



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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I just got back from two weeks vacation in San Diego. The wife and I were visiting my sister. While it was sweltering here in Albany, out there the days topped out about 80 and the nights dropped to the low sixties. And it looks like they have some extra pier space for SLATER. Now, if I can just find a tow, we'll give **Earl Johnson** and the guys from the LA chapter a chance to get more involved. While I was there I hooked up with an old retired commander buddy, **Frank Dengler**. **Frank** took me up to LA to see their maritime museum and the LANE VICTORY. While there we also visited with **I. Roy Coats**, where we spent a delightful four hours getting a great history lesson. For those of you who don't know, **Roy Coats** is a West Coast legend. Now eighty-eight, **Roy** has a long history of helping maritime museums and historic ships. **Roy** was a coxswain on the old cruiser HOUSTON back in the thirties. When the fleet was based in San Pedro. During the war, **Roy** worked the West Coast shipyards building ships. When the yards closed after VJ-Day, **Roy** ended up employed by National Metal and Steel Corporation at Terminal Island scrapping ships. He oversaw their maritime operations until 1979, and was thus in a unique position that makes him the envy of all us scroungers. **Roy** has an incredible sense of history and service. Not only did he make it a point to see that historical artifacts were saved from all the ships that saw their end at Terminal Island, but also he made sure that these artifacts ended up being donated to ships and museums up and down the West Coast.

One of his hobbies was decorating the lunchroom at the yard with photos, name boards and builder's plates from the ships that were scrapped. All that memorabilia has been moved to the LA Maritime Museum Conference room. We got special permission to see it, and believe me when I tell you, it was like walking in the most holy of Cathedrals. There were the names of more famous ships than I could believe, including about thirty DE's. It was awe-inspiring. **Indirectly, Roy has played a major role in SLATER's restoration.** To retell an old story for our new readers and members, in the seventies **Roy** gave permission to **Bob Rogers**, a retired naval officer, to remove parts from ships then being scrapped at Terminal Island. **Bob** was no amateur. With **Roy's** help, he filled two large connex boxes, an estimated twenty tons of shipboard equipment from teak to troughs, and everything in between. He shipped the material to property he owned in Belin, New Mexico, where he planned to establish a museum resort. For personal reasons, **Bob** decided to stay on the West Coast after retirement. Thus he had twenty tons of ship parts looking for a home. I met **Bob** when he was cruising the Mississippi on the Riverboat Delta Queen. He offered the parts to us on the KIDD, but KIDD's restoration was nearly complete, so I suggested he contact **Sam Saylor** about donating the material to SLATER. He did; they said yes; the material was appraised; and two work parties in the New Mexico desert heat later; the stuff was on its way to the SLATER in New York. It sounds so easy on paper. Talk to the **SOLDESA gang** who had to unload and stow it all.

Anyway, we're still installing the parts that **Roy and Bob** got back in the seventies. When you tour the SLATER and you see the old radios in Radio Central, the bunks in the CPO mess, the aluminum lockers, the proper officer's desks, the 24" searchlights, the seats on the troughs, and the 1MC quarter-deck station, that's part of **I. Roy Coat's** legacy.



Lowering the whaleboat into the water at Scaranos.



Roy Gunther, Beth Spain and Rocky Rockwood bringing her home.



BM2 Beth Spain doing in rate training with Russ Ferrer and Raf Suarez in her crew.

But all vacations end and mine did too. The crew has accomplished a lot this past month. **The big news is that the whaleboat is back!** On Thursday, July 11th, the whaleboat motored back from Scarano's Yard under it's own power with **Rocky Rockwood, Roy Gunther and Beth Spain** aboard. It was a great sight to see and the culmination of a dream we've all had ever since SLATER arrived here from Greece back in '93. We hung the boat off the falls in the water initially to let her swell. After a few days we moved her around to the starboard quarter and tied her off the fantail bits and the pier. We access her with the Jacob's ladder. **Rocky and Roy** are continuing to

work on her, installing the running lights and doing the permanent piping for the bilge pumps. **Dick Walker** did the legwork to get her legally registered in New York State. We believe it is the last operating whaleboat in the country restored to her original navy configuration. If you know otherwise, let us know. We hope she'll be ready to join the lighted boat parade that will be held in conjunction with the dedication of the new Riverfront pedestrian walkway on August 10th.

