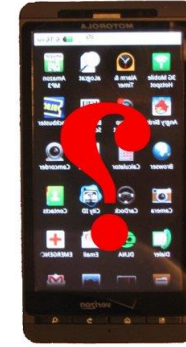


SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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I've mentioned several times in the past, I'm a technological dinosaur. No where is this more evident than in my failure to embrace cell phone technology. I'm a writer, not a talker. While I love email, I didn't even like telephones when they had wires. I grew up in a time when telephones had wires so it was okay to be out of touch. In fact, I still think it's okay. Not only okay, it's a right. The people who work with you take a lot more responsibility and initiative if they don't feel like your hovering over every decision they make from afar. Yes, I do have a cell phone. It's six years old. It usually sits in my briefcase waiting for your calls, when I remember to charge it. And if you call, there's only a fifty/fifty chance that I'll hit the right button and talk to you instead of cut you off. That's if I hear it at all. It is a good message collector. There have been rare moments when I have found it useful, such as when the welders set off the fire alarm and all the phone lines are busy. Or I'm out of town. But generally, it's a modern accessory I feel I can live without. I don't need to feel connected all the time. Some people may think that's kind of sad. But what's really sad is that I haven't turned sixty yet, but I'm already starting to write like **Andy Rooney**.



RPI Midshipmen serving as our gun crew.

Anyway, this isn't about me. It's about the kids and how they problem-solve in this new day and age. We set up the fantail awning on Monday, May 16th. The Monday gang handled the project under the direct supervision of **Heather Maron**, who followed the precise instructions prepared by **Katie Kuhl**, the only person who really hand a handle on rigging the awning. The awning apparently went up successfully and all was fine for about a week. **The following Thursday afternoon a freak rain squall came though.** Aside from the fact that it totally screwed up our boottop painting, it created a terrible sag in the awning.

I looked at it and couldn't figure out how to get the sag out. **Rosehn** and **Heather** looked at it and couldn't figure out how to get the sag out. The best brains in the HUSE crew proceeded to attack the rig with wrenches and pliers, and they couldn't get the sag out. The following morning I took another look at it with Heather and had no answers. I knew that the only person who could figure it out was Katie, but Katie is now working in New Orleans, and that's like being on the dark side of the moon as far as I'm concerned. That was when Heather took matters into her own hands. She took her I-Phone thing, or whatever ever it's called and photographed all the attachment points. She sent Katie a text with the images. Katie texted Heather back within minutes to explain that the guy wires had to be shackled to the attachment points as well as the obvious "D" rings. Heather rounded up **Bill Wetterau** and **Doug Streiter**, and gave them Katie's instructions, and in minutes the awning was perfectly rigged, sag gone and riding as well as if Katie had installed it herself. No need for me to catch up with technology when I have smart people working for me.

The Big event of the month was the USS HUSE work week. The HUSE crew arrived on Sunday, May 15th and **George Amandola** had one of the largest turnouts ever. We had put Together an intensive work list that was almost all outside, but Mother Nature had other ideas, and it rained almost every day. Of course, the most important space in any work week is the galley, and this was the first year that George had a real cook aboard in the name of **Don Nicorta** who had served on the experimental DE USS GLOVER AGDE1. Don was supported by **Joe Coletti**, **George Amandola**, and **Wally Bringslid** down on the messdecks. We had planned to continue the deck chipping, so Ron Mazure was supported by Dave Kehrer, Ron Frankosky, Gene Hermanson and Lew Shelton. They made considerable progress on the main deck portside when it wasn't raining, and worked inside chipping the lower levels of B-3 and B-4 when it was raining.



The USS HUSE Work crew under the fantail awning.



Don Bean and Paul Suzdak working the expansion joint.



The "Huse Chippers" hard at work.

