

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

Vol. 24 No. 7, July 2021



Not much ever turns up missing around here. That's not to say that things often get misplaced, but usually, everything eventually turns up. So, when something disappears and doesn't turn up, it's a cause for concern. **Barry Witte** had that problem when a battle lantern disappeared from the aft motor room. We have several spare battle lanterns in storage. So why would one disappear from the aft motor room? The space is not even on the regular tour route. And when a visitor chooses to pay for the engine room tour, they are always with an escort. So where did the battle lantern go?



Who did it?

The case of the scullery bulkhead

fan is even stranger. Years ago, when we stripped parts off the old USS GAGE APA-168, we took every compartment fan we could get our hands on. There was only one problem. GAGE

was a direct current ship, so using the fans required installing a small inverter, to make them functional. But, for a non-functioning display, they were perfect beautiful antiques.

So, back in 2012, when we restored the messdeck area for the second time, we found the mount for a bulkhead fan in the scullery. The mount matched perfectly with one of the GAGE DC fans, so we cleaned one up and bolted it in place. It wasn't functional, but it was a nice display detail.



Chan with his tour group on the quarterdeck.

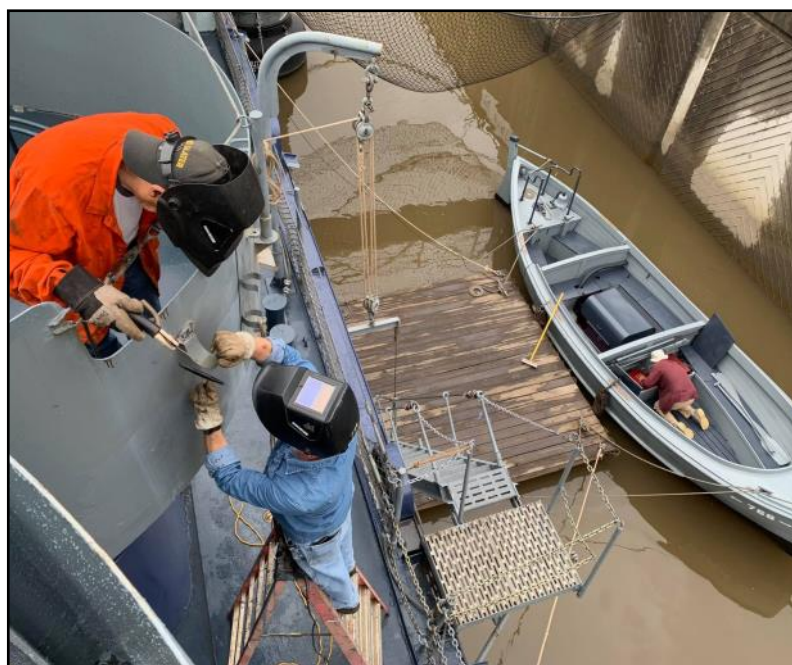
And there the fan rested for nine years as an integral part of the scullery display. It wasn't until a few months ago, when I was getting the large coffee pots ready for the spring work week, that I noticed the scullery fan was missing. I didn't think anything of it at first. Probably one of the electricians was planning to install an inverter and make it functional. But after a couple of weeks, without the fan reappearing, I began to question the usual suspects. No one knew anything about the disappearance of the scullery fan. I put up a notice in the Chief's mess, asking whoever took the fan to return it. No one fessed up.



Gary drafted the whole crew to help him out with the galley supply vent.

So now it looked like I had an actual theft on my hands. Would my beloved palm tree be next? Who did it?

After a couple months, someone bolted up a cheesy looking reefer fan that was totally out of place. No one has taken responsibility for that. But that motivated me to finally drag my ass back to the storeroom below berthing space C-203-L, where the old GAGE fans were stored. I pulled out several,



Dave and Chuck replaced a broken life ring mount.

I hoping one would have screw holes that would line up with the bulkhead mount. They sat in the scullery for a week. I finally prodded **Gary Sheedy** to mount the one that looked and fit the best.

At that point, Gary pulled out his pocket notebook and launched into a long lecture about his "List," and how hard Shanna was overworking him. He had just finished moving the unsold books from our book sale back to the aft shower stalls. Shanna had asked him to put them on the shelves in the ship's store. Gary insisted that they needed to



Fred Sirois is explaining the whaleboat davits to his tour group.

be boxed up, which he did. Now the boxes were too large to fit on the shelves in the ship's store. Then there was a discussion about where to put the boxes. I suggested that he use the starboard outboard bunk lockers in C-202-L. So, he put them in the aft shower stalls.

