



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Vol.3 no.4, April 2000

I stand in awe of this crew. What they have accomplished this winter, and in getting the ship back to the Albany side has been amazing. I believe most employers would kill for their level of competence and enthusiasm. And we don't have to pay for it.

First, a word about camel day. Before we can move the ship back to Albany, we have to set the sixteen two-ton apiece camels in place. This job does not have the thrill of the actual move, and this was the first time we have had to do it on our own without the help of the younger, stronger DOT Bridge Maintenance guys. On camel day ten guys showed up including Hack, "Band-Aid" Tom Beeler, brother Frank, Les, Raf, and Beth from our Snow Dock neighbors, the Dutch Apple Cruise Boat. Tom Moore and Roy Gunther worked on the camels doing the shackling. Bob Cross and John Kosa loaned us "Jimmy" and the Albany Water Department crane. We started work at eight-thirty and every thing was in place by 1300. Not bad.

The month started with the planned move across the river scheduled for Tuesday, March 28th. As we said last month, we wanted to be in place on the Albany side on Saturday, April first for our opening day. The Canal Corps Tugs were not available because they winter in Waterford on the other side of the Troy lock, so we made arrangements with Bart Brake of Empire Marine to move SLATER.

So, I was planning for an easy Monday with a few volunteers to continue the big clean up and make some leisurely preparations to get ready for the move on Tuesday. As is my custom when I arrive aboard, the first thing I did was check the answering machine. It was Bill Welch from Empire Marine. The message was simple. The weather forecast for Tuesday looked rainy and really windy. Could we be ready to move the ship that morning? I called Bill and said, "no way". He said that if the weather was too bad on Tuesday, they wouldn't be able to get us until Friday. With a Saturday opening, that was cutting it a bit close. Today, the weather was perfect. I told Bill, with only five volunteers aboard, I didn't see how we could swing it.

Two things happened to change my mind. Dick Walker showed up, and after hearing about the dilemma, said, "You want me to start making phone calls?" A few minutes later, Gary Sheedy showed up in his van. His help was vital in making the shore power disconnects and hookups. I said, "You think you could get the day off?" He got on the phone and got the day off, with the warning, "Don't change your mind." I called the tugs and said we'd be ready by eleven.

On move day, I can deal with any kind of weather but wind. On a dead ship, wind really makes me nervous. At that point we only had seven guys aboard. The crew started taking the wires off at nine. I went back to the fantail to see how it was going. All of a sudden, there were white caps on the river and the wind blew my hat off. Where did that come from? It's getting to be a move day tradition. Did I mention that the previous week had been seven days of flat calm?

Dick had good luck making phone calls and the crew began to arrive. By nine-thirty, all the wires were off. That was when I got another call from Bill. It was getting pretty gusty, and maybe we'd better hold off. When I told him all the wires were off, he said "okay". End of conversation. Every one started asking me "When are we leaving?" and I said, "When a tug makes fast to the fantail."

Meantime our promotion girls Joanne McFadden and Debbie Moore were frantically trying to alert the media that all their carefully planned press releases were now obsolete and that we were moving within the hour. We did everything we could to thwart their efforts, including cutting Deb's phone lines mid sentence while she was talking to the newspaper folks. Despite our best efforts to keep the move a secret, they managed to have three newspapers and two TV stations

waiting for us on the other side. But I'm getting ahead of myself.



Normally, we make the trip we have about thirty line handlers aboard. What the "over-the-hill guys" lack in youth, they make up for in numbers. However when we pulled up the gangway we had fifteen aboard counting Joanne and Nancy. The line handlers were Bob Callendar DE-744, Bob Dawson DD-723, Clark Farnsworth CV-32, Chief Dave Floyd, Dick Smith DE-5, Gordon Lattey, Larry Williams DE-246, Les Beauchaine DE-509, Ray Lammers APD-81, Erik Collin, Dave Riffley USCG, Frank Beeler, Danny Donovan, Cdr. Greg Krawczyk and myself. On the shore we left Tom Beeler DD-712, 878, Dick & Maralyn Walker USCG, Jerry Jones AO-144, Gary Sheedy ARL-23, Ken Kaskoun CVE-108 and Russ Ferrer USA.

