

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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June has been a jam-packed full month for our crew. We welcomed aboard just over 400 students from Green Tech High, Green Meadow Elementary, West Canada Valley Middle School, Griffiss Institute, SUNY Orange, St. Pius V School, summer camps, and participated in the Museum Ships Radio Weekend.

Chuck Chandler and Steve Syrotynski made sure we kept up our participation in the Historic Ships Radio Weekend, and requests for QSL Cards are still coming in. We also held an event with the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association in which they operated from our radio room. More than a dozen EGARA members operated Station WW2DEM aboard USS SLATER. The club operated a total of four transmitters during the event from 8 am to 4 pm, including the ship's vintage 1940's rig. Despite the bands being less than ideal, they achieved a total of 149 contacts.



WWII Vet, Fran Lucca on watch in the radio room during the DESA Reunion.

After much convincing on Shanna and James' part, Mike and the rest of the engineers finally agreed to start the 8-cylinder engine for an audience! The event started with James, in our new classroom, explaining the history of diesel engines and how they won WWII for the Allies. He then led us into SLATER's After Engine Room (B-3) where everyone donned their safety glasses and ear protection to watch the crew start the engine and let her run for about 10 minutes. It was great to show how much work our volunteers have put into the engines over the last 26 years, and how dedicated the current crew is to keeping things running smoothly.

The maintenance crew continued with several projects. In addition to assisting the building contractors as needed,

they worked on several projects to prepare the ship for the upcoming DESA Reunion. Most important to me was the chipping and painting of our decks and superstructure. Chipping and painting on the fantail and the maindeck port and starboard is now complete. **Key Bank** also sent ten volunteers as part of their “**Neighbors Make a Difference Day**” to repaint the maindeck on the starboard side. We’ll start scaling and repaint the 01-level next.

Danny, Earl, and Warren are progressing nicely on the aft three-inch gun ready service ammo lockers. They rigged a pipe frame over the gun tub so he can lift the lockers with a chain fall and move them around as he replaces the wasted metal. He’s rebuilding the locker doors at the work bench.

The biggest headache for the maintenance crew has been that the train gear drive failed on the forward three-inch gun, which is our display gun. A bevel gear failed. Doug and his crew removed the manual gear drive from gun 32 and installed it in gun 31, so our display gun is operational again.



Apparently it takes a village to repair a three-inch gun train gear.



Volunteer Alara fits in places most of us can't go. She is under the depth charge track.

For the number two three-inch gun, Doug has found a pair of gears that are commercially available that he can install in gun 32. Working with his nephew **Chuck, Chuck Teal, Super Dave Mardon** and our machinist **Alex**, Doug purchased the shafting material and bushing material to turn a new shaft and two bushings for gun 32. They are also planning to make a bushing spacer so we can load the thrust bearing because the new gear is thinner than the original.

The shipfitters also completed the process of welding the new padeyes for hoisting the whaleboat. These are essential so we can rig the boat correctly when we hoist it aboard in **October.** Other projects we have going include repairing the sink

faucets in the aft head, the sink faucet leak in the forward head, repairing the deck drain in the aft head, holes in the bridge wing deck over Ship's Office, a fire main leak over **Angelo's** Sewing machine, and rigging a compressed air connection on the fo'c's'cle.

Can you think of anything that goes better together than beer and Sailors? We can't. On June 3rd to celebrate SLATER's 79th Anniversary of Commissioning, our friends at **Allied Brewing** brewed up a special USS SLATER Summer Ale and came aboard to help us share it with our friends and supporters. The event attracted 95 people to taste the beer, eat the tacos, and tour the ship. A successful night for sure! While you'll have to head to the brewery to taste the beer, you can order your souvenir pint glass on our website.



Cassidy and Andrew kept things under control at our 79th Anniversary Party.

On Tuesday June 13th we hosted the USS HAMMERBERG Reunion and Memorial Service. We welcomed over 50 shipmates aboard, as they remembered their departed

shipmates and explored the last DE afloat in America. Following the tour, they boarded the **DUTCH APPLE** cruise boat for lunch and a ride on the Hudson River.



USS HAMMERBERG veterans, waiting for the service to begin.

In Collections, new additions to our various ship collections continue to flow in. Documents belonging to SLATER crew member **Henry Dilberger, S2c** were donated by his niece, Maggie. A plaque, pin, and Zippo lighter from USS HAMMERBERG were donated prior to the HAMMERBERG reunion. Two jumpers and a peacoat belonging to **Richard DeVesty, RM2c** are now on display with our uniforms. Richard served aboard USS OBERRENDER (DE-344) and

USS TISDALE (DE-33). Fortunately for Richard, he had transferred off the ship months prior to the kamikaze hit.

Last but not least, the family of Albert St. Jean joined us for DESA's final reunion. Albert had been one of SLATER's first volunteers when she was in NYC. He was also one of the "SLATER 7" who rode the ship north to Albany in 1997. He served aboard USS OTTERSTETTER (DE-244) during the war and remained in the Naval Reserve for many years after. He had saved a few volumes of the ship's newsletter and we are grateful to add these one-of-a-kind documents to our collection. If anyone is interested in reading them, email us and John will be happy to share them with you.