The SLATER Radio gang participated in the third annual "Navy Ship Museum Amateur Radio Special Event" weekend on 20 and 21 July 2002. There were approximately 60 Navy Museum Ships around the U.S. and in foreign countries "on the air" using the amateur radio bands. The event is sponsored by the USS SALEM's radio gang for the purpose of giving an opportunity to the million active amateur radio operators throughout the world to talk to the Museum Ships. Any "ham" (amateur) operator who talks to 10 or more ships receives a special award certificate from the USS SALEM. We see the event as an opportunity to publicize the SLATER nationwide. Out of respect for the World War II crews, the SLATER Radio station uses American made radio equipment including some original US Navy transmitters and receivers from 1943 - 1945 (vacuum tube type, of course). No "modern" antennas are used; all antennas are the restored original ship's long wires.

On 2 August 2002, the Federal Communications Commission in Washington DC approved SLATER Radio's application for a permanent ship's radio call sign. We are now WW2DEM for CW (code) and "World War Two Destroyer Escort Museum" in phonetics for voice. We will no longer use our previous temporary call signs N2USN and KC2JYN. Despite rumors to the contrary, the DEM in the new call sign stands for Destroyer Escort Museum, not for **Donald E. Montrym**. SLATER's radio operators for the event were **Joe Breyer N2LL, Don Bulger WB2VJC, Walt Stolte KE2MU, Don Montrym W1IBJ, and Jerry Jones K2AYM.** Although the radio



Radiomen Jerry Jones and Dick Engler transmitting during the historic naval ships HAM radio weekend.

propagation conditions were not ideal, SLATER's operators talked to some 50 stations including 10 other ships in the US and several foreign countries including Germany and Brazil. We will send QSL cards to all stations we talked to for confirmation. Amateur radio operators who wish to work WW2DEM and receive a confirmation QSL can do so by arranging a schedule with the ship. We can work 15 to 75 meters. New comers to the SLATER's radio gang, **Joe and Walt**, both retired from IBM, Kingston. **Joe** was an RM1, served on USS SUNBIRD ASR-15. He holds a Navy Certificate as a CW speed key operator and worked for Radio Marine Corporation of America in NYC as a harbor radio operator in 1951 before joining the Navy. **Walt** was a SGT in the Air Force doing Ground Communication and Navigation System installation and maintenance (Georgia and Greenland). **Joe and Walt** are now doing museum quality restoration work on SLATER's radio equipment. SLATER's original signal generators that generate the general alarm, chemical alarm, salvo alarm and collision alarm on the 1MC Battle Announcing system have been restored by **Joe, Stan, and Don Bulger**. Recordings were made of the authentic sounds from these original 1943 generators and will be used on the ships alarm system.



Erik Collin and Doug Tanner by the fully loaded starboard depth charge rack.



Chuck Teal and Doug Tanner Loading K Guns.

Doug Tanner's hatch in still on the sawhorses. He says the more I harass him, the longer it will take. It's gonna take a long time because perfection can't be rushed. His sidetrack project of the month was loading the K guns and roller loaders. He got inspired one Saturday and enlisted the help of **Erik Collin, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal**. They got a barrel dolly, rigged the new davit, and in the space of about four hours brought aboard sixteen of the 300-pound depth charges and hoisted them into position. The fantail rack should be the August project. The following week, Doug came in on a Sunday, enlisted the help of some naval reservists, and loaded the fantail rack. All the depth charges are now aboard. Not a bad months work.



Dick Smith chipping overheads.

Pat Perrella has really pulled the DE Museum together. Working in the heat of C-203L, she has created an extensive history of destroyer escorts with all the artifacts and documents you have donated. You folks coming for fall reunions really have something to look forward to seeing. In between giving tours and researching insurance problems, **Paul Czsak** has been putting the finishing touches on the supply office, which will be our archival library. His last project is to remount the door he restored. Unfortunately, the doorframe in badly battered and bent and **Paul** wants to repair it. Even more unfortunately, **Doug Tanner** has volunteered to repair it, right after he finishes the



Tim Benner patching the port deckhouse.

fantail hatch.

