

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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Vol. 24 No. 8, August 2021



I can't believe how fast the summer has gone by. The biggest news of the month was the receipt of a **\$10,000 Thomas J. Peltin Grant from Tin Can Sailors**. The destroyer veterans group supports the restoration of the destroyer museum ships around the country. We are most grateful that we are now included in the program. The money will be utilized this year to match our Save America's Treasures Grant. This will enable the abatement, restoration, and repainting of all the forward tour spaces, including Officer's Country, the entire second deck forward, and the muffler room



Beautiful ship on a beautiful day.



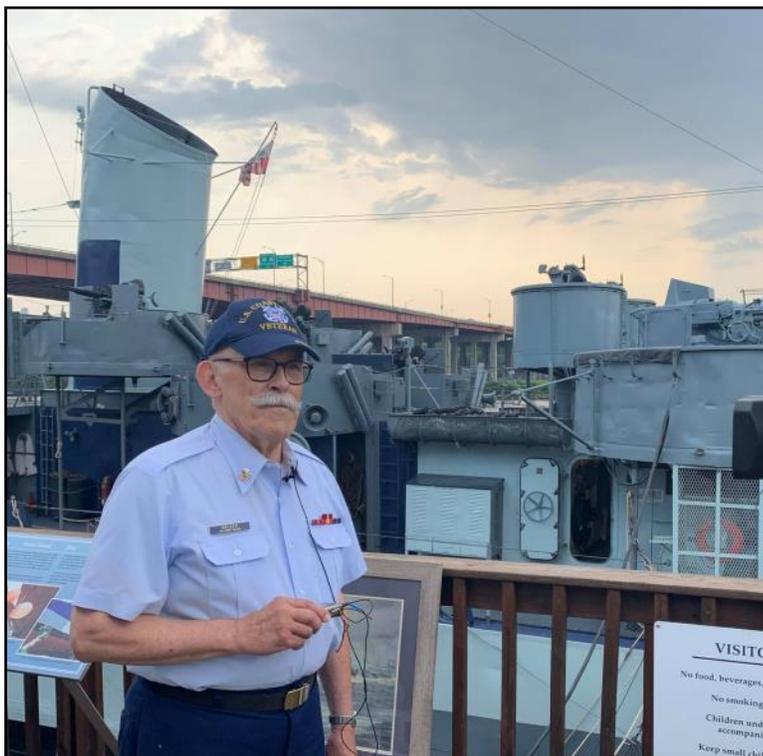
Many Coast Guard Auxiliary officials joined us for our celebration!

this winter. This is especially significant to me since I met **Tom Peltin** and gave him a personal tour aboard USS JOSEPH P. KENNEDY Jr. in 1978. KENNEDY was a sister to his own beloved USS EPPERSON (DDE-719) and we became good friend before his tragic and untimely passing from pancreatic cancer many years ago.

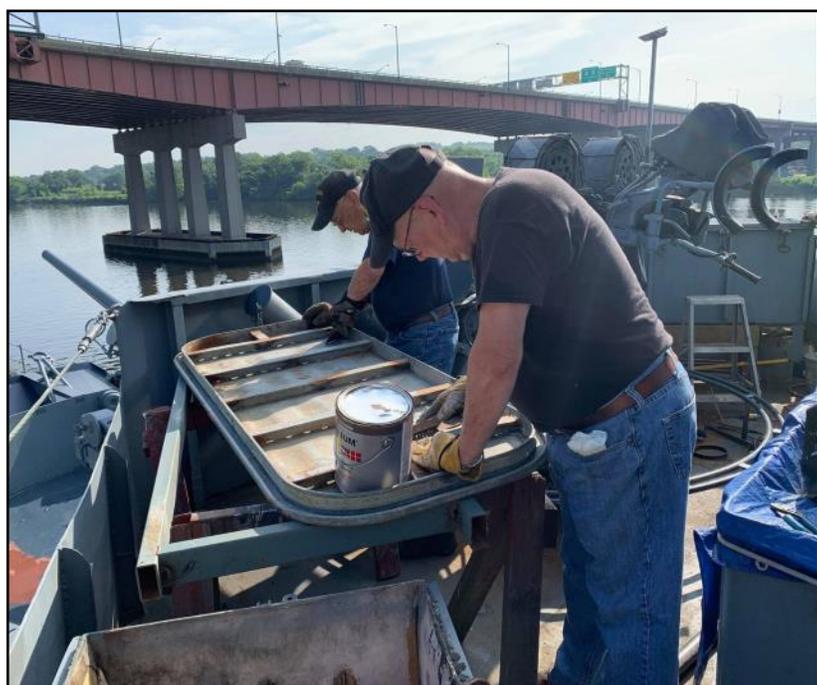
This month we celebrated the Coast Guard's

