



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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A Reenlistment in B-4.

The month began with the reenlistment of MM1 Matthew Sauls. MM1 Sauls is a true snipe because, given the choice of locations for his reenlistment, he chose to say his reenlistment oath in front of the main throttle board in B-4, the aft motor room. It was interesting to pack all the friends, wives, families, and kids into that space. However, it shows that once again, we are here to serve the active Navy whenever called upon. We were called upon to serve again

on Tuesday, June 9, when the New York State Police dive unit reported aboard for training. About thirty troopers participated in a day-long exercise designed to sharpen their diving skills, and reinforce the fundamentals of underwater search. They reported that the condition of the new magnesium anodes was excellent.



The Lehigh Valley Fleet Reserve Association.

We commemorated our 18th Destroyer Escort Day since USS SLATER came to Albany on Saturday June 20th. This year, the commemoration was supported by the members of the Lehigh Valley Fleet Reserve Association who came from Pennsylvania to participate. Coordinator Bill Nixon hwas well-acquainted with what it takes to keep this ship up and running.

This year we were honored to have Rensselaer County Executive **Kathy Jimino**, Albany County Executive **Dan McCoy**, assemblymember **Pat Fahy**, and Reverend **David Collum** were in attendance. **Steven Stella** was on hand with his bugle for a live rendition of taps, and the Lehigh Valley FRA members dropped the carnations for each ship lost in action. A special moment occurred when **Marianne Donovan** dropped the carnation for the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, as her father was lost aboard that ship before she was born.

It's estimated that about 150,000 Sailors served in the WWII destroyer escorts, from their introduction in 1942 until the last DER went out of commission in 1973. They were mostly Reservists. After the war, these civilian Sailors put the war behind them and went back to their civilian lives. Their ships went into mothballs to await the next call of duty. Many of the ships were called back during the Cold War and remained on duty through the Vietnam War. As these citizen Sailors reached retirement, they began to look back on their years of naval service with a sense that the contribution of the destroyer escort was being lost to history. In the early 1980s, the Navy redesignated the modern destroyer escorts as frigates, and the DE disappeared from the naval inventory. This sense of lost history resulted in two events. First, the veterans of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association banded together to save the USS SLATER as a monument to their service. Second, they instituted one day each year to commemorate their service. The third Saturday in June was designated Destroyer Escort Day and celebrated by the



Marianne Donovan remembers the crew of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS.

thirty DESA Chapters around the country On this day we pay homage to the Destroyer Escort sailors killed in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War years, and to the ten Destroyer Escort ships lost in action. The first Destroyer Escort Day was held at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City on June 16, 1990. We continue the tradition today, and will continue to commemorate as long as USS SLATER exists to remind us of their sacrifices.



with school children. That's the way we like it.

June was a busy month for our education volunteers and interns. Not only did they contend with some very hectic days, they did so in the occasional downpour. The month was notable for the variety of groups paying us visits. We hosted, in no particular order, a Cub Scout crossing over ceremony, visitors from a halfway house, RPI alumni who took a tour of our engineering spaces, 156 middle schoolers from Ichabod Crane (the largest group we have ever taken for a tour on a single appointment) and, at the end of the month, about 50 bikers.



The State Police dive practice.

In accommodating some of these groups, special thanks has to go to Bill Wetterau who has been willing to take the occasional break from restoration work to offer his services as a tour guide. Art Dott has also made himself available for more and more of these special tours, despite personal commitments.

Our tour guides deserve a lot more recognition for the work they do ensuring that our visitors have a first-class experience aboard SLATER. At the end of the month, we began a feature on our Facebook page to put them in the spotlight, beginning with **Mike Marko**, a DE sailor and submariner. We hope to share many more of their stories in the future.

