



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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I don't focus much on what I've been doing in this newsletter. If you ask most of the crew what I've been doing, the answers will range from "Not much," to "As little as possible," to "I know he collects a paycheck." As SLATER would be a hunk of rust without them, who am I to try to change their perception of what I do? But the fact is that this month I started on an unanticipated nostalgia trip of sorts.



Food is a real big deal here.



***Everybody loved move day but me.
For me it was a lot of stress.***

It all started in January, when a question came up about USS GAGE (APA-168). This was a ship that we are heavily indebted to, for the vast amount of restoration parts she provided to SLATER and other ships in the historic fleet. I had written a eulogy of sorts for her when she was scrapped, and when I went to download that edition of Signals, the link didn't work. So, I knew I had some problems.

I knew “My friend” and COVID survivor, Ed Zajkowski, had time on his hands. So, I asked him to check out each edition of SLATER SIGNALS on the website, and report back to me with what issues needed corrections.

In true Ed form, he went right to work on the Signals links and began making daily reports to me. It took him about a week to complete the review, and what he reported back to me was that the links were a complete disaster, an embarrassment to the project, and that I, in fact, had embarrassed my ancestors all the way back Giovanni da Verrazzano. In moving the newsletters from HTML to Adobe, links didn't work, images were split between pages, and the years 2009-2012 came up as muddled garbage. I was instructed to get off my ass and get it fixed.



A 40 year friendship, I guess that's why Ed can instruct me to get off my ass, and I listen.



Paul and Bill have organized bunk straps Angelo made.

As everyone else around here has “Real jobs” that keep them occupied, making the corrections fell to me. The first step was getting Shanna to teach me how to make corrections, using Adobe editors. Second, I had to pay the \$14.99 a month to download the program to my computer. Then I started with 1998 and began reviewing and correcting 22 years of my life.

Hanging down in the forward crew compartment are sixty-eight bunk straps, stenciled by Angelo Bracco. Each strap is



Tommy and I do not miss moving the camels.

Hanmann, talking about his German immigrant mother cleaning the Madison Theater, and that he really didn't have a lot of confidence in his oncologist. The excitement the crew had every time we moved the ship. The memories and people are far too many to recount here.

Aside from dealing with the memory of so many friends who accomplished so much, is the process of editing. What makes this job more difficult is that, as I learn more about how to edit Adobe, I just don't want to make the corrections Ed recommended; I want to make each issue look better. Now that I have the ability to upload images, I can upload better, clearer images, and make each issue better. Once I correct each edition, it becomes Shanna's task to upload each corrected edition to the

stenciled with the name of a volunteer who contributed significantly to the restoration of USS SLATER and has since slipped the hook. Reading the month-to-month summary of our progress over the past twenty-two years brought me, once again, face-to-face with their faces, names, and accomplishments. To that list, we will add one more name this month. **Ed Sakacs**, one of our first volunteers, died of Covid-19 this month. Ed had served as a storekeeper on USS COFFMAN (DE-191) and was one of our last WWII living Vets.

The images brought so many flashbacks. The twelve years **Tommy Moore** and I spent down on the camels, and the dedicated crew that supported us. The tears in **Dick Smith's** eyes when he said he no longer felt comfortable driving down from Ft. Edward. **Gene Cellini**, scaling the stack, shirtless in the hot summer sun. **Dutch**



Ed Sakacs of USS COFFMAN DE-191.

website. However, that gets time consuming, and needs to be postponed for another day. For now, the priority has to be just to make the corrections and get the information available. But give me a couple months before you go to the website and check up on me.

In addition to helping me with SIGNALS corrections, this month Shanna mailed out 12,000 promotional rack cards. They went to the distributors, to get them into rest stops and hospitality locations throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Vermont. The new brochures she designed arrived, and she's excited to have them out in the Ship's Store this season, and to distribute them next year.



The new merchandise Shanna ordered is starting to arrive!

Upon requests, SLATER's online Ship's Store can now ship merchandise to Greece, Portugal, Canada, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom! Shanna has also added plastic ship models, stainless steel mess trays (directly out of SLATER's surplus storeroom), new postcards, and posters to the site. Coming in March will be new T-shirts, featuring AETOS, polo shirts, and bibs. So, stay on the lookout for those!



Doug is serving up pancakes for breakfast.