Birthday. The 231st Birthday of the U.S. Coast Guard was on 4 August, but we held our commemoration on Saturday, 7 August 2021, which coincided with the 79th anniversary of the Guadalcanal Landings in 1942. Once again, **Charlie Poltenson, Grant Hack, and Dick Walker** did a great job of organizing the event and arranging for the participation of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Our favorite master of ceremonies, Steve Long, welcomed all the guests. We recognized the Coast Guard vets and Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel present. **Dick Walker** presented a brief history of the Coast Guard, and the Medal of Honor recipient, SM1 **Douglas A. Munro's** story. **Shanna** made sure to ask **St. Pius Boy Scout Troop 1078** to post the colors for the ceremony and the **Pitch Hitters Quartet of Racing City Chorus** to perform the National Anthem, and the Coast Guard Marching Song, Semper



Dick Walker was instrumental in making our Coast Guard Birthday ceremony a success.



Super Dave and Warren are working on restoring a watertight door.

Paratus. **Charlie Poltenson** followed with the accomplishments of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. After the ceremony, the birthday cake was cut and refreshments were served, prior to opening for visitors. Thanks to all who made this ceremony possible.

The maintenance crew has multiple projects going as the month closes. Doug, Dave, Chuck, Warren, Danny, Earl, Benner, and Andy continue to cut and weld metal. Both of the 02 level 20mm ready service boxes have been restored and are back in position.



Doug Tanner made this new grating for a life raft.

aft of the stack. **Bill Holt** broke off from the crew and is working on scaling and repainting the deck around gun 32, forward of the superstructure.

A couple of wood working projects are underway too. The grating from raft four has rotted out, so **Doug Tanner** took it upon himself to make a new one. By SLATER standards, this was completed in record time, and is now curing, prior to painting. **Bill Wetterau** was going to repair one of our wooden hedgehog replicas. He found the body so rotted that he took it home for a complete rebuild.

The fantail box is completely rebuilt and ready for reinstallation.

The starboard 02 level watertight door has been hung and Doug is making final adjustments. Gary Sheedy, Thomas Scian, and Bill Wetterau completed the restoration and reassembly of the galley natural intake vents on the 01 level. **Danny** has completed the restoration of his first depth charges. Having struggled with the metalwork involved for six months, his plan for the second repair is to fill it with closed cell foam and fiberglass cloth. It should be a lot lighter.

Thomas, Bill Holt, and Bill Wetterau finished painting the amidships 20mm gun tubs. They are now working on needle-scaling and repainting the 01 level,



Gary is working on repairing the fans one by one.

As usual, Gary Sheedy has several projects going. He got into the restoration of the compartment fans, following the scandal that resulted from the disappearance of the scullery fan. He purchased several new fan motors, and has slowly been replacing old compartment fans with rebuilt ones around the ship. He's also engaged in re-piping the fuel filter system for our heating furnace in the muffler room.

Always planning ahead, now that we have the anchor windlass brake back in operation, Gary is trying to diagram the most efficient and safest way to raise and lower the whaleboat. Thanks to Ed Zajkowski, he has access to the original rigging plans. He's studied all the video and photos of our past evolutions, and since we don't do it enough to get good at it, we never do it the same way twice. Gary, in his infinite wisdom, is trying to develop a standard procedure that we can pass down to the next



Walt and Boats repairing rope fenders.

generation.



The crew bringing the whaleboat in.

