



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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Two weeks elapsed from the departure of the Michigan crew to the arrival of the USS HUSE gang. This was the seventh consecutive SLATER Work Party for the crew of the HUSE. It was a great follow up to Michigan and allowed the completion of a lot of projects that had been started earlier. They had a good turnout with 22 former crewmembers and friends attending. The work party began arriving on Saturday 20 May. The attendees included Coordinator **George Amandola**, **Ernie Aeschliman**, **Don Bean**, **Wally Bringslid** (USS PURDY DD734), **Joe Colletti**, **Pete Houle**, **Guy Huse** (grand nephew of Admiral Huse), **Jim Larnar** (USS DAY DE225), **Robin Larnar** (Jim's daughter), **Bill Mehan**, **Bill Morton**, Supply officer **Dave Perlstein**, **Roland Robbins**, **Betty Robbins** (Roland's wife and our accomplished cook), **Jaye Robbins** (Roland & Betty's son), **Justin Tate**, **Lew Shelton**, **Pamela Shelton** (Lew's niece), **Harry Strauser**, **Doug Strieter**, Gunner's Mate **Stan Suzdak** (WWII DE sailor), and **Paul Suzdak** (Stan's grandson). "Eggs to order" were the order of the day, and for me it was a treat coming in every morning to a hot breakfast. **Betty Robbins** handled cooking the suppers, assisted by George, Dave and Joe in the SLATER's galley. There were no complaints as the galley crew kept everyone happy with a well-run, well-stocked mess hall.



The HUSE Field day crew.

Three primary tasks were laid out: prepping and painting the portside main deck house, prepping and painting the portside waterway, and repairing the starboard twin 40mm gun mount which had jammed in elevation. **Bob Kehrer** was in charge of the deck apes and he kept the painting work coordinated and ensured a steady progress with minimum of waste. **Roland Robbins** and **Bill Meehan** ran the paint locker and kept the brushes cleaned and ready, and the epoxy paint mixed and distributed in such a way as to minimize loss of the product. Once the \$80 per gallon paint is mixed, it has about a 4-hour pot life, so you don't want to mix more than you need. By the end of the week the deckhouse was complete, as well as the portside 20mm gun tubs and the 01 level ventilator thanks to **Ernie Aeschliman**. **Robin Larner** earned her stripes working on her knees to paint the lion's share of the portside waterway. Using the Imron epoxy, we anticipate the deckhouse will stand the weather and remain looking fresh and new for a long time.



USS DAY veteran Jim Larner and his daughter Robin Larner painting the waterway.



HUSE shipmate Ernie Aeschliman painting the Quarter Deck overhead.

Former gunner's mate **Stan Suzdak** worked his rate alongside his grandson **Paul**, and with **Doug Strieter** and **Pete Houle**, on the starboard side 40mm freeing up a frozen gear mechanism. The bearing in the main elevation gear had disintegrated, requiring a complete tear down of the whole gear drive. It took them all week to locate the problem and remove the bearing from the elevation shaft. Regular **Karl Herchenroder** ordered the replacement bearings and Stan has volunteered to come back up from Long Island to assist in the reassembly. Former GE engineer **Guy Huse** spent most of his time in the engine room working on electrical motors in a cramped and hot environment pulling and cleaning the brush holders and commutators on number four motor. He also freed up 20mm gun mount 22 up forward, which was jammed in train. Now all our 20mm guns are free in train and elevation, though we still lack the trunion springs for proper operation. Our thanks to George and the USS HUSE Association members for another 4.0 job.



After waiting a couple weeks for the replacement gears, Gary and Gus spend an afternoon putting the gun back together.



The 40mm gun gang Pete Houle, Doug Strieter and Stan Suzdak working on the elevation gear.

**We made another scrounging run to the James River Reserve Fleet.** This time our target was the USS SPHINX ARL24. SPHINX has been on donation hold for several years, and her number came up for scrapping this spring. We were given thirty days to put a trip together and make removals. SPHINX had the same Cleveland 3-268A diesel generator sets as SLATER, so she had the potential to be a rich source of spare parts. Unfortunately none of our engineers were available to make the run, so a scratch team was put together of **Gordon Lattey, Will Donzelli, Barry Witte, Bill Siebert, Mike Clark, myself and Loren Caddell**, a retired Chief Boatswain who served on **JACK W. WILKE DE800**.