Back to Gary's notebook. With Shanna and me sitting in the office, Gary patiently explained that he had six pages of Shanna projects, and that she was putting a lot of pressure on him to get through the list. He felt that, instead of getting ahead, he was falling further behind. He didn't know how much longer he could take the pressure. And that any shipboard project I had would be relegated to the end of the six-page list, after he finished his Shanna projects. But he'd take a look at the scullery fan. Shanna told me later, that she didn't

think she had any projects on Gary's list at the moment.

Now, I had brought up five fans for Gary to select from. Four WWII black ones that were DC, and a more modern gray one, that may be AC. Now, every shipboard historian knows that in WWII compartment fans were black, but I was so grateful that Gary had managed to fit my project into his schedule, that I failed to mention this. Which fan do you think Gary picked? There's always black spray paint.

Still, Gary has had a fairly productive month. In one of the greatest accomplishments that no one will ever see, he had the anchor windlass electric brake motor



Chuck is helping himself to lunch, prepared by Jo Ann.

rewound. Working with Barry, they got the electric brake reinstalled, so that the anchor windlass would work properly for the first time since the ship returned from Greece. I can't tell you how hairy it was, raising the whaleboat without the electric brake, and the capstan subject to slipping at any moment. Especially since I was usually the one in the whaleboat. Having the electric brake will make the whaleboat operation a whole lot safer.

Gary sees things no one else sees. Like in the galley. Apparently, he was looking up at the galley supply vent intakes, and decided they looked disgusting, and needed repainting. He started with the aft vent and with the help of his man Friday, **Thomas Scian**, disassembled the vent. He had Thomas scale and repaint it, while he overhauled the closure crank mechanism. Then, they put the whole assembly back together. I must say, it makes a much better impression when you are in



The dynamic duo, Gary and Barry, got the anchor windless electric brake working!

the galley looking up. As I write, Gary is starting disassembly of the forward intake. He also completed mounting brass numbering tags on all the bunk lockers aft.



Gary and Thomas start disassembly of the forward galley supply vent.

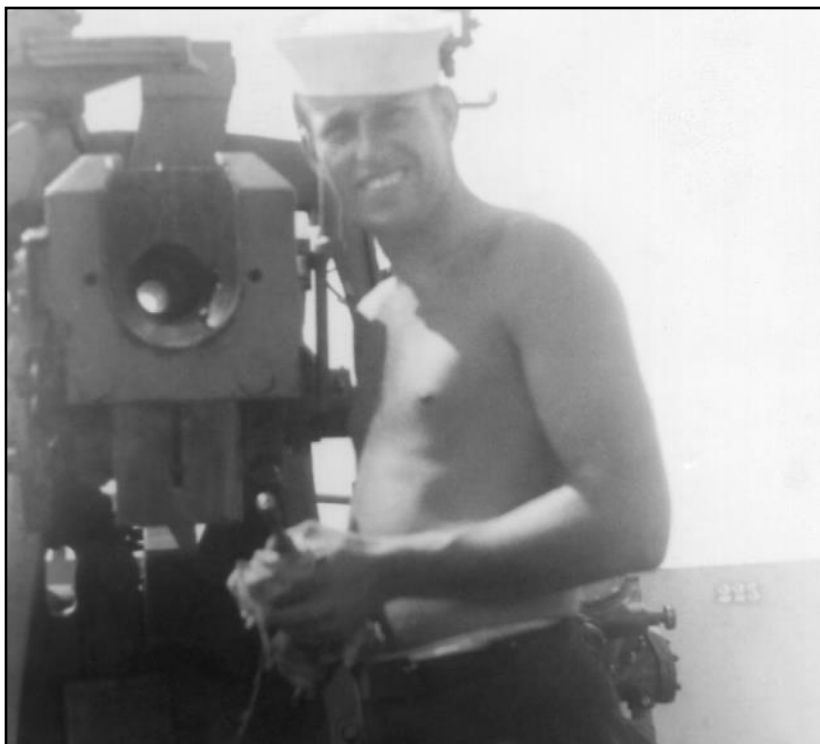
In addition to trying to keep Gary on track, Shanna has had a very busy July. It has been an amazingly busy month for our tour guides, with over 2,400 visitors, even through the wind and rain. Even the weekdays were feeling like busy Saturdays!