Walt Stuart continues to do our weekly Monday morning wash down. He and Boats Haggart have been repairing old rope fenders in the heat of the Bosun's Locker. Tommy Moore continues to keep the whaleboat clean and tidy, as Mike Dingmon and Larry Williams continue to exercise it. When the river reached high water from Hurricane Henri, we ended up with a mass of debris jammed up ahead of the whaleboat. This included logs, vegetation, and a

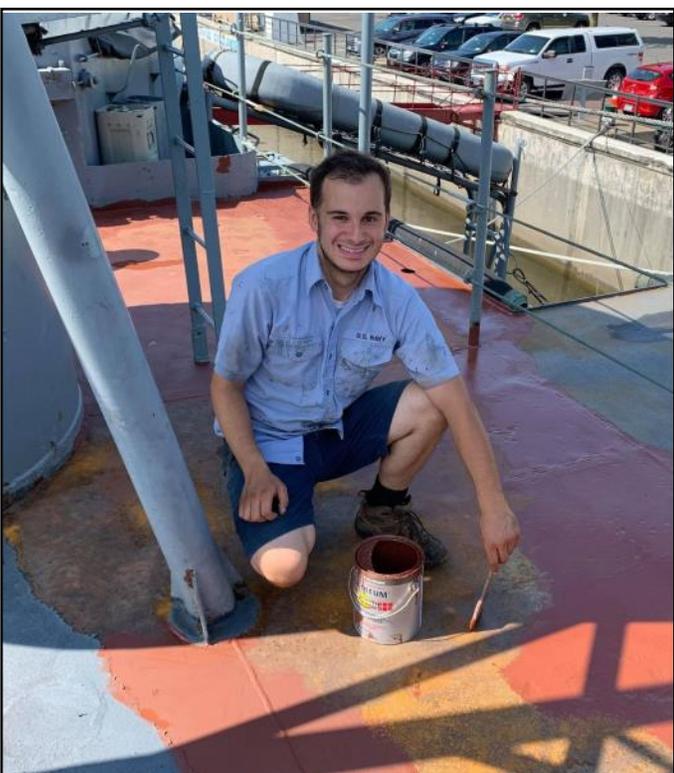
dead possum. We had to re-moor the whaleboat astern of the paint float, and it took us half a day to push all of the debris downstream, where it became somebody else's problem. Sorry about that, **Anthony**.

Up in the radio shack, Chuck Chandler and Steve Syrotynski have the RBB receiver up and running again. Steve has also repaired the modern iCom 765 transceiver, and it is back on watch, covering our SSB frequency of 14262. Steve has already worked both Argentina and Texas with it. With that offline, Chuck has been operating some CW on the K2 transceiver, and then switching to voice, and using the RBC to keep watch on the CW portion. In addition, we are keeping watch



Jo Ann continues to serve lunch on Mondays.

on the local FM simplex channel.



Thomas painting away.

Chuck is also working on one of the 21MC intercom units. He was able to locate 5 out of the 6 needed tubes for the 21MC in Radio Central. USS Slater Radio worked Indiana, Illinois, and Florida, as well as the Rock of Gibraltar on Morse Code. It also worked a mobile crossing the Hudson River, well south of us on FM. In addition, Steve brought over another box of donated tubes. We will test them and place them in storage as time allows. The CW watch was delayed, due to a bad connection in a patch cable, which Steve has taken home to repair. After starting on the starboard vertical with no luck, he moved to the port vertical, and worked stations in Colorado and Tennessee. It looks like the starboard vertical will need

some connections cleaned outside.

We had a pleasant surprise when Jerry Jones stopped by to visit. One of our original Albany radiomen, it was **Jerry, Don Bulger, and Joe Breyer** who did all the original restoration work and turned a dark, gutted, compartment that was the Radio Room, into one of the most authentically restored spaces on the ship. This included locating all of the original equipment that the ship would have had in 1945. Health concerns have kept Jerry from remaining active, but he continues to follow our exploits on Facebook.



Angelo is stenciling life jackets with the names of SLATER's original crew members.

Angelo Bracco is progressing well with his life jacket memorial project. His plan is to stencil the names of USS SLATER World War II crewmembers in the kapok life jackets, so these sailors will be remembered aboard their ship. Angelo is starting with sailors who's families are members and are on our mailing list. So, if you have a relative who served aboard USS SLATER in World War II, email us his name, so we can check him against our records and add him to the list.



We are looking for new volunteers to help Mike in the Engine Room!

Our lone engineer, Mike Dingmon, needs a friend. At one time, we had five volunteer engineers aboard USS SLATER. We are now down to one, Mike. The engineers have done a beautiful cosmetic restoration on the aft machinery spaces and have two diesel generators operational. But the fear is that if Mike doesn't get some help, the spaces may fall into disrepair, and the



Liam and his tour inside the Pilot House.

work they have done over the last 20 years will be lost. We had seven responses to our Facebook ad by people who are available on Mondays, when Mike works. These are people who live in the Capital District, know diesel engines, and don't mind cleaning, painting, and getting dirty in engine spaces. We're hoping Mike won't be alone for too much longer.

