

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**We're back in full tourist operational mode.** Fully deployed for the season. The first tasks after we got the ship moored were repainting and hoisting the steel gangway into position. **Erik Collin** handled the painting and as always, **Bob Cross** handled getting the crane so we could hoist it into position, giving us the two serviceable gangways that are required. April closed with our first two overnight encampments of the season. **Paul Czesak** and **Gordon Lattey** have worked hard on an education program that will help young campers relive the shipboard experience. Their program includes a ship tour, fire drill, general quarters drill, hands-on instruction, supper and a movie in the evening. The next morning they have breakfast, then clean up and compartment inspection. Both events went smoothly, and we have several more encampments scheduled over the next few months.



The SLATER's birthday cake.

**We beefed up our dedicated regular tour guide crew for the spring and summer with our part-time crew.** Our efficient cashier **Eileen Parfrey** is back with us along with several new helpers. **David Athay** is a midshipman with the RPI NROTC unit, so he comes well trained. **Penny Welbourn** is a retiring middle school teacher with incredible patience for kids. Her father was British and met her mother when he came to Boston to commission the British DE HMS HOLMES, so she has DE blood in her. He came back after the war, married and resettled in the States, and the rest is... well, Penny! We brought **Annette and Les Beauchaine's** grandson **Mike Long** aboard as part of the crew. Mike dresses out in full dungaree uniform and looks like the handsome incarnation of Les sixty years ago. At least Les hopes he looked that good in his youth. And from Colonie High School we brought aboard **Corey Reinhart, Kristen Hotvet and Dave Cardella**. Welcome aboard to all of you.

**We're happy to report that our school field trips have been up since last year.** This is thanks to the marketing work **Rosehn Gipe** has been doing, and it's great to see more teachers and students taking advantage of the lessons of the SLATER. We also had visits by two DESA Chapters this month. First, the **Garden State Chapter** came up from Jersey with a busload of DE vets. **Stanley Zalewski** posted a nice note on the website bulletin board after their visit about what a fine



**Guests and dignitaries remember the SLATER's commissioning.**

job the volunteers were doing. Later in the month the **SOLDESA** Chapter bussed up from New York City, and it was great to see so many old friends aboard. They brought aboard a brown bag lunch and ate on the messdecks. **Gus Negus** happened to be working aboard that day, and he gathered a crowd in the aft engine room and let **Marty Newman** start up and shut down the emergency diesel generator. **Teddy Prager** was all set to switch the load, but we decided not to push our luck that day.

**The big event of the month was on May first.** On that date we held a joint ceremony with the Albany Naval Reserve Center to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the commissioning of the USS Slater. The Day of Honor and Tribute was tied in with two retirement ceremonies for Naval Reservists CAPT **Arthur Dunn**, and HM1 **Sandy Cox**. The event kicked off at 1400 with the anniversary celebration.



**HM1 Sandy Cox and Capt. Arthur Dunn cut their cake during their retirement ceremony.**



**RADM Paul Czesak, NYHM was our mater of ceremonies.**





Master Chief Dave Floyd fires number three 'K' gun.



Erik Collin explaining the 'K' gun restoration.

**Frank Lasch and Paul Czesak spoke about the SLATER's history and the important role it has played over the last sixty years. They recognized former crewmember Ed Elze who was in attendance, and all his shipmates who couldn't be present. Captain Schaeffer, CO of the Strike Fleet unit presided over the retirement ceremonies and reception. The big part of the ceremony was the first official gun salute from the "K" guns by Erik Collin. Following a winter long restoration, Erik fired a three-gun salute from the starboard depth charge projectors in honor of the day. Our thanks to all who helped make the event such a great success and especially to event coordinator CDR Bill Kraus and CS1 Bill Bryan and Bill's wife Judy who made it all happen so smoothly.**

**As the ceremony was going on the Michigan crew started arriving for their annual spring field day, joined by my old buddy Ed Zajkowski.** As usual, competition to be Tim's favorite was intense among the crew. The galley crew, **Bill Kramer, Jim Andrus, Frank Warner and Paul Monaco** are always in the running, because it is great to come aboard in the morning to find the coffee already made and a hot plate of bacon and eggs waiting for me. But I guess we've gotten spoiled, because their superior cooking is now considered standard performance. We just expect that we will be fed well and gain weight.

**As the welder, Tom Schriener is always in the running to be Tim's favorite.** He got off to a good start this year working with Tim Markham, Scott McFadden and Gary Headworth. They wanted to spend the week doing what they dream of, working on engines. But first, they had to pay a price. That price was two days working on the shipboard sewer system for Doug Tanner. They reran the overhead sewer line in C-202L so that the discharge is now outboard of the waterway, and we can leave the sewer hose rigged without creating a trip hazard over the deck. Then, under the direction of Gus Negus, they helped with the continuing overhaul of the number three ship's service generator in the B-3. They also removed the heat exchanger from the motor whaleboat diesel, and working with Russ Ferrer diagnosed the coolant leak as a bad heat exchanger. If Russ can't fix it, the replacement looks expensive - \$300 for a used one, \$800 for new. We'll see how this develops. Anyway Tom might have had the award but for choosing to spend most of his time in the engine room working for Gus. By now everybody knows that I'm a deck man. I think he knew that he had lost the competition after I made the unfortunate comment that one chipper is worth three engineers. I say "unfortunate" because Gus Negus was on the messdeck when I made the comment, and it may be weeks before Gus speaks to me again. Tom may have been Gus's favorite, but he has to spend more time on deck to win points with me.