**Gorden and Loren crash as the boat returned us to shore.**



**USS JACK W. WILKE DE800 vet BMC Loren Caddell takes a breather on the SPHINX.**

**We traveled the Tuesday after Memorial Day and hit the fleet bright and early on Wednesday morning.** As a repair ship, SPHINX had a main deck auxiliary engine room with four of the 3-268A engines located there. Gordon and Bill went to work on starters, thermostatic controls and governors, Will went to work on circuit breaker panels, and I went to work on injectors. SPHINX was also unusual in that there was no power aboard, so for a change we were able to take whatever electrical components we needed, but this was kind of negated by the fact that she was a DC ship, so a lot of equipment was incompatible with our AC SLATER. But our engineers should have spares to take her into the 22nd century. Still, Bill was heartbroken about the parts we left behind.

**The regulars continue toiling away.** As soon as the HUSE crew left we stuck the "GM" for General Motors tag on the gun mount and tasked the diesel crew, **Gus Negus**, **Karl Herchenroder** and **Gary Lubrano** to complete the work on the 40mm gun. It took two weeks of waiting for parts to complete the job. **Stan Sudzak** scheduled another trip up here to help them get it back together, arriving on a Monday to find that Gus and Gary had completed the reassembly of the elevation gears the previous Saturday. I should have called him to let him know, but this is just another example of how I only know about 10% of what's going on around here. Stan didn't seem the least bit perturbed, and spent the day lubricating the gun mount manual drives. Sailmaker **Les Yarbrough** completed canvas covers for the port and starboard flagbag and the rangefinder, and is continuing to make 20mm gun covers as well as keeping the signal flags hemmed. Boatswain **Bill Haggart** put in all the grommets in Les' covers and continues working on fenders.

Coastie **Nelson Potter** has replaced all the signal halyards with new 3/8" nylon braided line.



**Gene Jackey and Clark Farnsworth put together one of the replacement depth charge racks.**

**Clark Farnsworth** and **Gene Jackey** finished repairs to the steel gangway and shoreside handrails and are now working on the starboard roller loader. The rest of the welding gang, **Doug Tanner, Joe Breyer, Tim Benner, Chuck Teal and Shawn Bevins**, are continuing repairs to the RDF platform at the base of the mast. **Erik Collin** is busy with deck painting. Chippers **Chris Fedden, Don Miller, Peter Jez, and Earl Herchenroder** have been chipping decks, while the engineers have been busy repainting the LP air compressor and stowing all their new parts. **Art Dott** brought in a group of Reservists that stowed **Will Donzelli's** electronic gear and cleaned the machine shop for us. Chippers also have continued chipping on the 01 level and the fantail. Erik is working behind them with epoxy paint to try and have everything squared away for the DESA reunion in September. The painting of the gun three-gun tub aft has been completed and it looks great. **Rich Pavlovik** is back working on the twenties. He did a quick pass around all the guns the first month he was back to get them looking presentable, and now is doing a detailed restoration of 20mm mount 25, adjacent to the stack. The expansion of the chart table to include the chronometer well is nearly complete. And **Stan Murawski** is back with us making Saturday lunches, now backed up by **Bernie Smith**.



**John Whalen puts the finishing touches on the gun 3 tub.**

**Off site, the students in Barry Witte's and Chris Hanley's industrial technology classes have completed their second prefabricated depth charge project "roller loader." Chris Dennis and Josh Tomaszewski** were the major contributors, with many others assisting. The pieces were brought down to the Snow Dock by **Dick Walker**, the first load carried in his new pickup truck. We didn't scratch it (the truck, that is) **Bill Siebert** had such a good time with us in Virginia that he is back with us and working on cutting and installing the watertight door we have been planning to put in bulkhead 99 between the aft motor room and the aft engine room.

**Our long-suffering communications department continues to suffer. Joe Breyer** came down during the Historic Ships amateur radio communications weekend in a valiant and solo effort to make sure that our SLATER was on the air and represented. First, there was so much crap piled up in front of the HAM operators desk that it took him two hours to clear all the gear out of the compartment that people had dropped there over the winter for

want of an easier place to stow it. Once on the air he had to face the fact that the SLATER is in a "black hole" for radio reception because of all the ramps to the Dunn Bridge that surround us to the west and north. Then, to put the icing on the cake, the welders started welding on the RDF platform on the base of the mast right outside the radar room. Frustrated, Joe gave up and went home to try and work the net from his own rig. Joe may have left, but we weren't done dumping on him. The following week, **Will Donzelli** delivered two Army MAN radio cases. According to his research, the Navy put the MANs on ships to communicate with Army units ashore in 1944 and 45. We figure we can make one good display radio out of two junkers. The only rub: where do you think we stowed the bulky MANs until

we get a chance to restore them? Right in the space Joe had cleared out in the radio room so he could have a little space to operate the HAM gear. Sorry about that Joe.

