



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Memorial Day aboard USS SLATER with Cub Scout Packs 18 & 72 and Troop 33 from the Capital Region.

This month we salute the long distance volunteers, as May has become the traditional month when the out-of-towners come from all over the country to help us out. In fact, this was one of our most productive months ever. On Sunday May 1st, **Ron Zarem** reported aboard with his team. Age, illness, and other commitments reduced the group to twelve people this year but, working with our local volunteers, they had an outstanding week.



The Michigan Chapter work crew with Tim's favorite, Ron Zarem.

"Smitty" once again planned the menu, did all the shopping, and turned out three meals a day for a solid week. The group leader, Ron, assisted him throughout the week.

There was a lot of activity in B-3 over the course of the week. Karl Herchenroder needle-gunned and painted sixteen crankcase covers. **Stan Dickstein** painted six valve handles, degreased the lube oil purifiers, and cleaned the stems of the sump tank level indicators. In addition, Stan also readied half of the inboard base of the inboard engine, in preparation for painting. **Gary Dieckman** degreased the rest of the base and crankcase of both sides of the inboard main engine #4, and the inboard side of the outboard main engine, #3. Then he spray-painted all the degreased surfaces of both engines, including the purifiers and the stems of the tank indicators. Gary also removed and disassembled the number boards for both sump level indicators, and removed them offsite for restoration. Finally, he replaced the crankcase covers Karl had painted.



Chief Ed Wakeman with his restored instrument panel.

Chief Ed Wakeman was also assigned to B-3. His assignment was the restoration of the gauge board for the number four main engine. Using parts salvaged off LSM-45 many years ago, he did a magnificent job of restoring the board, making it look factory new.

Topside, Ron Mazure, one of our Monday regulars, split his week scaling the decks when it wasn't raining and helping Gary Sheedy scale in the

shipfitter shop when he got rained out. Firecontrolmen **"Michigan" Dick Walker** and **Mike Marko** got the flying bridge squared away, the lookout chairs put back together, and the director uncovered. But, Walker seemed to spend way too much time hanging around the galley. Mike, who is one of our volunteer guides, took time out from helping Walker for his regular duty on Wednesday.

Guy Huse continued his work, taking Erik Collin's place as our ordnance man. He spent the week lubricating all the 3" and 40mm mounts. When that task was completed, he got an assist from Stan Dickstein as they pulled the breech off of the three-inch practice loading machine, in an effort to get that breech block operational.



Paul Guarneiri leading another group of visitors out of the messdeck.

Laird Confer, and his grandson Josh Mauer, had a critical assignment. Ed Zajkowski had been planning for almost a year to bring up a team of welders to replace the wasted waterway tie down flatbar. The origins of this go back to our drydocking, and the fact that Ed drew up the original plans for the camouflage, and naturally felt an intense desire to keep it looking as good as possible. While we were in the

shipyard he noted that water runoff from the main deck had the potential to streak the sides in the places where the flatbar had wasted away. As we did not have the time to address this in the shipyard, we did a lot of temporary patching with Red Hand Epoxy. But Ed never lost his desire to do a permanent repair, and he put together a handpicked team to do the job.

However, the first step of the process was removing all the old wasted flatbar. Laird and Josh brought up their own plasma cutter, and spent the weekend removing all the wasted flatbar from the waterways. This work set Ed Zajkowski's repair project three weeks ahead. Josh was the only one in the crew agile enough to work under the depth charge projectors and roller loader racks, where the corrosion was the worst. Kudos to this recently discharged Air Force veteran.

Ron Zarem, the guy who organized the whole event, helped out wherever needed. He worked in the galley with Smitty, kept the messdecks tidy, helped Ed on his gauge board, and kept the tailgate party going at night. It's been a long time coming, but after hanging around for 19 years, I've finally grown so fond of Ron that this year he's my favorite. The fact that he is on our Board of Trustees, serving with the Audit Committee, did not influence this choice at all.

The bunks were still warm when Ed Zajkowski arrived on Friday to scope out the work for his project. For Ed, he was back in the shipyard.



Ed Zajkowski's welding team.