Working towards an autobody finish.



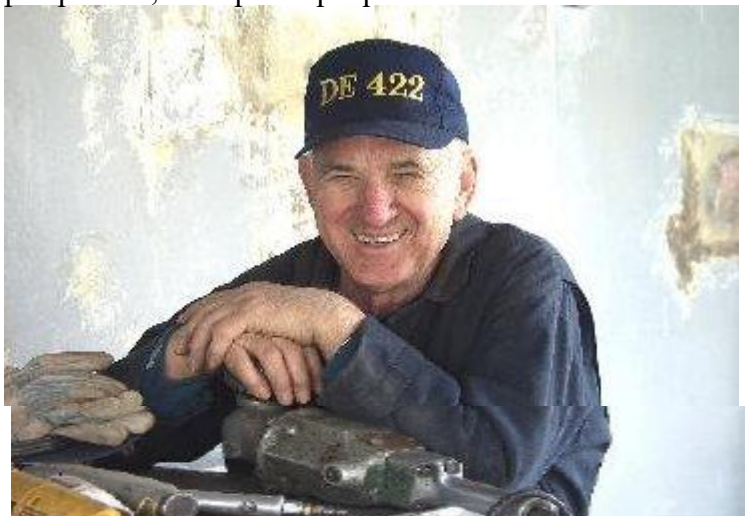
Tom Schriener welding on the sewer discharge line.

**The real stars were the deck crew.** The big project was sanding and repainting the portside main deck house. Over the course of the week **Gil Rivette, Jim Ray, Roy Brandon, Rush Mellinger, Rusty Nichols** and **Howard McCammon** spot scaled, sanded, primed and painted the entire portside main deck house. This included the overhead that is the area under the gun 42 gun tub. Since this was pier side and getting to be a noticeable eyesore, it was a great improvement to the appearance of the SLATER.

**Ron Zarem's son Mike was a star.** He is professionally trained as a painter/paper hanger and we had him doing insulation work in the gun shack, main deck passageway and the 01 level outside the ship's office. The quality of his insulation work was professional grade. It's a talent we need aboard, and he was certainly in the running. But then his Dad stepped in, and made a rule that no first timers could compete, and that all his points needed to be passed along to his closest blood relative aboard, namely his Dad. Ron of course, thinks all he has to do is pick up a spray gun to be my favorite. This year he sprayed out the gun shack for **Dave Floyd** with a prime coat and white topcoat. Then he turned to on the portside main deck house to help the crew put on the finish coat there. He may have ended the week as **Chief Floyd's** favorite; but from my perspective, a couple of people out did Ron.

**Jim Kohler didn't know it, but he was in the running.** As Mike Zarem's helper, he came in wearing a "USS WASMUTH" hat. Now, everybody aboard knows about the thing I have for four pipers, and

WASMUTH was the old DMS that blew her stern off with her own depth charges in the Aleutians. Being a four piper sailor almost won the competition for Jim right there, and I'm sure he was Mike's favorite, but there



A happy DE camper. Jim Ray takes a break.





The Michigan crew poses for their group picture.

were a few guys who worked harder. Up on the flying bridge **Dick Walker, Ron Mazure and Bob Donlon** continued to dress up the fire control radar room and the upper sound shack. They did a lot of exterior painting and touch up painting on the flying bridge that really needed some attention.

**The second runner up had to be John Bartko.** First, he teamed up with **Dick Briel and Rusty Nichols** to paint all the rope blocks and chain falls. Aside from doing a beautiful job, he managed to get useful work out of Briel all week. That's a feat in itself. Second, there is the minor fact that he made another \$5,000 contribution to the endowment fund. Thus far he personally has donated almost \$35,000 to the project. There are rumors starting to circulate that he has made a deal to buy the SLATER and is paying for it in installments. We may all end up working for John some day. That should have been enough right there to give him the top slot, but there was one guy who went one better.



Michigan Dick Walker stowing Korean fire control parts.



Pat Perrella photographs the action on the flying bridge with Ron Mazure painting in the background.

**Emmett Landrum** came the farthest to work on the SLATER. He came all the way from northern California to do this job. And I owe him one, because at one point I made the error of accusing him of being from southern California. I didn't realize that they were two different states that don't always get along together. Poor Emmett made the mistake of saying that he had started his Navy career sixty years ago in the bosun's locker. Well, it just so happens that we're in the process of chipping the Bosun's locker to bare metal, so we decided to give Emmett the opportunity to return to his roots and finish his Navy career in the bosun's locker, too. We packed him up there with a needle gun, crammed him between two shelves and he spent three days up there with our regulars chipping paint. I even think he missed a couple of meals in the process, because none of his shipmates bothered to call him.

