



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**CPO Selectees from the New England Recruiting District.**

**So the kids are back in school and September is supposed to be a slow month where we all calm down and things get back to the dull routine.** Not this month. The first event of September happened on the first of the month when the U. S. Navy's **New England Recruiting District** brought their Chief Petty Officer selectees aboard the SLATER for a day of orientation and work. This was similar to the August event with the Ballston Spa CPOs but the recruiters did not stay aboard. They spent the morning in orientation classes on the messdeck, then spent the afternoon scaling the fo'c's'le for us. It's great to see the SLATER utilized by the active Navy to keep their traditions and our link alive.

**Planning is progressing on the permanent mooring for the SLATER.**

Mueser Rutledge has completed the engineering and we have received our permitting from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NYS Department of State. At this time we have the project out to bid and we hope to begin construction in March, prior to moving the SLATER back to Albany.

**Taking a cue from the engineers, that there is strength in numbers, collections manager Katie Kuhl has been actively recruiting volunteers to help her and Frank Peter with the collections and archives.** Patti McCall, a professional librarian from East Schodack, NY, and Kathleen Dunsavage, a recent graduate of the Information Science program at SUNY Albany from Ilion, NY, are volunteering on Saturdays to organize and create a finding aid for the ship reference files, which have grown exponentially over the years. Their efforts will help researchers, staff and volunteers learn more about destroyer escorts and their role in naval history. **Rebecca Ralph**, a current Information Science student at SUNY Albany, is performing her internship at the SLATER for the next several months. Rebecca has taken over organizing and describing the SLATER's vast collection of historical audio-visual material spanning from the ship's arrival in New York City in 1993 to the present.

**We had two special events to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage of discovery up the Hudson River.** These events included many visiting vessels over the course of the



**Coast Guard Cutter BAINBRIDGE ISLAND tied alongside for a couple days.**

month. On Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> we hosted the Coast Guard Cutter BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, part of the escort for the Dutch Flotilla. On Monday morning five SLATER crewmembers broke off from their work and were privileged to be given a chance to ride the cutter.

Archivist **Franklin Peter**, Bosun **Walt Stuart**, Super **Dave Mardon**, **Angelo Bracco** and **Larry Williams** went aboard as the Coasties tested the whistle, bell and sirens before getting underway. They headed south to the Sunny Side Beacon light before the Coasties disembarked the SLATER crew in their Zodiac and returned them to Albany. I'm just glad they didn't decide to shanghai our crew.

**I heard all about this second-hand because at the time I was cavorting in Washington D.C. at the annual Destroyer Escort Sailors Association Convention.** Almost three hundred people were in attendance at the affair, which was held in Alexandria, Virginia. The highlight of the reunion was the memorial service held at the Navy Memorial. I gave a presentation

updating the attendees on the progress the volunteers have made this past year and had a lot of before and after shots to dramatize the difference for those who had not seen the SLATER when she first came over from Greece. I won't dare mention names for the risk of leaving anyone out, but it was great to see so many old friends and to thank so many of them personally for their support of the SLATER restoration for so long.

**I was home just long enough to change my underwear before I had to head south again, this time to Mobile, Alabama, for the annual Historic Naval Ships Association Convention.** The event gave me a chance to learn a good deal about the dry-docking that the destroyer LAFHEY is presently going through. I moderated a panel on volunteers entitled "Keeping Your Museum Attractive to Those Who Work for Free." Trips on Coast Guard Cutters and keeping me out of town and out of their hair are certainly two good incentives. Panelists included my good friend **Ed Zajkowski** of the J. P. KENNEDY, JR. and SLATER (who kept me honest), **Jason Hall** of the battleship NEW JERSEY, and **Buddy Macon** of the Naval Aviation Museum. Other seminars I attended included disaster planning, weathering the economic storm, using online social networking to generate interest, trends in museum visitation and custodianship of a historic naval vessel in 2009. As always, one of the great benefits of the conference was the networking done in the cocktail lounge after hours, but be assured, **Rosehn** has never let me put a cocktail on an expense account.

**But back to the Albany Quadricentennial celebration; the Dutch gave special recognition to the Quadricentennial by sending a flotilla of seventeen original and replica period sailing yachts to New York.** They came over via heavy lift ship to make a symbolic journey up the Hudson from Manhattan to commemorate the event. Making various stops along the way, the flotilla made Albany their last port of call before being loaded on a Dutch heavy lift ship for the voyage back home. The Dutch expedition commemorated the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's exploration that led to the



**Our Dutch friends enjoy a cup of American coffee.**

region's first European settlements. The Dutch flotilla joined the HALF MOON, a replica of the ship Hudson sailed for the Dutch during his exploration of the New World in 1609. After making many stops in various river towns on the voyage north, the flotilla arrived in Albany the week of September 21. It included the Dutch sailing ships, the HALF MOON, the barquentine PEACEMAKER, the canal barge DAY PECKINPAUGH, and the NYS Canal Corps tug CLEVELAND.

