

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum USS Slater

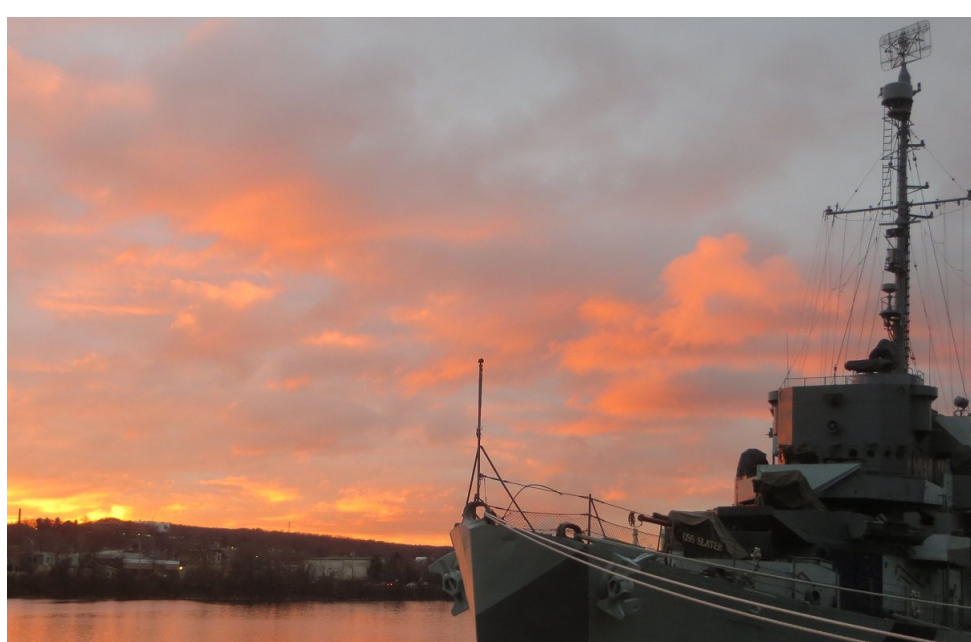
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December dawn.

## Season 18 has come to a close.

Once more, with the end of our ticket revenue for another year, I come to you, cap in hand, to announce the start of the 2015 Winter Fund Drive. I ask you to "Help keep a volunteer warm this winter." Not that we've had much need for heat so far. As I sit in the ship's office writing on December 23rd, it's a balmy 53 degrees out. No chance for a white Christmas this year but, when you live in Albany, you consider every day like this one a gift. We know it's coming.

**The year following our shipyard overhaul was productive and profitable.** Our several major restoration accomplishments in 2015 include the completion of the whaleboat davit pedestal restoration, the complete rebuild of the radio direction finder platform, and the fabrication of a replica radio direction finder antenna. We have also rebuilt the stuffing tube nest in gun three. That stopped the leak into the landing force equipment locker. Another item that was rebuilt includes the access hatches into the landing for the equipment locker. Other jobs include repairing the wasted bulkhead on the portside of the aft cross passageway, installing the starting air compressor and cooling radiator in B-1, fabricating and installing three replacement life rafts, as well as,



RPI Midshipman Kathryn Hunter and Barry Witte rigging the new forestay.

the restoration of the firemain in B-3.

**As we head into the New Year, we have ongoing projects.** These include the restoration of the steering engine room, laundry, and shipfitter shop, where **Gary Sheedy** and his crew continue to make significant progress. Under gun three, **Danny Statile** is completing the replacement of the wasted deck in the landing force equipment locker. Ashore, **Doug Tanner Tim Benner, Dave Mardon, and Earl Herchenroder** continue to make progress replacing the rotted support timbers on the trailer. This project will go into the spring. Upcoming projects will include replacing the galley and deck gear locker doors, and replacing the aft expansion joint over the machine shop. Another project will be replacing the stays, shrouds, and scaffolding on the mast, and repainting it.



