

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

PO Box 1926

Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123 Vol.

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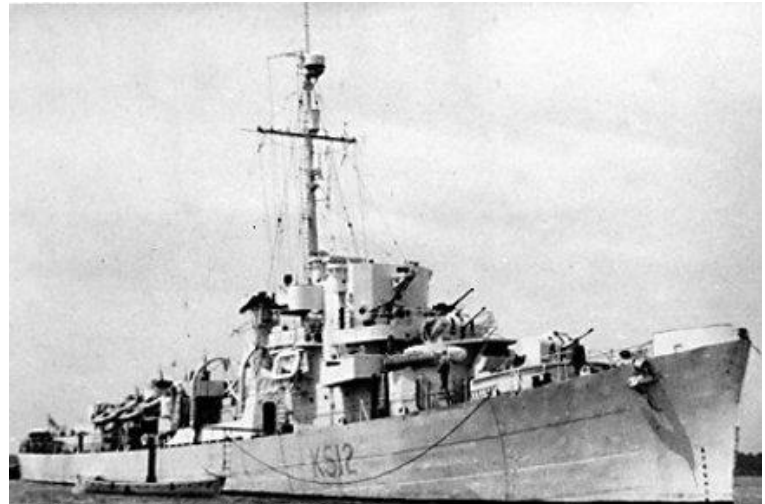
**September was another great month for me and for SLATER, but probably for different reasons.** The most important news of the month is the progress we are making on the Hull Fund. As of October 1 there was just over \$500,000 in the fund. We have a long way to go, but your response has been terrific. Having reached out to all the DE sailors, our next step is to reach out to the local Albany Community. To that end Michele Vennard and Gordon Lattey are sponsoring a Fund Raising Cocktail Party at the Fort Orange Club to benefit the Hull Fund. **The event is entitled “One Date – One Ship: Veterans Day 2011 – 11/11/11.”** **The date will provide our nation with a very special day to celebrate the contributions and sacrifices of our American Military.** Albany is home to a piece of that very important military history – USS SLATER has made Albany her home port for the past 14 years and provided thousands of visitors, including many students, with a first-hand experience of World War II and the important role played by Naval vessels like SLATER. We are combining this one special ship with this one special date and are hosting a cocktail reception on November 11, 2011 at the Fort Orange Club that will honor our Veterans and help us move closer to the goal of the much-needed USS SLATER hull restoration. Joining as Patrons of the event are **Ray & Lois Windle and Jack Bertsch of Polymer Conversions, Inc.** **The Sponsors include BBL Hospitality, Berkshire Bank, Maximum Security Products, and SEFCU.**



**On Sunday, September 11th the SLATER commemorated the 10th Anniversary of the terrorists' attacks.** Master of Ceremony **Steve Long** initiated the event at 0930 by ordering **Ken Kaskoun** to parade the colors; followed by **Jerry Jones** playing the National Anthem on the 1MC. **Dick Walker** then delivered an inspiring invocation. Steve Long introduced the guests seated on the Quarterdeck, including **Mayor Jennings**, County Executives **Mike Breslin** and **Kathy Jimino** and CDR **Bill Kraus**. Bill Kraus read the Governor's Proclamation and related his experiences during the New York City relief efforts. He was followed by the commemorating remarks by the civic leaders. **CDR Steve Stella** played Taps, and in lieu of firing the 3"/50 gun salute Jerry Jones piped over the 1MC a three-minute bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace. Dick Walker delivered the Benediction and **Linda Wruck** wrapped up the program with appropriate closing remarks.



Former Royal Navy Telegrapher Sid Marlar with Paul Czesak.



Sid's ship HMS CUBITT.

**An ambassador from the Captain Class Frigate Association, Sid Marlar who served on HMS CUSTIS, visited SLATER on Saturday 13 August.** Sid was Telegrapher (Radioman) in the Royal Navy. He and his son Andrew had attended the annual DESA Convention prior to their visit. **Paul Czesak** gave them a tour; they enjoyed Senior Chief Smith's lunch, and the chance to exchange stories with the Saturday volunteer crew. Sid especially liked **Joe Breyer's** briefing in the Radio Room.