**The tour guide crew has been busy with tours and overnights lately.** We've had school groups from all over New York State and beyond aboard so far this year, not to mention the overnights on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights over Memorial Day weekend. On that note we're happy (and thankful) to welcome three new overnight guides to our crew: Chief **Bernie Smith, John Whalen, and Ernest Friedon.** They'll take their place alongside our other overworked and under thanked overnight guides. By the way, overnight guides, thanks! **John Whalen** is currently on active duty with the Navy as a Machinist's Mate 3/c at the Nuclear Power School near here. He also holds the record for tour guide training, having gone from a visitor aboard the ship to a fully trained and qualified guide in about nine days. And, perhaps best of all, he also talked his roommate **Greg Koop** into volunteering aboard the ship as well. Other new faces include **Justin Finning, Jordan Finning, and Tom Connery.** It's a great help for us to have people under the age of 65 working down in the bilges, and it's a great help to them to realize how much shipboard accommodations have improved since 1945.



**Chipping continues on the O1 level aft.**

**We continue to serve the community as the State Police diving school trained at USS SLATER.** Their police diving school was in session and instructors used the SLATER to practice searching the hull of a ship for mines or drugs. The seven-week process gets police prepared for any range of scenarios that could float through the Capital Region, including a terrorist threat to mine or checking ships suspected of carrying drugs below the water line coming up the Hudson.



**Jaye Robbin's kids get a taste of shipboard life.**



**Guy Huse freeing up 20mm mount 22.**

**We held two ceremonies aboard this month.** On Memorial Day we remembered our veterans with a service aboard the USS SLATER at 1200 hours with **Paul Czesak** making the welcome address. Our trusty Color Guard paraded the Colors. **Dick Walker** did the Invocation and Paul read excerpts from a Presidential Proclamation. A moment of silence was observed for all fallen veterans followed by a SLATER 3" gun salute of three volleys by Erik Collin. The service ended with TAPS and the Navy Hymn over the 1MC. **Three weeks later the CAPDESA Chapter held our annual DE Day Memorial Service, on Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> at 0930.** All our local DE veterans gathered to remember the ships and shipmates lost in action. The event was especially notable in that several local dignitaries attended and spoke including Albany Mayor **Jerry Jennings**, Rensselaer County Executive **Kathy Jimino**, Assemblyman **Tim Gordon** from the 108th District and a representative from Congresswoman **Gillibrand's** office, **Darius Shaninfar**. **Frank Rizzo** donated flowers for the ceremony and **Steve Stella** played TAPS. A piper from the Albany Police Pipes & Drums playing a medley of songs and *Amazing Grace* after TAPS along with the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard Association following the 3" gun volleys to render a final salute.



**Laird Confer was back aboard with his motor home group from Pennsylvania.**

**If there is any question about a woman's ability to make it in "This man's Navy," this should answer the question.** I got a call from our favorite Boatswain's Mate **Beth Spain** saying that she has been selected for Chief. Naturally we're all excited for her. **Sam Saylor** had given Beth a set of his CPO pins a couple years ago in anticipation of the event. Beth will be heading overseas again in the next couple of months and we'll all be pulling for her to have a safe and easy deployment, as we'll be pulling for her husband Mark, home with the kids while she is away.

Now, you decide which one most deserves combat pay.

**Finally, our parent organization, the Destroyer Escort Sailors Assn., has taken the lead for us in trying to begin a grassroots letter writing campaign in an effort to obtain dry-dock funding for the SLATER.** DESA President **George Weidman** and **Sam Saylor** both feel that by banding together in a letter writing campaign we may be able to influence the outcome of the results of a grant request for funds to dry-dock SLATER. Their lead article in the latest DESA news lays that out. This year we have again applied for a \$605,000 matching grant towards dry-docking the SLATER under the Department of the Interior's National Park Service for a "Save America's Treasures" program. If you want join the effort, drop a note to the Save America's Treasures folks saying that preserving the SLATER is important to you, at: Save America's Treasures, 201 "Eye" Street, NW, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor (ORG. 2256), Washington, DC 20005. Maybe you should copy your Representative and Senators on it, too. Let's try to get a little bit of our tax money going for something we all want to see; the SLATER in a dry-dock.

**See you next month.**