honoring all veterans." Rear Admiral **Paul F. Czesak** NYNM (Ret) opened the ceremony, recognizing honored guests **George Weidman**, President of DESA from Dansville, NY; and several of our own Board members who were in town for our annual meeting, **Frank Lasch DDE847, John Cosgrove DE639, Don Norris DE766, Earl Johnson DE366, Ray Windle DE640 and Sam Saylor DE306.**

Colors were presented by the USS Slater Color Guard under the supervision of **Ken Kaskoun**, CWO2, NYNM. The playing of the National Anthem and the Navy Hymn was rendered by ET1 **Jerry Jones**, followed by the invocation per **Richard Walker**, USCG. The highlight of the ceremony was a reading of "What is Veteran's Day" By BM1 **Beth Spain**, who may soon be deployed to the Persian Gulf for her second tour of duty. **Erik Collin** fired a three gun salute from the 3" stern gun and TAPS was by bugler **Steve Stella**, CDR (Ret) Albany Police Dept. Our special thanks to **Paul Czesak** for his organizational skills in conducting this ceremony honoring all veterans.



Veteran's Day is observed aboard the SLATER.



SLATER supporters gathered at the Fort Orange Club to raise awareness and money for the project.

That evening we held our Third Annual USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club. The fundraiser was the creation of **Paul Czesak, Geoffrey Bullard and Doris Fischer Malesardi** and is designed to increase awareness of the ship in the community and raise money for our preservation effort. Among the many distinguished guests at this black tie event were Rear Admiral **Paul F. Czesak**, NYNM (Ret), Rear Admiral & Mrs. **Martin W. Leukhardt**, USNR (Ret), Commissioner **Robert F. Cross** of the Albany Port District Commission, and Dr. **Alfred C. Van Derzee**, the local CPO Association's Volunteer of the Year, as well as the evening's underwriters, **Sheridan & Susan Biggs, Frank & Mary Ellen Lasch, Gordon Lattey & Michele Vennard**, and **Bob & Doris Malesardi**. The evening began at 1730 in the West Lounge with cocktails. At 1830 Ceremonial Bosun, ET1 **Jerry Jones** and Bagpiper, **Bob Ditton** led the procession to the President's Room. Here Master of Ceremonies CDR **Bill Kraus**, and DEHM President **Frank Lasch** welcomed the guests. We were most honored to have Albany Mayor **Gerald Jennings** drop in to address the group and speak on the great progress the SLATER has made since she first arrived in Albany and his hopes for the future. I followed with a report on the year in review, "Surviving Fire and Flood." We then adjourned to the dining room for dinner that started with traditional Navy Bean Soup. This is probably the only night that this delicacy is requested at the Fort Orange Club. Following dinner the group assembled for the Afterglow in the West Lounge where we gathered around the piano and sang the classics to accompany pianist, **John Cerniglia**. It was a remarkable evening of respect and remembrance for the sacrifices that made America great.



Another great ship provides parts for the SLATER, the carrier FORRESTAL CVA-59.

The Navy opened the aircraft carrier FORRESTAL for parts stripping over in Newport, Rhode Island. Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Karl Herchenroder, Gus Negus, Gary Lubrano, Jerry Jones, Barry Witte, Chuck Longshore and five midshipmen from MIT participated in salvaging parts for SLATER's continued restoration. Parts brought back included firemain valves, washroom sinks, a refrigerator for the wardroom pantry, ventilation diffusers, compartment fans, misc. shipboard hardware and repair parts for our GM 16-278A main engines, which FORRESTAL has for auxiliary power. We owe a debt of gratitude to **Jack Casey, Chris Nardi and Ed Zajkowski** who allowed our crew to sleep aboard the destroyer JOSEPH P KENNEDY JR. in Fall River, saving us a lot in motel bills and travel time. I spent five years as caretaker of the KENNEDY between 1978 and 1983, my first restoration project. Of course there was a certain amount of grumbling in the crew when I went to my old bunk in officer's country forward of the wardroom, and sent everyone else below, "Down so far we never thought we'd find our way out." We even celebrated Benner's 64th birthday and had a cake, but no candles or presents. In 1998 the FORRESTAL was moved to Rhode Island for storage. That is where she will remain until her fate is determined by the Navy. Our understanding is that plans call for her to be sunk as a reef. Our thanks are also due to Sue Morrell and Ron Skramstadt for their support in making this visit possible.



RPI Midshipmen help out.



The whaleboat heads to Scarano's Boatyard for winter repair work.

