



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Beginning with this issue of the SIGNALS the pictures with borders can be clicked on to get a larger version of that picture.

Saturday, September 28 was a day to remember. The ship bustled with activity; she seemed to reach her full potential as an asset to the community and to history. While the maintenance crew hustled with multiple tasks, the guides lead tours through the ship. At the same time Naval Reservists from the **Albany Reserve Center** cleaned the parking lot, polished the brass and set of chairs for a change of command ceremony. Students from **Monmouth College** toured the ship with DE vets from the **Garden State DESA Chapter** as part of a new oral history program. The ship just seemed alive.



Monmouth University Student and the Garden State DESA CHAPTER saving DE history together.



Tour guide Dennis Marrissey points out Frank SLATER's photo to Monmouth University Students.

September has been Reunion Season. This past month we were visited by the crews of USS WILHOITE DE397, HARVESON DE316, PILLSBURY DE133, ALEXANDER J. LUKE DE577, FRYBARGER DE705, VANCE DE387, GUSTAFSON DE182, CLARENCE E. EVANS DE 387, ZELLARS DD777, and CURRIER DE700. Needless to say we were kept busy with ceremonies and memorial services. **Ken Kaskoun's** dedicated color guard crew was stretched pretty thin making all our commitments, but with the help of the Michigan volunteers, we always managed to turn out a color detail. Our thanks to **Ken, Jerry Jones, Bob Dawson, Larry Williams, Bill Coyle, Dick Walker, Gene Cellini, Dave Floyd, Les Beauchaine, Jack Madden, Bill Schroun, John Edwards and Pat Cancilla** who look sharp in all kinds of weather. My most memorable event of the month was helping a **CURRIER** radar man make it up to CIC. He was on oxygen and had a wheeled bottle with him, and we hauled bottle and tubing up two decks to he could see his old station at the DRT. The DE sailor is not to be denied.

We are coming up with a new way of recognizing those ship crews that have come to Albany for a reunion. When we complete our new gift shop we will line a shelf close to the ceiling with the hats of all the ships that have held reunions aboard SLATER. So, if your crew participated in an Albany reunion, we need a hat from you for the spring.

We were host to a very special project. Through the good work of **Jim Mitchell**, a special cooperative oral history program is underway with history students at Monmouth College in New Jersey. **Dr Susan Douglas** is using her students to gather oral histories from WWII vets. Jim introduced her to the members of the Garden State Chapter of DESA. When **Susan** learned of the existence of SLATER she decided that before her students interviewed the DE vets, it would be a fine idea to bus them to Albany to tour the SLATER. She reasoned that they should learn about DE life first hand so they would have a better understanding and perspective on what the sailors were telling them. Thus, on Saturday the 28th a bus arrived with all her students and a large contingent of the Jersey DESA Chapter. They spent most of the day aboard learning about DE life. CAPDESA Yeoman **Bob Donlon** had arranged for them to eat at the Watervliet Arsenal and tour there following their visit to SLATER. Upon completion of the project **Dr. Douglas** has promised

transcripts of the interviews for our individual ship files. This opportunity for the ship to play a key role in such an educational project is why we exist.

The change of command ceremony for the NR Striking Fleet Atlantic Detachments went off after the departure of the Monmouth/Jersey DESA group. Our IC Gang of **Jerry Jones, Barry Witte and Ken Kaskoun** spent the previous week mounting additional speakers and making modifications to the PA system. They shelled out some pocket money to make this happen. Now when we have ceremonies the podium microphone feeds through the entire ships IMC system. This makes it a whole lot easier for the poor soul in the radio room to cue the music on the code room computer for the ceremonies. This eliminates the traditional walkie-talkies that don't work at the critical moment, the misunderstood hand signals, and the last resort running up the main deck to the radio room to scream, "PLAY TAPS NOW!" But enough



Local Naval Reservists in ranks awaiting the ceremony.



Admiral Paul Czesak, Master Chief Dave Floyd and a strong contingent from the New York Naval Militia respresented us at the ceremony.



Departing the ship.

about our world. Looks like those problems are over. As for the ceremony, it was a beautiful afternoon and the ship made a perfect setting for the event. Sailors from the Albany Naval Reserve Center and those involved in the ceremony were resplendent in their whites. It looked to the world like SLATER was going back in commission. We were proud that we could serve once again.

The Michigan Chapter of DESA showed up with their fall field day crew, a small but highly motivated contingent. They came in on Sunday the 22nd, and turned to that Monday morning. Faithful cooks **Bill Kramer** and **Jim Andrus** turned out three meals a day all week and kept the galley spotless, though not quite secured for sea. Striker and first timer **Mike Torian** gave them a hand to ease their load.