**Our wharf was alive with activity as the barquentine PEACEMAKER tied up alongside the DUTCH APPLE with two of the Dutch sailing barges.** We took the PECKINPAUGH and the CLEVELAND outboard of SLATER. Other vessels moored at the city wharf and the Albany Yacht Club across the river. Upon completion of the journey, all the Dutch craft were loaded upon the Dutch ocean-going heavy lift ship FLINTERBORG for the voyage home. It was wonderful to have them with us. We invited the Dutch and the crew of the PECKINPAUGH to join us for our annual volunteer appreciation dinner the night of September 26<sup>th</sup>. Smitty cooked up our traditional lasagna dinner served on the messdecks and attendees included the early arrivals from the Field Day crew.

**The day after the annual volunteer dinner the fall field day crew began to arrive in force.** Twenty-two workers arrived under the casual supervision of Michigan **Dick Walker** to spend a week working and living aboard the SLATER. The crew was split up into work gangs and dealt with a whole week of cool temperatures, overcast days and showers. Usually just enough rain to screw things up. As always, Firecontrolman Dick Walker headed to the flying bridge and the gun director tub taking **Gary Headworth** and **Josh Maurer** with him. They spent the week scaling and painting the inside of the gun director tub and restoring the fire control instrumentation. They also found time to do some scaling and preservation on the sky lookout chairs. Our other Firecontrolman **Mike Marko** spent the week on the aft MK-51 gun directors in his continued efforts to keep them free and well-maintained in the hope that one day we can get one working with the aft twin forty.



**The fall field day crew.**



**Butch Warrrender restoring the hedgehog firing panels.**

In our continuing efforts in the forward head, welder Tom Skufca and Jim Parker went to work on the overhead electrical junction box that held all the cabling for three-inch gun number one. Over the years, salt-water corrosion had almost completely rotted this box out. Under Doug Tanner's direction, Super Dave Mardon had cut out most of the wasted steel. Now Tom and Jim went to work replacing all the old metal and fabricating a bolt on plate that was almost an exact match for the original construction. When they completed that project, they still found some time to do some bulkhead welding in the passageway that needed completion



The gunnery gang Frank Heckart, Jim Ray, and Mike Dingmon looking for the problem.



Laird Confer and Roy Brandon fitting the watertight door just aft of the hedgehog.

Repair of the main deck watertight door just aft of the hedgehog on the starboard side has been on Doug Tanner's list for about ten years. It was finally decided that the door had already been repaired so many times and was in such bad shape that further repair wasn't warranted. It was decided to replace the door with one of the same style doors removed from the USS GAGE. Laird Confer and Roy Brandon tackled that project, removing the old door, relocating the hinges and making modifications so that the new door would fit. They got the project about 80% complete before the week ended, leaving Tanner, Benner, Teal and Mardon to finish up the job.



Chippers John Yokum, Ron Prest and Ron Mazure scaling the foredeck.



Before the dust settled Walt Stuart moved in and primed the deck.

Restoration of the hedgehog projector has been a goal of Erik Collin's so that the projector will look as good as all those hedgehog rockets that have been painstakingly restored. Bob Harris and

**Butch Warrender** took on the task of removing all the firing circuits, panels and supporting structure, scaling the large components and sandblasting the smaller parts for a detailed restoration of this historic piece of ordnance. This will be an ongoing project that will include running new armored cable and rewiring the projector. Complete restoration will not be completed until spring but we are well on our way.



**Peter Gamwell cleaning the emergency diesel switchboard.**

**The port 40mm gun has been jammed in elevation most of the summer.**

Gunner's mate **Frank Heckart** took on the task of diagnosing that problem with the help of **Brandon Reese, Gene Hermanson, Jim Ray** and **Bill Nixon**. They completely disassembled the worm gear on the pointer's side, overhauled it, but found the problem was in the horizontal shaft bearings on the gear that engages the elevation quadrant. That was a bigger job than we were prepared to get into with winter closing in, so they reassembled the elevation gear and moved the job to the spring list.

**Down in the enginerooms, Guy Huse spent most of the week researching and reassembling the aft fire and bilge pump.** He is one of the first to use the microfilm reader that **Frank Heckart** donated to study the piping drawings. Unfortunately, the drawings

he needed were so badly photographed that they were almost unreadable. Guy also performed a valuable service in pumping about five gallons of waste oil out of the bilge and into our waste oil tank, something I'd been trying to get to for the past twelve years. **Peter Gamwell**, a volunteer electrician, spent the better part of a week aboard. Unfortunately, his schedule didn't coincide with the Fall Field Day week, but he put himself up in a hotel and spent the better part of the week working with **Larry Williams** cleaning the emergency diesel distribution board in B-4.

