

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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I must start by saying how incredibly grateful we are for your support of our Winter Fund Drive. To date we have collected almost \$55,000 in donations, to carry us through another winter. This amount does not count the Restoration, Endowment, and Save America's Treasures Grant match donations we continue to receive. Thanks to your support, we remain "Moored as before, port side to Albany Snow Dock, Hudson River, in Albany, New York. Eight lines doubled and six wires. Plant remains very cold iron. Taking all utilities from shore."



Danny is all set for welding this winter.



Doug continues to cook breakfast. Super Dave continues to be first in line to eat.

Immediately after closing for visitation, the crew got to work, preparing the ship for the winter. Ventilation access doors and panels were secured. The heating system was checked before the winter weather set in. We evaluated the antifreeze and topped it off, with a note to ourselves that we should change out the liquid in the spring. It's been there for 24 years. We purchased new canvas covers for the three inch and 40mm guns, and covered them for the season. Danny rigged his tarp, so he could weld

outside with a windbreak.

The aft crew's head has been converted into a workshop. Sawhorses were moved in, and the pilothouse starboard watertight door set upon them. This will ensure **Super Dave** can work in comfort, out of the bitter cold. The doors for the battery locker, and a load of hedgehog projectiles were also crammed into the space, in anticipation of restoration over the coming months.

The bulk of our work has been focused on the contract restoration that will take place on the main deck and second deck forward, funded by the Save America's Treasures Grant.

In preparation for restoration and repainting, all of the bedding and officer's curtains have been removed, and will be dry cleaned over the winter. **Gary Sheedy**



Super Dave has turned the aft head into a workshop.

and **Thomas Scian** supervised the removal of the bunks, chains, and mattresses in forward berthing, so hopefully they will remember how it goes back together. All the bunks were stored in the forward crew's head and the anchor windlass room. All pillows and life jackets were stored on the messdecks, as well as the mattresses from officer's country.

All the artifacts in the wardroom and officer's country were boxed up and labeled by Cathy Wheat and John Epp, and stored in the aft berthing spaces. We are continuing to mask all of our compartment labels, condition tags, electrical panels, and compartment



Mattresses from forward berthing are being stored in the forward crew's head.



Barry Witte supervised several Midshipmen projects, including working on the wardroom 1MC speaker.

advantage and needle scaled the overheads, and removed and replaced all the beat-up insulation board that had been hidden by the ductwork. We found several areas that had never been properly needle scaled when we did the initial restoration, so these have been addressed. The fact is that the last time these areas were painted was when we had the fire in January of 2006, so they are past due for freshening up.

Contract work is planned to start on January 10th. We are indebted to **Doug Tanner**, as well as **Gianna Aiazza** and **Joe Braun** of **Environspec Engineering**, for helping us navigate through the complexities of the National Park Service bid and contracting process.

fans, so these areas will be ready when the contractors begin work.

There came a debate about two ventilation ducts that ran through forward berthing on the second deck, to the old CPO head. Barry Witte determined that these were not original, and had been added to provide additional ventilation to the Chief's head. One can readily understand why that would be a priority. After a great deal of discussion, it was decided to remove the ductwork and the topside vents. **Andy Sheffer** was assigned that task.

Removal of the ductwork now provided ready access to areas of the overhead that had been inaccessible for years. Gary and Thomas took this



The shipfitters continued ductwork removal in the CPO passageway.

They have maintained excellent communication with our Park Service representative, **Lyndsey Alston**, and are making sure that the administrative requirements of the grant are managed properly.

Aside from the contract work forward, the crew will continue the restoration of the old inert hedgehog projectiles that were donated to us several years ago by **Peter Papadakos**. Several of these are missing their tail sections, and **Danny Statile** has plans to fabricate new tail sections. When restored, these will go on display on the hedgehog projector. The wooden replicas that are now on display are deteriorating from being out in the weather, so these will be moved inside to the hedgehog magazine. The shipfitters are also continuing restoration of the battery locker on the portside maindeck aft, and the bridge watertight doors.



"This ductwork isn't original to the ship, so it's coming out."