**Before leaving he presented Paul a bottle of British Navy Rum and a Royal Navy hat.** Since drinking on the SLATER is prohibited, the rum will be used by **Mrs. Czesak** as the main ingredient in this year's New Year's rum cake to be served in the Chiefs Mess at the coffee break for those that show up at the ship for work on Saturday, 31 December. This month we also hosted the reunion of US Navy Attack Squadron VA65, the Amsterdam High School Marine JROTC (an exceptionally sharp looking outfit, if I may say so myself), the reenlistment of EM1 Chris Blinson of the NPTU and the Fishkill QSY Society HAM radio operators who were given the red carpet treatment in the radio shack by **Joe Breyer**.

**Our programming for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts is expanding to include activities beyond the overnight stay onboard.** We offer the gangway and fantail of the ship for Boy and Girl Scout groups to hold promotional and award ceremonies such as Crossing Over, Flying Up, Bridge to Cadet and Bridge to Senior Girl Scouts. Linda Wruck has joined Jim Kuba in the ranks as a certified Merit Badge counselor. They can help you with badges for Citizenship in the Nation and American Heritage. Additionally, Linda can help with Citizenship in the World, Public Speaking, Geology, Indian Lore, and Fly Fishing. Thank you to Jim Kuba for his hard work and expertise in scouting that brought Linda into the loop.

**Steve Konas, a teacher at Bethlehem High School invited the SLATER's Traveling Classroom to present the story of the Battle of the Atlantic to the students enrolled in the Bethlehem Lab School.** The Lab School is a school within a school. Eighth graders apply to enter the program and are with the same class of students the entire four years of their high school experience. Alan Fox, Herb Marlow, and Linda spent the morning at Camp Chingachgook on Lake George with 130 students, discussing German aggression, the Holocaust, the United States' and allied response, and the affects of war on the U.S. and European home front. The curriculum was presented through documentary film footage, original artifacts, photographs, letters, and documents. It was a wonderful experience, engaging with high school students who had questions and comments about the pivotal actions that lead to the allied victory in the Battle of the Atlantic.

**The Rotterdam Senior Citizen Association also invited the SLATER's Traveling Classroom to its monthly membership meeting.** Through our new program *Keep Calm and Carry On*, Jack Madden and Linda presented the Battle of the Atlantic as the U.S. prepared to enter the war and protect convoys across the turbulent sea lanes. Meanwhile, the civilians at home and abroad lived through the affects of the war which were more severe in Britain. Near the end of the war, Brits were forced into the bomb shelters up to 17 times per day. Jack donated three additional easels to the Traveling Classroom program so we can clearly and easily display maps that illustrate the convoy routes littered with sunken merchant marine ships destroyed by the German U-boats.

**Speaking of which, our newest volunteers are Tom Cline of Binghamton and Tom Timmons of Albany.** The two Toms have joined our tour guide crew. We provide training while you make new friends and expand your awareness and knowledge of history. You can choose to be a guide one day a week, or perhaps two half days, or restoration and education in the same day, as many of our volunteers do. Additionally, you may want to help with the overnight camping program or our Traveling Classroom that visits schools and various organizations. There are many options to choose from, so you can create your own volunteer experience.



**The Michigan Field Week was an outstanding success despite intermittent rain.** Michigan **Dick Walker** once again organized the fall event that saw a great deal of catch-up work get done. Once again Chief **Bernard Smith** donated his services to cook for the crew all week long. He was assisted by former Coast Guard Chief Quartermaster **Larry Stiles** who took care of the messdecks and a rotating detail of messcooks who assisted Smitty in the galley. **Laird Confer** teamed up with **Roy Brandon** to tackle several welding projects. First off they went down into forward compartment A-304E which is now home to our forward sewerage holding tank and pump. The bulkhead between A-304 and A-305M was rotted out, which would be no big deal, unless the septic tank overflowed. To contain the possibility of sewerage in more than one place, Laird and Roy repaired the wasted bulkhead between the two spaces. This necessitated four people on fire watch but they managed to get the job completed in two days. Laird and Roy then moved topside to the machine shop bulkhead and began repairs on the main deck. The bulkhead was rotted out behind the work bench thanks to in-accessibility, and many years of water build up from the leaky expansion joint.