**I didn't want to be accused of ignoring our own engineers. Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon** and **Gary Lubrano**, assisted by **Don Miller** and **Earl Herchenroder** have been doing an amazing job repainting the overhead in B-3. So they wouldn't feel neglected I sent another one of Laird's grandkids, **Jared Mauer** and his friend **Tim Oskie** down to help them, along with **Gene Hermanson**. They spent time vacuuming up the space and painting the overhead of the lower level in B-4. They made significant progress, and **Ron Prest** volunteered to stay an extra day down there scaling and priming.

**Of course chipping is near and dear to my heart, so Ron Prest, John Yocum and Ron Mazure made me very happy with their work on the fo'c's'le.** They picked up where the New England Recruiting District CPO selectees left off and scaled the deck all the way back to the gun one shield, and despite the showers got a coat of Corroseal on everything. **Erik Collin** and **Walt Stuart** have since primed and painted the whole area. For his part, **Ron Mazure** enjoyed the chipping so much that he came back with our local regulars to keep the project going.

**Chipping may be near and dear to my heart, but food is near and dear to everyone else, and for that we are all indebted to CSK Bernie "Smitty" Smith.** The guy may as well put a mailbox at the gate; he's been here so often. He still cooks for the crew every Monday and has been filling in



**CSK Smith has kept all of us well fed for the past month.**

Saturdays for **Stan Murawski**, as well. He then offered to cook the crew lasagna for the volunteer dinner and provided the field day crew with three squares a day all the following week. All I can say is I gained five pounds from the experience, which I must now try and shed. Smitty was ably assisted in the galley by Coastie QM **Larry Stiles**, who did a great job on the messdecks and in the scullery. We also assigned one messcook to Smitty and Larry on a rotating basis, so it didn't matter what your rate was, you spent time in the galley. The week was a great success from the maintenance perspective, and despite the weather, everyone seemed to have a good time.

**We had a special visitor during the Field Day week.** Dennis Wood came all the way from Cheltenham, England, with his son Ian to visit the SLATER. Dennis had been a Huff Duff operator on one of the 78 destroyer escorts we transferred to Britain during the war, HMS MOORSOM. Under a British National Lottery program, **Second World War veterans are receiving funding to journey to places such as France, Italy and beyond to commemorate the battles that led to the end of WWII and to pay tribute to their comrades who did not come home.** The Lottery Fund is awarding grants through its **Heroes Return Program, enabling those who fought for their country to make remembrance trips throughout 2009 and 2010.** Many veterans and their families will be visiting battlefields and cemeteries in the countries where they served, including Egypt, Malta and



**Dennis Wood and his son Ian came all the way from England to see our ship.**

Singapore. **As Dennis said, there is no cemetery for the Battle of the Atlantic, so he chose to come to the SLATER.** Although we offered Dennis and his son bunks aboard the ship, Dennis's memory of lying on a top bunk with an asbestos pipe running within inches of his face lead him to decline the offer and stay at the Hilton, an option not available in 1944.



**Dave Mardon spends so much time working the forward head he has been awarded a reserved seat.**



**Air Force vet Wiley Johnson sanding down the reefer gratings.**

**Dennis's visit coincided with the reunion of the USS BATES and USS BULL, and they were all able to share stories as BATES, BULL and MOORSOM were at Normandy for the D-Day invasion. CAPDESA member Stan McMillan served on both ships and organized the reunion for his shipmates. BATES and BULL were later converted to APDs and BATES was lost at Okinawa with 21 of her shipmates. They held a touching memorial service on the morning of October 2<sup>nd</sup>. We also remembered the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup> with a Patriot's Day Ceremony that coincided with the reunions of the destroyer escorts PRICE DER337, STRICKLAND DER333, CAMP DER251, and PETTIT DE253. We also hosted reunions for the RAYMOND DE341 and the attack transport SIBLEY APA206 this past month.**



**New volunteer Will Tryon hard at work cleaning a 20mm.**



**Paul Guarnieri and Bill "Boats" Haggart working on replacing life lines.**

**Meanwhile, out in San Francisco, Rich Pikelney, Tom Horsfall and Peter Papadacos read last month's SIGNALS about Shippie and Ross not being able to get our depth sounder operational**

**because we were missing parts.** Horsfall and Pikelney are the two who are losing sleep at night because I have a TAJ transmitter instead of a proper TBL transmitter in radio central, and they are determined to make us right. In fact, Tom has the CLAMP's TBL fully restored and operational and is awaiting shipment and installation next spring. Knowing that time was running out to have access to the depth sounder parts we needed, they arranged another trip to our old friend the salvage tug USS CLAMP ARS33. Aboard her Tom and Rich recovered a near pristine depth sounder transmitter, the guts of the receiver in fair condition and a beat up indicator for SLATER. Tom took the transmitter and receiver so they can be shipped with the TBL. **Peter Papadakos** generously offered to take the indicator, as he has a large load of material he is driving across the country to the Battleship MASSACHUSETTS Rich commented that I "remain the luckiest as well as the hardest working scrounger on the planet." With all the traveling I've done this month, I'm sure my crew would agree with the first but question the second part of Rich's statement.

**See you next month**



The emergency diesel switchboard.