

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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USS SLATER DE-766
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We've just gotten through our DE Day Ceremony, the side painting is well underway and work continues in the aft head. Tours and Reunion Groups are arriving daily. Summer is upon us.

The big news this month is the progress on the hull painting. We're halfway into the eight weeks, the job is not quite half done, but the good news is that the money's not quite half-gone either. The core paint crew from National Surface Prep, Kevin, Chris, Jim and Joe have become part of our crew. We started on the starboard quarter and have worked our way around the fantail and up the port side, working off staging rigged on two 8 by 20 ft. steel flexi-floats. Working four ten-hour days so as not to interfere with visitors, the plan has been to use the vacuum-shrouded needle guns to chip Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and paint on Thursday to be quieter for four days.

In reality, rain has kind of blown the plan to hell, but we're not too far behind. Things went pretty well the first two weeks. We scaled and got two coats of primer on the whole quarter and transom. Our



benefactors at **Albany Water Department** sent the crane down and we set the flexi-float between the camels. We got the section between the camels scaled in three days. Then it never stopped raining. We were stuck waiting for it to get dry enough to prime and paint the section between the camels. The rumor started going around that according to the forecast, by the time it stopped raining, it would be cold enough to start snowing again.

The plan had been to bolt the two camels together for additional stability for rigging the staging to do the high bow section. But with only one float now available, the **Albany Naval Reservists** pulled it

around the stern up the starboard side, and down the port bow, on a sunny Sunday, so it was waiting for the paint crew on Monday. They went to work, but the forward third of the ship has taken about two weeks to scale. When the rain came, they donned rain suits and rigged a tarp. They kept going. But you can't paint in the rain. The crew continued working the bow with the single float even though it got a bit rocky at times when a boat came by too fast. Along the way we poked two holes in the hull along the second quarter-inch strake, both where water had lain inside the hull. One is against a web frame on the scullery deck and the other in the forward head. Both were temporarily patched with Devcon until permanent repairs can be made.

Finally the sun came out. By now we had our Imron topcoat aboard, and the guys went to work rolling out the section between the camels. With the **DE Day** ceremonies that Saturday, they painted the port quarter and the transom out of an aluminum bateau and had everything looking great for the ceremony.

This Monday, the **Albany Water Department** crane is scheduled to come back and get the float out from between the camels. We'll move it around to the port bow, finish the anchor and the bow numbers and move around to the starboard side. More good news is that the Greek Navy never ground off the weld marks for the old "766" which will make repainting them a whole lot easier. That's the plan. Starting week six.

Most of the deck force has been working in support of the side painting. **Dick Smith, Earl Gillette, Larry Rockwood, Dick Pavlovic, Pat Cancilla** and new volunteer **Ed Whitbeck** have been scaling and priming the waterways and under the chocks with the contractors. On rain days, they have been working in the aft head. They got the white touched up in the aft washroom and painted the deck.

Clark Farnsworth, Tim Benner, George Irwin and **Red Hume** have been working on the starboard head, getting the trough ready for installation. **Dick Smith** finished chipping the space, and **Tommy Moore** did the insulation repairs. The trough and two urinals should be in by the time you read this and another important part of every DE sailor's life will thus be memorialized. Now, if I can just find a volunteer to clean and shine the trough. Might be time to hold another captain's mast. Somebody posted a copy of the UCMJ on the messdecks, and I did notice that "malingering" is listed as an offense. So are several items I'm not sure school children should be reading about.

The deck painting has kind of ground to a halt, because of the work in the sides. We finished the 01 level, but are holding off on the main deck because the work on the side painting is pretty rough on the decks, what with spilling paint and dragging the Jacob's ladder around and all. **John Waechter** and **Barry Witte** got the anchor windlass back on line. As a test we walked out the port anchor to test the windlass. We released the brake and the chain stopper and held our breath. It held and didn't run away. Now we can leave the anchors standing out so we can chip and paint them as part of the hull-painting project.

The engineers and the electrical gang have been busy. The electricians have been continuing to work on the lighting aft in preparation for the restoration of those spaces next winter. **Larry Williams, Ken Kaskoun** and **Bob Callender** have started running an armored, shielded cable for the telephone system and the 1MC which will run from the ticket shed on the pier to the captain's cabin and ship's office. Hopefully this will alleviate a lot of the problems with the phone system. We purchased an ice machine that **Gary Sheedy** and **Jude Gosh** installed in the galley. That will keep **Les Beauchaine** and **Nancy Buxton** from having to buy bag-ice for the water coolers, but having an ice machine should be worth a lot of jokes this coming winter. And long "lost on the rails" engineer **Gus Negus** has been making it when he can, so there is still hope for getting the Diesel generator running. **Barry** has been busy with repairs. One Saturday he fixed the siren, the forward exhaust vent controller and ran down a ground in the forward lighting circuit.

