



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**The USS TARAWA CV-40 reunion crew checking out how the small boys lived.**

**September continued to be a busy month as we hosted several reunion groups including the USS TARAWA CV40, the USS HAYNSWORTH DD700, and the USS EARL K OLSEN DE765.**

We also had our annual Smithsonian Magazine Museum Day in which the Smithsonian subscribers are admitted free, and

we had a large turnout of members. We were visited by a unique group of civilian prisoner's of war, children who were taken captive by the Japanese in the Philippines and incarcerated for the duration of the conflict. Their collective hardship formed a bond as strong as any military reunion group and they continue to gather after all these years. Chief Jack Ryan also brought aboard a SUNY Oasis group and we began our first overnight encampments of the fall season.

**The Executive Director's annual odyssey began on Wednesday September 19th when I boarded a plane for Key West.** Each year I attend two conferences, the Historic Naval Ships Convention and the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association Reunion. Some years, like last year, they fall on the same dates, but this year they were back to back, so I began a ten-day two-city road trip. The last and only time I was in Key West was back in 1974 when I was flown down by Merrit Chapman and Scott salvage

company to be an ordinary seaman and officers messman on the old USS CABLE ARS19. The last leg of the trip was on Sunshine Airlines (known back then as Sometimes Airlines) in a DC-3.

**Arriving in Key West almost forty years later you still walk down the ladder onto the tarmac, but much has changed.** Over three days I attended seminars on *Volunteer and Visitor Safety, Offsite and Traveling Education Programs, Fund Raising in Tough Economic Times, Your Ship's Economic Impact on the Community, and Emergency Operations and Repair by the folks at the Battleship Texas, Survey and Repair of the Battleship North Carolina, and The Customer is King.* The Navy did a presentation on *The End of Life Decision, Planning for Your Ship's Disposal.* They are taking a pessimistic view, perhaps realistic, that all the ships will not survive, and that the Navy will not be responsible for the disposal costs. That really doesn't affect us as we are not part of their Navy donation program.



**USCGC INGHAM in drydock in Charleston South Carolina.**

**The high point of the trip for me was the time Bill Verge spent with me.** Bill is the Executive Director of the Coast Guard Cutter INGHAM, formerly of Patriots Point and now located at Truman Wharf in Key West. Bill put the ship through a drydocking at Detyens Shipyard in Charleston right after the transfer two years ago. Bill generously shared his experiences with the shipyard,

work plans and costs to try to give me some comparative numbers so I can gauge what our drydocking will cost us when we do the SLATER. Of course INGHAM has something I can only dream about: 5/8" shell plating and the fact that she was very well cared for by her crews for the five decades she was in service. I am indebted to Bill for the time he spent with me and the information he provided.

**From Key West it was on to Norfolk for the 37th annual Destroyer Escort Sailors Association Convention at the Riverside Sheraton.** The first cause for concern was when the luggage carousel chute as the carousel stopped with my bag was just about to be dropped. I climbed up and grabbed it and was out the door. I approached the Sheraton Van, and the Driver asked "Are you Mister Tim?" I felt like a celebrity. As the van pulled into the parking lot the first two people I saw were **Dori Glaser** and **Phyllis Gruber** "having a meeting" on the bench. I checked in with them and we visited for a few

minutes. When I got to the desk, my celebrity status changed when they said, “We weren't expecting you until tomorrow.” That was quickly sorted out. I spent the next three days set up in the Men's Ship's Store next to **Ed Glaser** answering questions about USS SLATER, personally thanking our donors, listening to sea stories and reminiscing with many old friends. I did my annual presentation on SLATER's progress to the membership.

**One of the high points of the trip was a tour of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS MASON DDG87 arranged by Phyllis Gruber, Bob Lamb and Walt Alexander of the Old Dominion Chapter of DESA.** Through their contact with the Command Master Chief **Eric Hovik**, a tour was arranged for Phyllis, **Eva Fox, Steve and Vicki Hoback**, Army **LtCol Carol Varner** and myself. As one of only three ARLEIGH BURKES that carry DE names (The other two being STOCKDALE DDG106 and TRUXTUN DDG103) MASON has been very special to DESA. **Tom and Phyllis Gruber** maintained a close association with the ship through her construction, launching and commissioning at Bath Iron Works.



