

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Moored as before, Port of Rensselaer, Starboard side to

By the time you read this we'll be two thirds of the way through for winter. Where did it go? The ship is all torn up, just like in any shipyard overhaul. Opening day is starting to look like it's just around the corner. The crew is busting hump to start putting this ship back together.

What this, of course, is leading up to is my Winter Fund Appeal. Let's get the hard things out of the way first. The winter fund had its start back in 1998 when the ship first came to Albany and we were trying to figure out how to pay our \$900 a month electric bills. As we always do, we leaned on the volunteer crew, and they responded by collectively kicking in an extra five grand to get us through the winter. This keeps us from eating up our precious savings during that time of the year when we have no ticket income, but are working hard to keep the restoration going full bore. We have continued to appeal to the crew every winter, and they have continued to come through for us. So now we ask you, if you can afford it to kick in to the winter fund.

I know we've asked a lot of you already and for that I thank you. During this time of the year, we live off our savings. The electric bills now run over eleven hundred a month. We just paid a four grand quarterly insurance bill. Heating oil runs about five hundred a month, so I appeal to you, if you are in a position to help us out, please send in an extra hundred bucks to the winter fund. Normally I try to be the first contributor to the winter fund drive, but this year several loyal shipmates got there first including, **Art Dott, Annette and Les Beauchaine, Gordon Lattey, Chris Fedden and Ed Sakacs** beat me to the draw. Ed even illustrated his donation letter with cartoons. I have donated my hundred dollars. If you can afford it, and your wife says it's okay, I hope you can do the same. You'll find a little envelope enclosed in this mailing to help you out.



RPI NROTC Midshipmen painting in C-203L



Midshipmen Learning the Trade from the Bottom Up



The Chippers finished chipping the aft crew's quarters C-203L. Tom Moore did a great job repairing all the insulation, which was in really bad shape. Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy continued finishing up the electrical work rerunning and tidying up some cables. Tom and Gene Cellini are in the process of getting a coat of white primer on the overhead, and painting out the bulkheads. The place is coming along great. Up forward, Raf and Erik Collin finished chipping out the IC Passageway below the mess decks. All these spaces are in the process of being cleaned, primed and painted. The chipping crew with Dennis Morrissey and Ed Whitbeck are still chipping away at the reefer decks to try and keep Gary Sheedy happy. Erik Collin is doing touch up painting forward.

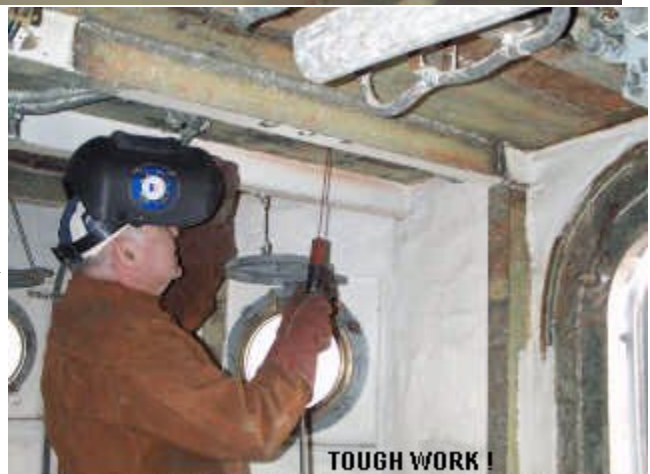


One of Several New Patches in the Pilothouse Overhead



**WASTED METAL !
Looking up Through a Hole Cut in the Pilothouse Overhead**

The pilothouse is all chipped out. Dick Smith and Chris Fedden have the place all squared away and ready for painting. In the process of scaling the overhead, they went through in a couple small spots. We called on the shippfitters to run the oxyacetylene hoses and welding leads from the machine shop up to the pilothouse and went to work. The more they cut, the more wasted metal they found. Every Saturday for a month, they went home thinking the end was in sight. Every Monday, Chris and Dick got out their chippers and punched a few more holes on the deck. Over the ensuing weeks, what started out as two small rust spots in the sonar hut deck turned into three two-foot by two-foot patches, and four smaller patches. Working every Saturday for a month, Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Russ Ferrer and Chuck Teal got the job finished, and welded top and bottom.



**TOUGH WORK !
Doug Tanner doing Overhead Welding in Pilothouse**

Below them, in the radio room, Jerry Jones and Don Bulger got their motor generator set for the main transmitter all installed with Russ Ferrer providing the welding support. This particular MG set looks big enough to power all the transmitters on the ENTERPRISE, but Jerry swears it's the right unit for our little SLATER. Jerry then spent three weeks fabricating a beautiful steel workbench to go over the MG set. He carefully measured, cut and welded. In the process he managed to drop the drill press vise on his foot (the odds makers bet it was a broken foot, but his doctor swears it isn't). He also cut the chord of Tim Benner's Black and Decker angle grinder. Benner took it gracefully. He threatened to cut up Jerry's bench and use the little pieces to weld up the holes in the deck of the upper sonar shack. By throwing his body between the bench and Benner's torch, Jerry managed to save his bench, and it now is a wonderful addition to the radio shack restoration. All this so the Sparkies can have a place to put their joe pot.



