



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

PO Box 1926

Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943

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As I start to put this newsletter together, all eyes are on Shanna Schuster. In case you missed the memo, she and her husband Michael are expecting to add another to our crew. Her expected delivery date is January 31. It is like there is a giant clock, ticking in the office. Every morning I greet her with “You’re here!”

Shanna remains incredibly cheerful and focused despite her present condition. Always the consummate professional, she’s been preparing **John and Jo Ann** on her essential duties for when she’ll be out on maternity leave, as we work to open to the public for this season. Two weeks ago, she decided she needed to embark on a new project. She decided that she needed to start reformatting her extensive collection of podcast episodes, so that she could publish them on YouTube, to gain additional exposure for USS SLATER.



In case you missed the memo...

and make our online friends feel more a part of the gang! All of our volunteers are

She is counting on Gio and Tyler to continue producing more content for our YouTube channel. This takes up a lot of time, and in addition to reformatting the podcast episodes to make them more visually appealing for YouTube, they will be working on a series of videos that will highlight our volunteers. Asking why our crew volunteers, what motivates them, and why they keep coming back. This series of videos will focus on getting to know our crew. They will hopefully encourage new volunteers to get involved, attract new donors when they see how hard these guys work,

encouraged to talk to Gio and Tyler about participating in these interviews. Please contact me if you are interested.

Shanna, Gio, and Tyler are not the only ones focused on growing our online presence. John and James are still cooking up more YouTube videos, and John and I keep everyone up to date on Facebook with what our volunteers are up to.

Shanna also completed inventory of the ship's store and is in the process of planning new merchandise for the 2024 season. She'll leave a lot of the Ship's Store details for Jo Ann to take care of, while John will take up the reins on hiring new interns and training them. Speaking of which, we could use your help! **USS SLATER is recruiting new tour guides, both volunteers and paid college interns!** If you have any friends or family who would make a great addition to our team, please send them an application, or send them to our website to fill one out <https://ussslater.org/volunteer>



Your support of the winter fund has been great! Dick Walker at work. getting our donation acknowledgements out to you.



Cathy Wheat helping to keep the decks clear.

It's hard for me to imagine how Shanna will suddenly shift her focus and disengage from us when she goes on maternity leave, but I imagine giving birth does cause a sudden shift in priorities. Jo Ann recognizes that Shanna will have no problem shifting focus. Given my dependence on Shanna, Jo Ann believes that I will be the one with the problem. I wholly expect that there will be a birth announcement by the time I finish putting this newsletter together.

For those wondering if she is expecting a boy or a girl both Shanna and Michael have gone the traditional route and have avoided gender notification, so they



The Coast Guard Cutter USCGC WIRE has been alongside twice this month.

can be surprised at birth. Though Shanna thinks Michael’s agreement with this arrangement may have had something to do with not wanting the whole house to be festooned in pink. Hopefully by the time you receive your February edition of Signals, we’ll have a formal announcement, photo, and name to share!

In Collections, John has been working to better organize our limited storage. Assisted by volunteers, **Alan** and **Tom**, the former depth charge magazine that is now used for artifact



Gary checking the 2024 Calendar to see if any of his old girlfriends are in it.

storage has been emptied. It has always been a challenge to install shelving here, due to the pigeonhole shelves once used to hold the depth charge pistols. Apart from two shelves installed in free space, there is nowhere to store our boxed artifacts, outside of on the deck or precariously on top of the pistol shelves.

So, John and Tom decided to make their own shelves. Using wooden poles cut down to fit, they have made platforms on top of the pistol shelves. With everything removed from storage, they have also decided to recatalog each artifact by taking new photographs of each item. Much of our collection

was donated two decades ago, and with the advances in camera technology since, it's time to update our records.

Initially, a makeshift lightbox was built using an empty archival box. This worked fine, but John's dream is to have a much larger lightbox with actual lights inside it. To that end, Tom went out and purchased one! It's not as large as he had hoped but it has LEDs and makes our photographs look a bit more professional. This is important for many reasons, but a major one is our collections website! Eventually these new photographs will be accessible online by you, so it's important they look nice.



John and Tom continue working in Collections.

Let's not forget Alan Fox. Each artifact donation we receive has an accompanying Deed of Gift in paper form. Former collections manager, **Katie Kuhl**, organized these about 13 years ago in a filing cabinet. But for many of these Deeds, they exist in just their paper form. Alan has started the process of scanning each page to create a digital copy, which will also give

easier access. He isn't a big fan of how many dividers are used in the filing cabinet, so he is advocating for change. We'll see. Katie, if you are reading this, sorry!



Larry Williams celebrated his birthday as he continues to maintain battle lanterns for us.

