

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Ship's Superintendent

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

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Vol. 3 no 5, May 2000

The big news stories this month are the Trip to Ft. Eustis, the return visit of Don and Ruthie Martin DE-186, the Michigan Field Day and the start of the side painting. Don and Ruthie showed up again in late April for two weeks of work. They had just attended the reunion of USS SWEARER crew in Charleston, SC and SLATER just happened to be on their way home to Oxnard, CA. Don dove right in on the needle gun with Dick Smith DE-5 and Earl Gillette DE-441 and began chipping out the aft shower stalls for the Michigan crew. Don stayed with it for ten days and got the stalls and the whole aft head chipped out and spray painted. As ever, his presence made a lot of progress possible.

For their fifth time Dick Breil DE-255 and Ron Zarem DE-148 organized a crew from the Michigan DESA Chapter to come out and work on the ship for a week. This time they showed up with thirty-two men, and it was like putting the SLATER back in commission for a week. Although most were from the Michigan Chapter, 6 other DESA Chapters were represented: East Pacific, Los Angeles DESA, Golden Chapter of Northern CA, Old Dominion VA, New Jersey DESA and our local CAP-DESA. All the airport and AMTRAK arrivals kept the "SLATER Angel LIMO" service quite busy as Claire Oesterreich DE-680 handled the pick-ups and ship-deliveries in between baking batches of brownies. She also made a 6 am arrival to transport Bob, Richard, and Rusty back to Albany International for their flights home on the following Saturday. Meanwhile at the AMTRAK station Rush Mellinger DE-147 and Dick Walker DE-359 were making their arrivals and departures. The rest of the guys arrived by car & van which was full of the cooks gear.

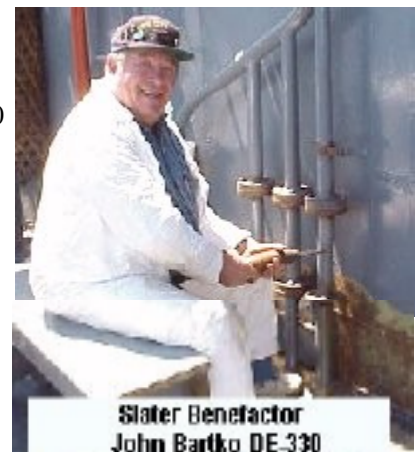


Cooks Paul Monaco DE-148 and Bill Kramer DE-366



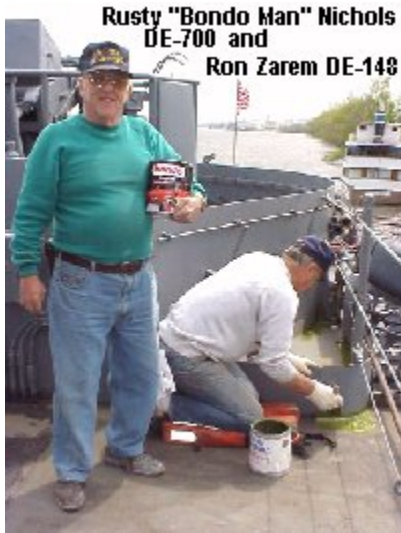
Cook Bill Kramer DE-366 and his two messcooks Paul Monaco DE-148 and James Ray DE-422 put all the galley improvements to the test. They had their work cut out for them cooking three squares a day for the crew. That was a major effort in itself. As usual, the big hit was creamed chipped beef on toast. Even Nancy got to experience this culinary delight, but not until she had been thoroughly briefed on all the navy nicknames for this scrumptious treat. Yum!