There was one big job that wasn't affected by rain. Doug Streiter agreed to tackle the repair of the starboard side of the aft expansion joint in the machine shop. The rubber was torn, and this had been leaking water behind the work bench for years. Apparently the water lay under the bench, where it eventually found its way between a doubler over B-3 and ultimately into a bucket we have hanging in B-3 to catch the incessant drip. This was a big job, because it involved pulling out half that workbench to access the expansion joint. Many hands played a role in this job, but **Doug Streiter, Paul Suzdak and Don Bean** did the lion's share of the work assisted by Super **Dave Mardon**. The first step was getting the cabinet out which took a day of cutting and rigging.

Once it was out, we were faced with the nightmare behind the cabinet. The entire starboard bulkhead was like Swiss cheese, evidence of sixty years of corrosion. **The second day they tackled removing the old rubber expansion joint which meant undoing about 100 bolts with an air impact wrench.** While this was going on **Guy Huse** identified a section of neoprene backed 4" firehose that would serve as the new rubber. He slit the hose and prepped it for its new life. That took care of Wednesday. The next step was punching the 100 holes for the 100 bolts and putting the hose in place. That was accomplished by Thursday morning with the hose bolted in place, caulked and all the nuts reinstalled. That afternoon, the area behind the **cabinet was vacuumed out and the work bench returned to its original position.** **By Friday morning** the job was complete and the shop again functional.



George Amandola, Don Nicorta and Joe Coletti kept the crew fed.

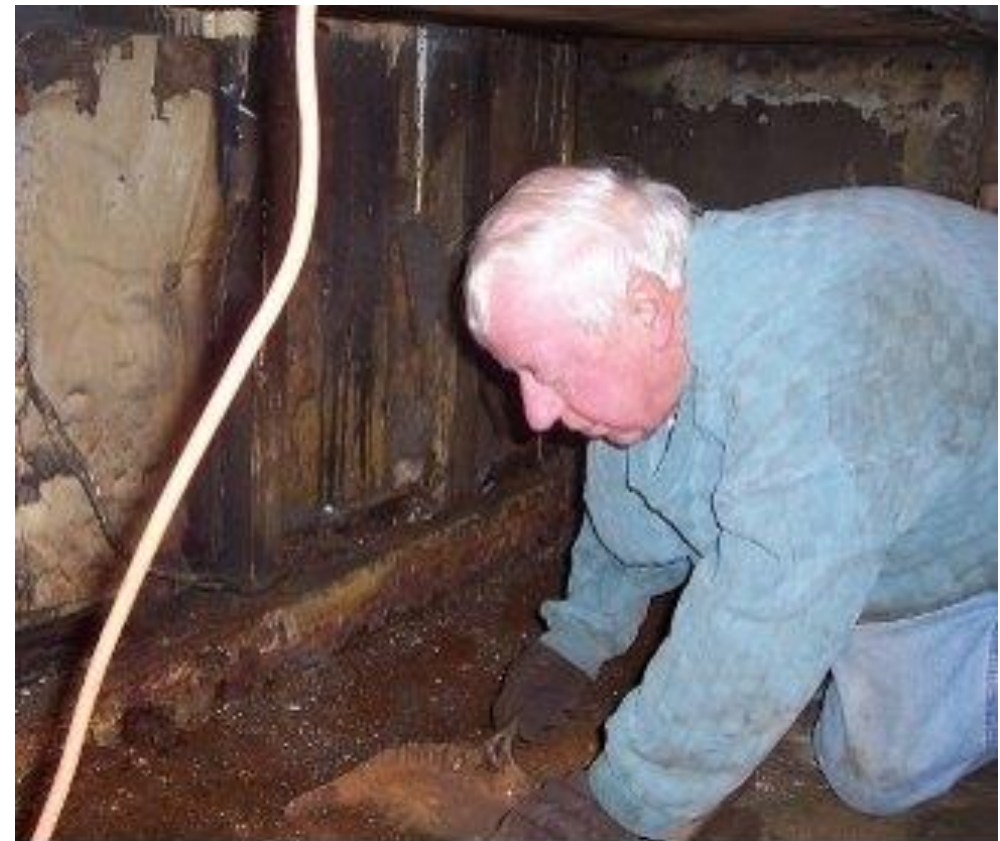


Robin Larner and Jan Swieger sewing a cover for the 40mm ready service racks.

