



SLATER SIGNALS

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

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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The month of May started with our spring work week. It was organized by the USS HUSE Crewmember's Association and **Brandon Easley**. The thirty participants who joined us included **Brandon, Ron Frankosky, George and Anthony Amandola, Jan Schweiger, Stan Ray, Ron Prest, Phil Liebold, Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy, George Gollas, Bob Barth, John Meeker, Andrew Gallotta, Tim Markham, Jim Maisano, Frank Bodenschantz, Doug and Suzi Strieter, Paul and Mark Suzdak, Chuck Krawczyk, Gary Dieckman, Joe Stout, Ed Wakeman, Bill Sarris, Bill Meehan, Steve Whynot, Gene Byers, Ed Zajkowski, and Blair Sandri.**

Logistics were handled by our faithful cook, **Blair Sandri**, who kept everyone happy and

well fed. He was supported by **Ed Zajkowski** in the galley and **George Amandola** and **Phil Liebold** on the messdecks. Another key player was **Bill Meehan**, who handled the paint locker. Bill mixed up over ten gallons of Epoxy paint, and never forgot to add the hardener.



Thanks to Brandon's determination, the side painting was completed despite the inclement weather.

Of course, my main priority is always painting, and I really wanted to get the main deck ready to paint. The weather wasn't cooperating with us, as we had showers almost every day. Nevertheless, **Ron P., Ron F., Jan, Stan, Gary D., and Chuck** got the whole portside main deck sealed and ready for painting. The local crew rolled it out the week after the work week crew left.

We had two sections of the hull that needed to be repainted, one on the starboard side aft, and one on the portside aft. Given the weather forecast,



The USS HUSE Association Spring Work Week Crew.

(which wasn't even on my radar, but it was on **Brandon's**) he enlisted **Chuck** to help him on the paint float and **Suzi, Mark, and Paul** to handle lines. Intermittently throughout two days, this crew completed all the hull painting I had on my list. A great job by a great crew.

A major portion of the work week effort went into completing the electrical, alarm, and computer installations in the new visitor center. The visitor center was set in place the week prior to our work week. **Gary Sheedy** worked hard to have the space ready for the electricians to come in and work. A handful of electrical workers spent the week applying some of the finishing touches. **George Gollas** and **Barry Witte** identified the various phone, ethernet, communications, alarm, and camera system cables that needed to be pulled and installed. First time work week volunteer, **Andrew Gallotta**, and regulars **Anthony Amandola** and **Bob Barth** were assisted by **John Meeker, Bill Sarris, and Brandon Easley** of the deck gang, pulling many of the wires and cables while the near constant rain kept them from chipping and painting.

Steve Syrotynski installed all the phone and ethernet jacks and plugs and mounted the patch panel, router, and got the internet up and running. **Bob** and **Anthony** spent one morning splicing the cables together. This was a tedious task, as each pair of wires had to be individually stripped, soldered, insulated, and covered with a foil shielding.

Next, they had to run the communication cable underneath the wood deck from the visitor center to the ship's junction box. It took several reroutes to get the cable to reach each junction box location. In the end, **Bob** and **Anthony** stretched the cable so that it would be

usable. When they finished, there was about two feet of excess cable. Not a bad recovery.

The machinery spaces also received a lot of attention during the work week. Earlier in the week, **Barry and George** reconnected the B-3 Intake Blower power cables in the fan room that was restored over the winter. **Andrew** cleared seventy-five years of paint off the original cable ID tags and then installed them on the replacement cables. A nice finishing detail to the project.

Down in B-3, Ed Wakeman and our volunteers finished up installing the needed fuel injectors on the 16-278 V-16 engine, number four. The next step is timing, but we cannot do this without the lube oil. Roughly 300 gallons are needed. We are currently looking into options to source and fund this undertaking.



John Meeker and Shanna are working on setting up the new Ship's Store in the Visitor's Center.

