

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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*A cold wind has started to blow down the Hudson, warning us that it's time to think about getting ready for winter. The crew is working to complete the outside painting projects and get the ship ready for the cold months ahead.*

**The Michigan DESA crew spent a week with us beginning September 19th.** Headed by Skipper Dick Breil DE-255 and Ron Zarem DE-148, the group included Steve Borovich DE-532, Rush Mellinger DE-147, Dick Walker DE-359, Earl Moorhouse WDE-488, Edward Sherer DE-167, John Shockey DE-217, Cook Bill Kramer DE-366 and Dave Marsh. Joining them were Bob Walker; Dick's son, CAPDESA Co-Chairman Bob Donlon DE-419 and his friend Ron Mazure. They were as productive as usual. The work they completed included scraping, sanding, degreasing and masking the forward three-inch guns for painting. They also completely scaled and prepped the aft three-inch gun. This gun has been hiding under a



**Michigan DESA and Albany Joint Work Crew Assembled on fantail**



**Tim Rizzuto assessing Aft 3" 50 cal gun.**

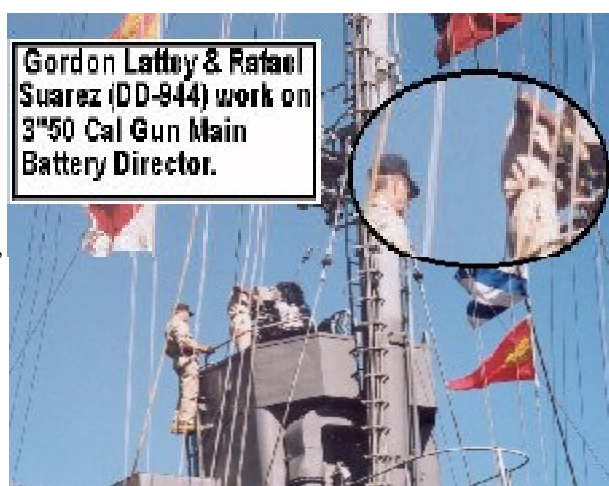
canvas cover since the ship came to Albany and nobody except those who saw the gun can appreciate what an effort this was. There was a reason gun- three was under cover. It was a peeling, rusted mess. In four days of chipping, the crew prepped it to look like new. It rained on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, but that didn't get the crew out of any work. We rigged the canvas cover to form a tent over the gun tub, and they kept on working under cover. They put Corroseal on the gun Thursday, and Friday Ron Zarem sprayed it out as well as the fantail 20mm tubs.



**Aft 3" 50 cal gun after prime coat**

**Tom Moore got the forward guns sprayed out with primer and topcoat and they all look like new.** The Michigan gang also worked on the main battery director. They helped Rafael Suarez DD-944 finish scaling it, and they got the firecontrol radar shack cleaned out and looking presentable. They did a lot of cleaning in the maindeck passageways, gave a lot of tours, and also sold a thousand dollars worth of Jeep raffle tickets while they were in town.

They are promising to come back in May with forty men. We promised Bill Kramer we'd have all the grills working and running water in the galley. We have all winter to get it straight. He left us a list of ten improvements he'd like to see made in the galley before they return. These include sink drain, running water, a refrigerator and repairs to the grills and ovens. Item ten was a "Redhead in a French Outfit to wipe his brow when needed." so you guys from Michigan better start figuring who's going to dye their hair red and wear the French outfit.



**Gordon Lattey & Rafael Suarez (DD-944) work on 3"50 Cal Gun Main Battery Director.**



**Battle Station helmets drying on the fantail after painting by Key Bank Volunteers.**

**An unexpected source of support came from Key Financial Group.** They organized a community workday for their employees, and SLATER was one of five sites chosen to benefit. Jim Cole organized the effort, and nineteen white-collar workers dressed down and reported aboard to work. They split up into four crews. The first group vacuumed and primed the deck up on the open bridge. A second group repainted the aft liferafts and supports. A third group scaled and primed the decks on 20mm gun tubs 24 and 25 amidships. A fourth group did repainted the line reels on the 01 level aft, painted helmets, and trim work on the 40mm guns. It was a great experience for all, and we hope they come back in the spring.

**Before the snow flies, we plan to complete the painting projects.** This week we hope to put the topcoat on the flying bridge and paint the deck gray. That will complete the project except for fabricating the windshield and detailing the instrumentation, which Jerry Jones AO-144 and Don Bulger AO-68 can do at their leisure over the winter. The sky lookout chairs have been installed. We're looking for a donation of four

old 7x50 binocular sets to complete them. Everyone has been really impressed with the quality of the work up there, especially those who saw it before. We cut the ready service lockers of the deck aft of gun one to fix any holes in the deck. Dick Smith DE-5, Earl Gillette DE-441 and Dutch Hannmann DE-530 have been working on those. We want to finish them and the hedgehog projector by the end of the month.