Regarding personnel, as she has every February, Shanna reached out to our tour guides, to ensure they are planning to rejoin the crew when we open in April. If the schedule doesn't fill out, then we'll need to hire additional college interns.

We had a new video launch on our YouTube channel. Shanna worked with USS LITTLE ROCK in Buffalo, and they collaborated to film a comparison of each ship's navigation decks. She also filmed a short clip to send to the UK, wishing a happy 80th Anniversary to the Western Approaches Headquarters and their move to

Liverpool. The video aired on television and she had three different people reach out, saying they saw it and wondered if the store shipped to England. It does, by the way!

Jo Ann is in the process of completing her second full audit. She reports that the 2020 in-person audit by Bonadio was completed last week, in the third week of February. When the auditors left on Friday, they said we were in really good shape and if they needed anything else, they would get in touch over email. **Jen Hayes**, who helps oversee the audit, hopes to have a draft of the audit report to us by Tuesday, March 2nd, and therefore it will be to us by our next board meeting on the following Tuesday, March 9th. This is more reassurance to you, showing how judiciously your donations are being used.



Jo Ann completed the Audit this month, and is still cooking for us!



Doug will never find me here!

Maintenance has continued on several projects. Doug Tanner, Dave Mardon, Warren Brozio, Earl Herchenroder, and Chuck Teal have nearly completed repairs to the shore head. All the rotted exterior wood has been replaced. The commode is back in place, and Shanna and Jo Ann are thrilled about that. Doug had the crew fabricate a trap door, to access the piping under the head. All that remains to be done is insulating the pipes under the floor, and Doug is taking a little pity on his crew and waiting for the weather to warm up before he sends them down the hole. In the meantime, they have been working in the classroom, installing a new air conditioning unit.

Danny Statile and Tim Benner have a couple welding projects going. They are in the process of rebuilding the ammo passing scuttle on the 01 level, just aft of gun 32. Doug had arranged for **Bill Novak of American Boiler** to fabricate a ring for the watertight door gasket channels. We were able to use them on this scuttle by cutting out the length needed and opening it up just a touch. You have to look pretty close to see the repaired section.

Next up will be the rebuild of the third deck hatch, in the forward CHT pumproom, that is badly wasted. There are several holes in the deck in the pumproom that are being addressed prior to painting. They have also been fabricating parts for the restoration of the anchor windlass room, including stowage bars for hanging blocks, firehose racks, and applicator holders.



Paul moves ammo cans in preparation for welding.

Danny also got his gangway ramp back from the paint shop and installed on the aft gangway. That's another project we can check off as completed. **Danny Statile, Barry Witte, and Gary Sheedy** also got the new electric water heater installed, plumbed up, and wired into the electrical system. The unit is located next to the furnace in the muffler room.

Gary Sheedy just about has the anchor windlass room ready to paint, working with Bill Holt, Paul Guarnieri, Bill Wetterau, Thomas Scian, Tommy Moore, Ken Powers, and Boats Haggart. They have been scaling paint down in the CHT pump room, sorting through all of the deck hardware, and getting things organized in preparation for painting.



Bill, Gary, and Paul are getting the block and tackles hung.

Gary has a vision for the space, and with his attention to detail, we expect the finished product will be as perfect as the reefer deck. In the “be careful what you wish for” department, I mentioned to Gary that it would be nice to have some wooden block and tackle made up with manila line, to display in the Bosun’s locker. By the end of the week, twenty wooden blocks were laid out on the mess tables and three 600’ spools of three-quarter inch manila line had been delivered. Unless he’s planning to fit out a square rigger, I’m afraid of what he has in mind.



Danny doing what he does best.

Gary has been coming in Tuesdays for as long as I can remember. Along with **Ron Prest**, that was their private workday. Then, **Cathy Wheat** shifted to Tuesday as her cleaning day because she said she could get more work done with fewer people underfoot. Then, **Tommy Moore, Angelo Bracco, and Bill Wetterau** started coming in Tuesday. And **Danny** decided it was easier to work when fewer people were around. And **Jo Ann** started making sure that there was lunch for everyone, and now Tuesdays are a real party. Too crowded for Cathy who now comes on Thursdays to do her cleaning.



Hey Doug!