Next up, we turned our attention to the 8-cylinder ship service generator. This is our famous engine that starred in our "USS Slater - Start your Engine" video on Youtube. **Mike Dingmon** finished cleaning out the heat exchanger, using a homebuilt tank and solvent solution. The tank was heated and a pump circulated solvent through. By the end, the exchanger flow opened up, and was matching the pump that was feeding it.



Do you think we can have this together for the engine public demo in June?

We reinstalled this exchanger and did a test run on the engine. Everything is in order. Some more minor adjustments will be occurring in the coming weeks, in preparation for our first ever public engine demonstration. This will be an exciting opportunity for the public to see and hear one of these wartime GM engines running. Space is very limited, but if everything goes well, we'll host more of these events in the future.

On Friday May 19, our beloved whaleboat came home from Scarano's Boatyard. Tommy Moore organized the crew; and the engineers met with **Tommy and Larry Williams** at SLATER's parking lot. They all hopped into Tommy's truck and made the three-mile drive to the boatyard. The whaleboat had been soaking in the water for a couple of days, so the wood was swelled up enough that the pumps on the boat could keep up with any water that made its way through the planks.

Two weeks earlier, Mike and Jim Niemynski de-winterized the boat, started it up, checked fuel and fluid levels, and ran it until it warmed up. Everything was fine. So the trip back should have been simple. Should have been, but it wasn't. The crew turned the key, the engine roared to life, then sputtered out quickly. They checked the inline filter, and sure, there was some gunk in it, but it shouldn't stop it from running. They removed it and tested flow and found that it was low. They checked the flow directly from the tank, and it was also a little slow. A small wire was run through it, and it cleared out a bit.

The crew attempted to start the engine again. It came to life, then died. They bled the lines, and it made no difference, a bad feeling started to wash over everyone. The water levels inside the boat were allowed to get too high while it was soaking. The water separator filter outside the tank is mounted in the bilge, and a bad seal let it fill with water. The crew decided to run on a portable diesel tank and make way to the ship.



The whaleboat is back and repairs are underway.

Hopeful for an uneventful trip back to the ship, they made it about halfway before their 12v bilge pump stopped working. Luckily, the leaks were slow enough that they weren't reaching for the hand pump or bailing out water with a bucket. They arrived to the ship and hooked up the 120v pump. The lines were secured, and the whaleboat now awaits some more work on Monday. Besides that, they picked a windy day, and got soaked with the spray, but it's all perspective. Coxswain **Larry Williams** said it was the best day of his life.

The following Monday, they coordinated with Doug Tanner and Tommy Moore to assist in making the necessary changes to keep water

out of our fuel. This included cleaning the fuel tank, and relocating the fuel separator a bit higher, so the flooding doesn't reach the filter and cause additional issues.

Regarding the whaleboat, it is with deep sadness that we report the passing of one of our most critical long-term volunteers, Lawrence “Rocky” Rockwood. Rocky joined the crew in 1999 and teamed up with the late **Roy Gunther** to restore our wooden motor whaleboat. Rocky’s skills with wooden boat building enabled him to develop a warm working relationship with the folks at **Scarano Brother’s Boatyard**. He and Roy completed the initial restoration and brought the boat back to SLATER in the fall of 2000.

Rocky was a sonarman who served aboard USS COONER DE-172 in World War II. He put many hours with the Scarano folks caulking, sanding, and painting. The



Fair Winds and Following Seas to Rocky.



