



# 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. 15 No. 1, January 2012**

**This month starts with the famous question, "Do you want the good news or the bad news?"** In my continuing effort to always end these newsletters on a high note, I'll start with the bad news. It can be best summed up in a memo I sent to the Trustees, volunteers and staff on January 4th:

Attention SLATER Trustees, volunteers and staff: The USS SLATER is experiencing a temporary financial setback. This fall, under the new State consolidated funding application program, the SLATER did not receive any funding. We made two applications, one for restoration support and one to continue work on the permanent mooring. To my surprise, both were rejected. This is the first time in a long time we have not received any State grant support. Also, due to State budget constraints, we are no longer receiving the State Legislative member item support we have received in previous years amounting to 15-25K which helped pay for operating expenses. Additionally, I anticipate the emphasis on the Hull Fund will cause a reduction in Winter Fund donations. This will leave our operating budget with a shortfall and we expect several very lean months ahead.

As a result of all this, we have been forced to terminate the Education Coordinator position, and reduce the full time staff to four people. Linda's duties will be split among the remaining four of us. Heather Maron will coordinate tour guide training and scheduling this spring in addition to her duties as Collections Manager. We thank Linda for her service and wish her well in her future endeavors.

We must constantly operate the SLATER within the limits of our self-generated income. I would ask your help in any ideas for reducing expenses as much as possible. I was recently told by a major donor, "No organization does more with less than the SLATER does." That's what we strive for, and it's that spirit that keeps us afloat while other not-for-profits fail. Thank you for your continued help and support.

It's not all bad, but with the loss of state funding, we projected an operating fund decrease. The potential was there for running an operating deficit if we didn't act to reduce expenses.



**We're tightening our belts to get through the winter.**

**On the positive side, the Hull Fund is doing very well. This is in large part to the initiative of our new Chairman Bartley "BJ" Costello. BJ made direct contact with Philadelphia-area philanthropist H. F. (Gerry) Lenfest who, among his other accomplishments, was a former Reserve Commanding Officer of USS COATES DE685. He assumed command of her in**

1965 while she was in the Group II program by which the Reserve officer was the commanding officer. The regular Navy officer was responsible for maintaining the ship but was not the CO. The ship then had the lowest rating in the squadron. However, in three years the COATES won the USS ENGLAND trophy as the top Reserve DD/DE in the Atlantic Fleet because the crew felt the ship belonged to them. Mr. Lenfest's initial response was that he would not become a major donor to the Hull Fund, but would contribute something. He then sent BJ a check for \$100,000, which to us is certainly a major donation. Thanks to Mr. Lenfest and all of you, the fund has raised over \$700,000. We are working on the preliminary drydock work package and will begin contacting shipyards this spring to visit them and discuss the work on the SLATER. Right now, as so many yards have shut down, there are only three options available in the area, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and New London. The number increases if we consider Philadelphia or Boston, but that is a long and expensive tow. Also, your donations to the Winter Fund have now reached over \$33,000 as of February 1. Without any State funding we have a tough year ahead, but all you donors are certainly stepping up to the plate.

**While all of this fund raising goes on, the work aboard the ship continues.** This is where I am in serious danger of repeating myself, as there are no adjectives I can use to describe the state of the ship right now that I haven't used before this time of year. Messy, filthy torn up and depressing might be a few. Part of the problem is that all the work this winter is happening right outside my office in the normally pristine forward area of the ship. Everything is coated with a layer of dust.



**Chuck Teal fitting a piece into the breakwater while his grandson fire watches.**



**Tim Benner and Dave Mardon replacing wasted steel in the starboard deckhouse.**

**As you enter the ship by the door at the starboard breakwater, you realize some major work is going on.** Just beyond the breakwater you encounter a temporary plywood and sheet plastic shelter that has enabled the work on the forward deckhouse to continue all winter. Doug Tanner, Tim Benner Dave Mardon, Gene Jackey and Chuck Teal have all been working on this one. This work has involved cutting out 15 inch of wasted metal and replacing it with 6 inch flatbar from the deck. The steel was rotted and leaking down to the messdecks through the stuffing tubes that carry the wiring for the forward ventilation fan controllers. The tubes were rotted, allowing water to pass through, right next to the live 440volt wiring. This necessitated running temporary power for the forward supply fan from the galley power panel in the main deck passageway so we could have heat this winter. All five stuffing tubes were cut out and replaced and all new armored cable run from the ventilation power panel located on the reefer deck, up through the messdecks, to the main deck controllers.

To make the job more interesting, part of the repair was over the starboard fuel trunk creating the possibility of an explosion from residual oil fumes in the tank. Doug Tanner deftly handled that weld by inserting an air bag into the fuel trunk and pushing it beyond where the weld was. He inflated the bag. Once it was holding pressure and he had a seal, he inserted dry ice into the trunk and checked if it was explosive gas and oxygen content with a gas meter. When everything was safe, he welded up the seam over the fuel trunk. Of course all that work goes on at the base of the ladder right outside my office, so the dirt and the noise have been pretty annoying .

As you cross over to the port side you see that the armory is undergoing modification. A rifle rack has been installed and we're making space to stow our flags and poles for the color guard. Throughout the passageway, ragged welds are being smoothed and holes plugged to dress up the space.





and "Super Dave" Mardon welding up the supports.