This month we were pleased to see Bob Herbst back on the schedule in earnest. For those who have wondered when **Jim Kubaw** would return, we can say that you will see him well-rested from vacation and back on Sundays in July. Commitments at church and at home will keep **Dennis Nagi** from being able to volunteer for much of July, but we look forward to his return to Wednesdays later in the month. Of course, our interns have been doing a phenomenal job, too. Despite starting a prestigious internship with the Governor's Office, **Vincent Knuth** has stayed to help out during the weekends. **Claire Burgon** and **Shanna Hopson** have stepped into the breach and currently assist with some of **Erik Collin's** previous duties.



The return of the Whaleboat.

The deck force continued to make great progress. The big event was the return of the whaleboat, following a long winter of restoration by our own **Rocky Rockwood**. Thanks to the good folks at **Scarano Brother's** boatyard, Rocky was able to work under cover on the boat all winter. With an assist from **Bill Wetterau**, Rocky replaced some rotted wood around the engine box, then sanded and painted the whole boat. She came back

upriver on June 15th, with **Mike Dingmon** at the tiller and **Gary Lubrano** as his engineer. Ever since then, we've been exercising the boat every Monday, with **Larry "The Legend" Williams** as our duty coxswain and **Mike Dungmon** and **Ken Kaskoun** alternating as engineers.



Bill Watterau fabricated new blocks.

Regarding the davits, Doug Tanner finished the pedestal collar and even put the final coat of paint on it. Bill Wetterau did a beautiful job building new boat fall blocks with the black locust Steve Dull provided. We made Bill lift the blocks one last time, so we could photograph his work. Once the blocks were aboard, it didn't take Boats Haggart long to get his crew together. They got the falls rerigged and the davits swung out for summer display.



The deck gang rerigged the boat falls.

Boats and his crew, Walt Stuart, Paul Guarnieri, Dick Brumley, Thomas Scian, Nelson Potter, and Kenny Skaarup continued to work on the life raft project. Tim Benner made a run up to Argyle to pick up the last two raft bodies at Adirondack Studios. Angelo Bracco made all the straps, and it didn't take Haggart long to get the grating lashed into the second raft body. That raft has been set in the number three position on the starboard side aft. The final replacement raft is being readied to go into the number two position, portside forward.



Gene Jackey and Clark Farnsworth welding up stuffing tubes.

With gun three tight, and no longer leaking water into the landing force locker and C-203L, the shipfitters shifted their attention to the radio direction finder platform. Over

the course of the month Doug Tanner, Danny Statile, Tim Benner, Super Dave Mardon, Matt Clifford, and firewatch Earl Herchenroder have cut away all the wasted metal, made templates, had the replacement metal bent to match the curve, and are now lifting and tacking the replacement steel into place. It's turned out to be a major undertaking, way more than we anticipated when I told **Scott McFadden**, "Hey Scott, just scrape and paint the little rusty spot up there behind the mast." In the meantime, **Clark Farnsworth** and **Gene Jackey** have completed the stuffing tube nest for the gun three wiring. We'll get back to work on that as soon as we finish the RDF platform.

We've made some good progress in the aft diesel space, B-3. The students of **Chris Hanley's** autobody repair class at **Colonie High School** completed fabrication of the lower level telephone booth in B-3. **Barry Witte** and his students hauled it back to the ship and he and **Mike McKay** got it installed back where it belongs. They have also continued work on the firemain. In addition to taking care of the whaleboat engine, the black gang, **Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon, and Ken Myrick**, have done routine maintenance on the B-3 ship's service generator, as well as the emergency diesel generator on B-4, and alternate test runs each week. Next on the agenda will be getting **Will Hevey** back from Connecticut, and getting the 24" carbon arc searchlights up and running, now that we have a DC power source. We've also obtained the service of a King's Point engineering cadet for ten days, **Tim Hughes**. Tim has been working with Barry Witte to diagram the lube oil system for the main propulsion diesels in B-3.



Tommy Moore's B-2 shelving project.

Gary Sheedy has continued to make progress in the spaces aft. The chemical warfare locker is all scaled, primed, insulated, and ready for painting. **Bill Wetterau** has taken on the task of needle gunning the shipfitter shop, but he's also in great demand for topside painting when the weather is fair.