Another job that wasn't affected by weather was the sewing circle. Our resident sailmaker **Angelo Bracco** has been out due to knee surgery, so the word was passed to the HUSE crew to see if anyone knew how to run a sewing machine. **Robin Larner** and her friend **Jan Swieger** reluctantly raised their hands, and they became the sail makers. Over the course of the week they fabricated three new breech covers for the 3" guns, the last ready service ammo cover for 40mm gun 43, and two new flagbag covers. Again, **Guy Huse** came to their aid as the expert grommet puncher and installed number 5 grommets until we ran out. While supporting everyone else, Guy managed to continue making progress on his fire and flushing pump in B-4. After he completed the work on the pump he found the priming tank for the pump and began prepping it for installation. He was supported by **Anthony Amandola** and **Stan Suzdak** who completed the installation on the battery charging light in B-4 and assisted with various electrical repairs over the course of the week. Guy also ordered the grommet tools that we were missing and another gross of number five grommets.



Ron Frankosky scaling in B-4.



Don Bean cleans out under that machine shop work bench.

It was the boottop crew that had the toughest time of it. We had hoped to make some serious progress on the starboard boottop, but the rain washed us out. Gunner's mate Bob Kehrer was in charge of the crew, but it was raining so hard Monday, we scrubbed the boottop and he went to work cleaning out the muffler room. His crew consisted of Jeff Robbins, Jaye Robbins, Jeff Kehrer, Brandon Eisley and Joe Delfoe. Monday they pulled the paint float around and pulled it back. Tuesday was a total washout, so they did a complete clean out of the muffler room, restowed all the steel, moved a lot of excess material to B-2, and made room so we could stow the podium and folding chairs in the muffler space. Now we don't have to move them up and down ladders for ceremonies. Wednesday they moved the float back around and got half a day in scaling and corrosealing the boottop with **Dave Kehrer** and **Ron Frankosky** on the float. Thursday dawned as a decent day and they went back over the side with **Brandon Easley, Dave Kehrer** and **Jeff Robbins** taking turns on the float. That afternoon, they were almost as far forward as gun 2 when it began to sprinkle. I looked at weather radar and told them to stay down, that it looked like one small patch that would be over us in ten minutes. The ten minute part of my forecast proved correct, but as soon as I told them to stay down, the sky opened up with the most incredible downpour I have seen in years. Mother Nature gave us one last kick in the teeth, though that's not how we phrased it at the time. We had no choice but to secure the operation and haul the float aft to the pilot ladder in the middle of the torrent. That ended side painting for that week.

As always, Roland Robbins and Bill Meehan handled the paint locker. Monday they cleaned the paint locker and got the brushes ready, but they really didn't have much to do all week. They had it easier than anybody. To maintain good order and sanitation, George assigned **Derwent Cartmell, Ernie Aeschilman** and **Jim Larnner** as compartment and head cleaners. As always, I think in his own quiet way, Ernie outworked everyone. Every time I saw him he was sweeping, dusting, wiping or scrubbing. He spent two days cleaning in the aft machinery spaces and did a bang up job cleaning behind the chippers.

The local maintenance crew has kept busy in preparation for moving the accommodation ladder back to its original position on the port side amidships. Doug Tanner, Dave Mardon, Tim Benner, Gene Jackey and Clark Farnsworth have been preparing a new chock that will be needed on the port side. The original was removed several years ago and is now needed in conjunction with the accom ladder relocation. The next steps will be relocating the platform hinges and the davit to support the ladder and then we should be good to get it back to original. **Rocky** has been continuing his work on the motor whaleboat and he should have it ready in early June for launching. We'll plan to keep it moored aft as we have done in the past ten years until the ladder relocation is complete. Tour guide **Joe Delberta** has been making a significant contribution to maintenance. After completing his bachelor's degree, he decided it was time to learn a trade and has opted to go to welding school. With that in mind he started volunteering with the shipfitters and in a month's time has become a credible welder fitter. He assisted with the completion of the port main deckhouse repair and has fabricated several pieces on his own.