It was the ugliest assignment I could give a 78-year-old man, proving once again that I have no heart. For taking the assignment and not reporting me to the council on senior citizen abuse, **Emmett Landrum** was my favorite. Capping off the Michigan Field day week was the visit by the USS SAMUEL S. MILES reunion group, including Michigan regulars **Chuck Markham** and **John O'Leary** with Michigan shipmates **Tom Borrows** and **John Whitmore**. It was great seeing them all again.



**Mike Long and Les Beauchaine, Grandson and Grandfather aboard the Slater.**

**Now that the weather has turned decent, Larry Rockwood has dropped his electrical parts restoration like a hot potato and has gone back to his first love, the wooden whaleboat.** He has repainted the whole inside and the inboard side. With the help of the **USS HUSE** crew and **Hack Charbonneau**, we lowered the boat, reversed it in the falls, and brought it back aboard so he could caulk and paint the other side. I was the man who was elected to go down with the boat to turn it and swap the falls. It looked like a scene from "Mutiny on the Bounty" with the whole crew leaning over the rail shouting "Cast the SOB adrift!" But fortunately more loyal heads prevailed and they brought the boat and me right back aboard. I guess they weren't ready to lose the whaleboat after all the work they put into it.

**In addition to all the work being done by the Field Day crews, our own regulars haven't been slacking off.** We've received several project specific grants. **Gordon Lattey** was instrumental in obtaining a grant from **Alan Goldberg** and **Claire Oesterreich** to purchase two new Navy-style ranges for the galley. And the **Wright Family Foundation** provided a grant to fabricate flameproof mattress covers for the forward bunks in support of the overnight camping program. **Dennis Nagi** mounted an air-conditioner in the Visitor Center Classroom, an addition that will be most welcome in the summer time. He also cut and finished clock bases for the ship's office and the supply office so that we could mount some of the clocks **Geoffrey Bullard** has been obtaining for us. Another shore side problem was the grass. All of a sudden it was knee high. The lawnmower that **Tim Benner** donated last year finally bit the dust, despite the best efforts of the Michigan crew to resurrect it. Gordon went at it with his weedwhacker, but it was too much. **Gene Jackey** finally answered the call and donated a lawn mower, and cut the grass to test it out. I guess nobody warned him about what happens if you do something once around here. There is no such thing as doing something once. **Clark Farnsworth** has been continuing work on the chock project. He now has two on the bench fully repaired and ready for installation. For those of you keeping score at home, the score stands at eleven chocks completed and eleven still in need of restoration.

**Doug Tanner has two hot projects on his plate.** First is the installation of the sewerage grinder pump in the contaminated holding tank under C-201L. Now that we have a shore sewer connection, we want to use it, so he is installing an electric grinder pump that he obtained for us several years ago. As always, he is supported by his sidekicks **Tim Benner**, **Chuck Teal** and electricians **Gary Sheedy** and **Barry Witte**. We also owe a debt to **Dave Wolberg** who donated parts for the motor controller for the pump. Doug's other hot project is the accommodation ladder. We are fabricating a Navy-style



aluminum accommodation ladder on port quarter just aft of the camels to provide access to the motor whaleboat. Doug has engineered the design for that, and is looking forward to getting over that stinky septic tank job so he can start working in fresh air again. And **Ken Kaskoun, Don Shattuck, Bob Calender** and **Larry Williams** have been sorting through a mass of sound powered headsets.



**Radioman Joe Breyer talks to the world from the radio shack.**

**The gunnery department is getting into summer mode. Rich Pavlovic** is back with us after a winter hiatus and has gone through and touched up the paint on the 20mm mounts and is now working on touching up the forties. **Walter Shaub** from Pennsylvania drove up to deliver us eleven spent shell bags for all the twenties, so now they are complete with shell bags and covers on the MK 14 gunsights. Between repairing signal flags **Les Yarbrough** made a new cover for the MK52 gun director on the flying bridge. **Frank Beeler** and **Bob Lawrence** are taking care of the three-inch fifties and **Dave Floyd** and **Andy Desorbo** are still putting the finishing touches on the gun shack. Their big step forward this

month was getting their workbench reinstalled. It had been sitting out on deck all winter. **Stan Murawski** has been busy making insulation repairs in the gun shack and the anchor windlass room. Meanwhile, the chippers, now down to **Chris Fedden, Ed Whitbeck, Dave Hamilton** and new volunteer **Mark Nadeau** have been pecking away at the anchor windlass room. Hopefully the chipping will be finished by the time I write next month's edition. Then they can start getting some fresh air working on deck.

**Several big events are pending.** As I write the USS HUSE crew is aboard twenty strong chipping and painting, so I'll have a full report next month. Then we have our DE Day Ceremony planned for June 19<sup>th</sup> and then **Geoffrey Bullard** and **Doris Fischer's** SLATER night at the Fort Orange Club that evening.