We now have enough gunners to call it a division. **Tom Beeler's** brother **Frank** has been coming down two days a week and working on the three inch guns. **Raf** recruited an army tanker **Larry LaChance** who has been helping out, along with **Gordon Lattey, John Waechter, Chief Dave Floyd** and **Russ Ferrer**. The result of all this energy is that gun-three has been elevated (with great difficulty), gun-two has been elevated (with great difficulty) and gun-one elevates (with great difficulty). However, mounts one and two train easily, and the breechblocks have been freed in all three mounts. The whole process is to: force it an inch, pump in more grease and move it back. Force it two inches, pump in more grease and move it back. The only problem with that is that the operating lever on gun one has broken twice, keeping Russ busy. A lot of great detail work is also going on the gun mounts. **John** is restoring and installing the sights and telescopes, and restoring all the dial indicators on the fuse pots and receiver regulators. Russ also fabricated steel covers for all the 20mm cooling tubes to replace the rotted wooden ones.

Never one to rest, Doug Tanner fabricated a new six-foot roller for the gangway, a three-inch stainless pipe supported by two roller bearings. He jacked up the gangway and installed it single-handedly the morning of the **DE Day** ceremony, so the scrape of the gangway on the steel waterway wouldn't drown out the speakers. That's a sound we won't miss. He is also replacing steel plate on the starboard quarter that wasted away under the old AETOS plate. That's the area right inside the laundry, so we had to move all the combustible material out of there. The **Albany Naval Reservists** did that job for us. Doug is now in the process of planning and gathering up the material to extend the heating system to the aft crew's quarters with his usual insightful advice, "Let's not wait till November to start this job."

Ray Lammers continues his work on detail restoration of electrical fittings and is truly doing "museum quality" restoration. The rest of us should be that good. All the lamp shades, switchboxes and speakers that you see around the ship that look factory fresh are evidence of Ray's work. **Dan Wing** has undertaken stenciling and painting all the compartment numbers in each space forward in 1945 style. And radarman **Bob Dawson** has been keeping CIC and the pilothouse spotless. The latest addition to CIC is our sparkling new Status Board that complements our lighted plot table. **Roy Gunther** has both whaleboat davits swinging free and is getting them ready to receive the boat at the end of the summer. **Erik Collin** has also been painting

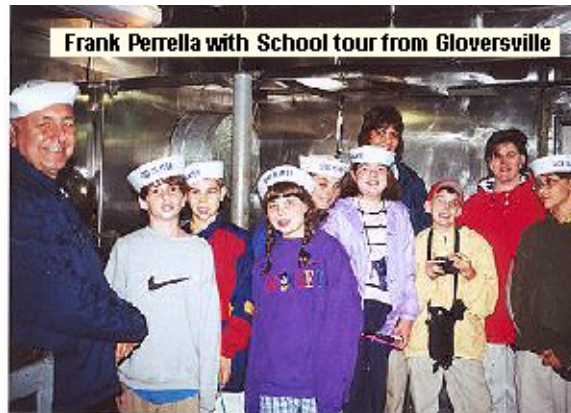


around the ship and volunteering to escort visitors down through the Engine Spaces as requested. This is not a normal visit on the tour route but we are glad to oblige when we have a willing escort available. Meanwhile, the radio gang **Jerry Jones** and **Don Bulger** are busy cleaning radio antenna insulators and rigging wire so they can transmit this summer. Their first attempt to power up the TCS transmitter ended with a blown fuse and a dark radio room.



**TOUR GUIDES
Bob Whitney
& Bob Dawson**

Nancy, Debbie Moore and Dick Walker have been doing a great job booking and finding guides for the school tours. Over my screaming objections they keep booking big tours on workdays. But the end of the week deposit totals tend to calm me down. The guide crew has been doing a great job with keeping up with all these kids. In just two days over 250 school children with their teachers and chaperones walked around **SLATER'S** decks learning about the historical impact of Destroyer Escorts and seeing how a typical crew worked and lived aboard ship. Their enthusiasm is unmatched and their ability to climb ladders effortlessly always reminds our crew of their "younger legs". **SLATER** also received some nice publicity from the **TIMES UNION** with a front-of-the-Business section article with photos. We appreciate the statistics given by **Michele Vennard** from ACCVB to show the positive financial impact on the Albany area because of Reunion visits to **SLATER**.



Frank Perrella with School tour from Gloversville

At the monthly Executive Board meeting

Frank Lasch surprised some of us with a presentation from the WW II **SLATER** Crewmembers. At their 15th Annual Reunion held in Mobile, Alabama, they voted to award **Nancy Buxton, Pat Perrella** and myself as Honorary **SLATER** Crewmembers. We each received a certificate, and most original ship collage made by **Dwight Barker** entirely from paint chips saved from **SLATER**. Dwight also composed a bit of poetry to accompany the gift. The girls have already decided to apply to Officers Training School to secure more comfortable quarters and I guess I better just hustle if I want a promotion in the **SLATER** ranks by the time our "fellow crewmembers" arrive next spring for their next reunion. All in all we appreciate their tribute of appreciation & are glad they are pleased with the progress on the ship.