**Gordon Lattey and Andrew Sandalakis have been chipping away on the 01 level forward around gun 2.** We should have that area Corrosealed and primed by the end of the month, including those ready service lockers. There's a lot of overhead under the 02 level 20mm gun that makes it tough. Andy is one of our new volunteers. He previously served in the Greek Air Force and you guessed it - he can read those Greek Tags like a charm! Maybe we will be able to understand what's going on around here a little better thanks to Andy!

**Finally, Chris Fedden DD-711 sprayed out topcoat on gun three and the gun tub and painted the deck.** We got gun three's ready service lockers welded down, and put the helmet racks back in place. We're also putting the IMC speakers back in the gun tubs. Another surprise for Barry. Speaking of whom, the electrical gang has several projects going. The running lights have been completed, and they are now doing the electrical support on several other important projects. They are installing the power supply and control circuits for the heating system. Also, the high water alarm on the sewer system, so we'll have more warning to pump the tank before we have a couple inches of sewage on the deck in C-201L. They are also busy at work doing the electrical installation in the spaces that we will be restoring this winter. They have completed the incandescent lighting repairs in the Captain's Cabin, Radio Central and CIC. Former soldier and present paralegal Mike Gurney has become a particularly valuable asset. He took the electrician's mate training manual home and read it cover to cover. His basic attitude seems to be, "If sailors can figure it out, how hard can it be?"

**Which leads us to plumbing and heating.** Some people would have considered this the headline news story, but on a recent date that we failed to record due to its lack of significance for most of us, Nancy Buxton used a new porcelain commode on the ship and flushed it for the first time. The wastewater then traveled down a pipe to a fuel tank that was converted for waste storage. Nancy and all the women involved with the project have felt a special sense of gratitude to Coast Guard Damage Controlman Doug Tanner and his crew from GE who made this possible. We still have to complete



the float switch and weld the coupler on the main deck pump out connection, but the system is essentially complete. It's a 1,200-gallon tank, and at a gallon a flush, we have a little time. Nine out of ten women polled prefer a porcelain commode to the Portajohn. Thank you Doug. Doug says it was no problem. "If a Navy guy could figure it out, how hard can it be?" Who is going to break the news to Nancy and the rest of the girls that in about two weeks we have to drain down the system for the winter? There'll be mutiny in the air.

**There may also be some heat in the air.** Red Newell, another ex GI, is well along with the installation of the heating system He and Bill Schroder along with the rest of the crew from Plumbers and Pipefitters' Local 7, have the boiler and fuel tank in place and the plumbing run started to the forward supply fan room. The Local 7 apprentices are working on the job Monday nights. We hope to have it up and running by the end of November.

**On Slater's Social Scene, Claire Oesterreich hosted the Fall "get-together-before-the-snow-flies" buffet for the old volunteer gang.** They turned out in full force along with wives (& husbands) to tackle a 160 lb. roasted pig along with the other food. Teddy Prager DE-239 and his group of "Original" Slater Volunteers traveled north to share the day with us and meet a lot of the "New Kids on the Ship" who have been continuing the work they started and carried on for four years in Manhattan. Pat Perrella hoisted out the blue & white checkered tablecloth to make them feel right at home & we think we broke the NYC record for "most people in the Wardroom at one time". Actually, the wind moved everyone right into the shelter of the ship and the forward Crews and mess decks made a cozy setting. All those tables and benches so lovingly restored by Ray Lammers APD-81 were finally "christened" in proper fashion. John McCoy from Manhattan came back on Sunday and joined in with the regular work-crew. Les Beauchaine DE-509, our four day a week man, then transported him to catch his train in real style in the SLATER "Shore Patrol" Jeep.



**Ted Prager (DE-239) "Original" Slater Volunteer visits with Leo Baehler (DE-182) during Volunteer Party. Ted is currently part of the INTREPID team and Leo is a summer tour-guide & also volunteered while the Slater was in New York City.**

Our present plans are to run our last tour day of the season, Sunday November 28, to take advantage of the Thanksgiving Holidays. We will plan to move the ship back to Rensselaer the following week. We are trying to arrange for a 440 volt-shore hookup on the other side to stay off the generator this winter. We will pull than camels and break up the mooring right after the ship is moved. Although we haven't given you a recent "Camel Report" they appear to be floating "high & dry" after the spring infusion of Styrofoam.

We have applied for a grant to develop the mooring dolphins , to replace the camels and install the ice deflection system. We have contracted with engineering and have received the preliminary design. Hal Hatfield, Dave Crandall and Barb Higbee have put their heads together on this one and have put in a tremendous amount of effort following through and staying on top of the process. We are in the process of submitting it to the Corps of Engineers for approval. The Board has approved the expenditure of funds to develop the detailed design so that we'll be ready to go forward with construction if the grant is approved. That should make this winter the last year we will have to leave Albany. No word yet on the other grants. It doesn't look like we'll get the dry-docking funded this go round, but we will resubmit it during the next round of grant applications. We should hear about the grant for the whaleboat and the aft crew's quarters in December.