Using his plasma cutter, Laird cropped out a piece of rusted metal four feet long and four inches high and shaped a replacement piece to go into the cutout. By the end of the week he had it welded up and Corrosealed. We'll continue that job this winter. **Butch Warrender and Jim Parker** teamed up to take on several jobs. They removed a large piece of ratty looking firemain from outside the Chiefs Quarters and dressed it up so it looked like a brand new piece. They then worked on getting water to the sink in the wardroom pantry. As a side project, we've had an ice machine sitting unused in the pantry for about 12 years, so they are running fresh water and a drain to it so we can put it back into use. That project is about 50% complete when they ran out of time, so they know what they will be doing in the spring. They also installed a raised spout on the messdecks scuttlebutt, so it is now possible to pour a glass of cold water.



Michigan Dick Walker explains the bridge instruments to Col. Bob Nersasian for his upcoming book on USS LEOPOLD DE319.

The firecontrol gang worked on two different projects. Dick Walker and Gary Headworth spent the week up on the flying bridge working on preservation in the MK 52 gun director platform and stand. Down below Mike Marko renewed all the compressed airlines and electrical lines on the 20mm gun mounts that service the MK14 gunsights. He also did a lot of preventative maintenance on the MK51 gun directors. Ron Mazure and Gene Hermanson spent the week on deck chipping on the starboard side with our regulars.



John Yokum and Ron Prest back over the side.



**New Jersey volunteer Ron Frankosky painting out the waterways.**

**The fantail has been completed by our regular troops so now we are moving up the starboard side.** They actually got as far as the machine shop by the end of the week. They also worked off the paint float and worked on the boottop and freeboard on the port quarter. Monday they managed to get all the loose paint on the quarter scraped off and Corrosealed. Tuesday they managed to get primer on everything they had Corrosealed. Then Wednesday, despite rain, there was enough break in the afternoon that they got the entire boottop painted out and put haze gray over all the primer spots. They followed up this amazing performance with a lot of touch up painting on the depth charges, roller loaders and waterways. The second paint crew was Jim Ray and Ron Frankosky. They did a lot of touch up painting topside. They repainted both life raft racks forward, painted out the forward bulkhead of the superstructure just behind gun two, in the rain, since it was under the bridge over hang. They also primed the B-1 fan room on the portside just aft of the galley.

**On Wednesday morning it rained hard enough to stop all outside work.** We moved all the painters into the lower level of B-4. Jim Ray and the big guys Ron Frankosky and John Yocum worked along the aft bulkhead painting the fuel oil manifolds and bulkhead, finally completing that project. Ron Prest worked the forward bulkhead, painting out the generator couplings and shafts, so that the whole area looks great when looking down from the B-4 ladder.

**Two special visitors were part of the group, retired Army Col. Robert Nersasian came with Bill Legault.** Bob is doing research on the loss of the Coast Guard DE USS LEOPOLD in 1944. His brother served on the ship and survived and was awarded a Purple Heart. Bob is working to document the history of the ship and her loss. His participation in the Field Week gave him the chance to talk to DE sailors and to kind of experience the things his brother experienced on the LEOPOLD, the steep ladders, crowded berthing spaces, narrow hatches, eating on the messdeck, the hum of the ventilators and riding in the whaleboat.

**The work week was a success despite the weather.** Special thanks to **Jim Ray** who pulled the final messcook detail and did an awesome job cleaning the galley, “boldly going where no man has gone before.” And to **Larry Stiles** for taking such good care of the messdecks and, of course, **Smitty** for his culinary skills that made it all possible.