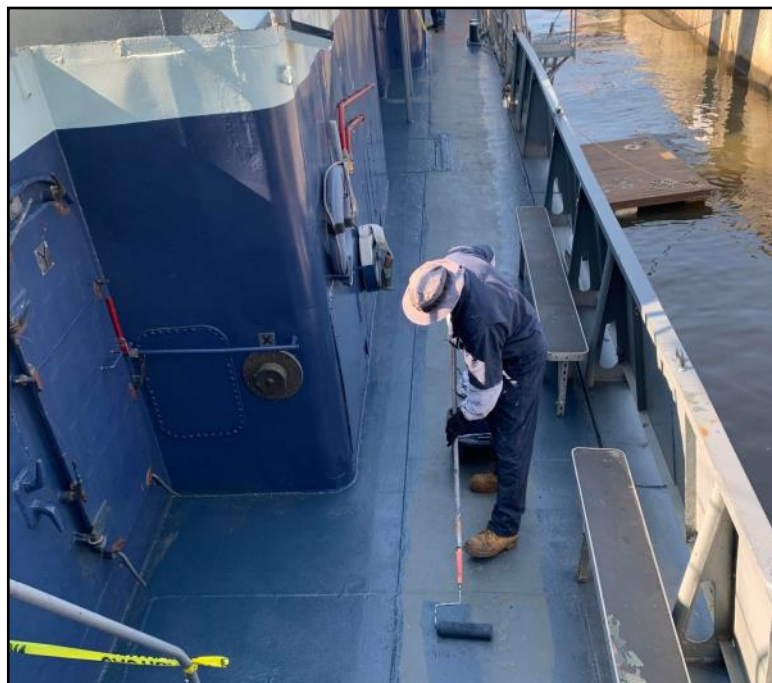
Doug Tanner and his team got the crypto machine installed in the code room.

boat would never be in the excellent shape it's in without him. As a veteran of many years working in boatyards in Maine, Rocky provided the technical expertise we needed on the project. He continued to lavish his attention on the boat until 2016, when he had to give up volunteering for health reasons. The fact that our whaleboat continues to bob in the water alongside SLATER will always be a testament to Rocky’s dedication and skill. Thank you, Rocky.

Doug Tanner and his crew completed the installation of our MK-1 ECM in the coding room. Credit goes to many people starting with visitor **Charles Stein**. While on tour, he noted that USS SLATER was missing her decoding machine. Charlie was connected with the National Cryptologic Museum in Maryland. After checking with us, Charlie made an inquiry with their Collections Manager, **Spencer Allenbaugh**,

about the possibility of receiving a Sigaba Cipher Machine on loan. Spencer responded immediately that such a loan was possible, and he would make a machine available. We immediately involved trustee **Greg Krawczyk**, who lives in Maryland. Greg made arrangements to pick up the machine and transport it to Albany, along with an assortment of tubes he had for the radio gang. The delivery was made on November 18th. We are now one of the few historic ships to have an authentic ECM on display.

That led to the start of the restoration of our ECM machine cabinet. We acquired the cabinet off the USS CLAMP back in 2006, and it has been sitting in the wardroom ever since. The acquisition of the ECM machine brought attention back to the cabinet. **Warren Brozio, Doug Tanner, Dave Mardon Gene Jackey, and Earl Herchenroder** spent several days figuring out how to get it open. They did a complete restoration of the cabinet, installing the ECM, and ultimately placing it on display in the coding room. The line up of the screw holes for the ECM was a perfect fit. It is a very rare find that not too many ships can brag about.



Ron, Bill, and Thomas got the main deck painted.



Thanks to Richard, the Mk14 gunsight is ready for displays and mounted on SLATER's 25 gun. The compressor works and the target lights.

From the fire control department, we have made more progress. Richard Bourgeois reported that his first MK-14 gunsight restoration is now completed. The sight is mounted and working as a display item, and he presented it to a few tours for the first time this month. He replaced the sight that was on gun 25 and swapped the compressor for a unit that he restored. The units that were on gun 25 are now in the gun shack, soon to be mounted on gun 22.

In Collections, John has completed a digitization project of nearly 30 diagram books for Rich Pekelney of USS PAMPANITO. These original books from WWII offer detailed measurements of our anti-aircraft guns and their respective gun

directors. Together with books from other museum ships, Rich has a plethora of resources for his website, www.maritime.org/doc. Museum ships from around the world will now have access to these rare drawings for their own restoration.