Alan also helped Jo Ann in our shoreside library. As our resident librarian, Jo Ann has put her knowledge and skills to the test by creating call numbers for each book, putting that into our database, and then shelving them. Each visitor to the museum sees the bookshelf when they enter our Briefing Room. New books often find their way to Jo Ann, either from our volunteers or donations from you. It was time to add our new titles to the shelf, so Alan was recruited to help. Unfortunately, we are running out of space, which may become a problem in the future.

So, here we are, halfway through the winter. This is the point at which I take stock of the situation and must ask, are our maintenance projects fifty percent complete? The answer is, as it has been every year, nope. Oh boy!

Things started simply enough. Doug and his team (**Dave, Earl, both Chucks, Bill W., Bill K., Warren, and Danny**) planned to replace the wasted starboard bulkhead in the pilothouse and investigate the Exec's stateroom for wastage under the bunk. There was also the issue of rehabilitating a working air compressor. **Gary** was going to have his team (**Dennis, Ed, and Thomas**) clean out and repaint the aft magazines under berthing space C-202-L, and **Barry** and his team (**Seth, Dominick, and Ian**) were going to replicate the original food serving line.

Then, we noticed some leakage in the radio room passageway on the 01 level forward. It turned out that water had been collecting around a signal lamp mounting



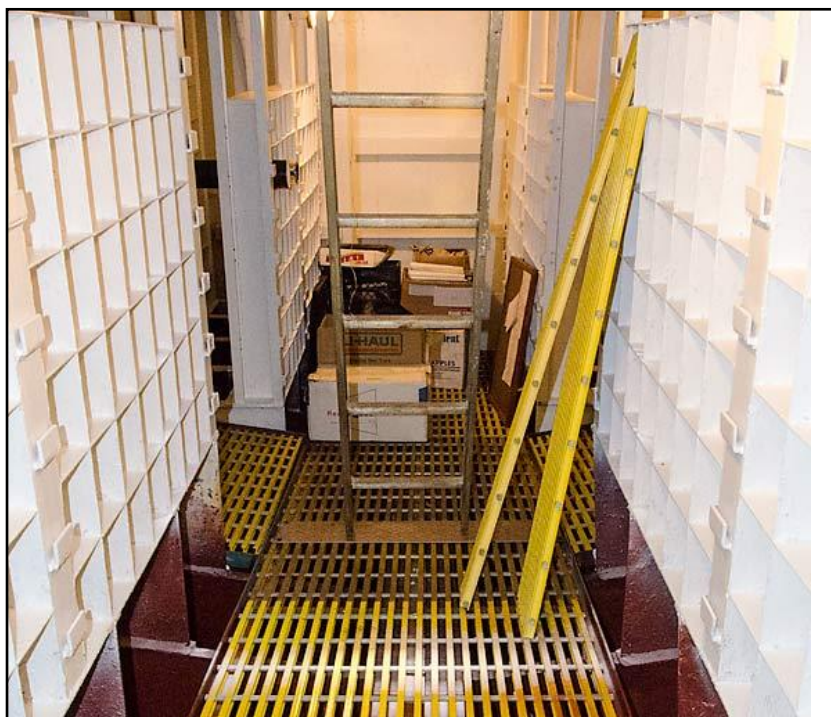
Halfway through winter.

tube on the 02 level, starboard side, and rotted through the deck. We jumped on that, removed the tube, and patched the deck.

Next, Cathy Wheat came along and noticed some water on the deck to the chartroom on the 02 level. Doug investigated and began removing overhead insulation. It turns out that the fire control radar room on the flying bridge has a false deck, with no access. Apparently, water has been leaking into this area for years, and has rotted through the steel that constitutes the overhead in CIC and the chartroom. We are just now in the preliminary stages of cutting into the radar room deck to assess the situation. We are also planning to contract the removal of the



Shanna is hoping to get Gio back from maintenance to education.



Depth charge magazine rehabilitated.

fiberglass overhead insulation in the chartroom and CIC, so we can safely do cutting and welding on the deck of the FC radar room. We'll use a contractor, since insulation removal is a job none of the volunteers want to do.

Over the past month, the shipfitters removed and secured the starboard natural vent exhaust duct mess deck to main deck. They also completed rebuilding and refitting the starboard wardroom portlight. Then they completed installation of the Quincy 240 air compressor in the forward

engine room, which now in service. Danny is currently fabricating an oil separator for it.

The shipfitter team investigated the starting air compressor, test ran it, and built up 400 psi. They are hoping the soaking in Marvel Mystery Oil will free up the rings and reduce the consumption of lube oil that the starting air compressor is experiencing, without having to do a complete teardown. They confirmed the pressure switch is behaving properly and will also be installing a power switch for it, so no more using the breaker to turn the compressor on and off.