**As promised in the last few SIGNALS , we have a few speciality items we will supply from the Ships' Store by Mail Order for your Holiday purchasing.**

**Item #1 - White 100% cotton golf shirt with embroidered SLATER logo -Sizes S-M-L-XL - \$24.00**

**Item #2 - Signed "FIRST EDITION" copies - "The BUCKLEY CLASS Destroyer Escorts" by Bruce Hampton Franklin.** This book is a "must have" for all DE enthusiasts. 210 pages with complete descriptions and photos of each Buckley Class Destroyer Escort along with a detailed history of the DE program and evolution as a WW II fighting ship. - \$40.00

**Item #3 - Navy Blue DE-766 Baseball Cap (Winter Weight) - the classic standard cap to add those collectors pins & patches. Wear one of these to show your pride in Albany's own Destroyer Escort. One size fits all - \$16.25**

**Item #4- Ceramic white coffee mug with blue Slater Logo** - Start your day with a "toast" to the USS SLATER DE-766 with this sturdy mug. Microwaveable & tested to last through many cups of the Slater Crews' favorite beverage. - \$5.50

**Item #5 -Albany's own special video - DE Day Memorial Observance - 19 June 1999**. This 2 hour video features the entire program including the performance by Troy's Uncle Sam Chorus, the late DESA Executive Director Ralph F. Freese's memorable address followed by the floral tribute to fallen comrades by the CAPDESA members. Following the ceremony you will travel around the USS SLATER on a guided one-hour tour with Tim Rizzuto. - \$16.00

**Item #6 -U.S.S. SLATER (DE-766) HOMECOMING Cassette tape** - This unique tape features SLATER Plankowner Marvin Cash's guitar & vocal rendition of his original poem written to commemorate the return of the ship to the USA in 1993. Side 2 features "The History of SLATER" as read by Mr. Cash . The jacket cover has a B & W photo of the Ship during WW II. - \$10.00

To Order : Please send a check to the address on the newsletter for the total amount plus \$4.00 for shipping & handling. The Slater Angels (and Elves) will ship to you "ON THE DOUBLE". (Supplies are limited - first come - first served)

**You may have noticed that this is a different address** - Yes, it's true and Bill Bantz, President of Mercer Companies is bringing us right along with him into the "High Tech " world of "Electronic Communications". Between this and our Slater Year 2000 "Pin-Up" Calendars we should easily meet the Y2K challenge!

**We have an ambitious work plan for the winter.** We will start up in the pilothouse and try to restore all the spaces above the main deck including the sea cabin, CIC, radio central, the captain's inport cabin, forward Officers' country (three more staterooms and the head), the passageways, machinshop, engineers office, storeroom. Aft crew's washroom, aft crew's head, the DC locker, 40mm clippingroom, emergency radioroom and the aft cross passageway. If we get all that done we'll tackle sonar control and the firecontrol radar room up by the flying bridge.

**Lots of work is also going on behind the scenes and will continue through the Winter.** Joanne McFadden has a full schedule of articles prepared for local and national publications. She is also working closely with radio and television networks to publicize all the special events that are taking place on SLATER's Historic decks. From the mail that is being received the WORD is getting around that SLATER is providing the platform of it's mission as a museum dedicated to the heritage of the DE Sailor. Nancy Buxton is planning to upgrade her Educational Program to offer some advanced topics for students such as the navigational instrumentation of the Bridge. Pat Perrella finally completed the mailing to the Destroyer Escort Commanders Organization and Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings very graciously signed all 150 copies along with Skipper Frank J. Lasch. The response has been very gratifying and several past DE Commanders have written and sent checks towards SLATER's Endowment Fund. **We also had the honor of a visit by Cmdr. George W. Egan and his wife Ruth from Montecito, CA.** Cmdr. Egan's ships were the ACREE DE-167 and BARON DE-166 . After a tour of SLATER, Frank Lasch took them on a tour of Albany and discussed a possible 2001 Albany DECO Reunion.



**Cmdr & Mrs George W. Egan - USS ACREE (DE-167) and USS BARON (DE-166) visit SLATER with Albany DEHF Skipper Frank J. Lasch, Esq.**

**Finally, you all should brace yourselves.** Included with the November SLATER SIGNALS will be my annual tear stained "Winter Fund" appeal letter. That's the money we need to keep the restoration going after we pull up the gangway and lose our ticket revenue. Our new gimmick is that contributors at the Century level will receive the new "SLATER Pin-Up Girls Calendar"! Not to be outdone the guys have been posing for their "SLATER Chipper-Dales Calendar"! (Don't worry, we promise we won't let any of these guys take their shirts off.) We know you'll be back NEXT month TO HEAR ALL ABOUT THIS ONE! **See you next month!**