

SLATER SIGNALS

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

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In our second month back from the shipyard, we reconnected with an old friend, **Bruce Franklin**. Bruce had written a book, "The Buckley Class Destroyer Escorts," published by the US Naval Institute in 1999. Bruce did a book signing in SLATER's wardroom when the book first came out, and then we lost track of him. Early this month, the Franklin family arrived with **Bruce**, his father **Dick**, and his sister **Kerri**. The elder Dick served as a quartermaster aboard USS NEUENDORF (DE-200), in the Pacific during World War II. Now 95 years old, and sharp as a tack, he completed **Dick Walker's** whole two-hour tour, and then had the energy to climb back up to the charthouse, and go over his recollections of the layout of the space. Bruce and his Dad had last toured the ship when it was down at the Intrepid Museum in Manhattan, and they were awed by our changes. It's great to finally reconnect. Dick Walker had his copy of Bruce's book autographed for a second time, this time by the entire family.

On Saturday, 3 October 2020, we had twenty volunteers aboard, sharing the ship with tourists. We celebrated **Gary Sheedy's** 75th birthday. That same day, **Blair Sandri** and



Dick Walker and the Franklin Family.



We celebrated Gary's 75th Birthday!

Ed Zajkowski arrived to prepare the galley for the fall work week. The first order of business was a mini-reunion with the shipyard crew. Ed and Blair got together with **Jo Ann Mulligan**, **Thomas Scian**, and Midshipmen **Jack Carbone** and **Brendan Lutz**, for the first time since USS SLATER arrived back in Albany.

Sunday, the crew arrived for our fall work week. Due to Covid-19 concerns, the event was considerably scaled down, with nine volunteers in attendance. In addition to Ed and Blair, Trustee **Gary Dieckman** came up from Elmsford, and **Ron Frankosky** was up from New Jersey. **Steve Whynot** and **Gene Byers** came over from Massachusetts, and **George Gollas** was up from Pennsylvania. **Bill Maloney**, whose father served in USS BANGUST, came up to photo document the changes to the mast.

The first order of business was checking all the fuel tanks, to make sure there was no leakage following the trip from Staten Island. Then all the manhole covers had to be secured. **Thomas Scian** and **Jo Ann Mulligan** took care of the tanks forward, and Gene and Steve did all the tanks aft. **Gary Dieckman** spent a day in the B-3 bilges, cleaning under the generator, before deciding that maybe he was getting too old for bilge diving. He restored the



Gary restoring a motor control box.



George working on the call bell system.



Steve and Gene lubricated all the ordnance.



Chuck, Doug, and Dave working on the trailer.



Ron priming around the forward 3 inch gun.

cover for a motor controller, and then joined **Ron Frankosky** on the fo'c's'le. Ron had gone right to work needle scaling decks. By the time, he went home, he and Gary just about had the whole area around gun one completely chipped and primed. **George Gollas** continued to research and repair our interior communications call bell system. **Bill Maloney** photographed the mast from every angle, Ed worked on a series of detailed “Before and After” images, to document the shipyard work. Bill then went to work helping Thomas clean and scale on the 01-level aft of the stack. Ed kept everybody on track, and Blair continued his shipyard tradition of serving great meals at an affordable price. We thank you all for your help.

Doug Tanner has kept his crew busy. **Dave Mardon, Earl Herchenroder, Chuck Teal, Warren Brozio, and Tim Benner** have worked on the west side of the trailer, replacing all the rotted molding strip and all the gutters. They plan to get into the rotted wood around the base of the head next. Doug is also looking to find a contractor to replace the roof on the trailer in the spring. In addition, they also started the drain down of the freshwater system, to secure the system for the winter.

Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Bill Holt, and Paul Guarnieri completed splicing all the new signal halyard, and making the



Kathy and Angelo organizing the signal flags.



Bill working on the aft 3 inch gun.

retrievers. Angelo Bracco and Cathy Wheat have been busy repairing signal flags and filling the flagbags. Angelo is working on a complete inventory of all our signal flags. I'll make a signalman out of Angelo yet.

