

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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Despite the lack of running water, Chief Smith continues to keep us fed.

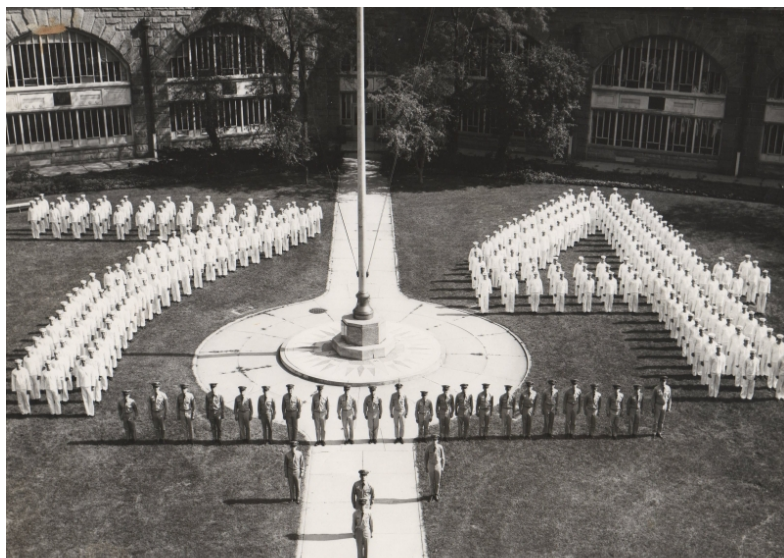
don't like to use salt for corrosives, because we want this deck to outlive us. We do use salt on the gangway, and the observation deck ashore.

SureFoot is great stuff, but the downside of using it is that it gets tracked all through the ship. The fact that we have no running water this time of year, means filthy, streaked and gritty decks are something we just have to live with until spring. We take a lot of pride in our housekeeping aboard SLATER, and the fact that we can't keep the ship up to our summertime standards just adds to the general malaise of trying to survive an Albany winter.

In the winter time, slippery, ice-coated decks are a real problem.

Especially when you look at how many of our volunteers are over eighty. One part of the solution is something that Frank Lasch thought of many years ago. He purchased 200 ft. of coco mat that we roll down on the main deck in the wintertime. However, at times the ice and snow forms right over the coco mat. At that point, we spread around a limestone-based product called "SureFoot." We

That's doesn't seem to affect the volunteers, though. Last Saturday, we had twenty-



Together again after 48 years. New volunteer Carl Camurati and I posed together as freshman at Ft Schuyler in August of 1974. I think it was engineers on the left and deckies on the right. Can you find us?

five bodies aboard. We had three new volunteers report aboard, and it looks like they may stick around a while. **Rich Mouzakes** was an YN3 in the Navy, and a retired social worker. Lord knows, we could use some social work around here. Rich has fallen right in with the group that needs social work the most, Tanner's shipfitters. **Rich Wallace** took the tour, and decided he wanted to get involved. A former Army radar technician, Rich made his career

in technical journalism. Since he's old enough to know what a vacuum tube is, he has started his SLATER career working with **Don Cushman**, sorting out tubes in the electronics workshop. The third member of the new trio is **Carl Camurati**. Carl and I have a great deal in common, in that we were both SUNY Maritime College dropouts and, in an amazing coincidence, we would have been in the same class, the class of 1974. Carl made four semesters as an engineering cadet, while I made five as a deckie. Carl turned to professional photography, while I ended up spending forty years on ships that don't go anywhere. If I can pry Carl away from **Boats Haggart**, I'm going to try and get him to work with the engineers, or have him straighten out the machine shop.

So many things are interconnected around here. Thinking towards spring, I was poking around the radio shack about a month ago, bemoaning the mass of electronics paraphernalia that has accumulated there over the past year. I was thinking that it was time to do some housekeeping, but where to move them all? The logical choice was the electronics shop, below the messdeck, but that was already chockablock with boxes of vacuum tubes. In an inspirational moment, I thought of emailing tour guide and retired ICC **Don Cushman** about straightening out the ET shop. Don agreed, and teamed up with new volunteer **Rich Wallace**. They made considerable progress, dumped a lot of trash, and created a lot more space down there. They were just in the nick of time, as radioman **Joe Breyer** dropped in to fulfill a promise he'd made to the Oneonta Ham Radio Club. They were having a field day, and he had said he'd come down and make



New volunteer Rich Wallace and Chief Don Cushman have tackled cleaning out the electronics shop.



Rich Mouzakes and Dave Mardon working on the void scuttle.

radio contact from SLATER. Having some time to kill, I asked Joe if he'd mind stacking anything that he didn't want in the radio room by the door. Then I'd get it moved below.