Rizzuto Tried to make a deal for mooring line.



USS MASON DDG-87 in Norfolk preparing for deployment.

**There was a Palpable level of tension in the air as the crew was in the midst of qualifying for the upcoming deployment.** But the interior condition of the ship made me green with envy. It was clean beyond anything I had ever experienced. Perfect gaskets, perfect knife edges, everything clean and polished. Even the stuffing tube nests were spotless. Throughout the tour I reverted back to my former life as a scrounger (Is there really any difference between that and the fundraising I do now?) and carefully noted what modern shipboard equipment would be useful aboard SLATER. It is interesting to note that the standard 440volt submersible pumps have not changed a bit in 70 years. Thank you. I'd like to have six. The old red devil portable blowers had been shrunk down and made much lighter, so I'd like to have four of them. The portable “Elephant trunk” ductwork was not changed, so I'll take eight sections. A couple of the new P-100 diesel pumps would be nice. And about 1,200 feet of your inch and a half diameter mooring line. Also, the design of the navy clocks has not changed, except they have battery movement. Thank you, but we have enough clocks. Oh, and the new camo uniforms. We don't need any of those either. We're still the old Navy. I'll have a truck on the pier and the completed 1149 forms in the morning....then I snapped back to reality.



**Bob Quigley DE252 and his family made four generations at the DESA Convention.**



**Dick and Angie Ager chat with Don Hitchcock and his daughter Trudi who joined us from England.**

**One of the great things is seeing the children and grandchildren of the DE veterans take an interest in the service of their elders and attend the reunions.** DESA President **Steve Hoback** made a special point of recognizing these youngsters at the DESA banquet on Thursday night. I know from our own experience here aboard SLATER there are so many times that old Sailors bring their uniforms and artifacts to us, saying wistfully, no one in my family is interested this stuff. That's kind of sad, so we are all impressed and grateful to see families showing interest in the service of the "Greatest Generation." **Trudi Thomson** came all the way from England with her father **Don Hitchcock** who was representing the Captain Class Frigate association. It was great to see **Charlie Markham** again, escorted by his daughter Nancy. And, there were many others, but the record went to **Bob Quigley** off USS HOWARD D. CROW who was escorted by a veritable entourage of 3 daughters, 3 granddaughters and 1 grandson! DESA has chosen to have their 2013 Reunion back here in Albany next September, so we look forward to a lot of intergenerational sharing as the old Sailors return to a destroyer escort with the their younger generations.

**While I was away the Radio Gang participated in a major worldwide event hosted by the prestigious Italian Naval Old Rhythmers Club, INORC, of which there are only four US members.** Two of those members are **Stan Levandowski** who served aboard USS BOXER LPH4 and **Tony Castellano** who served aboard PC564. Stan came up with the idea of operating a special event station aboard the USS SLATER using Elecraft transceivers running 5 watts CW to the ship's antennas and hopefully operating from the ship's radio room. Tony agreed that he had a winning idea. Stan got in touch with me and I put them in touch with **Jerry Jones**, our lead Electronics Technician. Jerry was very enthused about the idea and became a most gracious host.



**Participants in the recent radio event included Joe Breyer, Ulrich Steinberg, Mike Wyles, Tony Castellano, Stan Levandowski and Jerry Jones.**

**A date for the special event was agreed upon, September 19, 2012 which coincidentally happened to be Tony's 80th birthday and the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stan's enlistment in the US Navy.**

After much preparation, the radiomen packed their seabags and reported aboard. The crew consisted of Stan, Tony, and **Ulrich Steinberg**, who was a former lieutenant in the German Army

Signal Corps and is well known throughout the world in radiotelegraph circles for his many technical contributions to the art of Morse. They were met by our regulars **Jerry Jones, Mike Wyles, and Joe Breyer**. Tony told Joe that, after Sonar School, he served aboard the USS PC 564 whose home port was the submarine base in Groton, CT. Joe responded that he served aboard USS SUNBIRD ARS15, also based there. It turns out that their ships occasionally operated together. What a small world.