On Wednesday June 14th, Flag Day, Shanna joined the Capital Region American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association at their annual Golf Tournament. USS SLATER was chosen as their charity of choice for this year's tournament and fundraiser. AHEPA is the largest Greek-American heritage service organization in the world. Board Chair **BJ Costello, and Trustees Bob Lazar, Art Dott, and Mike Clark** all participated in the tournament and helped raise funds for AHEPA and SLATER. Art also brought his sister and nephew to participate in the fun day. The event netted \$4,000 for the SLATER, thanks to Shanna's creativity.

The biggest event, both in number of people and impact on the project, was certainly the Farewell Reunion of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association. Everyone arrived on Friday the 16th of June to our welcome reception filled with beverages, cheese boards, and celebrations of finally being back together after Covid.



Board Trustees Mike Clark and Art Dott are joined by Art's nephew, Billy and his sister, Mair at the AHEPA Golf Tournament.

The next day we marked DE Day, the 33rd annual Destroyer Escort Day celebrated nationwide. SLATER Board Chairman, **BJ Costello**, served as our Master of Ceremonies as Trustee, **Steve Long**, told us the History of DE Day and listed the 15 Destroyer Escorts lost during WWII in American Service. We also welcomed aboard the **Adirondack Battalion of Sea Cadets** as our color guard. They were supervised by SLATER Volunteer **Ken Kaskoun**. The **Pitch Hitters Quartet** of Racing City Chorus performed the National Anthem as well as God Bless America, and **Steve Stella** sounded Taps on his bugle.



The flower bearers for the DESA Memorial Service.

The most moving portion of the ceremony was when we list



The Adirondack Battalion of the US Naval Sea Cadets added a lot of color to our DE Day Ceremony.

each Destroyer Escort lost during WWII, followed by a toll of the ship's bell and the commitment of a carnation off the side of SLATER into the Hudson River. Our honored guests that committed the carnations this year were **Ray Smith, Marianne Donovan, Phyllis Gruber, Mary DeSantis, Tom Jacobs**, and two WWII Veterans **Julian Austin, and Len Alexander**.

After the ceremony, DESA participants ventured across our parking lot to Dutch Apple Cruises and enjoyed an afternoon cruise on the Hudson River, complete with a BBQ lunch served by Saati Catering. Sunday was the big day aboard SLATER for the DESA crew. It was also Father's Day, so our tour guides stayed busy for sure! DESA had free reign of the ship, as they rekindled old memories, relived the glory days, and retold stories that we can't wait to share

with you. Sunday afternoon we lowered the DESA colors and raised the DEHM colors and made sure to communicate that we intend to hold the traditions and values of DESA dear, as well as continuing to save the proud history of Destroyer Escorts. We concluded the reunion with the banquet Sunday night at the **Hilton Garden Inn at Albany Medical Center**. I have never seen a reunion group so appreciative of our efforts.

When DESA was formed, it was created by WWII DE Sailors as a last man organization, and that attitude has always permeated a large part of the membership. The bylaws were written so that you had to be a DE veteran to be a member. When the Navy eliminated the DE classification, that didn't help the organization. As the thousand class DE Sailors started to join, there were thoughts of keeping the organization going, but no one seemed to pick up the ball.



Julian Austin, 98 years old, was a torpedoman aboard USS CHATELAIN (DE-149). She was part of the task group that captured U-505 in June of 1944.



Our DESA Banquet was very well attended and a good time was had by all!

DEHM and DESA are separate organizations with different boards of directors. DESA created DEHM in 1993, when they acquired SLATER, with bylaws that enabled anyone who wanted to support USS SLATER to join. They realized in 1993 that they needed an organization that would go on in perpetuity. They created a new organization, to own SLATER with membership open to anyone, to maintain USS SLATER for future generations.

As DESA created the SLATER organization, we believed we owed it to DESA to bid farewell on a high note hence, so we hosted the reunion. We'll continue to preserve DE

history through the ship's restoration and preservation, as well as archive the stories of the ships and her crews.

Finally, we bid farewell to two of our most treasured volunteers in June. William “Boats” Haggart ran our deck department for fifteen years, and taught marlinspike seamanship to anyone who wanted to learn. He was an institution during his years aboard, and his presence taking care of the details of deck seamanship made my life a whole lot easier. We also lost **Gordon Lattey**, following a long illness, who has been involved with the project from the beginning. Gordon, and his wife **Michele Vennard** played critical roles in bringing SLATER to Albany. Without them reporting to the Mayor that this was a doable project with great potential, it is doubtful we would be in Albany today. Gordon made the arrangements for our arrival ceremony and has been a key volunteer ever since. To Boats and Gordon, we can only wish fair winds and following seas. We have the watch.



Mayor Sheehan and Council Member Ginnie Farrell presented USS SLATER with a ceremonial check for the ARPA Grant.

See you next month,
Tim



Our two Bosuns, Walt Stuart and the late Bill Haggart.



Gordon, Evan, and Michele. It is doubtful USS SLATER would be in Albany today without the efforts of Gordon and Michele.