Gary Sheedy making electrical repairs in pilothouse



Radioman Jerry Jones ready to defend his new Shelf

Jerry's wife is now threatening to make him start going to the gym. Says he's not getting enough exercise and this is the year he's going to get in shape. His response is typical of Twigits, Scope Dopes and Ping Jockeys. He says, "Round is a shape, isn't it?" We just hope he doesn't hurt himself there.



Benner Going for another Donut and Coffee Break



It's Just To Early!
Saturday Morning Breakfast in the CPO Mess.

Another project that is starting to come together is the rangefinder project. As you may remember, a couple years ago the good folks on the Liberty ship JOHN W. BROWN in Baltimore donated the optical rangefinder that had come of the USS GAGE APA168 to us. No stand or cradle, just the tube. The rangefinder tube sat on the 01 level under canvas ever since. Last fall, Hal Hatfield had the guys in his shop fabricate the platform for the rangefinder based on dimensions Cliff Woltz got from the USS STEWART in Galveston, and a sketch Dick Walker worked up. Well, along came new volunteer Roy Lustenader, who was a former Tin Can Fire control man off USS STORMES DD780.



Tanner Frying Up Eggs. Our Wives have us all on Diets, and They can't figure how we're Gaining Weight.



Roy Lustenader and His Son Stand next to the New Rangefinder Pedestal and Platform that will be on the Flying Bridge soon.

Roy took all the data we had on the rangefinder, sketched up a plan for a pedestal and found a good Samaritan to build it for us out of three-eighths-inch plate. That's probably the thickest metal on this can. Then he got his son to deliver it to us in his pickup truck. We didn't have to do a thing. We still have the issue of the rangefinder mount that holds the actual tube, but **Roy** is working on that too. We plan to get a crane and hoist the rangefinder tube, pedestal and platform to the flying bridge while we're still pier side here in Rensselaer. **Roy** is now doing working drawings for the missing roller loader racks for the depth charge projectors. By the way, at 83, **Roy** just got a pacemaker, and has aced out **Don Bulger** for the position of oldest working volunteer.

Another major restoration accomplishment in January was getting the lathe in the machine shop operational. We had been talking about this ever since the SLATER first came over from Greece in 1993. **Doug Tanner** mentioned that it would be really helpful to him to be able to turn bushings when he begins working on the watertight doors. The ship has an English Harrison lathe, which Greeks put in as a replacement for the original 13" South Bend. I gave the word to go ahead with the lathe project, and the crew really jumped on it. I mean really jumped! Sometimes it's six months before they get around to it. But they got right on this one. Maybe that big heater in the shop had something to do with that. **Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callender and Larry Williams** ran a new power line, **Gary** worked on the controls, and **Russ Ferrer** got into the mechanics. Everyday, **Russ** would come into the office and lay out a series of seemingly insurmountable problems he was having with the lathe. He made it sound hopeless, but he solved them all, and now she runs fine. He tells us that once the guys get used to this machine, they'll never let me trade it for a South Bend.

After the lathe project, Ken, Bob and Larry headed down to B-1 to make repairs to the lighting circuits down there. Barry, Gary and Mike Clark have two projects going, installation of the new breaker panel for the galley and completing rewiring several circuits in C-203L, running the new armored cable. **Ray Lammers** and **Rocky** are continuing restoring electrical fittings.

DESA came to our rescue in a big way! A big expense we have pending is depth charges. **Sam Saylor** has been working with **Dr. Rod Speer** of Naval Sea Systems Command, and the Navy has agreed to surplus thirty-six inert MK9 depth charges to the SLATER. As always in dealing with the Government, the donation is made on an as-is-where-is basis, with no cost to be incurred by the Government. It looks like the total cost for palletizing, loading and shipping the seven tons will be just under \$5,500. **DESA** came to our rescue on this one and agreed to cover the cost of acquiring and moving the depth charges at their winter board meeting. This is great because these are probably the last depth charges to be had in the world. They'll be in their rightful home on the SLATER. When these come through, it will give us enough depth charges to fill all the K gun roller loaders and the fantail racks.

Again, we have firmed up the field day work weeks for 2002. The Michigan Chapter of DESA will be aboard working aboard the week of April 28th to May 4th. The contact person is **Ron Zarem** at (989) 345-0237. Their spring field day fills

up fast, but you can still contact Ron about reserving a spot with them in October. The Northern Illinois Chapter will be aboard the following week May 4th through May 11th. They still have open slots. The contact person for that one is **Bud Ried at (847) 272-7938**. They usually have some extra slots, so if you want to do some work on this old girl, give one of them a call.