We always need a plan and Doug always has one.

Down in engineering, **Mike Dingmon** has been keeping his crew busy with an oil cooler changeout. Below the deck plates, in a project that started back in early October, **James Miles** has made a survey of the four machinery space bilges, prior to removing any water or oil that has been collecting against the shell plating. Initially, oil was spotted in large pools in all compartments, except for the forward motor room, B-2. The pools were large enough for you to see your reflection when you looked down. James's goal is to

let any water trapped under the oil film evaporate out, but also to eventually get people in there to paint the bilge, work on any plumbing present, and allow maintenance to get in there and monitor the thickness of the hull where it is most vulnerable.

After a couple of months' worth of vacuuming and laying down oil absorbing pads, we are finally done with the oil seepage. Now we are just letting the oil mats pick up the residual oil that is in corners where the vacuum or James cannot fit. James foresees the oil absorbent mats as being a regular maintenance item, as both operational diesels, the 8-cylinder engine in B-3 and the 3 cylinder in B-4 will continue to leak coolant and oil into the bilge, because of the age to these engines and our inability to do



James Miles continues his important work cleaning the bilges.

complete overhauls.

Going forward, we are looking to clean the bilges with detergent to remove residual oil, and then repainting with our standard Rustoleum Rusty Metal Primer. James estimates that fifty gallons of oil have been removed from the bilges. When we look at long term preservation, this is some of the most critical work that is going on. We are indebted to James and the rest of the Engineers for accepting this challenge.

It's a lot cleaner up in the radio shack, where Chuck Chandler, Steve Syrotynski, and



The Engineers continued the oil cooler change out.

Rich Gallagher have continued to make progress.

Steve and Chuck were able to finally remove the faulty tuning control assembly from the TBL transmitter. The binding in the tuning was in the turns counter, as the tuning coil itself turns easily now. Steve took the counter home and got it working smoothly.

A second problem in the TBL Transmitter was a failure in the power supply, but an easy fix. Steve ordered parts, and as soon as they come in, the radio gang should be able to evaluate the TBL. Rich Gallagher was aboard, and spent some time testing donated tubes, so we know they will be usable when we place them in storage. Chuck continues to promote the project by making Ham contacts. This month he worked stations in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.



"They promised me that these hedgehogs were inert."



Steve repaired the binding in the turns counter.

Our Sunday duty officer, John Epp, has joined the full-time team and assumed duties as Curator. John is the type of guy who enjoys reading deck logs for recreational reading. As soon as tours wrapped up, he immediately began cataloguing and packing up Officers' Country and the Wardroom, in preparation for our Save America's Treasures Grant restoration work. Anything that was not nailed down has been moved aft for safekeeping, until they can be returned. He's going to continue the work he did last winter, and get the Collections Space in even better condition, ready for you all to visit next season.



Walt Stuart and Bill Wetterau got the three-inch guns covered for the winter.

Donations to the museum's collection continue to find a new home aboard SLATER. Recently, we were fortunate to add artifacts from USS STAFFORD (DE-411). These pieces belonged to Lt. (jg) Carl H. Williams, USNR, and were donated by his son, Peter Williams. STAFFORD served proudly in the Pacific for the duration of the war, escorting convoys from August 1944 through the war's end. On 5 January 1945, the destroyer escort was part of Task Force 77, in the vicinity of Manila Bay, when eight Japanese planes launched a surprise attack. Four of the planes targeted TULAGI (CVE-72) and her three

escorts STAFFORD, GOSS (DE-444), and ULVERT M. MOORE (DE-442). Three of the enemy planes were splashed, but a fourth was able to puncture the wall of anti-aircraft fire and crash into STAFFORD's starboard side. The kamikaze punctured her hull and opened two of her machinery spaces to the sea. The abandon ship order was issued, and her crewmembers, with the exception of a nucleus crew, were transferred to ULVERT M. MOORE. Her remaining crew was able to prevent the ship from succumbing to the sea, and she eventually made her way to Leyte for repairs. Two crew members were killed in the attack, and twelve injured.