The same has happened on Sundays. To reduce the number of people working at the same time, and the possibility of COVID-19 exposure, **Barry Witte** began coming in on Sundays with **Alex Titcomb, Brendan Lutz, and Jack Carbone.** They were joined by **Richard and Henry Burgeois.** A few new Midshipmen began to join their ranks, making it another very productive workday.

Most of their work has been taking place in the aft motor room, B-4. Richard and Henry have been replacing missing piping in the original WW2 low pressure steam heating system. We



Jim Gelston is still in once a week to wind the clocks.

paint on the running gear, and since he knows what to do all on his own, we're letting him run with that project.

Another midshipman was asked to fix the broken valve stem on the service air compressor outlet valve. It has always been missing its hand wheel and had always stuck out to Barry as something we should fix. They got the valve apart, and it was apparent that the stem was sheared off. They removed the stem, and put a blank plug in the valve, so we can still run the compressor.

Alex Titcomb took the broken stem, and some brass round stock home, and will be making a replacement off-ship in the next couple of weeks.

Another minor project is that there is an original spotlight mount over the lathe in the machine shop. The mount is original, but we never took the time to place the correct fixture there, since the machine shop is not on the public tour route. **Brendan Lutz** found the

think those pipes were removed during Greek service, because apparently it is not as cold in the Mediterranean as it is in the North Atlantic. When Barry needed to weld a through-bulkhead pipe to a flange for Richard, **Gabe Tombellini**, one of the new midshipmen, said he could weld. So, Barry let him try and he put down a great bead, even though it was only three inches in circumference.

Gabe was eager to get involved, and after the welding was done, Barry asked him to look at the scuttles in the double-ladder hatch, leading down to aft berthing, C-202-L. Neither scuttle works as it should.

Gabe began to remove the decades of



Danny finished the new ramp for the aft gangway project.

correct fixture and switch that go there, and he is restoring those. Once wired in, Alex will have a good amount of light to work on the lathe.

Jack Carbone has continued work on the ship's whistle pull cable. Barry and the midshipmen are now thinking about the next long-term project. That might be the restoration of the upper sonar hut on the flying bridge. To that end, Barry brought home the Tactical Range Recorder, known in the old days as the chemical recorder. He plans to restore it at home. The midshipmen are amenable to beginning work on the sonar shack, once the COVID restrictions are no longer needed. That may be the midshipmen's long-term project for the next couple of years.



Steve is making contacts in Radio Central.

Up in the radio shack, Steve and Chuck are a continuing presence every Saturday. They are giving other ham operators a schedule of when they can contact us. In addition, Steve has been putting several extra hours a week in, between consulting jobs.



Tim Benner is welding the missing ladder rung.

Steve has made contact with Jerry Jones and Joe Breyer and is now getting a handle on all that has gone before, so he and Chuck don't have to reinvent the wheel. Steve has worked on repairs to the Audio Patch Panel and the TBL transmitter speech modulator. He also repaired the CMX Speaker Amplified Unit, in radio central.

Chuck took measurements of the ship's antennas and their distance from public access, to calculate RF exposure levels, based on power output and frequency, to satisfy existing FCC regulations. Chuck was also in contact with **Mike Wyles**, who moved to Florida. Chuck is taking the

lead from Mike in coordinating the Museum Ships Weekend this year for SLATER We fully anticipate being on the air during the weekend and contacting ships across the world.

Together, they worked the American Radio Relay League headquarters station in Newington, CT, using an original WW2 transmitter and receiver. They also worked stations in NC, GA, PA, MD, IL, and NJ, as well as Quebec, Ontario, and France. Chuck contacted stations via Morse code in VA, TX, NC, IL, CO, FL, Puerto Rico, France, and Sweden. They also copied the Press broadcast from coastal station, KPH/SAN FRANCISCO RADIO, on the commercial maritime frequencies, using a vintage RBC receiver. In addition, they cleaned out the coding room, to use as a temporary workspace, pending its restoration to the original configuration. They will be starting to get Radio Central ready for public viewing over the next several weeks.

It looks like we're over the hump for winter. Slowly, the crew is getting their COVID vaccinations, as we prepare for the 2021 tour season. Needless to say, everyone is looking forward to spring. Soon the circulators will come out, the covers will come off the guns, and we'll reopen for business. We hope to see you aboard.

See you next month,

Tim



We are looking forward to spring.