The trip across was really smooth and really fast. We had the tide right, going out, but the strong south wind had us at the Snow Dock in about thirty- minutes when normally we take an hour of leisurely cruising. The tugs applied the "waterbrakes" at the dock and gently eased us right into position. The heaving lines began to shoot across. Some of us did better than others. By that time Tom Moore, Raf, Mike Stenzel and a few others had joined the shore party to meet us, and now the fun began. Getting the ship tied up with six on the focs'c'le and six on the fantail meant the "over the hill gang" really had to put out a lot more effort than usual. Even the electricians had to help with lines. It took a little longer, but by 1400, all the lines and wires were on the aluminum gangway rigged, shore power and water hooked up. With a few sore muscles we were ready for another season. Almost.



Getting the ship cleaned up after four months of renovation made the move seem easy. All hands turned to sweep, vacuum, swab, dust, paint and polish to get her ready. Special thanks go to Erik Collin who took a weeks vacation off from

his computer job to finish painting all the interior decks forward. Gordon worked with the Albany Reservists and got all the MK14 gunsights remounted. Jerry and Don tweaked their **radio room**, Bob "the gray haired guy" tweaked the pilothouse and **CIC**, and Claire Oesterreich kept the whole cleanup going using her "brownies" as incentive for people to come down. It really works. Meanwhile, Nancy and Dick Walker set about calling and rounding up the tour guides. Pat Perrella put flags in the flag bags. The whistle, siren and GQ alarm were all tested. Deb got out the press releases, and we opened to our third season on April first as scheduled.

General Electric Volunteer Crew
Responsible for Hot Water on the Slater



Ship Cleaning

Eric Weidman - Polishing Brass Pilothouse

I won't go into detail about all the improvements. We'll just make you come and see for yourselves. When you come ask to see Jerry Jones comic photo album of our move day antics, titled "SLATER - _TOONS". - Thanks Jerry. And thanks to Gary for the reefer in the galley, to Russ, Doug Tanner USCG WAVP 387, and the gang from GE, including Sev Moro AR 22, Doug Cutright , Lew Knott DDR-834 and R. J. Hummer NAS Miramar for hot water fore and aft. The Michigan DESA crew will think they've died and gone to heaven with two working showers!



Mike Stenzel Photographing in Reefer Room for Drawing



Mike Gurney tweaking multi-channel Entertainment System (uhh Radio?)

This crew doesn't rest. New volunteer Larry Rockwood DE-172, just finished painting the amidships repair locker. The Chipperdales and the electricians are hard at work in the aft head, tripping over each other as usual. Clark is installing the sinks there. Dick Walker is organizing his tool room so we have a neat bench to throw our tools on at the end of the day. Fellow Coastie Dick Palovic chose the unenviable job of chipping and painting under the galley sinks. Barry and Mike got have the new multi-channel entertainment system up on line and the yardarm blinker working. Gary is getting all the electrical spares organized. Roy just rigged the davit guys for the whaleboat. Mike Stenzel has been photographing obscure ship

Crew with "new" Optical Rangefinder



areas with his specially rigged tripod & automatic-timed digital camera to upgrade the SLATER Website, and as I write; Hack, Les, Jerry and Doug are on their way back from Portsmouth, Virginia with a load of spare parts from the James River Reserve Fleet. This trip follows the weekend jaunt to Baltimore by Gordon Lattey and Frank Perrella DE-326 to retrieve the Optical Rangefinder the SS John W. Brown so graciously gave to us. Overnight accommodations were provided aboard BROWN plus the wonderful experience of being aboard a fully operational ship that is older than SLATER .



By the time you receive this Albany Skipper Frank Lasch and Slater assistant Eric Weidman will have completed their "on road" trips on behalf of SLATER. Frank attended the National Convention of the Destroyer Escort Commanders Organization in San Diego, CA, while Eric attended the 15th Annual Reunion of the USS Slater DE-766 Crewmembers and their families held in Mobile, AL. Both delivered Slide-presentations as part of the group's featured program. Eric is currently completing his Master's Thesis at SUNY Albany which involves the "History of the USS Slater DE-766", and his work has been instrumental in bringing more information and detail to our entire project.