**They set up their gear and connected to one of the ship's original port vertical antennas and tuned it to 17 meters.** They went on the air and quickly worked Sweden receiving a very good signal report. Things looked good, but then when Ulrich, connected to a starboard vertical antenna, fired up on 20 meters, he wiped Tony out because the antennas were too close. Stan, being on 40 meters and using the ship's horizontal long wire, was not affected by either of them nor did he affect them. The problem was solved by Tony changing antennas to a short vertical whip on the flying bridge, but it was less effective because of its short length and the very long length of transmission line. All three were then able to operate simultaneously on their respective bands without interfering with one another.

**When the 1600 GMT start time arrived they immediately made several contacts.** The contacts Tony and Ulrich were making were long haul, such as the Southwest, California, Puerto Rico, South America and Europe. Tony made some notable contacts such as IZOLKW, a fellow INORC member in Rome, Italy, CX7TT who is a retired U.S. Navy Captain living in Uruguay, and NB5EQ which is the USS Altair Association in Texas. When the event ended at 2000 hours GMT, they had made 148 contacts across 37 states and 10 countries using a power level equivalent to a child's nightlight and 68-year-old antennas. After it was all over, they packed up their gear and departed the USS SLATER. They were tired and sad that it was over, but they know they will all be back aboard our wonderful ship in the near future. Tony's last wish was that he could again sail on a Destroyer Escort as he had done several times in Key West, during his time in the Navy.



**Super Dave Mardon carrying the load.**



**Gary Sheedy is making significant progress on the reefer deck.**

**Maintenance continued throughout the month.** With **Doug Tanner** on the road, **Dave Mardon**, **Tim Benner**, **Gene Jackey**, **Chris Fedden** and **Clark Farnsworth** had to carry the load without their fearless leader. They have nearly completed the repair work on the flying bridge and the signal bridge a deck below. We are hoping to get these spaces painted out during the fall work week coming up October 14<sup>th</sup>. To facilitate that, our chippers, **Don Miller**, **Earl Herchenroder**, **Ron Mazure** and **Walt Stuart** have been chipping away at the deck. Clark continues to peck away making repairs to the starboard breakwater door. **Thomas Scian** and **Austin Tyron** did a magnificent job of polishing the ship's bell and bringing back the original shine. Now they have to keep it polished every week. **Gary Sheedy** is making real progress on the reefer deck. He hit a real milestone this month with the installation of the gauge board and the log desk as well as the lampshades and electrical box covers. The space looks better than anything I saw on the MASON. **Bill Wetterau** has been working two days as week on the B-4 lube oil piping and doing touch up painting to dress up the space. Forward of Bill, new volunteer **Ken Myrick** has joined the engineering gang in their efforts to fire up number three main engine.



**The 2012 RPI NROTC Midshipmen.**



**NPTU students Weber, Trecha, Himmel, Sedler and Adock did an amazing job in B-4.**

**We have the RPI NROTC Midshipmen back with us, working side by side with the old Sailors to keep the old skills alive and sharpen their mechanical ability.** Under the supervision of Barry Witte, their big project is installing a lube oil pump in the aft motor room B-4 and fabricating new gaskets as they reassemble the piping. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Navy Sailors Steve Sedler, Zach Kimmel, Damon Trecha, Sean Adock, and Ben Weber. This was the latest crew from the Navy Nuclear Power Training Unit to volunteer to work in the bilges of B-4 and, like the two groups before them, these guys really got down and dirty. Between them they pulled almost 100 gallons of rust and crud out of the B-4 bilges, scraped, wire brushed, Corrosealed and primed. This involved actually crawling around under the bilge piping, a job they did without complaint. The B-4 bilges are now about 80% complete, and if the program keeps going, we hope to move forward into B-3 before the end of the year. Hopefully they will never encounter similar conditions in the modern US NAVY.



**Damon Trecha looking for a way out of the bilge.**



**Applying the Corro Seal.**

**Finally, we have several events coming up.** The Capital District Chief Petty Officer Association will celebrate the Navy Birthday on Saturday October 13th. On November 10th we celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday. That evening, for those of you who are members, be on the lookout for your invitation to our annual USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club. The cocktail party to raise money for the Hull Fund will begin at 1730. The guest speaker will be CAPT James T. Loeblein, USN, Director, US Navy Senate Liaison from Washington, as well as an update on the status of the Drydock Project as well as cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Then, on December 7th at 0900 we will commemorate Pearl Harbor Day in conjunction with the Zaloga American Legion Post. We hope to see you at some or all of these events.

**See you next month**