



## 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, Fax 432-1123**

**Vol. 20 No. 4, April 2017**

**Following the last minute clean up, we opened for visitors on Wednesday, 5 April, right on schedule.** A rainy April didn't stop our tour guides. We trained four new college interns, and they are ready to roll with tours and overnights on their own. We kept busy with tours all month long, including Cub Scout Packs 253, 43, and 33, ten Au Pairs, 28 youngsters from **Pai's Tae Kwon Do, Solid Foundations Home School, Beechwood Retirement Community**, as well as school groups from **Everett High School STEM Academy** from Everett, Massachusetts, and **Hough High School** and **Bailey Middle School** from Cornelius, North Carolina.



Boy Scout Troop 221 was one of several groups that have camped aboard this spring.

**Overnights have also kept us busy.**

We played host to 70 campers as part of our overnight program this month. Troops from Weedsport and Vestal, New York and Pequannock, New Jersey stayed aboard SLATER as "Honorary Crew."

**Chief Art Dott is back to his old tricks, already with two mentions in reviews from our visitors.**

Inga, who visited as part of the Au Pair group said "Was incredible, I recommend this tour to everyone... our tour guide Art really went the extra mile. It was well worth the trip and I hope to do it again sometime soon!"

Scott, from Albany also had nice things to say about Art, "I found the tour to be awesome. I thought Art did a wonderful job and I can't wait to come back." There is some speculation about how Art manages to generate so many positive reviews. One school of thought is that Art is appealing to their sympathy and telling his groups that if they don't give him a good review, he may get "fired." Another theory is that he is just logging on to TripAdvisor under various pseudonyms, and writing his own reviews. However he does it, he keeps them coming back. Intern **Andrew**, in his fourth season here, also was mentioned in a review. Jack from Albany said "Excellent! Our guide, Andrew did a great job! We saw everything, from the captain's quarters to the depth-charge station."



With a little help from his friends, Gary Sheedy got the speaker in the steering gear compartment working.

**Back aft in the Collections Space, Shanna is slowly making some progress.** The collection is now pretty well consolidated in compartment C-203-L and the depth charge magazine. She's got her office set up, all the equipment connected, and archival materials located. Now, to sort through and organize the artifacts! With the ship open for the season, she doesn't have much time during the week to work back there. Tuesdays will be her

day to work back there, and we all know nothing happens on Tuesdays! (Check out *Signals* from September 2016 if you do not understand the reference.)

**Coming up in May volunteer Bob Herbst will give presentations at the Saratoga Senior Center on the 19th and on the 27th he will be at the Schenectady Library.** Also, at the Schenectady Library we will have displays set up honoring SLATER and her history. And Trustee **Alan Fox** will present the program *Saving the Slater* on Wednesday, 21 June at 1730 at the Gloversville Public Library.

**On April 20th the members of our local Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge commemorated the heroism of the "Four Chaplains," for the third year in a row.** The "Four Chaplains," also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains," or the

"DORCHESTER Chaplains," were four United States Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other civilian and military personnel, as the troop ship SS Dorchester sank on February 3, 1943, during World War II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats, and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship. The ship sank in about 20 minutes. Power was lost before distress signals were transmitted, so precious rescue time was lost. The water temperature was 34 °F (1 °C) and the air temperature was 36 °F (2 °C). By the time additional rescue ships arrived, "hundreds of dead bodies were seen floating on the water, kept up by their life jackets." Almost 700 souls were lost in the disaster.



We continue to get great help from the Sailors at NPTU Ballston Spa and NSA Saratoga Springs.

**It's been a month of completions.** The shipfitters, **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Super Dave Mardon, Gene Jackey and Earl Herchenroder**, completed modifying the new watertight door for the galley. They are now working on the deck gear locker. They are modifying another watertight door to replace the wasted door there, and will cut out and replace some wasted steel at the base of the locker. **Boats Haggart** was

"thrilled" when they dumped all his line and deck gear outside and threw a tarp over it. They also fabricated and replaced some wasted handrail on the portside ladder by the galley. **Danny Statile** is back. He's fabricating new stainless steel belaying pin rails for the signal bridge. And **Andy Sheffer** is replacing the stuffing tubes at the secondary conning station.

**After struggling for months with the cooling problem on the B-3 ship's service generator, Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon, Gary Lubrano and Ken Myrick got the repaired heat exchanger and expansion tank reinstalled.** They did an initial 30-minute test run and she ran nice and cool. They made a few adjustments to the thermostat and followed up with a three-hour test run. They had great water flow and





The engineers did a successful test run of the B-3 ship's service generator.



The work float is back in the water.

the engine ran smooth. The next step will be to hook up with the electricians and run it under load.

**Thanks to an assist from Anthony Renna and the Dutch Apple crane, Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart and Tommy Moore, we got the work float back into the water.** They rigged the accommodation ladder over the side for access. The deck gang has a new project going, fabricating the second generation of replica floater nets. WWII floater nets were essentially a cargo net with floats run around the perimeter to create an emergency lifesaving device. The first generation we fabricated were oil boom floats painted black lashed to rope. The sun has deteriorated the Styrofoam floats beyond repair, so we are replacing them with fishnet floats painted black. Boats and Walt are painting and weaving 720 floats into nets to fill the five floater net baskets.