my Moore has been doing carpentry with us for 17 years

**We recently hit an astounding 10,000 likes on Facebook.** What was most impressive was the support of friends in Greece, and how they, too, have embraced SLATER as A/T AETOS. As one Greek veteran commented, "Many more Greeks served on AETOS than did Americans in her two years of service during World War II, and they have great affection for their 'Eagle'." Our interpretative volunteers continue to make us proud. Thanks to their efforts, we remain the third most popular Albany attraction on tripadvisor.com, after the State Capitol and the State Museum. Two recent comments testify to the quality of our volunteers:



Buddies Dave Mardon and Tim Benner on the trailer project.

"World War II historical ship well maintained. We attended this naval museum with our son. This WW II ship, loaned to the Greek Navy after WWII and then returned, has been well maintained by volunteers who have brought it up to the condition of a WW II destroyer escort. It is a guided tour that shows more spaces than some other ship tours (engine room tour separate cost). The docent was very interested in history and they enjoy veterans who give them personal knowledge and first hand stories to pass onto visitors. Well worth a visit."

"Wonderful Tour. We made this a key part of our recent visit to Albany. I knew a lot of the history behind the boats in general but it was still great to see it up close. It is amazing to see the challenges



Vets Shaun and Pat Sutton from College of St. Rose working on the firemain.

that these sailors had to go through. A toilet where you sit right next to the next person is just hard to imagine for us. 30 second cold showers also would take some getting used to. They also have it set up so that you can sit at 2 of the 40 mm gun mounts to see what it was like, and you can actually move them, though not fire them. Probably a good idea. There were quite a few things that they passed around so you could actually hold them."

**The month began with our annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Service and breakfast at the Joseph E. Zaloga American Legion Post on Everett Road. Board President,**



The SLATER Color Guard on Pearl Harbor Day.

**Tony Esposito**, emceed the event, which featured commemorative remarks by Albany County Executive **Dan McCoy**, Albany Mayor **Kathy Sheehan**, and Rensselaer County Executive **Kathy Jimino**. The event was well-attended, with many other dignitaries present, including Assembly members **Pat Fahy**, and **John McDonald**, and many friends, including **Jerry Jennings**, **Mike Breslin**, and **Mike McNulty**. Sadly, it was the first year we did not have any Pearl Harbor survivors present. Reverend **Charlene Robbins** did our invocation and our USS SLATER Chaplain, Reverend **David Collum**, did the benediction. Our SLATER Color Guard, **Ken Kaskoun**, **Art Dott**, **Larry Williams**, **Boats Haggart**, and **Dave Mardon** were present, looking sharp in dress blues and assisted by the Christian Brothers Academy Cadets. **Jerry Jones** handled the sound and **Steve**



New volunteer Cathy Wheat and Board President Tony Esposito prepare for the Christmas Party.

**Stella** was on hand to play Taps. Following the commemoration, **Pat and Carol Connolly** provided the traditional Navy breakfast that included creamed chipped beef on toast. Our special thanks to Albany County Veterans Affairs coordinator **Michael Good**, and the crew at the Post, **Harvey Martel**, **Jerry Perry**, and **Dave Miller**, for creating another memorable event.

**As the month drew to a close, we hosted another promotion ceremony.** Commander **Craig Sicola**, a carrier aviator and student at the NPTU, was being promoted to Captain.

**One of the requirements for taking an XO or Captain's billet on a nuclear carrier is attending Nuclear Power school.** It was CDR Sicola's desire to be promoted aboard a ship. Since we're the only ship in the area, NPTU's XO CDR Michael Foster reached out to us and we made the wardroom available. This was special for CDR Sicola. His family lives in Texas, but they were in Ballston Spa for the holidays, and his sons were available to pin Craig's eagles on him. Captain **Dave Fowler**, who had his own promotion aboard in July, administered the oath. In attendance was USS SLATER plankowner **Ed Lavin**, and his daughters **Sharon** and **Debbie**. They were in town to spend Christmas with Dad, and took the opportunity to bring Ed down to his old ship and have coffee in the galley. Ed saw his old ship participate in a naval tradition, and shared the experience with his daughters.