But, when the showers come in he has to crawl back to Sheedy and beg for his old job back to stay dry. Ron Mazure has been working on the aft bulkhead of the steering gear space, while Gary himself has been working on the motors, rams, and hydraulic pumps. He's amazed at the amount of brass and bronze he's uncovered, but doesn't want the finished project to look any better than the reefer deck. He's also completed the installation of the overhead exhaust fan, and is coming along with the deck vent for the smoke generator.



Angelo Bracco making spent cartridge bags.

Other odd jobs happen all over the ship. Guy Huse and Bill Holt have taken on the gunner's mate's duties. Bill has been working over the twenties, one at a time, repainting and lubricating them. Guy is working on replacing the shoulder rests on the two 20mm mounts on the 01 level forward, guns 21 and 22. These are the last of the replacements fabricated by **George Christophersen** and **Jack Bertsch**. Installing the new ones will be easy. It's getting the

old ones out that has required a torch, hammer, and a lot of penetrating oil. Having finished his work on the life rafts, sailmaker **Angelo Bracco** has been fabricating new spent cartridge bags for the 20mm gun mounts. **Tommy Moore** has almost wrapped up his shelving project in B-2, the place where everything we want to hide disappears. **Chris Fedden** keeps the tool room straight, **Jim Gelson** continues to keep the clocks wound, and **Cheif Smith** continues to keep us fed on Mondays and Saturdays.

The Museum Ships Weekend is an annual event that activates many worldwide amateur radio stations associated with museum ships. This year, the



On watch during Museum Ships Radio Weekend.

event was held on the June 6 and 7 weekend with over 100 stations participating. The objective is for Hams to contact as many museum ships as possible. Hams that contact a minimum of 15 participating stations are eligible to receive a certificate from the battleship USS New Jersey, which coordinates this event.

Stan Levandowski led the preparations aboard **SLATER** by getting us registered, getting the paperwork squared away, and getting as much publicity of our participation out to the radio community as possible. He set up our frequency plans and operator schedules. Sadly, health issues prevented him from participating in the actual operating event, which broke his heart. He had been looking forward to it for months. **Jerry Jones, Mike Wyles, Don Montrym and Joe Breyer** manned the radio shack on Saturday, with Jerry and Mike coming back for another stint on Sunday. Even after the meticulous preparations, the gang hit a snag as soon as they showed up on Saturday. **SLATER's** maintenance crew had set about rebuilding the radio direction finder platform on the mast which required erecting a scaffold around the base of the mast. To do this they needed to disconnect the coveted long wire antennas that we planned to use. Temporary jumpers quickly got one of the wires back into service. The radio gang had a ball, with many Hams vying for the opportunity to contact a historic ship.



Progress continues on the RDT platform.

SLATER's favorite author is about to have his first book re-released, reprinted in paperback. **Bob Cross** is one of the most dedicated Trustees of our USS SLATER. His first book, *SAILOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE*, a seagoing biography of President Franklin D Roosevelt, was so well-received it is being published in paperback by the US Naval Institute. Bob examines Roosevelt's great affection for the sea, in the context of an era dominated by the Great Depression and two world wars. From luxury ocean liners and presidential yachts, to submarines and kayaks, this book lists all of the vessels on which FDR sailed, and includes some never-before-published photographs. Check out Bob's website at www.robertfcross.com for more information about his books.

We've had some nice publicity this month. I did a radio interview on Monday the 15th with Marietta Allen for her weekend magazine show on Hudson Valley Radio WNBR out of Beacon, NY. I was also asked by an old friend, **Jim Nordmann**, to do a presentation of USS SLATER's drydocking to the National Maritime Historical Society down in Montrose, New York on Wednesday, June 24th. Speaking of the drydock, July 1st is the one-year anniversary of our return from the shipyard. We posted a series of reflective pictures of the shipyard experience on our Facebook page. You should check it out, to reminisce about what we have accomplished together. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org

See you next month.



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Looking good in 2015. Thanks to Stephen Mayotte for sharing this great aerial shot.