Tom Schriener and a first timer and Air Force vet Gary Headworth tackled the mechanical jobs. Their first task was to add additional heating coils to the forward supply vent fan and pressure test the system. That kept them occupied until Wednesday. Usually we like to wait until January to work on the heating system, so this year we're ahead of the curve. When they completed that job they went into the aft diesel room, B-3, to look into cleaning out a D.O. tank for **Bill Siebert**. When they opened the tank they found it full of water and oil. It was supposed to be dry. They pumped the waste into our waste oil tank. Since there were no notes in the tow plan about this tank being ballasted, there was some concern that it might be leaking from the outside and taking water. But after a week of observation, the water hasn't risen, so it may have been a last moment ballast job, perhaps to compensate for the starboard list created when the Greeks removed the Evaporator and the donkey boilers from B-2 back in '93. **Tom and Gary** spent Friday helping the "Ping Jockey's" in sonar securing equipment. That took care of their week. I promise, before the world, **Tom**, when you come in the spring you can work on the diesels.



Frank Beeler painting out the gun three tub.



John Bartko made a \$5000 donation to the endowment fund before he went to work painting.

Another First timer was Norm Sullivan and his son in law Michael Torian and Michael's son Mike. That made it easy to remember names. **Norm** was a former seaman aboard SLATER in 1945, so it was like coming home. But that isn't really **Norm's** claim to fame. Prior to reporting aboard SLATER, **Norm** served aboard the FLETCHER Class can **LEUTZE, DD481**. **LEUTZE** was in the thick of the Pacific war from 1943 on. In a wild melee, **LEUTZE** was badly banged up by kamikazes on April 6, 1945. While she was going to the aid of another damaged can, the **NEWCOMB**, **LEUTZE** was so heavily damaged that she ended up being scrapped. So was **NEWCOMB** for the record. Norm finished out the war on **SLATER**. He and his sons were tasked with cutting in and rolling out the deck on the 01 level aft. They did a fine job getting the non-skid and deck gray down in two days. Unfortunately they had to leave Wednesday due to work commitments, other wise they would have had the whole 02 level done too. Both "kids" were quite excited about the project and the people and expressed a desire to come back.

Up in nosebleed country, the 03 Level, "Michigan" Dick Walker was back restoring the MK 52-radar gear in the fire control shack. He also painted and primed the deck above, under

the gun director. Sonar men **Bob Donlon** and **Ron Mazure** spent the week in the upper sound shack, or the asdic hut as the Brits would say. They finished up the insulation repairs, continued painting the white interior, worked on the voice tubes and began priming the deck. With the help of **Tom** and **Gary** they got the 21MC, TRR and the stack mounted in place. This was probably the first time former snipe **Tom Schriener** ever got higher than the main deck. However, his partner was a former air crewman who flew B-50's, so **Gary** isn't used to working below 10,000 feet. The place is starting to look like a sonar shack.

The big job is still the trailer. **Dennis Nagi** has taken over as "clerk of the works" since **Charles Miner** went to Florida, and is doing a great job. Under his direction the Michigan guys were tasked with painting the exterior of the trailer. **Ron Zarem, John Bartko, Rush Mellinger, Earl Moorehouse and Roy Brandon** tackled the job. **Dennis** had all the material ready for them so on Monday morning they went to work. They got a first coat of gray stain on the trailer by the end of the day. Our weekday electrical gang has the telephone lines and interior electrical work almost complete.

On Tuesday, they were joined by another gang of volunteers from Key Bank. Each year **Key Bank** sponsors a "Neighbors Make a Difference Day". **SLATER** has been a beneficiary of this event for the past four years. This year, twelve **Key Bank** employees signed up to come down and help the Michigan gang paint the trailer. They applied a second coat of stain on the exterior and got a first coat of stain on the trim. They also



The Michigan gang relaxing aboard the DUTCH APPLE.

Painted out the interior gift shop area white. After that the **Key Crew** helped the gunner move all the 40mm cans out of the gun three tub to the 01 level by the forties and moved a bunch of three in powder cases up to the ready service lockers by gun 2. They were a big help and gave us a real boost.

Rush Mellinger jumped in after the **Key gang** had finished their work and gave them a thorough tour of the ship.