Barry's replica of messdecks serving table is "steaming" nicely along.

Gary's team of Ed, Dennis, and Thomas have almost completed painting out magazine C-302M and will soon move into the amidships space C-303M. The space looks amazing with the new paint! When the shelving is complete, we'll have easy access to our newly organized ordnance spare parts. Thankfully, not too many unexpected problems have popped up during this project.



Ed, Thomas, Bill W., and Dennis have been making progress restoring the aft magazines.

Barry and his team are working on the serving line replica project. One of the unforeseen adjustments we've discovered is that two topside ventilators, port and starboard adjacent to the wardroom provide air to the messdeck, were postwar additions. As the goal of this project is to get even closer to the 1945 restoration date, these ventilators are being removed. That permits easier access to maintain the bulkhead behind them.

Barry also made two trips to Baton Rouge, sharing his electrical

knowledge with our friends aboard USS KIDD DD-661. The ship is preparing for dry dock and is experiencing some flooding issues as the Mississippi River is rising. Barry helped them get their anchor windlass operational and assisted with rigging power for bilge pumps. Having spent fifteen years of my life restoring that ship, I have a strong concern for her well being, and Parks Stephenson and his crew are doing a great job as they prepare for their trip to the shipyard.



Doug and his crew completed overhaul and installation of the Quincy Air Compressor.

Up in the radio shack, Steve Syrotynski, the father and son team of Steve and Dave MacMinn, and Steve Page, have been keeping busy.

They finished attaching all of the receivers on local operating position number one to the antenna selector switch. They also started repairs to the RAO-2 radio receiver and are replacing a filter capacitor in the RBO-5.

They continue to organize the spare tubes in the electronics storeroom below the messdecks and have used the TBL-8 transmitter to make new contacts.



James continues his exploration into the condition of main engine number four.

Tour Guide, Carl Camurati, has developed into a valuable member of the maintenance crew. Initially, he took on the project of repainting our topside battle helmets. He is working with John to stencil the helmets and is casting new foam liners for the talkers' helmets. He then took up the restoration and maintenance of our compartment fans, making sure that all the spaces that the public has access to have the "safety" fan guards, as opposed to

the traditional old style “finger chopper” guards.

January has been a lonely month for James Miles down in the engine room. Winter months means routine checking of the sea valve in B3, to be sure it is watertight, and no water is getting in and freezing in the plumbing. So far so good. The V16 project is forging on as well. After the fuel injectors were replaced mid-2023, the engineers started work on the fuel rack, which connects the speed control lever to all of the fuel injectors. Older style racks are solid bars, while this "newer" rack is spring loaded, allowing any number of injectors to be seized, while allowing the rest to operate. We aim to get all of them working perfectly. This involves taking things apart and servicing them, to be sure they remain free to move back and forth. The oil sump has been cleaned, and new gaskets made for the sump covers. Progress is slow but steady. On the other front, we are working on securing lube oil for the engine, evaluating the lube oil system, and dozens of other tasks that need to be completed before we can turn the dormant engine over again.

The whaleboat fuel injection pump has been rebuilt and is now awaiting reinstallation once the weather perks up a bit. As always, those interested in seeing more about this and other projects are welcome to follow the Facebook page and subscribe to USS SLATER’s YouTube channel. Even if you are not a big YouTube watcher, it is a big help to subscribe to the channel, it helps the



Coast Guard crewmembers from USCGC WIRE helped us tighten mooring lines.

museum reach more new people all over the world.

So, with the expanding scope of the metal work on the flying bridge, we're a long way from 50% complete with our winter restoration projects. But each year about this time, when I start reminding the maintenance volunteers of their "opening day deadlines," they figure out a way to get it all done. We'll, of course, keep you posted.



Danny cutting a plate to patch the signal bridge.

Winter is half over and we have already gotten a tremendous response to our Winter Fund. Without your support, we would not be able to operate in the cold, winter months. If you haven't donated yet, we ask you to help keep a volunteer warm. The link to donate is [here](#).

It is with sadness that I must report the loss of our friend and shipmate, Bill Mehan. Bill, while in the Navy, served aboard the USS HUSE DE-145, and was a member of the USS HUSE Association. He was a HUSE Association Workweek volunteer, working on the maintenance and restoration of SLATER since 2001. In addition to all of his years working on SLATER, Bill was a good friend and great shipmate. He will be dearly missed.



Bill Mehan the way he would want to be remembered, with shipmates Jan and Gail.

**See you next month,
Tim**