We had a note from Sam Saylor, DEHF President who organizes the Foundation Newsletter . Because of a computer glitch with the mailing list, some may not have received the "Volume 6, Number 1 - First Quarter 2000" issue of Trim But Deadly. If you are a regular Foundation Member and did not receive this issue just, write or call us and we'll make sure you get a copy.

Notes from Nancy: The last two weekends in March found me knee-deep in the great SLATER "spring cleaning adventure". Thanks to all my helpers, especially Chris Soulia, Julie Sussin, Eric Weidman and Claire Oesterreich, who sloshed along with me. (Tim was lurking about wearing "white gloves" and carrying his "dental mirror" making sure no one was slacking off!)

"WELCOME BACK" to all the TOUR GUIDES: those all important people who transform the ship from a cold hunk of iron to a living object with a soul for the visiting public! Our season has started and we are doing great; with guest numbers up substantially from last year. Thanks to our volunteer coordinator, Dick Walker, our watch list is up to date. We need help on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so give Dick a call if you can join us. Dick's "First-Mate" Maralyn is also starting the Tour Season with an organized and efficient Shop Inventory system that will provide us with accurate & up to date information. It was great to see everyone at the guides meeting in March .The next guide's meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 13th, at 1300 hours. Please try to attend as this provides our best opportunity to "fine-tune" our presentations and address any issues that may come up. Don't forget to sign-up for a name tag - the list is in the shed. I

would also like to thank all those who assisted me with the preparation of the "Community Development Block-Grant" as we received notification of our acceptance in receiving this grant to help with our Education and Tour Guide program. Another "WELCOME BACK" to our favorite Motor-Home parking lot residents, Don & Ruthie Martin from Oxnard, CA. They just swung by after attending this years ships' reunion of the USS SWEARER DE-186, in Charleston, SC , parked their vehicle and went right back to work where they had left off last year.

Looking back, March was pretty nice month weather wise. April has been pretty crappy. Really good days alternating with really bad days. A foot of snow on our second Sunday shut us down completely except for a couple of Glens Falls Reservists, Russ Erik Collin, Eric Weidman and Nancy. In spite of it, our income has been twice what it was last year at this time. The effort in getting to the Snow Dock early and bringing Debbie Moore aboard to answer the phone has really paid off. The ACCVB and Gina Mintzer also provide the solid base for providing information to reunion groups about visiting ALBANY & SLATER Looking back, this crew has done some amazing things.

Again, our thanks to the Albany Water Department for the continued crane service. The snow made us especially grateful to Ed Sakacs DE-191, who drove all the way from Schenectady every time it snowed to plow a path to the ship in Rensselaer. Finally, and most importantly, thanks to the Albany Port Commission, Frank Keane and Mark Bruno and their crew for putting up with us for another winter. I hate to think where we'd be without their help getting through the winter.

As we enter our Third Full Season of Restoration Work & Tours an interesting sociological phenomenon has developed among the SLATER crew . It seems to be affecting those who have been on "Vacation Cruises" - I can't believe the comments from these people who have spent thousands on relaxing vacations in warm, sunny ports of call - "The ship was too clean & quiet, the coffee tastes terrible, the ship areas don't smell right and no visits allowed to the ENGINE SPACES!" The Perrella's said their Cruise aboard SS John W. Brown last August was far better than the Renaissance-1; with realistic WW II "flybys", swing music, gun firings, US Marine Landing exhibits, and complete tours of all ship areas including the Engine Room! All this gives us hope for the future when SLATER can offer "living history" cruises of her own .

In the meantime, if you're planning a summer outing or family reunion consider a visit to SLATER; and by all means bring your neighbors and friends. Our museum ship offers a glimpse into the past and a realistic look at how a crew lived and worked aboard a Destroyer Escort during 1944-45. There is always room on our "volunteer crew roster" for you which can include visits & work in the ENGINE SPACES! Until next month