It rained all the way up Friday, but when he got aboard, he walked down and marked all 600' of water way flat bar, determining that about 147' would need replacement. The work of Laird and Josh gave them a good head start. Saturday morning, we off-loaded 400' of 1/4" x 2" steel flatbar that Ed had

gotten donated. It was cut into 10' lengths. Home in his garage, Ed had drilled holes in 300', every 6 inches. So he drilled 600 pilot holes, 600 9/16" holes and, smoothed out each hole on both sides, and then he primed each hole.

Doug Tanner made a phone call, and got his friends at Petrochem, Jeff Genovese and Jack Dougherty, to supply two diesel welding machines for the project. When they needed to bend some steel for scuppers on short notice, Doug made a call to **Steve Barber at Port Welding**. They delivered the pieces half an hour later. That Saturday, the locals continued prep work, getting items out of the way of work, grinding, and fabricating metal pieces to replace rotted metal.



Three welders, no waiting. Ed's welder friends from the Limerick Nuclear Power Plant tackle our waterway problems.

Sunday, his crew arrived. The welders, Ed's coworkers from the Limerick nuclear power plant, both active employees and retired, were **Rick Espenshade, Ed Schlegel, Joe Zygmunt and Bob Lally. Ron Prest, Thomas Scian, Wayne White, Steve Whynot, Steve Klauck and Gene Byers** supported them. Work started Monday, May 9th, right on schedule. Reveille at 0600, breakfast finished by 0630, morning meeting at 0645, and

then welders welding and grinders grinding by 0700. The weather was finally fantastic, warm, and sunny. The eleven of them were all working as a well-coordinated team.



Keep those life jackets on, boys.

scuppers were fabricated and welded in. As of early afternoon, 80% of the waterway bar was finished. Two men then started to clean the new metal and prime it.

As in the shipyard, Ed did the cooking and topped it off with an 8-pound boneless pork loin, using his daughter's recipe, on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning, the four welders worked to noon, and then headed for home. They were beyond exceptional, with no breaks, 11 hour days, hot sun, etc. The quality of craftsmanship is above expectations.



The 2016 USS HUSE Assn. work crew.

Tuesday, one of the diesel weld machines threw its fan belt.

Thanks to a call by **Doug Tanner**, by 0800 that day, Petrochem had a replacement in and running. Our welders added an old ship's AC machine and, with that online, we were able to have all 4 welders welding. Lunch was lasagna, provided by DEHM Board President **Tony Esposito**. We replaced 147 linear feet of flatbar, so welding both sides amounted to 294 feet of welding. Two

The following Sunday, for the 14th year, volunteers from the USS HUSE DE-145 Reunion Association reported aboard for their work week. Everyone knows that a successful workweek is dependent on a successful galley crew. For this week, Albany Fire Department Battalion Chief **Dave Newton** volunteered to cook. He was assisted by group organizer **George Amandola**, and together they kept the whole crew well-fed and happy.



Some of the HUSE Assn. chippers, Robin Larner, Jan Schweiger and Gail Esker, at work.

Wally Bringslid was on again to serve as messcook, messdeck master at arms, and compartment cleaner. **Bill Meehan** and **Roland Robbins** took care of the paint locker.

The crew broke up into teams. The chippers, **Gail Esker**, **Sharon Roberts**, **Jan Schweiger**, and **Robin Larner** spent the week scaling and priming the fo'c'sle with needle scalers and grinders. **Joe Delfoe**, **Brandon Easley** and **Anthony Amandola** got the dirty job. They were tasked with setting up scaffolding on the main deck under 20mm gun tub 24, as well as scaling, priming, and painting the underside of the tub. They came out black-faced, but they managed to complete the task by Wednesday at noon.



Anthony Amandola priming the pilothouse bulwark during the HUSE Assn. work week.

Ron Frankosky, who lays floors for a living, was tasked with replacing the vinyl tiles in the shore head. This involved pulling the commode, molding, and tile, laying down a new layer of plywood, putting down a solid piece of vinyl, and replacing the molding and commode. He was under the gun to have this completed by the time we opened to the public on Wednesday morning, a deadline he successfully accomplished. The

1MC announcement, "The shore head has reopened for business," was greeted with cheers from the crew, especially the women crew members. Ron then joined the women on the fo'c'sle, chipping and priming for the rest of the week.