A couple hours later, Joe's pile was so high you could hardly get through the door. Modern ham radios, speakers, insulators, amplifiers, vacuum tubes, books, a claw hammer, meggers, meters, and even some parts from an engine order telegraph. I was fortunate that the following Monday I had a full crew on hand to move everything below, otherwise **Jo Ann** wouldn't have been able to get into the code room to post your donations. **Boats Haggart, Don, Rich, and Chuck** hauled everything below. The tubes and bit parts went into the ET shop for sorting. The big stuff was crammed into a magazine we use more for larger pieces of electronic gear. The

claw hammer is now hanging in the shop, and I'm still trying to figure out where to put the EOT parts.

However, most of the activity has been in berthing space C-202-L. In the summer of 1944, SLATER was assigned to Key West as a target ship for the TBM torpedo bomber squadrons. The exercise torpedoes were supposed to be set to go under the keel, but things didn't always go as planned, and the logbooks recorded several hits by dummy torpedoes. On the starboard side of the aft crew compartment, all the bunk lockers were



Larry Williams and Karl Herchenroder at work in the aft engine room.

out of alignment and the sheet metal warped from the hull plating being pushed in. **Doug Tanner** and his team, **Tim Benner**, **Dave Mardon**, **Gene Jackey**, and **Andy Sheffer** have been cutting away the warped sheet metal, and fitting in new steel to straighten out the lockers. **Danny Statile** has tackled two wasted void hatches, and the wasted perforated deck in the aft cross passageway.



Doug Tanner cutting metal for the bunk locker repair.

Gary Sheedy, **Barry Witte**, and **Barry's team of students, midshipmen, and Sailors** have been tackling the electrical issues. Barry ran Internet service to Shanna's computer in the supply office with armored cable. They've cleaned and straightened the aft overhead wire ways, too. **Ken Powers** removed a lot of post-WWII-era piping. **Patrick Madden** assisted Barry and **Xhoni Kulira** in re-running the fire alarm wiring in shipboard

armored cable, as well as working on the battle lanterns. They also identified original locations for fire hose racks and restored them. **Ken Powers** learned to weld, and filled in holes in the overhead stringer beams where piping had been removed.

Progress continues on the smoke screen system. Off site, over in Connecticut, our volunteer machinist, **George Christophersen**, has been doing some amazing work for us. He's been fabricating parts for the smoke generator including the combustion chamber viewport. He's also been restoring spent 40mm ammo cartridges and



Our master off site machinist, George Christophersen.

machining projectiles for them. George is an old Tin Can Sailor who served in USS BEATTY DD-756. We are most fortunate to have a machinist with his skill as a part of the restoration team.

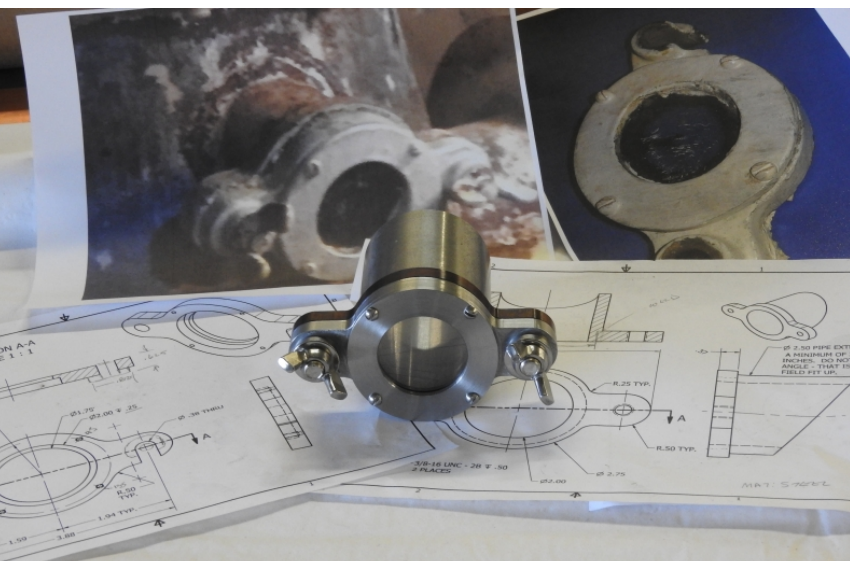
Gary Sheedy continues to make progress with the restoration of the aft officers' stateroom. Both **Gary and Thomas Scian**

reinsulated the outboard bulkhead and overhead. Gary's also had **Nate Shakerley** restoring the stateroom furniture. Elsewhere around the ship, fighting the weather, **Guy Huse** continues to make progress on the restoration of the Gun 31 sightsetter disassembly. NPTU volunteers have also been rewiring the display lighting in CIC. **Danny Statile** completed the fabrication and installation of an accumulator in the forward crews' head, so the commode will flush properly. The engineers, **Karl, Mike, Gary and Larry Williams** have been

working on pyrometers and a work bench in B-3. **Chief Smith** cooks, **Jim Gelston**

winds the clocks, and Coastie **Dick Walker** is always available to pick up supplies.

