



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Vol. 7 no. 1 January 2004

It's now January 19th. As I write this, the happy sound of four needle scalers is coming up the ladder from the messdecks. The temperature is supposed to reach thirty today. The crew is breaking out the deck chairs and the sunscreen. We're safely tied up in Rensselaer, iced in. The move to Rensselaer came late this year. On January 7th the low was minus ten degrees. By 1000 the next morning it was up to a balmy minus four. Thanks to **Russ Ferrer** cleaning and adjusting the furnace in November, the heat has been working fine, keeping the office up to about forty-five degrees. After being outside to check the lines, it felt like seventy in here. We had two weeks of extreme cold, and there were days we felt like we were in an Arctic outpost.

I've gotten in the habit of checking the previous edition of TRIM BUT DEADLY to find out where I left off in the continuing SLATER SAGA. After reading the last issue, it sounds like we spent this quarter undoing everything I wrote about last quarter. We took the whaleboat out of the water, covered up all the guns, sealed up all the ventilation, shut down the gift shop and moved the ship back to Rensselaer for the winter. It may sound easy, but it wasn't.



Removing the temporary gangway.



Making the turn off the Snow Dock

Fridays are usually a slow day around here. Not much happens this time of year. It was on a Friday, January 2nd that I got word that the STELLAMARE salvage had progressed to the point that the vessel was upright, and that the pier opposite her was available for our use. **Mark Bruno** from the Port faxed me the Coast Guard approval around 1130 that morning. As always, with Fridays, it was a slow day. I had **Nancy** and **Rosehn** working in the trailer, and **Beth Spain, Rafael Suarez, and Roy and Margaret Warner** working aboard the ship. I got ready to eat lunch, but figured I should call **Bill Welch** at **Empire Marine** to let him know that I'd be looking for tugs at his convenience, perhaps sometime in the next couple of weeks. Bill's response really woke me up. He said that the tug they like to use to move us, the HERBERT BRAKE was leaving for a job in Connecticut that evening and wouldn't be back for a month. It was this afternoon at 1400, or February. With no crew on hand, I didn't know what to say except, "can you make it 1430?" He said he'd call back so I ate my sandwich. He called back at 1230 and said we were on for 1430. I sent out an email to all the local volunteers that have email addresses, and I called **Dick Walker**, who was fortunately home. Dick agreed to call all the local volunteers. We went to work.



Raf, Bob and Frank taking up slack.



Securing the colors.



Beth, Raf, Roy and Margaret went to work taking off the clamps, wires, and gangway safety net. We got out the heaving lines. Beth's husband **Mark Spain** showed up to pick up her check, and he got drafted. The volunteers started to arrive about 1330, and by 1430, when the tugs arrived, we had about thirty-five crew aboard. Fortunately **Barry Witte** was still off school on Christmas break, and he had called a couple of his students. He, **Ken Kaskoun** and **Roy Warner** were aboard to handle the electrical hookup. **Larry LaChance** got the message in time and came down to run the emergency generator. It worked perfectly. Barry made the announcement over the 1MC about switching from shore power to ships power, and we had lights and heat for the whole trip. I had worried about it getting dark before we got to Rensselaer, but that wouldn't have been an issue, since we could have switched on all the running lights. It was a perfect day for moving. The temperature hovered around forty and it was flat calm. Neither Bill Welch nor Bart Brake made it this trip. The job was in the capable hands of Denny Donovan at the helm of the HERBERT. Denny's ship handling was outstanding. He only used the assist tug CHEYENNE only three times, once to turn us at the Snow Dock, and two gentle nudges to get us into the pier in Rensselaer.





Barry and Benner hooking up the shore power.

It was amazing to watch the CHEYENNE come in, reverse, and kiss the side of the hull, and give that little push without even marking the paint. The current was running good, and by 1530 we were at the berth and waved off the tugs. The last of the crew left about 1700 after all the lines had been doubled, wires put on, gangway and fenders rigged, and shore power and telephones reconnected. That left the camels to be hauled out at the Snow Dock.