We've had a great year restoring the SLATER. Accession wise, we obtained all the major components we were seeking to complete the restoration. That included the QGB sonar stack, the SL surface search radar antenna, transmitter and dome, the TBL radio transmitter, a new SA radar transmitter, sinks for the forward crew's head, desks for the ships office, chronometers for the chartroom, a new refrigerator for the wardroom pantry, a storeroom full of spare engine parts, and enough messtrays and helmets to equip the entire crew. And then there are all those DE artifacts **Pat Perrella** has continued to collect. Thanks in part to the fire restoration, the entire forward end of the ship was cleaned and repainted, as well as the main deck passageway forward of the machine shop. It



Museum Board Member Earl Johnson from Long Beach California does it all. He helped organize the raffle, raised almost \$50,000, and then comes into town to chip paint! That's a Sailor!

looked fresher than ever. On the exterior, the entire superstructure got painted as well as the fo'c's'le and 01 level forward. Gun one was completely restored. We were working our way aft along the boat deck chipping and painting, when the weather closed in and we had to start inside work. We painted the starboard boottop. Two of the amidships 20mm guns were completely refurbished by **Erik Collin** and **Rich Pavlovik**. And topside, we fixed a lot of wasted metal. Every time we found a new hole some place, we did a permanent repair that will last the life of the ship.

One more upcoming event. Our annual Pearl Harbor Day Memorial will be held at the Joseph E. Zaloga Post 1520 American Legion, 4 Everett Road, Albany, NY, at 1100 hours on Thursday December 7, 2006. If you are in the area you are welcome to attend the Commemoration, and the reception hosted by the Zaloga Post following the ceremony. Please RSVP to **Rosehn Gipe**, phone 431-1943 or email gipe@uss Slater.org, confirming your availability to attend the ceremony and the lunch. The ceremony is jointly sponsored by Albany County Executive **Michael Breslin**, Albany Mayor **Jennings**, the Albany County Veterans Bureau, and the USS SLATER. Our thanks also go to the Zaloga Post and **Ed Marks** DE185 for the donation of thirty matching chairs for the classroom to replace thirty mismatched old folding chairs. It almost looks professional!

Fundraising wise, we've had a year of hits and misses. Happily, the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation approved a grant of \$94,000. And we were awarded another \$3,000 in Assembly member items to be used for security and fire prevention improvements. But the big funding necessary to build the permanent mooring and dry-dock the ship continues to elude us. Sadly, we were rejected by the NYS Department of Transportation in a \$900,000 grant for hull repair. At the most recent CAP DESA meeting there was spirited discussion about the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum and how they were able to raise sixty million dollars for her dry-docking and pier repair when 5% of that amount would solve all our problems. We envy their ability to raise funds.

This museum has been a labor of love from its inception. It wasn't the vision of a politician, an admiral, or a millionaire. It was the vision of a bunch of regular swabbies, those regular sailors and their wives who have pretty much done, and will continue to do the impossible, in bringing us this far. Take the **Los Angeles Chapter of DESA**, who this year raised over \$43,000 with a SLATER Raffle, the **Michigan DESA Chapter** who have been coming here since the SLATER arrived from New York City twice a year, and DE Associations like the **USS HUSE** who give their time along with all the other DE sailors and ships associations. Last week **Bob Morrill, John Depersis, Alton Carpenter and Dick Pedro** of **The American Legion** presented us with a check for \$1,000 and promised to buy us a new television for the classroom in the spring. Today the **USS DELONG Reunion** group donated \$500 to us and **CAPDESA Auxiliary** treasurer **Helen Andersen** presented a check in the amount of \$200 to be given to the USS Slater's Winter Fund and \$2.50 in pennies to the Slater Kitty from their November meeting. These are just a few random examples of how you folks have been so generous.

So it is again to you I turn and make my ninth annual Winter Fund Appeal. I, and many others have

already written our \$100 checks. Apart from your membership dues, this is the one time of the year that we ask you to contribute to the operation of the USS SLATER. The premise is simple.

November 26th will be the last day that we will sell tickets. For the next four months we will have no operating income until we reopen in the spring. We could live off our accumulated savings to get through the winter, but I'd rather save that for the future. Instead we ask that all of you who care about the ship make a suggested contribution of \$100 to help get us through the next four months until we reopen to the public, and thus preserve our savings. If you can give more, we certainly encourage that. If you can't afford one hundred dollars, please give what you can. Every little bit helps. This will purchase the heating oil, electricity, paint, parts, coffee and insurance that we need to operate through the winter. We've acquired all these new parts. Now we have to restore them and get them installed.



The State American Legion show their support for the project with a Thousand dollar donation.



For those of you receiving the SIGNALS by mail, you will find a convenient return envelope enclosed to make your donation. For those of you who see this online, this is the one time we ask that you take action beyond clicking your mouse. Please click the link to the donation form on the website and print it out. Then fill it out with your donation, place it in an envelope and mail it to USS SLATER, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY 12201-1926. If you're not a member, this act of donation will make you a member, and you will receive our quarterly newsletter TRIM BUT DEADLY. To all of you who say, "I wish I lived closer so I could help," this is your chance.

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the SLATER's arrival in Albany. It will be a special year for us, culminating with the DESA Convention being held here September 2nd -7th 2007. We are truly looking forward to showing all the DESA members how far we have progressed with the project that started as such a long shot ten years ago. And taking time to remember all those sailors who donated to bring the SLATER back from Greece, but are no longer with us. This ship is their legacy, and yours. You made it happen.

Please be generous to the Winter Fund