Colonie High students work on the SLATER. Nick Malatesta replacing the TBL motor-generator's motor controller's overloads.



The Key Bank "Neighbors Make a Difference"

Once again, Key Bank sent down a crew of volunteers during their annual "Neighbors Make a Difference Day." The Key crew arrived in the early afternoon and was split into three groups: ship cleaning, gardening and picnic table dismantling. They got right to work with the cleaning crew attacking the aft berthing areas that needed some attention after the Michigan and Huse work parties. Decks were swept, bunks and bedding tidied up and the compartments generally straightened up. On shore two old picnic tables were quickly dismantled and hauled away. The gardeners trimmed grass and weeds around the Victory Garden and then set about preparing the garden for spring cleaning. After an hour of hard work everyone took a break to tour the ship. After a group photo it was back to work. The cleaning crew made such quick work of the aft spaces we moved them to the forward areas of the ship where they cleaned bulkheads and straightened bunks on the messdeck and forward bunk room. We thank Key Bank for their continued help and support.

We are one step closer to an honor few historic properties achieve. On Tuesday, May 24th I flew to Washington, D.C. to testify before the National Landmarks Committee as part of the process of gaining this status for USS SLATER. **Eric Rivet** began working on the application process several years ago, which first had to work its way up through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation before being forwarded to the National Landmarks Committee in Washington, D.C. The Committee meets twice a year to review properties for Landmark Status, and we received notification of our review much sooner than we had anticipated. Heather Maron worked up the power point presentation, and Greg Krawczyk, veteran of hundreds of military briefings agreed to make the presentation. I stayed on hand to answer questions. Our presentation was well-received and the Committee unanimously recommended to the Department of the Interior that we be granted Landmark status. It should be noted that several members of the committee thanked the SLATER volunteers who have worked so hard for so long to preserve this piece of history. This, coupled with the Absolute Charter we recently were granted from the New York State Department of Education Regents, give SLATER as much prestige as a New York State Museum can have short of actual Museum accreditation. The education department continually looks for ways to reach more people in more places.



Dolores Ferrer and tour guide Vincent Knuth working in "Nora's Garden".



Rob Nielsen show's off a garden sign Dave Marden found.

Veteran tour guide Jim Kuba is one to push those limits in creative ways. Every Sunday, before Jim starts his tour guide watch, he walks through downtown Albany. He started a daily walking program because of Weight Watchers and tries to walk a 5K every day. This year, Jim decided to invite fellow members to join him on his routine Sunday walk, starting from the SLATER parking lot. Twenty-five fellow members decided to join him, and a few stayed after for a tour of the ship. Jim is happy to accommodate SLATER visitors with a free value-added walking tour of Albany. These need to be scheduled on a case-by-case basis. You can contact the SLATER office to make arrangements. honor of Frank Slater's mom, Nora, is now thriving. Master Gardener Delores Ferrer recruited two of our tour guides, Rob Nielsen and Vincent Knuth, and they really dug in. Our garden boasts cucumbers, peas, tomatoes, herbs, onions, lettuce, and sweet peppers. The perimeter of the entire green space has day lilies and walking Egyptian onions on one side and Morning Glory vines sprouting on the other. The idea with the vines is to cover the chain-link fence, providing a more serene space. To support the history and lessons of the Home Front during World War II, you can choose from some new items in the Ship's Store. Of the many new items, two new books are Lily's Victory Garden and Rebekkah's Journey. Each tells the story of the issues facing civilians during the war. Lily helps an older couple in her town with the loss of their son in the war, through a victory garden, and Rebekkah is one of the 1,000 European refugees invited by President Roosevelt to relocate in Upstate New York. Teachers will love to make these new additions to their classroom libraries.