**Local volunteer Bill Wetterau working his way up the starboard side.**

**Our own crew haven't been slackers either. Super Dave, Tim Benner, Clark Farnsworth, Chris Fedden and Gene Jackey** finished up the chock over the CPO mess with **Boats Haggart** hanging Dave over the side one more time to do the outboard welding. They now have moved up to working on the 02 level radio direction finder platform that has been hanging unfinished for three years. The chippers **Bill Wetterau, Ron Mazure, Don Miller, Earl Herchenroder and Walt Stuart** finished the fantail and are moving up the starboard side. Parachute rigger **Angelo Bracco** made new covers for the MK52 director, the rangefinder and is now working on new covers for the MK14 gunsights.

**The radiomen continue to struggle with the TBL motor generator. Jerry Jones, Joe Breyer** and from afar, **Tom Horsfall**, are dealing with the latest problem, an open winding in the high voltage section of the motor generator. The thread-sized wire burned up in two places. Of course, my first instinct is to revert back to my old nature and think in terms of cumshaw and piracy. I immediately made a mental list of all the ships that have TBL motor generators, and which ones are charitable, and which ones have the weakest security, with the idea that a swap for our old armature could be arranged. Then Jerry dashed my hopes reminding me that having the only RCA TBL in the historic naval ship fleet means that nobody else's armature will work. Thus fellow shipkeepers, you are all safe.



**We will investigate the possibility of rewinding of the generator and gather some cost estimates.** Our problem is complicated by the fact that this generator is not only very high voltage at low current (small wires) but also has two separate direct current windings with two commutators and an alternator winding with slip rings. Jerry is also thinking that it looks like this was a failure of old insulation and not an external current overload. Using a microscope Jerry may try to cut away burned insulation and splice new pigtailed between the windings close to where they emerge from the laminations and the commutator segments and reinsulate with Formvar. If there are no internal shorts between the windings and or the laminations, it possibly may be saved that way.

**Or, alternate approach may be to just snip back and reinsulate the burned open wires,** and leave those few windings and commutator segments disconnected and floating, and if they are not shorted internally to the laminations check to see if the generator still works with the few missing windings. The DC output would be reduced and would have some bad ripple, but the filter capacitors would take care of that. The final alternative is to build a new power supply, but as purists, we hate to go that route. Jones reports that we are not planning to abandon hope yet.





**Down in the engineroom, our motormacs Karl Herchenroder, Gus Negus, Gary Lubrano and Mike Dingmon** have met with more success than the radiomen. They have run the 8-268A ships service generator in B-3 for half an hour and actually generated DC power that could ultimately be used to power up 24" searchlights. Barry Witte and George Gollas handled the electrical side of the project. The AC side of the generator is working, but there are some switchboard issues that will have to be resolved this winter when we can take power off the board. Rocky has also spent a lot of time down there cleaning the main engines and prepping them for painting.

**On the binnacle list this month is recently retired tour guide Les Beauchaine, former signalman aboard FROMOE DE509.** He and Annette were actually on the pier waiting for SLATER when she arrived in Albany in 1997. Les went to the doctor for a checkup, and they sent him directly to St. Peter's Hospital once they had a look at him. He had a quadruple bypass three days later and a replacement valve. He is recovering well, but apparently he retired just in time. However, his doctor says he's going to feel twenty years younger when he recovers, so we can't wait till he gets back aboard.

**Finally, the Executive Director missed several of these events while attending the annual Historic Naval Ships Conference.** The fact that I was missing would normally not have raised a single eyebrow ("Were you gone?" is the normal response) except for the fact that this year the conference was held in Honolulu. will be applicable to SLATER. It was also great to spend time with former SLATER volunteer **John Whalen** who is now an MM1 stationed aboard the attack submarine GREENEVILLE. We got a personal tour of the boat thanks to John, and it's amazing how much still feels familiar. **See you next month.**