New Slater Crewmembers

Speaking of the Commissioning SLATER Crew, Claire Oesterreich

was able to spend some time with WW II **Captain Marcel J. Blancq** at his retirement home in Sea Level, North Carolina. She brought an album of **SLATER** photos to present to CAPT. Blancq and attracted quite an audience of retired Navy residents as she was describing the restoration of **SLATER**. Although in fair health, Capt. Blancq managed to express his pleasure at receiving news about his ship. His caretakers have said that he always enjoys our news reports and we are also glad to send him **SLATER SIGNALS**.

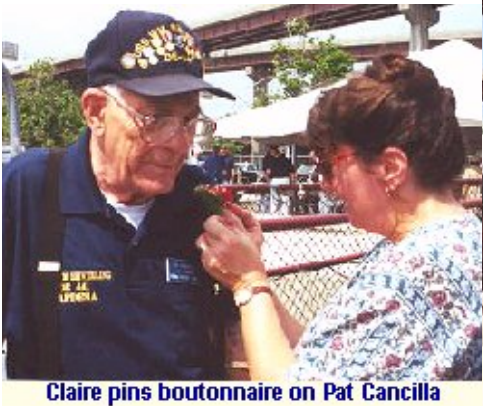
Congratulations to **Eric & Julie Sussin Weidmann** on the occasion of their marriage. We are glad to have them back helping with tours and the shop. More volunteer news is that **Chris & Trudy Fedden** have left for a vacation so we'll have those big shoes of Chris's to fill around the ship. **Andy Sandalakis** is reported to be on the binnacle list and we wish him a speedy recovery.

DE DAY 17 June 2000



Our biggest event of June is the annual Destroyer Escort Day Memorial Observance which is held to honor the memory of the 15 DE's lost because of WWII, and the 1,304 shipmates who gave their lives while attached to DE's and APD's. We also honor the volunteers we have lost over the past year. This year's ceremony was dignified and representative of the comradeship between the SLATER Volunteers, members of the CAP DESA Chapter and the community. CDR Roy W. Gunther handled the Master of Ceremonies for the event and was assisted by CAP DESA chairman Don Justus and Bob Donlon. Chief Dave Floyd presented the "two bell ceremony" tribute with our SLATER Honor Guard of Dick Walker, Clark Farnsworth, Charles Miner, Leo Baehler, and Chuck Tator. Our special guests were the families of Betty Cancilla, Grace Floyd, Dutch Hannmann and CAP DESA members William Engel and Robert Fitzgerald. The late DESA Executive Director Ralph F. Freese was also remembered by floral tribute as he was our honored guest at last years' observance. Our friends from Troy, the Uncle Sam Chorus once again provided us with memorable patriotic songs sung in barbershop harmony and Uncle Sam himself gave us the meaning of being American. The Nicholas J. DeSalvo Division Sea Cadets accompanied by Lt. Adrienne Daniels served as Color Guard and members of the Naval Reserve Unit assisted with the honor guard and playing of taps. The SLATER angels also kept the occasion "well covered" as Claire provided the tent and chairs along with a triple batch of brownies. Nancy was covering the tour guide scheduling and brought the sandwiches for lunch, Maralyn and Annette were covering the shop table with their faithful assistant Les, and Pat was covering the photography for the event. Fortunately the weather cooperated and the serious rain held off until the ceremony was concluded and the fantail cleared of equipment.





Claire pins boutonniere on Pat Cancilla



Sea Cadets Present Colors



Slater Honor Guard



Charles Miner pins corsage on widow of Dutch Hannmann



Chief Dave Floyd - Chuck Farnworth & Cdr Roy Gunther



CAP DESA Remembering fallen Ships & Crews

Following the ceremony a donation of \$300.00 for SLATER was presented to Nancy by Judy McMillan, Kay Eberle, Mary C. Smith and Maggie Grasek from the CAP DESA Auxiliary. Earlier in the week I had received a check for \$2,000.00 from Quinton Lawson, a shipmate and fellow "Motor Mac" with Dutch Hannmann aboard USS BIRMINGHAM DE-530. We were pleased to be able to tell Dutch's family about this tribute from a friend on DE Day.

Now it's back to business as usual aboard SLATER as we try to combine work with cleanup and being ready for the tours and reunion groups. The loyalty of the SLATER volunteers in being dedicated to helping out wherever needed is really appreciated during this busy season. Even though I have to keep this crew "in line" their loyalty is never in question.

In light of what I wrote last month, the crew held a ceremony in my honor and presented me with a potted tree. Like most ceremonies that the crew holds in my honor, it was held on a Friday, my day off, while I was home, and the tree was left in the aft head for me to discover on Saturday. Not being into horticulture, I have yet to determine if it is real or plastic, so I'm not sure if I need to solicit a donation for a watering can. See you next month.