Our education crew is getting a bit of a breather after a very hectic July, but August proved to be busy still with over 2,200 visitors. 36 of these visitors participated in SLATER's

Overnight Program from North Rockland High School's JRROTC. **Austin and Liam** lead the crew on a tour, served dinner and breakfast, and stood fire watch for the night.

Austin lead a virtual tour of SLATER to a group of senior citizens located near Albany, in Latham. Through this tour many people who cannot take the "normal" tour up and down the ladders can finally see the ship and hear all the accompanying stories that are shared during one's visit to SLATER. **John** also gave a virtual tour this month. He crossed the country on the 25th to give a virtual tour to the Navy League in Portland, Oregon. The leader of the group wrote **Shanna** and said "**John** provided a superb online tour of USS SLATER for our Portland-Blueback Navy League today. Much appreciated! I was so impressed with the tour that I donated \$100 just now. Thanks **John**, Happy Sailing!" We are so excited to be able to share our ship with people across the country! If you are interested in booking a Virtual Tour, don't hesitate to contact **Shanna**.



Carl showing off a life raft to his tour group.

Speaking of Shanna, back in 2018, I taught her to run the whaleboat, just in case she ever needed to in an emergency. This month she decided she hadn't been out in the boat since, and maybe she should refresh her memory. With just a little help she got the boat started and was able to run it, with **Jo Ann, Austin, and Cassidy** for a quick tour up and down Albany's waterfront. It's good to know she's able to run it if we ever need her to.

By now you know that our Podcast, **DE Classified**, is exploring a different destroyer escort every month. John featured USS LEOPOLD DE-319 in July and we received a note from **Lee Price**. "I was very impressed with the podcast episode USS LEOPOLD. I'm **Pete Cone's** niece. I am so pleased to have hear some (three?) of his letters read by the wonderful narrator. Thank you for your careful attention to Pete's artifacts we sent to you." In mid-August we released episode 4, about USS RICHARD



Jo Ann, Cassidy, Austin, and Shanna took the whaleboat out on a Tuesday.

M. ROWELL DE-403. This episode, researched, written, recorded, and edited by **Cassidy**, features the fascinating story of ROWELL. She takes us through the Battle of the Coral Sea with ROWELL's namesake, then into instances of Friendly Fire during WWII, and finally a deep dive into ROWELL's Punishment Log. You can find all the episodes on our website (<https://usslater.org/de-classified>) or wherever you download podcasts. You'll want to make sure you are caught up before September's episode with **Austin** featuring the wild adventures of USS BUCKLEY.



Check out the DE Classified episode featuring USS RICHARD M. ROWELL.

Finally, we were honored to be asked by The Brotherhood of the Arctic

Allied Convoys in St. Petersburg, and the cruiser HMS BELFAST in London, to participate in a special ceremony, the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the first Allied convoy to arrive in Murmansk, on 31 August 1941. This was known as the “Dervish Convoy,” and is being celebrated in Russia as “Dervish 80.” The commemoration was done through video greetings, and having all participants toll their ship’s bells 16 times. The bell tolling was based on an old Russian tradition of marking the New Year with 8 strokes rung by an old man, and another 8 rung by the youngest in the crew. The ceremonies were arranged simultaneously with the bell ringing ceremonies held on 31st August, at 6 p.m. (Moscow), 4 p.m. (UK), and 11 a.m. (USA and Canada).

Though USS SLATER never participated in the arctic convoys, we are honored to be included as a Battle of the Atlantic veteran. Other ships on this side of the Atlantic that participated include, USS STEWART, USS TEXAS, the Brazilian destroyer escort BAURU, and the Canadian ships HAIDA and SACKVILLE. We prepared our video presentation honoring those who made the sacrifices on the Arctic Convoys. That video is available on the USS SLATER Youtube page. The Sailors are all gone, and only a few of the ships remain. May the spirit of the maritime brotherhood outlast our lives.

See you next month!

Tim



Danny, Matt, Dick, Larry, and Art helped us ring the bell to remember the sailors who served in the Arctic Convoys, on the 80th Anniversary of the first convoy arriving in Murmansk.