Work on the messdecks storeroom. Mike Forstner grinds to fit a new bulkhead panel,

**Heading down to the messdecks, this space has been trashed.** All the furnishings have been stripped out or covered with plastic and the tables have been covered with plywood. Grinding and chipping are going on as we get ready to repaint the space. The scullery looks like it puked. As we work to remove all the post-war modifications, the dishwashing machine, sink counter and post-war ventilation has been removed and is scattered about the messdecks. Super **Dave Mardon, Bill Wetterau, Earl Herchenroder** and **Gene Jackey** are replacing all the expanded metal and blanking over the post-war vent openings. The sink and counter were raised eight inches for some unknown reason, so that is coming back down to its original location. Over in the "cage" or pantry on the port side, a couple pieces of deteriorated interior bulkhead have been removed and are being replaced with new metal. Down below the messdecks, in our portside electronic shop and sonar equipment room, some major chipping is going on as we get ready to restore this space. **Ron Mazure, Don Miller, and Walt Stuart** have stayed engaged down there.



Boats Haggart and Nelson Potter working on a cargo net.



Ron Mazure and Don Miller chip out the ET shop below the messdecks.

**Continuing forward, forward berthing is full of all the furnishings, dishware and supplies that came off the messdecks.** If you need a roll of toilet paper, this is the place to find it, but you gotta know where to look. We've fought a desperate battle to try and keep the watertight doors closed to limit the dirt and grime. Right down below there is the reefer deck where Gary Sheedy and Dave Jeffries have been working all winter. Gary is very close to putting up the gauge board and completing the space. Knowing how much I want to see the machinery space complete, Gary continues to torment me, now by moving his effort into the portside reefer where he has begun restoration of that space. He and Dave have removed all the cooling coils and are refinishing and polishing them. Up in the Chief's mess, Tommy Moore reinsulated the overhead and bulkhead under the chock we replaced last summer. The area has been repainted and we'll reinstall the bunks next week. But the compartment has remained habitable for coffee breaks and lunches.



This doesn't exactly look like a cosmetic



Gary Lubrano and Mike Dingmon working on the restoration of number four main engine.

**Down in the aft diesel space, B-3, the engineers have started on the cosmetic restoration of their first main engine, number 4.** I say cosmetic, but they are also on the hunt for a complete gasket replacement set for a Cleveland 16-278A. I give you the model number so if you have a set, or know someone willing to donate a set, please get in touch with us. Who knows what those engineers have in mind. Between trips to the whaleboat, Rocky completed restoration of all the thermostats and the exhaust elbows. The rest of the crew, **Gary Lubrano, Karl Herchenroder, Gus Negus, and Mike Dingmon** have been gently needle-gunning the engine in preparation for painting. Above them, **Barry Witte** is nearing completion of the restoration of the main distribution board. All the panels are back in place and Barry has painstakingly reproduced all the missing labels after much research, and is installing the last of them.



The aft main electrical distribution panel in B-3 before...



... and after the Witte treatment.





Bob Kibbey and Mike Dingmon rigging out the TBL motor generator for the radiomen.

**That's about it, except that up in the radio room, just across the passageway from me, the saga of the TBL Generator continues.** With help from **Bob Kibbey** and **Mike Dingmon**, the generator was uncoupled from the motor and the high voltage generator, set uprights, and the armature prepared for removal. It sits in this position, pending information on what our repair options are. The original manufacturer Bogue Electric is still in business, and **Jerry Jones** has been in touch with them to see how charitable they are and to see if they still have the capability of rewinding the low voltage section. Speaking of charitable, we looked into the cost of purchasing three replacement water tight doors, one for the galley, one for the hedgehog locker and one for the deck gear locker.



**There's nothing unusual about this picture except that the guy doing the cutting is ninety years old. Happy Birthday Clark!**

These are the most badly deteriorated doors. Most of our spares are cannibalized from old ships, but watertight doors is the one item that the Navy and Maritime Commission won't let us remove from ships that are about to be towed to the scrap yard. We contacted the Navy supplier of the doors and the price per door, less frame and dogs unpainted is \$3967.50. Anybody feel really charitable? In the same vein, after spending countless hours rebuilding chocks, we found a source that is very close to the original style carried aboard DEs and the price per each is \$851 plus shipping. We need six. Anybody want to buy us some chocks?

**Speaking further of needs, we have a volunteer billet to fill**

**aboard.** We desperately need to find someone local who can take over the thankless job of Machine Shop Storekeeper. Ideally we'd like a person who can work two days a week, Monday and Saturday, when most of the volunteers are here. Essentially, the job involves straightening up after the thirty or so Neanderthals who regularly use the shop, and bust their butts working until it's too late to clean up. The job would involve organizing all the hardware, sorting through fasteners and plumbing fittings and being able to find what we need when we need it. Basically someone to bring order to chaos. Said person better have the patience of a saint, a strong sense of humor, a love of organization and tidiness, and unflappable resolve.



**Paul Guarnieri and Intern Tin Udovicic restore the hedgehog projectiles.**



**Thomas Scian sanding the passageway bulkhead.**

**We had some personnel losses this season. Long time volunteer Bill Coyle passed away after a long illness.** Bill was a motormac on the USS WILEMAN DE22 and started many years ago working in B-3 with Bill Siebert. SLATER's flag flew at half mast in his honor. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Miriam and Bill's family. We also lost long time CAPDESA member Hank Rizzo off USS CHASE DE158/APD54. Hank always provided the flowers for our DE Day Memorial Services. Finally, in another passing of sorts, one of our shipmates was caught lying about his age. We finally found out the truth about Clark Farnsworth. Clark is a retired Chief Shipfitter who served aboard LEYTE CV32 at the end of World War II. If you recall, last year I put Clark's age at 87. After many years of deception about his age and birth date, we heard a rumor that he was actually going to be ninety years old on January 10th. He had previously said he was only 88. We confronted him in the chow line and demanded to see his driver's license. Sure enough, he was born on January 10, 1922. Maybe we'll have to cut him a little more slack now. Clark, on behalf of all of us, you are amazing.

**See you next month.**