The crew had hardly reported aboard and unpacked their sea bags before John Bartko DE-330 had tracked me down. He caught me on the quarterdeck Sunday night with Sam, Earl and Ray and said, "This year I want to make my donation before you hand out the job assignments. I thought I might get a better job." Upon making that statement, John got out his checkbook and made a \$5,000. donation right on the quarterdeck desk. Any way, John chose the painting



**Slater Benefactor
John Bartko DE-330**

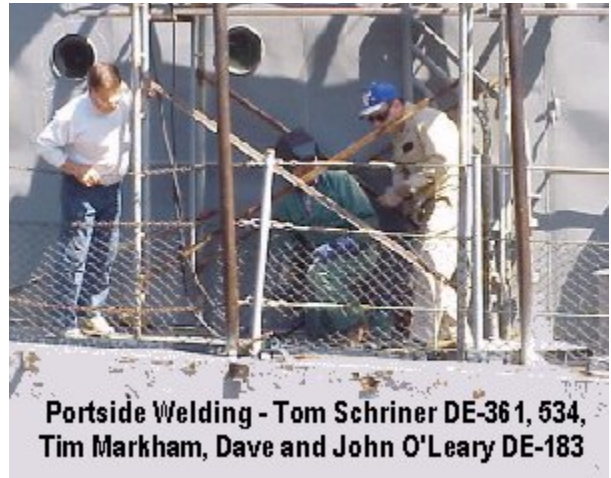
detail, and spent the week needle gunning tank vents around the maindeck house. The rumors that I personally served John coffee and water, put a pillow under his stool and gave him periodic shoulder massages are totally false. Especially the one about the mint on his pillow. John was abused just like the rest of the crew, and Dick Breil has the video to prove it.



Rusty "Bondo Man" Nichols DE-700 and Ron Zarem DE-148

The crew broke into four sections; painting, welding, pipefitting and cleaning. The painting detail under Ron Zarem was slowed down by bad weather, but they got the fantail, quarterdeck, the K guns and the 01 level sanded and primed with help from Dick Smith, Earl Gillette and Larry Rockwood DE-172. They also did a lot of detail prep work around the main deckhouse and a lot of, dare I say it, Bondo repair work. Rusty Nichols DE-700 donated a gallon of the indispensable compound and was officially designated "BONDO MAN - May 2000". There is no stopping this Michigan Gang; not only do they travel 10 hours to do the work, they also donate supplies, equipment and resources to accomplish the task. Dick Walker DE-359 contributed the cost of the shut off valves needed to install the 7 sinks aft, while Tim Markham, Chuck's son (DE-183-186) applied for a Grant from CMS ENERGY CORP. to cover the cost of the primer and paint used during the week. DESA Director Bob Fowler DE-534 also brought and left tools for us to use.

Welder Tom Schriener DE-361, DE-534 led the crew that worked mounting the forward life raft racks port and starboard on the superstructure. Greg Krawczyk FFG-22 had done the original design sketches. Hal Hatfield donated the pipe. Doug Tanner asked Lou Okonski at TROY BOILER WORKS, INC. to bend the pipe. And now it was up to Tom and his crew to mount the stanchions and assemble the supports. They got the job done in a week. It would have gone faster if Tom hadn't spent so much time heckling Ron and the painters about their lack of progress due to the weather. The next step is repainting and rigging the rafts before we lift them into position. CDR. Roy Gunther DD-711 completed the rigging of the Whaleboat davits and took advantage of the Michigan Manpower to swing them free. More news about the Whaleboat next month



Portside Welding - Tom Schriener DE-361, 534, Tim Markham, Dave and John O'Leary DE-183