**Tony Esposito, Chief Smith, and Chief Art Dott put together our annual volunteer Christmas luncheon on Monday the 21st.** Tony provided a glazed ham and the SLATER provided a 19-pound turkey that Smitty prepared at home and served to the crew with all the trimmings. Shanna Hopson and Larry Williams decorated the messdecks for the holidays with Christmas lights and a tree. The only problem was that we couldn't find the Christmas tree stand, but that's not a problem when you have talented shipfitters like **Danny Statile** and Super **Dave Mardon** on hand. They welded one together in a matter of minutes.

**We had a couple of wonderful surprises this December.** First, longtime friend and webmaster of the amphibious ship's website, Russ Padden, got his company to donate four used computers to upgrade our aging machines. Russ connected with Thomas Scian in Middletown, and Thomas brought them to the ship, where they are awaiting installation.



EM2 Nathan Marlin helped Gary Sheedy relocate the washing machine to its original position.



In honor of Wendell Rogers' generosity, here it USS SWENNING DE-394.

**Second, and an even greater surprise, was a donation by Wendell Rogers who served in USS SWENNING DE-394 in World War II. Mr. Rogers donated \$50,000 to the endowment fund and \$50,000 to the restoration fund, the largest individual donation we've received since we completed the Hull Fund Drive. It is the generosity of people like Mr. Rogers that have enabled this project to prosper without government support. Our heartfelt thanks go out to him, and Naoko McKelvey of Lumin Financial services, for arranging the donation.**

**And now it's your turn. All this brings us back to where we started, that it's Winter Fund Drive time again!** This issue of SLATER SIGNALS is being mailed to everyone on our mailing list, in the hope you will see fit to make a donation to help us get through another winter. If you are hearing about the Winter Fund for the first time, the need is simple. Each year, the ship closes in November, and we lose our main source of revenue



Walt Stuart, Boats Haggart and Larry Williams covering guns and stowing helmets for the winter.



resident sailmaker, Angelo Bracco.

for the winter months, our visitors. Our income stops, but our expenses continue. Thus, each winter we ask those who can afford it to give some more, namely \$100 more. We need your help to help us pay the heating bills, keep afloat, and avoid having to have to dip into our savings.

**You can see that, in terms of accomplishments, this has been a great year.** We know a lot of you would love to help out physically, but you live too far away. Here is your chance to participate in a meaningful way, by supporting the volunteers who are close enough to do the work. We've cut back staff, turned down the heat, and dimmed the lights. But we need your help to keep from dipping further into our working capital to get through the winter. I've made my hundred-dollar donation and I hope you will, too. For those of you who receive this newsletter online and don't get the return envelope, you can participate in the Winter Fund Drive

by

downloading our donation form, and simply marking it "Winter Fund." Place it in an envelope addressed to USS SLATER, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY 12201-1926. Or, you can go to [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and click on the "Donate" button. I might add, to those of you getting this newsletter for the first time, SLATER SIGNALS is available online. If you're not online and you want to receive this newsletter, for your donation to the winter fund, we'll be glad to put you on the list. The 18 years of seasonal begging has paid off,



Chief Smith grilling steaks for the crew.

in that many of you have already sent your Winter Fund donations in, without being asked. So far we have raised over \$8,000.

**Let's make sure the sailors on the front line of this restoration have the money and the tools to do the job.** Help us keep the volunteers warm this winter. Be as generous as you can to the USS SLATER Winter Fund Drive. One day there will be no more Destroyer Escort Sailors left, so let's make sure that this ship is around to tell their story. **Don't forget the donate button on our homepage**

**www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates. Please be as generous as you can to help us keep the volunteers warm this winter.**



Thomas Scian and Jim Lenden working on the aft expansion joint.

**See you next month.**