The deck force is toiling along. Ed Whitbeck, Dick Smith, Chris Fedden and Raf Suarez have completed chipping along the main deck port and starboard. They and are now working their way aft along the 01 level. The painters Mike Muzio, Peter Jez, the Rensselaer Polytech NROTC Unit and new volunteers Peter Schick and Daniel Harkenrider have been working along behind the chippers. They've been in painting waterways cutting in along the deckhouse and the depth charge racks. Behind them we've been rolling out the non skid. We plan have all the decks finished for the September reunions.

The gunners have been concentrating their efforts on gun one. Dave Floyd, Andy Desorbo, Frank Beeler, Bob Lawrence, and Dave Blostein have all joined forces to completely disassemble the train drive. After they got it apart, they spent two weeks dripping Kryoil penetrating oil into the gears and train bearings. They got it so loose now it just about blows around in the wind. They are in the process of repainting all the parts and working to make the elevation easier. When they get the work gear back on and have it all reassembled, they plan to join Rich Pavlovik on gun three. Rich has been scaling and repainting the tub back there. The cannon cockers want to either free it, or call it a basket case and just put it back together for looks. Care to place any bets? In other ordnance-related news, we received a gift from the Coast Guard. Tim Firme at the Coast Guard Yard in Curtiss Bay and Chief Scott Vickery arranged for the donation of 75 spent 76mm cartridge cases to fill the ready service lockers in gun three. These have been loaded, and another piece of the puzzle is in place.

Engineering wise, Gus Negus and Barry Witte picked a hot day and test ran the emergency diesel for four hours. The temp got up to one-ninety and stayed there. Barry ran every piece of electrical gear but the anchor windlass. Bill Siebert and Russ Ferrer have been working on the oil cooler for the 200 Kw generator set in B-3. And Ray Lammers continues toiling on the electrical boxes.



Carpenters Jim Clow, Dennis Nagi and Doc Miner take a break in our new gift shop.



Our volunteers are turning that battered trailer into a beautiful visitor's center.

The trailer has been making amazing progress. Straw boss "Doc" Miner has rallied his crew, Dennis Nagi, Bill Coyle, Jim Fowler, Bob Clow and the electricians Larry Williams, Bob Calender, Ken Kaskoun and Don Shattuck. The outside is all paneled and all the windows and doors are installed. All the trim work and molding is complete, drip edge installed and the roof has been coated and sealed. The inside wiring is just about complete; through we still don't have our permanent power hooked up. "Doc" will finish up his phase of the work in about two weeks and head back to his home in Florida. He is planning for some sea time as a crewmember aboard AMERICAN VICTORY, the restored WWII cargo ship in Tampa.

We now have dueling media personalities. First we had our long time Bo' sun Mike Muzio, who was one of the featured volunteers for a piece Time Warner Cable did about touring the ship. Mike along with tour guide Bill Scharoun, spoke about the ship and how great it is to tour. Muzio, of course showed off his skill with a Bo' sun's whistle. Time Warner has been repeating that piece over and over again since June as part of its Around the Town series. Mike swears that he is now a celebrity, with folks stopping him in the mall and asking for his autograph. Not to be outdone, one of our newer guides, Tom McLaughlin, a former radar man third on the USS MIDWAY and USS

SALEM, just happened to give a tour to the General Manager of the local Fox 23 on July 4th. The GM was bowled over by Tom's tour and assigned one of his reporters to come down to the ship and profile Tom's "job" as a tour guide. Our crew suffered two losses this past month. Our deepest sympathies go out to volunteer Al Vanderzee on the loss of his wife Mary after a long battle with leukemia. Mary was a sparky delightful lady whose sense of humor matched Al's. Our prayers go out to them both. Al has been back with us filling his diverse roles as Board Secretary, tour guide, and now painter. And, Bill Hoeth, a former DE RM, who did so much painting for us last summer passed away this month.

Finally, our best wishes go out to Debbie Moore. After two and a half years with us, Debbie is moving on to a new position with Albany's Capital Repertory Theater. We owe Debbie a great deal for her work in marketing the SLATER, managing the foundation record keeping and staying on top of a myriad of little administrative details. But we can understand the irresistible lure of an air-conditioned office complete with indoor plumbing and not having to dog down a twenty-pound porthole every night before you go home. But, she obviously didn't learn very much while she was here. She's going to work for another not for profit agency. See you next month.