Another major digitization project nearing completion involves over two dozen audio and video interviews with members of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association. These DE vets from the **Garden State Chapter of DESA** were interviewed in 2002 by history students from **Monmouth University**. The college recently donated the entirety of the interviews to us for digitization in preparation for DESA's final reunion in June. These interviews offer a rare firsthand account of life aboard these tin cans by the very people responsible for saving SLATER. Thank you to Monmouth University for undertaking this project twenty years ago and in trusting us with their safekeeping.



It was a great month for tours, here Austin explains the Pilot House.

With the help of interns Gio and Tyler, we have also been going through our archival collection in preparation for relocating it to our new shoreside building. Since the bulk of our collection is housed at or below the water line, moving our paper documents and

photographs to a climate-controlled area on land is an important step into preserving destroyer escort history. It is a tedious project involving updating our database to include new descriptions and scans of each page and photograph. But it has been a lot of fun for us reading through these pieces, plus it gives our interns more hands-on experience with artifacts and managing a database.



Ed staining the railing on the observation deck.

Lynn Wetterau is once again helping with our DE files. Last year, she digitized hundreds of DESA newspapers and placed them into our ship files. Now she has started working to scan everything in each file. This will allow us to send the contents more easily to

interested visitors and give us an idea of what DEs we are missing or are lacking information.

With this movement of digitizing our archives, we are trying to expand the reach of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum. You all know us as USS SLATER. You know about the ship and all the work it has taken over the last 26 + years to restore her to her WWII beauty. You know that we pride ourselves on excellent restoration and quality presentations to the public through our tours. We also want you to think of us as a resource and authority on the history of Destroyer Escorts and their sailors. John and his team are working tirelessly to make this information available to the public and accessible to all.



We hosted a delegation from Nijmegen, Netherlands with a crew from Albany. They were treated to a nice breakfast aboard SLATER.

May was an exciting month for our Education team as we finally got to move into the new building! The Pod and the portable toilets were removed on Friday the 5th,



We were honored to have USS STARK survivors back aboard for their memorial service.

before the parking lot was paved on the 8th and 9th. The new set up looks so good! We are still waiting on some finishing touches like the side stairs for the handicap accessible ramp and some landscaping.

Sunday May 7th was the Albany History Fair sponsored by Historic Cherry Hill. Tour Guides, **Tom Corigliano** and **Gio Romano** manned a table and spoke to many people about the awesome time they could have aboard SLATER. We also welcomed aboard 60 overnight campers this month, good thing these kids are tough, because it rained a lot!

The following weekend is always a

busy one in Albany. Tulip Fest is as big as it gets in Albany as it honors the relationship between sister cities, Albany and Nijmegen, Netherlands, and the services they provided each other during WWII. We hosted Albany's **Mayor Kathy Sheehan**, as well as Nijmegen's **Mayor Bruls**. Other distinguished guests were: **Anja Adriaans, Walter Hamer, Teddy Vrijmoet, Chloe Beatty, Bill Bauer, Dennis Gaffney**, SLATER Board Chairman **BJ Costello**, and former Board President **Tony Esposito**. These guests were treated to breakfast in the Mess Deck served by Business Manager **Jo Ann Mulligan**. It is always a treat to have such great guests aboard for a fun breakfast on the decks of SLATER and to honor such a historic relationship.

On Wednesday the 17th, we were honored for a second time to host former crewmembers and guests of **USS STARK (FFG-31)**, aboard for a **Memorial Service**. This day marked the 36th anniversary of the Iraqi missile attack that killed 37 of their shipmates. They saved their ship and sailed her home. The ship's bell was tolled for each of the 37 crewmembers. The sailors who died will not be forgotten.

June will be another busy month! Our tour guides will welcome aboard six large school groups, we'll host the Final Reunion of DESA, a USS HAMMERBERG Reunion, the Engine Room Demonstration, SLATER Summer Ale launch party, and a presentation by local historians David Hochfelder and Ann Elizabeth Pfau, *"Her Voice A Bullet" Imaginary Propaganda and the Legendary Broadcasters of WWII*.

See you next month,

Tim



***A freshly painted ship, installed Visitor's Center, and paved parking lot.
Photo provided by Nicholas Marshall.***