The overnight encampments have really kept us hopping. Every Friday and Saturday evening since the start of the season, groups have stayed on board to enjoy a tour, meals, educational programming, free time onboard the ship, and then sacking out in the same bunks that SLATER's Bluejackets slept in. We hosted a total of 188 campers for the month of May! Groups included Unity Christian Reformed Church Cadets from Hawthorne, NJ, Boy Scouts from Hudson Valley Council in Newburgh, the Twin Rivers Council in Albany, the Revolutionary Trails Council in Utica, the Baden-Powell Council from Binghamton and Sea Scouts Ship 25 from Etna, NY. **May was a busy time for school group tours.** In one day, the SLATER guides provided tours to three separate groups of 50, 65, and 42 visitors and that was immediately following the day of 87 students in a single group. SLATER guides provided tours to a total of 478 visitors from various schools. When they hear the call, the guides are also on hand to host ship's reunions. The USS KIRKPATRICK DE318 held its ship's reunion onboard the SLATER during which time we enjoyed talking with the veterans and their families.



Les Beauchaine (USS FORMOE DE509) explains the workings of a depth charge.



Tour guides Les Beauchaine, Max Dumicich, Julianne Madsen and Rob Nielsen.

A huge thank you goes out to **Dennis Nagi, Alan Fox, Ken Kaskoun, Glenn Harrison, Joe Burke, Bob Dawson, Bill Scharoun, Chris Lecce, Tom McLaughlin, Herb Marlow, Chuck Marshall, Bob Bull, Russ Ferrer, Steve Long, Joe Delberta, Grant Hack, Nelson Potter, Chuck Teal, Paul Guarnieri, Les Beauchaine, Leo Baehler, Jim Kuba, Harold Grimm, Bill Goralski, Mark Gardiner, Patrick Whitford, Matt Tolman, Mike Paulmeno, Rob Nielsen, Julianne Madsen, Vincent Knuth, and Max Dumicich.** We know that **Jack Madden** and **Floyd Hunt** are just itching to come back, and, boy, are we waiting! Where else can you have so much fun at work? If you are interested in joining our current force of tour guides and working with scouts or the general public, contact **Linda Wruck**, our Education Coordinator, to schedule an interview. **This month we also participated in the Hudson Valley Heritage Weekend with half price admissions.** We finished the month with Memorial Day weekend. On Monday, May 30th we commemorated the event with our annual ceremony. **Steve Long** was our Master of Ceremonies and CDR **Earle Flatt** our Chaplain .

Ken Kaskoun led the color guard through the ritual that has become a hallmark of our events. It was great to see Dick Walker back as part of the color guard following his knee surgery. **Erik Collin** fired the traditional three volleys from number 3 3" gun to remember our servicemen lost in the line of duty and the veterans who survived. Our thanks to **Glenn Harrison** for his work in organizing the ceremony. What made the day very special for us was a visit by a few of the crew of the current USS ALBANY SSN753. Our own **Adrian Daniels** brought the group aboard. Led by their skipper Commander **Thomas Buchanan**, the crew split into deck and engine tours and got an up close and personal look at ASW technology of seventy years ago.

Finally, this is getting to be a much too regular occurrence, as the World War II generation ages. We lost another of our important SLATER supporters this month. **Dick Breil** a former WWII Coastie off the USS SELLSTROM DE255 crossed the bar on May 19th. Dick was former president of the Michigan Chapter of DESA and a DESA Director. Dick was the driving force behind the Michigan Chapter work weeks, and brought the first crew to the ship back in 1998 when we had no heat, running water and were running on generator power. Conditions were about as primitive as they could get. Dick's foresight in organizing the first work week aboard the SLATER has left an incredible legacy of progress by his Michigan shipmates and the other groups that have come to work aboard SLATER. It gave the local volunteers the true sense that they are not alone. To Dick and all who have gone before, fair winds and following seas.

See you next month