Gaye Phipps, Marcia Haas, and Jeff Robbins finished up Ed Zajkowski's project by coating all the new waterway flatbar with another coat of primer, and then topcoating it all with deck gray. Then, they turned their attention to the 28 40mm ammunition cans scattered about the main deck, and sanded and painted all of them. **Hank Ward** spent the week down in B-3, cleaning main engine number three. He must have done a great job, because **Karl Herchenroder** didn't want to let him go home.

Guy Huse and Stan Dickstein were back, working on the ordnance. Their first task was getting the loading machine back together, which they accomplished handily, and the breech is now operational. Working around the ship, by Friday morning, all three 3"-50s could be moved in azimuth and elevation. They also did some work on gun 22, a 20mm, that had some weld build-up in the channel where the magazine seats. Grinding that out allowed the magazine drum to seat properly.



Super Dave Mardon watching Chief Farnsworth and Doug Tanner do lathe work.

The big project was to begin the process of replacing the rubber in the amidships expansion joint. Doug Streiter, Sue Streiter, and Paul Suzdak had worked on the joint a few years earlier, while working with **Earl Herchenroder, Gene Jackey, and Super Dave Mardon.** Under **Doug Tanner's** supervision, they began the ripout of the old rubber. The first part of the process was the removal of the forward half of the workbench by Doug, with

liberal use of an acetylene torch. Though it's doubtful Doug would ever use the word "liberal" to describe anything he did. The bench and drawers were chopped into three pieces, and hauled out on deck so we could access the starboard section of the expansion joint. The next step was removal of the rubber. That required breaking loose 700 rusty nuts and bolts that hold the retaining bar against the rubber. Susie was tasked with

scaling, shining, priming, and tagging all the retaining bars, so we would know how it went back together. The fixed faces of all the flanges also had to be scaled and cleaned before the new rubber could be bolted in place.



The SLATER guides got a tour of the tugboat RED HOOK.

Their departure left Doug Tanner and his crew to pick up the pieces. The expansion joint was wide open for about a week, before Doug could get back to start installing the rubber. What is amazing is that we had no rain for the whole time the joint was open. As soon as Doug got the rubber cut and set in place, it rained. Doug, Karl, Dave, Gene, and Clark spent the remainder of the month, two days a week, working in some pretty oppressive heat,

getting the new rubber fitted and bolted in place. Seven hundred holes had to be drilled in the rubber, and 700 nuts, bolts, and washers had to be replaced.



Thomas Scian cleaning and scaling where the machine shop work bench used to be.

While all this was going on, our regular crew completed the rebuild of the paint float, got the whaleboat ready to go back into the water, continued installation of the LP air compressor in the forward engine room, continued the restoration of the shipfitter shop, steering engine room, and insulated the laundry. And, our dedicated, excellent, interpretative crew continued to reap praise from our visitors for their

knowledge and presentation of the history of our USS SLATER.

We have two passing's to report this month. Michigan volunteer, Rush Mellinger (DE-147), crossed the bar. Rush participated in the first Michigan Field Week aboard USS SLATER in October 1998, when six members of the Michigan Chapter of DESA journeyed east to begin a tradition that continues to this day. Rush continued to participate until health issues forced him to stop coming, but we haven't forgotten the part he played in getting us going. It was the beginning of a beautiful relationship, between Michigan DESA and USS SLATER.



Master Chief Gunner's Mate Dave Floyd.

Finally, we lost Master Chief Gunner's Mate Dave Floyd this month. Dave was active with the NYS Naval Militia and was heavily involved when SLATER first came to Albany in 1997. He was active with us until October 2004, when we piped him over the side in full dress blues. He helped with every aspect of the operation, from tour guiding, line handling, and ordnance maintenance. He went into the Navy at 16, and served in the old Battleship WYOMING that was serving as a gunnery training ship. He then served in USS BELKNAP DD-251, in the Atlantic. She was pressed back into destroyer service as part of the first ASW hunter-killer groups. The group got a Presidential Unit Citation for

sinking so many U-boats. David was a very proud veteran of the US Navy, retiring after 21 years with the rank of Master Chief. Hand salute to both these veterans.

Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

See you next month.