**Back aft, while Barry Witte's students are fabricating the smoke generator tank at Colonie High School, Gary Sheedy is focusing most of his attention on restoring the laundry equipment.** He's in the process of cleaning, polishing and painting the washing machine. He mounted the large exterior style 1MC speaker in the steering gear room. The speaker looked beautiful, but it didn't work. It took several days of troubleshooting with shipmates; they finally found a broken connection in a junction box in sickbay.



NPTU Ballston Spa Sailors repainting the propeller shaft guards in B-4.



The radio gang trouble shooting our RBB receiver.

**The radio gang is back on duty. Joe Breyer, Paul Hintz, Stan Levendowski, and Mike Wyles started working on the RBB receiver.** They powered it up using the emergency connector on the RBB power supply. None of the front panel lights came on, but the tubes got hot. They replaced the panel bulbs and all came on except for the power-on indicator. That was traced to a wire broken off right at the light socket. When they connected a speaker, they got a very welcome white noise hiss, but could not tune in any stations. After exercising the band change and limiter switches for several minutes, they got a very good increase in the hiss when they touched the output of the converter stage, indicating that the audio, detector and IF stages are up and running. The following Saturday Joe brought his tube tester and replaced the bad tubes. The unit is up and running perfectly, nicely matched with the

higher frequency RBC that works well. They are getting geared up for the historic ship's radio weekend.

**Elsewhere around the ship, Steve Klauck took on the task of documenting, checking, and replacing batteries in all our WWII style battle lanterns.** He also lent his IC skills in trying to troubleshoot Gary's 1MC speaker problem. **Bill Holt** has proved himself an adept painter, and got the whole fantail painted out. That was a project that got stopped by the cold weather in the fall. **Tommy Moore** has been sanding on the





Steve Klauck checking battle lanterns as part of getting ready to re-open.

whaleboat. He's reinforcing a crack on the rudder. Unfortunately, he found some softwood in the keel forward. We're waiting for Eric from Scarano's to make an assessment about what kind of repair will be needed. On Sunday, 23 April, the Michigan Chapter of DESA began to arrive for their workweek. This was their 20th year of providing support for the USS SLATER. As always, Chief Smith donated a week of his time to cook for the crew, assisted by Ron Zarem, who served as Smitty's principal messcook. They put on a terrific turkey dinner on the messdecks.

The week started off pretty rainy, so **Ron Zarem** took on repainting the passageway forward of the machine shop. He was assisted by **Scott McFadden** and **Bill Wetterau**. **Barry Witte** had mounted two firehose racks on the bulkhead and it was due for repainting. When the weather cleared, they got the new galley watertight door camouflaged and the new ladder handrails primed.



The Michigan Chapter of DESA joined our crew for their twentieth year of work weeks aboard USS SLATER.





Scott McFadden and Ron Zarem painting the new galley door.

**With an assist from Doug Tanner and Bill Wetterau, Guy Huse finally got the horizontal rotation pin in the gun two sight setter freed up. Ron Mazure** stayed up in the gun shack all week scaling parts for Guy and scaling the areas on the gun that won't be accessible with the sight setter is reinstalled. For his part, Guy Huse has begun to reassemble the sight setter, the first time that parts have started going back on the gun, since he completed disassembly last fall.



Dick Walker gives two thumbs up to Ron Prest as he polishes the wheel for Opening Day.

**Gary Dieckman and Ed Wakeman took on engineering projects.** Gary picked up on a project he had started last fall, the restoration of the B-3 lower level diesel alarm panel. With an assist from Ed, they bolted the restored panel in place on Friday, factory fresh except for the label plates. Ed spent most of the week fabricating a guard for the belt drive on the B-1 compressor. The

engineers recently got that plumbed into the air system so we have a back up LP air compressor.

**Firecontrolmen "Michigan" Dick Walker and Mike Marko started out the week on the flying bridge.** They pulled the deck grating out of the sonar shack and re-installed it for the summer. When the rain stopped they oiled the wood. They re-assembled the sky lookout chairs and re-mounted all the binoculars. They cleaned out the fire control hut and sound shack, and spent the remainder of the week working on the MK-51 directors around the ship to make sure they were free.

**Sadly, I have to report that we lost another shipmate this month. Frank Beeler, a former gunner's mate who served aboard USS SAVANNAH (CL-42) throughout World War II, crossed the bar on April 15, 2017. He volunteered with the gun gang between 2000 and 2006, alongside Chief Dave Floyd, Andy Desorbo and Bob Lawrence. He was aboard SAVANNAH when she was almost sunk by a Nazi glide bomb off Anzio, and told the story of keeping the ship afloat to be drydocked in Malta. He stayed with her through the overhaul and put her back in commission. Toward the end of the decommissioning, he had a chance to get aboard the brand new heavy cruiser ALBANY (CA-123). Impressed with the new ship, Frank asked his division officer for a transfer. When the request was denied, Frank exited the Navy, and pursued a career as a teamster alongside his younger brother Tom. Frank is one of so many who reported aboard when USS SLATER didn't look like she was worth saving, and helped turn her into the monument she is today. Fair winds and following seas, Frank.**



Frank Beeler cleaning recoil springs on gun 41.

**Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.**

**See you next month!**