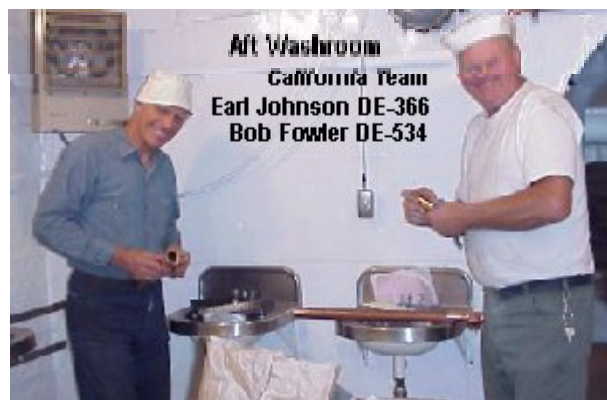


**Aft Steering Cleanup
Emmett Landrum DE-10
Bob Donlon DE-419
Ron Mazure MSO-471
John O'Leary, Sr. DE-183**

The bulk of the crew worked under the personal supervision of Dick Breil in cleaning out the aft crews quarters. If you have been down there in the last two years, you know what a jumble of material it had turned into. The first two days were spent building additional shelves in the lower magazines out of 2x8 planking that was stowed in the space. Then the sorting and movement of material began. Electrical and electronic gear was moved forward to the reefer spaces. All ordnance, navigational and damage control gear was sorted and stowed in the magazines below C-202L. All interior communications, galley and tradable material was stowed in the spaces under C-203L. The tradable material includes postwar gear and maritime commission fittings. All plumbing parts, supplies and fixtures were sorted and moved to the Shipfitter's Shop aft. All the books and charts were archived in the After Officers' Stateroom. All the bunk frames, hooks and chains were stacked in C-202L for future use. Three Dumpster loads of really useless material went out as trash. And finally, three pick up loads of scrap metal netted about \$250.00. Our own Dick Walker, USCG lent his truck for this task The spaces are now ready for restoration work to begin.

Then, there was the job that wasn't supposed to happen; plumbing the aft crew's washroom. Foundation directors, Earl Johnson DE-

366, Sam Saylor DE-306, and Ray Windle DE-640 were in town for a SLATER Board meeting. They joined DESA Director Bob Fowler DE-534 with plumbing in two more showers the weekend the Michigan crew arrived. That made a total of four working showers. Once the workweek started, Bob and Earl stayed on and went to work with Clark Farnsworth CV-32 to mount the seven sinks and plumb in hot and cold water and the sink drains. By the end of the week, and following many trips to the plumbing supply house, all seven sinks were on line. This was a bit of progress none anticipated, but when talented people show up, we let them go at it.

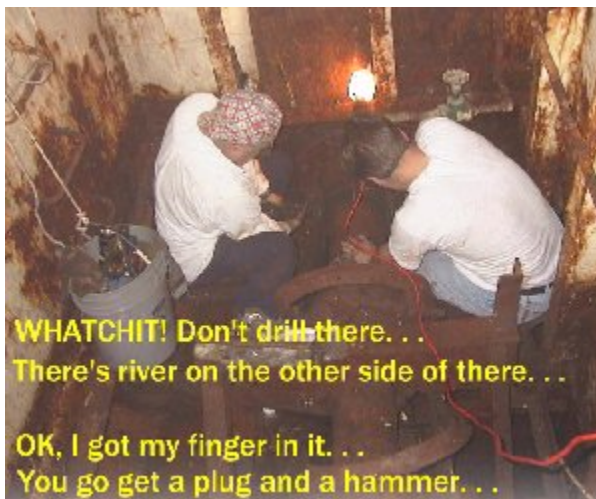


The Michigan field day week was a resounding success, and we encourage other DESA chapters to talk to the crew from Michigan and consider setting up similar events. We are indebted to all participants for helping get the SLATER ready for spring. A side benefit was that our PR pros Joanne and Debbie got us all kinds of television and newspaper press on the event, and we saw the resulting bump in attendance in the weeks that followed. Even Mayor Jerry Jennings came down for the USS BOOTH DE-170 Reunion. He was so impressed with the gang from Michigan that he treated them to a dinner cruise on the DUTCH APPLE Friday night. It was a wonderful time for all, except me. Those old guys wore me out keeping them busy. By 1800 Friday night, I was sound asleep.