On Wednesday Ron and his crew got a third coat of stain on the trailer and on Thursday they finished the trim. Thursday evening, I asked **Beth Spain** to take the crew out for a whaleboat ride, something I haven't even offered to do for our regulars yet. It poured rain all day Friday, so they turned to cleaning out storerooms aboard the ship. On Friday evening **Lou Renna** graciously invited the whole crew for a free cruise

and dinner aboard our next-door neighbor the **DUTCH APPLE**. I understand that the crew was fairly rowdy. There is even a rumor that **John Bartko** got a five-dollar tip for a performance he did while the DJ was playing "The Stripper". Now, I know John to be a very dignified and reasonable individual. I find such scuttlebutt hard to believe, but they say they've got the pictures to prove it.

After each field day, when the crew goes back to Michigan, there is intense discussion at their next chapter meeting about who wins the award for "Tim's Favorite". This is in refreshing contrast to the home team crew that could generally give a damn about my opinion. The competition in Michigan is usually pretty stiff between the head painter **Ron Zarem** and the head welder **Tom Schriener**. This competition generally leads to a lot of brownnosing, flattery, ingratiating and generally undignified behavior. Not typical of sailors. For instance, I was served breakfast on officer's china and real, not plastic, flatware, because **chief cook Bill Kramer** announced he wanted to be in competition. The award can easily be bought by a major donor, as **John Bartko** has proven for several years. However, if rumors of his behavior on the **DUTCH APPLE** are true, this may disqualify him. He reportedly gave that fin he got tipped back to its owner instead of donating it to the **SLATER**. The jury is still out, and we'll report to you after the next Michigan Chapter meeting.



Greg Krawczyk, with a small portion of the USS CAVALLARO gift from the Korean Navy.

To continue the ongoing saga of Greg Krawczyk and the USS CAVALLARO, Greg finally got aboard the ship and was able to remove a few small items. He received a lot of help from the Korean Navy. They had towed the **CAVALLARO** out for another target exercise. Greg went to visit the ship when she got back. She'd taken another hit, and he wanted to see how much of our gear had survived. When he got aboard he found all the gear he had tagged was gone! Fear turned to gratitude when he learned that the Koreans had removed it prior to the exercise. He emailed me two photos. From the evidence, he has obtained the entire IMC amplifier rack, two lube oil purifiers, the complete low pressure air compressor, a complete "K Gun and roller loader, a load of circuit breakers and meters for the electrical panels, and just about every piece



Michigan Dick Walker's restored fire control room.



How many parts can you identify?

of gear in the MK 52 radar room. His email said he was "Glad to be a Grubby snipe again." Now we're working on shipping. I believe he got more than he can ship as personal property when he comes home. Too bad Greg isn't a member of the Michigan Chapter, as he could take the "Tim's Favorite" award hands down.

Back on the home front, the regulars keep toiling away, though, as I said, there is little interest here in being "Tim's favorite" for the month. The gunners have had a really big month. They moved the train gear off gun two and moved it aft to gun three. They got three all reassembled and it trains and elevates like it just came out of the Gun Factory. They got moved all the cartridges, ammo cans and parts out of the gun three tub, and did a beautiful job repainting the tub and deck. They moved about five hundred pounds of gun parts forward to be used on gun two as soon as **Doug Tanner** finishes repairing the helical gears. In the meantime, they are working on the elevation side of gun two lubricating, chipping, and painting the mount. The deck crew is still chipping and painting. They are working on the starboard side of the main deckhouse forward. The ship fitters have several projects going. **Clark Farnsworth, Red Hume and George Erwin** are continuing to burn off, rebuild and reinstall the wasted chocks. **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal** are working on the rangefinder platform on the flying bridge. The radio gang is still packed in like sardines. Newcomer **Stan Murawski** is a climber who is doing a great job on antennas and insulators.



Tour Guide Kira Zaikowski hoisting the call colors.



From the bilges to the flying bridge. Doug Tanner working on the rangefinder platform.



Frank Perrella and Gordon Lattey serving up chow at the annual volunteer diner.

Nancy Buxton, Beth Spain, Paul Czesak and myself attended the annual Historic Naval Ship's Convention held in Buffalo this year. We took turns holding down the Fort. **Nancy and Beth** went over for the first two days, and **Paul** and I went over for the last two. I was a little concerned when I got there, because when I asked all my old friends if they had met the "SLATER Girls," all I got was blank looks and shrugs. I started thinking that they either kept a real low profile, or they spent the whole time in the lounge. **Margaret Renn** of the Battleship Massachusetts finally fessed up that **Nancy** had been in all her education sessions and that **Beth** had attended all the preservation sessions. I did hear a rumor that they both wore special names badges that read, "I work on the USS SLATER with Tim Rizzuto, Please talk to me anyway." **See you next month.**