We welcomed aboard two families of USS SLATER sailors this month. Samantha Slater Smith and her husband were aboard on the 8th. She has a unique relationship with the ship, as her

father, Elam, served aboard as a 40 mm gunner's mate. Also, the ship herself is named in honor of her uncle, Frank. We were so grateful to share our ship with her and make a meaningful connection with the Slater family!

We also welcomed the family of William Onorato. Bill's daughter, Monica Onorato-Balboni, her husband Bill Balboni, and their son joined our Monday maintenance crew for lunch, and Dick Walker showed them around the ship. They enjoyed their time so much that they donated a catered lunch for the Monday crew.

On the 21st, we had the pleasure of hosting Jim Harrington and family. Jim's father, James R.



***James R. Harrington aboard
USS WYFFELS DE-6 in 1944.***

Harrington, served aboard USS WYFFELS DE-6. Equipped with photos from WWII, the family took the opportunity to recreate the photos with James' grandson, with Thomas standing in the same spot at the 3"/50 gun.

Shanna organized the "New to You" used book sale this month. We had many of our volunteers donate their unwanted books, and we sold them as a fundraiser for the ship. She made over \$600 from them over three days. She is also booking Overnights and group and school tours for this fall! Give us a call to book a visit because we'd love to see you!

Our DE Classified podcast episode for this month focuses on USS LEOPOLD DE-319. This Coast Guard-manned ship was the first destroyer escort sunk during WWII. She also serves as the largest combat loss in the history of the U.S. Coast Guard. While learning about LEOPOLD's namesake, you'll learn about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, as well as USS JOYCE's DE-317 efforts to rescue LEOPOLD's crew. We appreciate all



***James Harrington's grandson Thomas
aboard SLATER in 2021.***

who download and support us on this new educational endeavor. Give us a listen wherever you download your podcasts, or listen to it at our website, usslater.org/de-classified.

Doug's shipfitters, Dave, Warren, Chuck, Gene, Tim, and Earl now have multiple projects going simultaneously. We thought we were done with the port 02 level 20mm ready service locker, but Doug decided he didn't like the way the lid closed, so they hauled the cover down to the work bench, to make modifications to the hinges. They got the starboard ready service locker emptied out, and it looks to be in much better shape than the port side. There's some wastage on the lid, but the inside of the box itself will just need scaling and painting.



Angelo replaces a repaired life ring with help from his grandson.

Danny Statile also has multiple projects going. They hauled the fantail 20mm ready service locker up to the workbench, and Danny fabricated a new lid. **Andy Sheffer** is back, working with him on Tuesday, and together they replaced two sections of wasted metal in the bottom of the box. In between, Danny is now in the process of finishing up his depth charge repair with Epoxy.



Danny is fabricating a new cover shield for the fantail 20mm ready service locker.

Up on the 02 level, the second watertight door repair is progressing. Doug has made modifications to the door frame, to compensate for the warped bulkhead, so that the door will close properly. They are now modifying the swedges to fit the dogs on the door frame.

We had an unpleasant surprise when Cathy Wheat discovered four inches of water on the deck in the officer's head.



Angelo and Walt are working to repair the raft.

It took a week to find where it was. **Thomas Scian** finally discovered in pinhole in the deck above aft of gun two. The leak was above a section of vent duct, behind insulation, which explains why it was so hard to find. Once located, Doug quickly had his crew weld a doubler over it. They also welded a broken 40mm seat back and a broken life ring support on gun 24. It's great to have this team of problem solvers.

Up on deck, raft four had a rotten strap that needed attention. I detailed Walt Stuart and Angelo Bracco to replace it. When they got into it, they discovered that the whole wooden raft

grating was rotting away. They removed it for repair, and I asked **Dick Walker** pick up a section of wooden fencing, to install on the raft temporarily. Doug and **Bill Wetterau** worked up a plan to build a new grating so, that will keep Doug's boys busy throughout August. Angelo has also been restoring and re-rigging our life rings and stenciling life jackets with the names of former crewmembers.

Just aft of the amidships passageway, is the engineering department office or the logroom, which happens to be the last interior display compartment on the tour route. Because of its close proximity to the machine shop, the crew seems to treat it as an annex to the machine shop, and inevitably the display is modified by the addition of projects in progress, miscellaneous tools, welding machine gloves, and safety gear. So this month, I made my semi-annual reminder that the log room is a display space and everyone needs to put their crap somewhere else. They were surprisingly cooperative, and the logroom is once again fit for public display.