Our scrounging party that went to the James River Reserve Fleet consisted of Hack Charbonneau DE-531, Les Beauchaine DE-509, Doug Tanner USCG and Jerry Jones AO-144 came back with a truckload of needed electrical fittings, a copper for the galley, and 25 bunk frames, hooks and chains needed for the aft crew's quarters. One of the biggest finds came from Chris Nardi of the Battleship Massachusetts who got a donated plotting table for CIC. We are indebted to Buddy Creekmore, GYRO SYSTEMS CO. of Virginia Beach for donating the brand new unit. Jerry Jones just made the trip to Fall River to pick it up and it is already positioned in CIC.

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Several new volunteers have joined our ranks. Jude Gosh is a heating air conditioning tech who served as a machinist mate on the USS SAIPAN, the communications flagship. On his first day, I said, "Just work with Doug Tanner to get to know your way around". I didn't know what Doug had in mind for that day; repacking the leaking starboard shaft- alley. The stern gland was leaking to the point where the space would fill up to the shaft in about a day. Doug's plan was to remove the twelve rusty hold down nuts on the retaining ring, pull the ring and put a layer of synthetic packing over the existing packing. It was a slimy, messy job in the darkest hole on the ship. There was a lot of kibitzing by the other members of the crew; "What are you going down there for. Nobody ever went down there." Gee, how come Doug always gets to break in the new guy". Any way, it took them about four hours to complete the job, and they succeeded in stopping the leak; one of the most significant and nasty jobs that has been done this spring. Jude came up smiling and said, "That was fun! I can't wait to come back." Other new comers include Josh Collins who joined the Michigan crew in cleaning out the aft crew's quarters and came back to clean out the aft repair locker and DAQ space. Josh took a tour and liked it so much he wanted to get involved. Dan Wing a former SEABEE has joined as a painter. He worked with Josh cleaning out the aft repair locker, and has been working on the deck painting with Erik Collin, Larry Rockwood, Dick Palovic, USCG and Pat Cancilla DE-441. Finally, one of Doug's GE co-workers R. J. Hummer, NAS MIRAMAR as signed on as a regular and has been completing the installation of the pipe hangers on the new fresh water lines in the machinery spaces.



The electricians have started going like gangbusters in the aft crew's quarters now that they have space to work. They are renewing the lighting circuits and wiring the entertainment in the C-202L and C-203L. Meanwhile, Larry, Bob and Ken

have been completing electrical work forward in the captain's cabin and pilothouse. They are also continuing their efforts to complete the sound powered phone circuits. Ray Lammers APD-81 continues doing his detail work of the electrical fittings. John Waechter SSBN-616 has completed the overhaul of the anchor windlass. We're awaiting one last check with the megger, and the test will begin.

The Deck force is working to complete the deck painting over the next month. Chris Fedden DD-711 and Gary Salmon have continued their work spray painting topside. Tim Benner USNR, got a pretty miserable job. He's replacing all the wasted plate in the passageway outside the aft head. All that concrete on the deck pretty well ate up the steel. There wasn't much left when it was exposed. The Life-Jackets which were scrounged from the JRRF are taking on NEW LIFE thanks to the expertise of Col. Mike Stenzel, who also serves as the Webmaster of our website. He has been overhauling 5 per evening; washing, drying, & re-stenciling. Then they are reassembled with new plastic whistles before placing back in the various compartments.



The last big news is that a contract for the side painting has been signed with National Surface Preparation, Inc. They are certified in lead abatement and the list of their certifications is as thick as a telephone book. After several tests, it was decided that the best and fastest way to remove the paint is with vacuum shrouded pneumatic chisels while working off stages with floats underneath to catch all the debris. Work started on May 15th and should continue to July 15th; working ten-hour days Monday through Thursday. We will be applying high performance epoxy coatings.