Saturday, the third was a normal volunteer day. The weather looked good so **Doug Tanner** and **Tim Benner** started cutting away the wasted deck under a chock that had been removed on the fo'c'sle.

No sooner did they have a sizeable hole in the deck than it started to pour rain. Doug rigged a tarp and kept going. Around 1100 the rain let up, the sun came out, and we managed to have an insert welded in tight by the end of the day. We also made some adjustments to the mooring lines and got the gangway netting rigged.

That weekend, the weekly forecast called for Monday to be lousy but warm, Tuesday to be colder and by Wednesday, the first real cold snap of the season would be upon us. **Bob Cross** said he could get me a crane operator for Monday, so I decided to go ahead and pull the sixteen mooring camels out before it got real cold. It was snowing when I met Ricky on the Snow Dock at 0730. The snow eased up and the temperature hovered just above freezing. It was calm, so we cast loose the northern raft of camels and floated them down with the tide to the lifting point. The crew started showing up around 0830, and by 0930 we had almost twenty men on the job. The indispensable **Tommy Moore**, and the expendable me worked down on the floats. Tommy broke the shackles and I pulled the camels around to the lifting point and made the hook ups. On shore, **Dave Floyd, Ed Whitbeck, Chris Fedden, Gene Cellini, Gordon Lattey, Andy Desorbo, Larry Williams, Don Shattuck, MacDonald Smith, Clark Farnsworth, and Stan Murawski supported Ricky and the crane.** **Jerry Jones and the Andrians** photo documented the entire adventure. We had one breakdown with the crane, but they got that repaired in about ninety minutes and we were up and running again. Just time for doughnuts and coffee! It took us longer than usual, but by 1500, all sixteen were stacked on the pier, the gear was stowed and we were secured for the season.

My sincerest hope is that someone who is in a position to approve local, state or federal funding, will see these pictures, appreciate the effort we are going through to make this project work with an inadequate mooring, and get us some funding for a permanent mooring system.

Camel Day





Repairing the reefer deck.



Repairing the pantry deck

Specifically, **Rafael Suarez** will be scaling **Bosun's Locker** and forward second deck passageway. **Dick Smith, Ed Whitbeck, Les Yarbrough** and **Chris Fedden** will be scaling wire ways and ventilation on the messdeck, storeroom and foul weather gear locker. **Gene Jackey** will be removing tile in the scullery, messdeck cage, forward second deck passageway, and wardroom pantry, and assisting **Stan Murawski** in overhaul of ventilation and piping fittings on the messdeck. **Stan Murawski** and **Chuck Teal** will be repairing insulation in the CPO mess, anchor windlass room and forward second deck passageway, as well as overhauling tank overflows, valves and ventilation fittings on messdeck, and reassembling the dish washing machine. Stan has also taken on the duties of "Oil King" for the winter. **Dave Floyd, Andy Desorbo, and Rich Pavolvic** will continue scaling ordnance shack, repairing insulation, reinstalling the workbench, and painting. They will also be assisting with scaling on second deck forward, and repainting the MK 14 gunsights. **Barry Witte, Mike Clark, and Gary Sheedy** will be rewiring electrical and alarm circuits in anchor windlass room and forward second deck passageway, completing alarm wiring through officer's country, electrical rewiring on messdecks, and providing 440v power for sewerage grinder pump in C201L. **Larry Williams, Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callender, Roy Warner, and Don Shattuck** will continue work on sound powered circuits, lighting in B-2, restoration of officer's call bell system, begin interior electrical box tag replacement, and stowing the Korean IC and FC gear.

Doug Tanner, Clark Farnsworth, Tim Benner, and MacDonald Smith, will continue working on chocks, repair wasted deck in reefer decks, hard pipe water supply to land head, install a sand blasting cabinet, install grinder pump in septic tank and purchase suction hose. They will then reassemble the cage doors in anchor windlass room, and mount TV shelf in forward messdecks locker for the overnight camping program. **Rocky** will be keeping the snow off the Whaleboat and with, **Bill Coyle**, sort electrical fittings in forward crews head, continue restoration of electrical fittings in support of messdecks and second deck forward restoration, and mask interior compartments in preparation for painting come spring. And the ever invaluable clean up, paint and computer guy, **Erik Collin**, will continue restoring the "K" guns, doing touch up painting in interior passageways, and repainting interior decks.