Even though we are closed to the public, this month has been steadily busy for the Collections and Education department. On the 18th, **Alan Fox** was at the Beltrone Living Center in Colonie, giving a presentation about SLATER and her life in WWII, in the Hellenic Navy, as well as her restoration as the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum. On the 27th, **Will Trevor** was welcomed at Gloversville Public Library for a



George's completed smoke generator sight glass



Will Trevor at the Groversville Public Library for a presentation on the Battle of the Atlantic.

presentation on the Battle of the Atlantic. Exploring the longest battle of WWII, Will led his audience on a journey of discovery and realization of the importance of stopping German U-Boats. We also hosted **Laura Berning**, and our old friend **Debby Goedeke**, from the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau aboard. **Laura** was scouting Albany locations for the Governor's Film Office. She wanted to have some photographs on their website, as possible locations for all of our potential filmmakers.



Shanna Hopson finally has some time to devote to the collection.

We have four presentations coming up in February. Art Dott will spend the 14th with the men at Normanside Country Club, in Delmar, talking about that special lady in our lives, USS SLATER. On the 15th, **Alan** will be presenting to the Senior Companions in Saratoga. **Charles Starks** has a double header at the end of the month with the presentation of "Heroes All Around Us" on the 23rd at the Senior Center in Saratoga, and on Post cards have gone out to senior maker's Bureau, and the presentations

Interpretation Coordinator Shanna Hopson has sent out letters informing area libraries of our Museum Pass program. If your library doesn't participate and should,




Cathy Wheat has started making up the bunks for spring.

let us know and we'll get a letter out to them. The pass can be checked out from the library, and is good for 2 adults and 2 children to tour SLATER for free, during our regular season. We sold 53 passes last season and it would sure be nice to surpass that goal. Shanna has also sent out postcards to scout groups, informing them about our Overnight Program. We are starting to book the overnights now, and would love to hear from all of our scout friends for this one-of-a-kind experience.

The inventory of the Ship's Store, both ashore and aboard, was completed, tour guide refresher lunch scheduled, and work continued on the SLATER's STEM tour, which will be offered to groups this season. Another project Shanna is planning is a children's lesson for schools and libraries. In this lesson, the kids will learn about different types of naval ships, their different jobs, and what role destroyer escorts played in WWII. They'll learn about Dazzle Camouflage, color their own ship, and give it a hero's name.

In the collections space, things are moving right along. Shanna and Gary have formulated a plan for displaying artifacts on the existing racks. It is a slow process, but we are progressing every day. Shanna has attended a couple of webinars online, to learn what's new in the preservation game. On the 11th, she learned about Preservation in Exhibits, and learned how to display artifacts without damaging them in the process. The next week, she watched another that focused on how to handle objects "found in the collection," something she deals with on a daily basis while working back aft.

On January 8th, we celebrated Clark's ninety-sixth birthday. We had a full turnout from the crew to honor this man, who has been one of our most dedicated volunteers since the SLATER arrived in Albany twenty years ago. Due to the ice on the decks, we chose to have this event in our shoreside briefing room. We had a visual presentation on

 our wide screen television of over 100 images of Clark volunteering aboard the SLATER with his shipmates, many of whom are no longer with us. We served sandwiches, potato salad, and punch, as well as the traditional hot coffee.

When everyone left the briefing room to go back to work, Clark had no desire to leave, and lingered for a couple hours, chatting with Tony Esposito, Thomas Scian, and assorted friends who stopped to spend some time with our legendary Chief Shipfitter. He really looked like he was enjoying it all. All the way home he couldn't stop talking about the "best birthday party I ever had." It was a very special event for Clark and the SLATER. Clark is one helluva guy. We never imagined it would mean so much to him.

Finally, all this progress happens because of your Winter Fund and Restoration donations. We are already at 80% of our Winter Fund goal of \$70,000, thanks to your generosity. We are completely confident that if your donations keep coming in at the present rate, we will meet or even exceed our goal by spring. We couldn't do it without you. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates. See you next month!



The gang gathered to honor Clark Farnsworth on his 96th birthday.