Amidst all the projects and planning SLATER has been visited by many special friends since our last SIGNALS. Chan Zucker, Exec. Director of the Historic Naval Ships Association (HNSA) spent a day with us and Frank McClatchie, from Santa Ana, CA, was onboard with his friend Annabelle at the same time. Chan was on a swing through the Northeast visiting ships of the HNSA Fleet and had not seen SLATER since her early NYC days. Frank served aboard USS NEAL A SCOTT DE-769, and has been a regular correspondent and contributor. The day before, Frank was observed sitting on the bits looking longingly at the ship and before he was identified it was quite clear he was a Destroyer Escort Sailor! Even though it was "after hours", he was invited aboard and spent time in Radio Central with Jerry Jones while explaining all the electronic systems with an amazing memory for detail! He also had some historical information about the U-1228 capture & boarding of May 1945 in the North Atlantic. He was the only German-speaking member of the DE-769 crew and handled all the "contact" between the Germans and US captors. Frank also left us another great



**HNSA Capt Chan Zucker
SLATER Capt Tim Rizzuto**

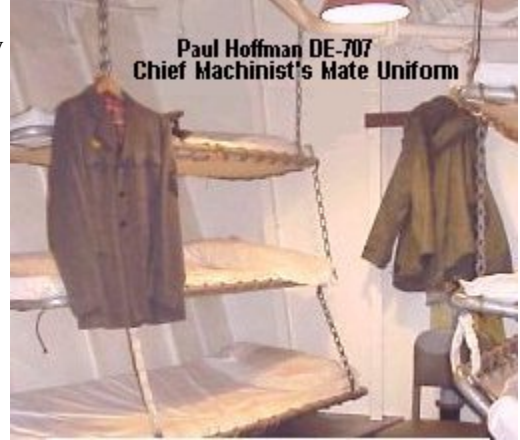


Frank McClatchie, USS NEAL A SCOTT DE-769 being appropriately thanked by Slater Angels Claire & Pat!

contribution of \$1,100.00 and was appropriately thanked by Slater Angels Claire & Pat! We all appreciate these visits and all we learn from them and are grateful to so many who travel so far just to visit us. Another visitor was Paul Hoffman who traveled from High Point, NC just to work aboard for a few days. Paul brought us some of his uniforms and belongings he used as a Chief Machinist's Mate aboard USS JOB DE-707, so we now have authentic furnishings for the CPO's Quarters.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - The National Destroyer Escort Day will be observed during

ceremonies that will be at 1100, Saturday, 17 June aboard SLATER. Once again the UNCLE SAM CHORUS, from upstream Troy, NY, will provide several patriotic numbers in Barbershop style. The Memorial Service will follow to honor the DE's & men lost during the WW II conflict. The local CAP-DESA members and SLATER volunteers who have departed during the past year will also be remembered in special tribute. Among this group will be Betty Cancilla, who spent many hours at the ticket booth with husband Pat, DE-441. Betty was also our "MS WARDROOM 2000" calendar gal and will be missed by us for her cheery disposition and willingness to volunteer at anything she could do for SLATER.



Paul Hoffman DE-707 Chief Machinist's Mate Uniform

We were pleased to hear the reports from Frank Lasch who attended the DE Commanders Convention in San Diego, CA and Eric Weidmann who was in Mobile, AL at the same time for the SLATER Alumni Association's 15th Reunion. Slide presentations were given to both groups and they extended their continued support and praise for all that is being done in Albany. The best news is that both groups will be planning their YEAR 2001 Reunions for Albany and we will be having all these wonderful DE men aboard SLATER.

SLATER CREW REUNION - MOBILE, AL
with Eric Weidmann



Finally, I'd like to get my hands on those guys who are leaving notes on the CPO refrigerator door. One note said, "Tim's Motto: The floggings will continue until morale improves". A note under it said, "And prior planning is the root of all evil." What do they mean by that? I'm planning a Captain's Mast for these mutinous and disloyal troublemakers. Probably he same guy who made the duplicate key to the wardroom pantry refrigerator and ate my quart of strawberries. That's him. The same guy that threw my palm tree overboard. I'll find him, or her. Until I catch them, all hands will continue to be some place at all times. SEE YOU NEXT MONTH - - -