After six years, we figured it was time to renew the mooring lines. We ordered three 600' spools. The truck showed up on a Monday during lunch, which was fortunate, as we had a large crew aboard to help get them off the truck. With no forklift available, Doug figured out how to roll them off with a couple planks and a restraining rope, so we wouldn't kill anybody.

Danny Statile made a pipe stand so we could rotate the reels, and the deck gang is now immersed in making eye splices.

Barry Witte has just about completed the vertical fighting light control panel. He has completed the wiring, so that the indicator light panel shows the actual configuration that the fighting lights are set to. He is still in search of the correct fasteners and switch handles for the switch panel. When it is painted and labeled, the system will be complete. **Gary Sheedy** has returned to the steering gear compartment. He is completing the smoke generator and has started cleaning up the actual steering gear motors and hydraulic components.

Ron Prest has been back.

Together with **Thomas Scian** and **Bill Wetterau**, they completed repainting the fo'c's'le, the interiors of the three inch gun tubs, and all of the ventilators and ammo locker tops on the 01 level amidships with PSX-700 paint that should last for ten years. This is thanks to our Department of the Interior Maritime Heritage Grant. We were able to obtain enough PPG PSX 700 epoxy siloxane coating to keep USS SLATER looking shipshape for the next ten years. We thought it important to show the world that the Second World War was not a



Volunteer group from the Albany Police Academy.

black and white war. We are indebted to PPG's Technical Sales Representative **Ashley Aarons**, and their color expert, **Royce Grimes**, who worked patiently with us to make sure the new paint matched the colors we applied during our last shipyard period. We are indebted to PPG for their commitment to make sure USS SLATER is historically correct.

On Saturday, 17 October, our regular volunteer crew was augmented by a group of volunteers from the Albany Police Academy. We

split them into five groups and put them to work. They painted out the fo'c's'le, tightened mooring lines, cleaned bilges, and inspected depth charges. Only three depth charges were found to need repair, as the casings were rusted through. **Danny Statile** had the first one on the bench and had begun the process of brazing the small holes and piecing together patches to weld up the large holes. With all the curvature, it's a slow, time consuming process. And it was a great day for tours.

Though, we are not seeing the same number of visitors we saw in years previous, our

guides are staying busy. Our tour groups are now much smaller, allowing more opportunity to be socially distant from those not in your household. Smaller groups mean that our guides start tours more frequently. We have had some very kind words from visitors that we'd like to share with you. Bob S. said "**Sarah** took my group through the Slater yesterday and she nailed it! The tour was good or better than any other ship tour I have done, which is several!" Anthony H. wrote on our Facebook wall "The entire tour was a highlight! Our tour guide, **Liam**, was very knowledgeable, with a great sense of humor and definitely not boring, we will return to do it again." And on TripAdvisor, where we are still



Carl, Liam, and Austin showing off some new merchandise in our ship's store.



Walt inspecting the depth charges.

listed as the #1 Thing to do in Albany, Diego T. wrote “Wow! This tour blew our expectations! Our guide, **John**, gave us a very detailed tour of USS SLATER and answered many questions we had about WW2.”

We appreciate those who have visited, donated, shopped, “liked”, and commented. Your support during this difficult year has meant the world to us. We truly know how lucky we are to have such great supporters and volunteers.

Coming up in November, it will be our last month of tours for 2020. Our last day will be the 29th, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We will be closed Thanksgiving Day, but open Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10-4.

We will not be hosting a Veteran’s Day ceremony this year. Instead, we ask you to make a donation in honor (or memory) of a Veteran who is important to you. In turn, we will list that Veteran’s name on our website, and send you a post card from one of our volunteers. Also, any donation that we receive in the month of November will be entered into a raffle for SLATER merchandise. The grand prize is a year membership. You can donate online

(usslater.org), in person, over the phone (518-431-1943), or through the mail. Make sure you include your phone number with your donation, so we can contact you should you win! The drawing will occur on 3 December 2020.

We are also running many promotions for Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, etc. Check out our website to learn more.

Despite Covid, there were several presentations



Barry with his fighting lights panel.



Karl is one of our Volunteers of the Year this year!