Our scrounging efforts are going international. Greg Krawczyk has found one of the last RUDDERROW class APD's in the world. The former CO of the Albany Reserve Center made Captain and received a new assignment as the Naval Reserve activities coordinator in Korea. But he hasn't forgotten his old friends in DEHM. While nosing around Korea, he found an old USN RUDDERROW class APD tied up out of commission in Chin Hae. The ship turned out to be the Korean Kyung Nam which was the ex USS CAVALLARO APD128. **Greg** did some checking around and confirmed the identity of the ship, which was transferred to Korea in Oct 1959. She was originally launched as Rudderrow Class DE-712, 15 June 1944, then commissioned as Crosley Class APD-128, 13 May 1945. Also, the ship's namesake was a 23 yr old native of New York City, Ensign, Salvatore John Cavallaro, killed in action on 1 Sept, 1943, at Salerno and awarded the Navy Cross. The ship is being sunk in May as a target ship. **Greg** managed to get down to Chin Hae twice so far. He is

sending us a disc full of digital photos. He didn't find any of the ordnance gear we need as CAVALLARO had five-inch gun and was steam not diesel, but he is working on electrical spares.



Throttle Board in B2, APD 128



The Flying Bridge, APD 128

Greg wrote from Korea that he got an hour and a half tour Monday by the Master Chief who is in charge of all the mothballed ships. Greg wrote, "I took 75 photos, but only got to remove a couple of small items. Sound tube caps + a 440 cable. The Chief is going to talk to his boss about my returning to take more (of the bigger stuff). There is none of the major items you were looking for. It had 5" gun, sps-10 radar, etc, and all these big items are long gone, or stored in the shipyard somewhere, or set up as displays. But, as you'll see from some of the pictures I'll send over the next few days, there are plenty of small items we could use. I'll send you a full report and photos later."



Boiler Face in B1, APD 128



Boat Deck, APD 128



looking at Pilot House, APD 128

We can't wait to see Greg's pictures. I got to thinking about it, and at this time there is no place in the world that I would rather be than with **Greg** scrounging aboard the old APD. My wife told me she is arranging for me to start therapy next week.

Attention tour Guides! Nancy is getting all cranked up for the new tourist season. She got a grant to allow 800 Albany school children to visit the ship for free, their admission being covered by the grant. So the school tour program is really taking off. She's gearing up all your tour guides for the new season, so it's that time of year again, time to shift into a "guide" mood. We will have our annual pre-opening meeting on Saturday 16 March 2002 at 1300. We will meet on the mess deck. If you have any topics or questions you wish to address at the meeting let me know ahead of time, so we can plan accordingly. Remember, to come to Rensselaer, going to Albany won't get you on board unless you plan to swim across the Hudson. Look forward to seeing all of you on March sixteenth.

With all these school groups coming in, we will be looking for more tour guides to train too. If you know someone who you think has guide potential, tell them about us and have them call Nancy on the ship at 431-1943. She'll be glad to hear from you.

As part of the preparations for reopening to the public, Dave Meyersburg is back with us and redoing our tour guide brochure. The guides want the brochure's map of the ship to have the same orientation it does at the Snow Dock. In their words, "The bow has to face left, so it won't confuse the visitors." So, we can either turn the ship around or redo the brochure. Dave said he'd redo the brochure.

Two unsung heroes who have put in as many hours as anybody are Kathy and Richard Andrian. We had a little spare time on our hands, so we agreed to start editing the *Trim But Deadly* Newsletter here in Albany. The Andrians have the ambition, time, the computer capability, and most of all the patience to put *Trim But Deadly* together. My name is on the issue as editor, but as usual that's a lie. Other people did most of the work. Our thanks also go to **Victor Buck** who has edited TBD since it's inception. He's done a magnificent job and will continue to provide the in depth historical articles that have made the newsletter so worthwhile.

We have another group of potential volunteers looking to get involved with us. Midshipman Michael Louis with the Rensselaer Polytechnic Navy ROTC unit is planning to bring his classmates down for two work weekends on March 2nd and March 30th. We hope this begins a long involvement with a group of young men who haven't heard all our sea stories before.

Finally, SLATER is attracting another, new type of volunteer to the restoration effort. You won't see any names boldfaced here. Some people may volunteer and contribute for the recognition, and public appreciation, but there is a growing crew on the SLATER that seems to be doing just the opposite. A new style of volunteer, the stealth volunteer, is carrying more and more of the load. These are volunteers who park some distance away from the ship, or who have been

known to camouflage their trucks with branches and foliage. They don't want their wives, girlfriends or bosses to see their cars, or see them. You never see them come aboard. They just quietly appear in the machine shop. They are shady people who sign the logbook with aliases, if they sign at all. Sometimes they wear beards or shades to disguise their appearance. They respond to a friendly greeting with, "I'm not here today," or "You didn't see my face." They make up excuses like, "I couldn't sleep last night. I was thinking about this oil cooler, and I've just got to finish it." They make large cash contributions to the coffee fund with the warning, "Just make sure this doesn't get listed in TRIM BUT DEADLY." You might think we were running a brothel or a barroom the way things are getting. As management, we still publicly maintain that volunteer work should never interfere with your paying job, or your marriage. So, if you fall into this category, just don't get caught. **We don't know anything.**

See you next month