Other projects this month include identifying a second compartment to store our growing collection. Thousands of artifacts have been donated to the museum since SLATER returned to the United States nearly 3 decades ago. As we accumulate more to tell the story of destroyer escorts and honor their crews, space is becoming limited. Currently, the



The RPI Midshipmen helped to cover the forties for the winter.

depth charge magazine, below Crew's Berthing C-203L, houses our collection. A possible candidate to become a second storage space is the Emergency Provisions Storeroom C-307A.

Additionally, John has begun researching a new exhibit in our museum space, to honor the African American sailors who served mainly as stewards aboard destroyer escorts. USS MASON (DE-529) was one of only two warships to be crewed predominately by African American crewmembers. *Proudly We Served* by Mary Pat Kelly offers an excellent account of this historic ship.



Walt masked the compartment fans in preparation for future spray painting.

December would not be complete without our annual Christmas Party. On Monday, the 13th of December, former Board President, **Tony Esposito**, treated us to lunch, **Cathy Wheat** put up the tree, and **Jo Ann** and **Shanna** helped to set the food and tables up. Traditionally, we hold the party in the mess deck, but with preparations for the interior restoration underway, we had to move the party to shore. Shanna and Jo Ann spent Monday morning trying to figure out how to fit thirty-five people and food comfortably in the

classroom and the store. At 1100, after back and forth between inside and out, Jo Ann made the final decision to move the party outside where we could all sit together as the sun had come out and it was around 50 degrees. We quickly gathered a group to help move all the tables out, and we decked the halls from the SLATER wood deck. Tony led us through the annual carols. We are incredibly lucky to have the volunteers that we have, and that we are able to come together and celebrate!

Shanna had a busy month of wrapping up our season and filling the store orders that came in online. Your support of our Ship's Store has been



Cathy trimmed the tree!



Jo Ann passed out gift bags for the volunteers!

group tours and overnights from both years, 2021 is within 1,000 people of 2019. So, its not as bad as it looks! Thank you everyone for your support and coming to visit.

Our Education Volunteers had a very busy season conducting tours, and some of them take the winters off, but many of them participate in our Speaker's Bureau. They will travel (or present virtually) to Libraries, Schools, Group Homes, or any other group. We have many presentations to choose from, from the History of SLATER, to the Battle of Leyte Gulf and Taffy 3. We are now offering a virtual tour of the ship, with a guide who can answer all your questions in real time. Most presentations are around an hour in length, including questions, but can be customized to fit your needs. There is a suggested donation to the museum for each presentation.

Our tenth episode of our podcast, DE Classified went live this month! USS BASSETT DE-672/APD-73 made her mark on history when her crew saved 150 sailors from the worst sea disaster in U.S. Naval history. Her crew has been denied medals and

amazing this season, our sales are up 64% from 2019! Remember that every dollar earned through the store goes directly back to the restoration of SLATER!

Shanna also compiled all kinds of stats about our season's attendance. 11,964 people toured the decks of SLATER in 2021. This is about three thousand less visitors than our 2019 season (the last "normal" season), but this can be explained by the lack of overnight campers and group tours that were not possible in 2021. If we subtract the totals from



Tony led the crew in carols at our annual Christmas Lunch.

recognition because of a “deal” made with the Navy. Many of the BASSETT crewmembers are fine without the medals because they know the heroism that took place that night. Now, its time you know too. [Give it a listen!](#)

For the next three months, your donations will be our primary source of income. If you enjoy the history you read about here, as well as our Facebook posts, and want to support the SLATER Volunteers, please consider donating to our Winter Fund Drive. You can click the button on the top of our home page here: www.ussslater.org Donors who give \$25

or more will receive a subscription to our print quarterly newsletter, TRIM BUT DEADLY. It's thirty-six pages packed with DE history and photographs. To all of you who have donated, words can't express our thanks. And to those of you who haven't contributed, please consider a donation to help keep a volunteer warm this winter.

See you next month!

Tim



We had quite the load of scrap metal for Dick Walker to run to the scrap yard.



**Happy New Year from the
USS Slater-A/T Aetos Crew**