Dick Walker presented a model of USS HAYTER to Alan Fox.

aboard SLATER this month. Volunteer **Dick Walker**, USCG, converted a Revell Buckley model to an exact replica of USS HAYTER (DE-212), as a gift to Trustee **Alan Fox**. Mister Walker is a self-proclaimed "Rivet counter," who describes this art form as "Kit bashing." **Alan Fox's** father, **Sam Fox**, served in USS HAYTER in the Atlantic in WWII. It is in Sam's honor that Alan has served as a Trustee, Treasurer, and Tour Guide for the 22 years USS SLATER has been in Albany.

Barry Witte submitted our mast restoration project to Metal Supermarkets "Best Industrial Shop Project Contest," and we were selected as the winning project for **2020**. In addition to the publicity the award

generated, Metal Supermarkets is donating a Lincoln Electric 180 Amp MIG Wire Feed Welder with a Magnum 100L Gun, Gas Regulator, and MIG and Flux-Cored Wire. The machine retails for \$700, so this will be a great addition to the welding shop. Trustee **Diane Watters**, President of our own local Metal Supermarkets shop, presented the welder to the SLATER crew on Halloween, in costume.



Diane Watters presented a Mig Welding Machine from Metal Supermarkets.



600 feet of line...better get to work.



Midshipmen Jack and Brendan were honored as Volunteers of the Year for their service toward the shipyard work!

contribution to our shipyard overhaul this past summer. Their citations read in part, “We are very impressed with your efforts over the past fourteen months, serving as a Planning Assistant, leading up to the ship undergoing a yard period. Your efforts yielded work packages that described in detail tasks needing to be completed, resulting in enhanced communication of technical data to shipboard personnel with accurate cost estimates and actual execution of specific tasks. For six weeks you provided hands on oversight to skillfully answer technical questions. **Your consistent efforts have been an inspiration to your fellow volunteers.** Your dedication and meticulous attention to detail have provided the opportunity for many generations of visitors to witness the role that USS SLATER has played in our history. **Your leadership, outstanding professionalism, and commitment to the USS SLATER reflected great credit upon yourself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Historic Naval Ship’s Association.”**

The Capital District Chief Petty Officers Association honored three USS SLATER Volunteers this month. On Monday, 19 October 2020, with twenty USS SLATER Volunteers present, **Art Dott and Sean Robbins** presented **Karl Herchenroder** with their USS SLATER Volunteer of the Year award. Karl served as an engineman in USS OTTERSTETTER (DER-244), and then went on to a long career as a shop manager for Cummins Diesel. Karl has worked in our engine rooms for sixteen years, and it was thanks largely to Karl's work that we had electrical power on our journey to and from the shipyard this summer. Well done, Karl.

On October 28th, the Chiefs made two more virtual awards to Midshipman 1/c Jack Carbone and Midshipman 1/c Brendan Lutz for their



Bill documenting our new mast equipment.

It is only thanks to your support that USS SLATER exists to inspire these young midshipmen. We also give our retired volunteers an outlet for their talent, and the camaraderie that comes from accomplishment as part of a team. Covid-19 has hit us hard, but we are continuing to adjust and adapt.

It is with that in mind that our 2020-21 Winter Fund mailing will go out next month. We're sure you're hearing this from every organization that you belong to, but right now your support is more critical than ever. We only had a three-month visitation season this year. And because of Covid-19, we will not be able to hold our annual Ft. Orange Club Gala Fundraiser. That will be the loss of another \$30,000 in donations. It takes \$1,000 a day to maintain and operate USS SLATER, but as you read here, we continue to improve, and with your support will continue to inspire old and young alike.

Prior to the advent of Covid-19, we were working on a project to replicate the old WWII bedspreads. We are now looking to get that project back on track. We are looking for a generous donor to underwrite the cost of reproducing the old Navy officer's style bedspreads. These will be on display in the Captain's cabin and throughout officer's country. We are planning to purchase 20 replicas, as our original WWII bedspreads are showing wear, after 20 years aboard. The estimated cost will be \$4,000. If this strikes you as a worthwhile project, please get in touch with us.

See you next month,

Tim



SLATER's fighting lights all lit up!



Bedspreads on display in Officer's Country.

Don't forget the donate button on our homepage, www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.