Restoration has started and the messdecks is a mess.



Replacing electrical cable on the messdecks.

So we're back in our winter work mode. The winter work plan involves several spaces. On the messdecks we'll scale wire ways and ductwork, and do detail restoration we missed the first time around prior to repainting. In the scullery we'll remove the tile and reassemble and weld down the dishwashing machine. In the wardroom pantry we're removing the tile, repairing the holes in the deck and activating the pantry call bell system. In the anchor windlass room we plan to scale and repaint the whole area. And on the reefer decks we'll replace about 20 square feet of rotted deck plate and continue detailed restoration. The electricians will complete replacement of alarm cables through officer's country. The gunners will continue work in the 01 Level Gun Shack. And we plan to install a grinder pump in septic tank and purchase and rig a septic pump-out hose and continue to restore the portside chocks so they will be ready when we tie up portside to the Snow Dock in the spring.



Making fast in Rensselaer.

And finally there's the radio gang. There was some dissention in the ranks of "C" Division, about they way that the were portrayed in the last SLATER SIGNALS. They felt it unfair that they were singled out as the only ones who work in the warmth during the Albany winter. They felt it important to point out one of the architectural peculiarities of the CANNON class destroyer escorts. In the CANNON class destroyer escorts, the main heating coil for the whole forward end of the ship is located on the starboard side 01 level forward. There is only one space closer to warmth of that heating coil than the radio room. Only one space that is warmer, whose aft bulkhead is part of that fan room. That space is the ships office, where I am sitting right now comfortably typing this newsletter. They'll be working on setting up the radar simulation in CIC, improving the sound effects, restoring the exterior 1MC speakers, and sorting and stowing all the Korean electronic parts in IC shop.

A couple other notes. Our senior welder, Clark Farnsworth, turned eighty-two this month, but that still won't get him out of overhead welding or working on his knees. His flexibility is still the envy of a lot of younger guys in the crew. And Ray Lammers requested our first medical discharge, pending a hip replacement. The discharge is conditional, dependent upon successful surgery or national emergency, which ever comes first. Ray, we want you back!

I would be totally remiss if I didn't thank you all for being so generous in your donations to the winter fund. The contributions started coming in September, two months before I sent out the appeal. As of December 31 2003 we had received \$27,785 in contributions and were a thousand dollars ahead of last year. And your contributions continue to come in every day, so on behalf of all of us here aboard the ship, thanks for helping us get through another winter. Beth and Sam Saylor have been gratefully trying to keep up with the posting and thank you letters, so if your acknowledgement hasn't come yet, it's on the way.



Repairing the fuel oil pump.



Working on a 1MC speaker.

Our favorite volunteer clock repairman Geoffrey Bullard, his daughter Thessaly, our own Paul Czesak, and their friend Doris Fischer have joined forces to help promote the SLATER in the Albany Community. They are planning a special event in June to help raise money and promote public awareness of the project in their circle of friends. Their event, "The USS SLATER Hosts Navy night at the Fort Orange Club" will include a cocktail party and dinner scheduled for Saturday, June 19th to coincide with our DE Day celebration aboard the SLATER. We'll keep you updated as they make plans for the event.

Finally, when I called Bill Welch down at Empire Marine to thank him for moving us, I did something that was totally out of character for me, a true step up from my usual groveling. I told Bill that as much as we need and appreciate his donated services, if need be, we could certainly pay him for the towing. Bill responded, that you guys had paid the bill a long time ago with your service to your country. So don't forget that. SLATER isn't loved and cared for by this community just because she's the USS SLATER. She's loved and cared for because of what you did, because of you and your sacrifices for your country. **See you next month.**