The painters have been making real progress. Thomas Scian, Bill Holt, and Bill Wetterau



Mike and Larry continue to exercise the whaleboat each Monday.

have finished scaling, priming, and painting the amidships portside 20mm gun tubs. They are now close to finishing the starboard side tubs. **Bill Wetterau** has also been scaling and cutting the fantail, in preparation for painting. **Bill Holt** has been working on the 01 level forward. I caught **Earl Herchenroder** and **Warren Brozio** on a day when Doug wasn't here and got them to paint our ancient railway baggage cart.

Elsewhere, **Richard and Henry Bourgeois** have been working together to restore an **MK-14 gunsight compressor**, as a first step in making a **MK-14 gunsight operational**. **Smitty** has been cooking on Saturdays, and **Jo Ann** and her mom

cook on Mondays. **Jim Gelston** continues to keep our clocks wound, and **Dick Walker** is always on hand on Wednesdays to stuff envelopes and pick up supplies. **Cathy Wheat** is still doing our weekly cleaning. **Barry Witte** traveled to Boston, to assist their volunteers restoring **USS CASSIN YOUNG DD-793**. He demonstrated an assessment of their fire alarm system, and is doing a thermal scan of the electrical system and fuse box labels.



Bill Holt continues to paint.



Henry Bourgeois continues work on the MK-14 gunsight.

Up in the radio shack, **Steve Syrotynski, Chuck Chandler, and Rich Guthrie** have been maintaining the radio watch. Steve brought back a repaired RBM receiver, so once it was in place on the receiver shelf, they were able to move one of the less-authentic ones to storage below decks. Steve also donated a modern iCom 765 radio, to allow **WW2DEM** to operate two stations at once. It has been placed in the Coding Room, out of sight from public tours. This is the radio that did such a good job for us during Museum Ship Weekend. One of its strengths is that the controls are easier to understand at first glance, so any guest operators can be operational more quickly.

Chuck made up a CW key line for the TCS set, so now they can put that vintage radio on CW at some point. It's got a reputation as a pretty poor performer

on CW, but at this time, it's our only vintage transmitter on the air. He also reconnected the forward starboard vertical antenna to the copper tubing overhead. Once they get the new switch in place on the overhead, it will be ready to use. Chuck is also continuing work on the MC21 Captain's Intercom system. So far, he has collected manuals and is now working on understanding the wiring between stations. The original manual calls for a 90-conductor cable, for a full complement of 11 intercom stations. From what we can see, none of the original wiring is in place in Radio Central, CIC, or the bridge. This will be a lengthy project!



Our interns are ready for a busy Saturday, Sarah, Christian, Liam, Shanna, John, Austin, and Chan.

There is a lot of interest in our radio shack, so Chuck and Steve worked with Shanna to develop a special radio room page on our website.

This supplies the public with information on the equipment and how to contact us. They also spend a lot of time sending out QSL cards.



Chuck is studying the complexities of the TBL transmitter in the radio room.

Some of you may soon be getting another communication from us. Jo Ann has been working on our annual, "Last Call," list. Whenever we put someone in our data base, an end date is included, in case we do not hear from them for a year or two. At that point they get a notice that their subscription to TRIM BUT DEADLY is about to end unless they contact us. Of course, we're more than happy to receive a donation with their reply, but all we need is a response that they are interested in remaining on the postal mailing list. If you get one of these letters, let us hear from you. Thank you all for your continued support.

If you find yourself in the Albany area on Saturday 7 August, we are

celebrating the 231st birthday of the Coast Guard with a ceremony at 0830. All are welcome to attend and Coasties are gifted the free admission to tour the ship!

I'd like to leave you this month with some final thoughts from Jack Carbone, our Midshipman who has volunteered weekly over the last four years. You remember Jack from all his mast climbing in the shipyard in 2020! Ensign Carbone has graduated and is now off to be a plankowner on a new ARLEIGH BURKE Class destroyer. We wish him the best of luck. He left us with a parting message "Volunteering at SLATER has been a great experience for us (me and Brendan). I would not feel nearly as prepared for the fleet if it wasn't for the work I put in there over the past four years. I know that future generations of midshipmen will get the same out of it as I did."

See you next month!



Ensign Jack Carbone pictured with his last project before shipping off.



USS SLATER from the whaleboat.