

# SLATER SIGNALS

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

USS Slater DE-766

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Those of you, who were fans of the old Seinfeld show, may remember that on one episode, they did a show about “Nothing.” That is what writing this edition of SIGNALS feels like. In compliance with Governor Cuomo’s stay at home order, our last volunteer day was March 16<sup>th</sup>.

Having no idea when this social distancing will end, we postponed the USS HUSE Association spring workweek that had been scheduled for the third week of May. If you were planning to attend, you can unpack, for now. We’ve rescheduled it for September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 2nd.

We continue running on a minimal level. I come in Monday mornings to check the ship, check the draft marks, mooring lines and the heating oil. I still start my Monday mornings by making a fresh pot of coffee. I don’t have a lot of visitors, and neither of the girls drinks coffee. What’s left over gets dumped out on Saturday. Maybe that’s why I don’t have many visitors.



*Stay with us, we have had to postpone our shipyard trip. We hope to re-schedule for later in 2020.*



*HUSE Crew in 2018 along with some of our regular maintenance volunteers.*

**After coffee comes answering emails.** I think there is a little more email than usual, since people are trapped at home and have time to think of weird questions. Google still won't let me log in at home, so answering messages doesn't happen there. I actually stopped paying attention to the investment balances, too depressing. But as we've said before, the drydock money is in a fixed income account, and thus is safe.

**What few visitors I do have practice social distancing.** **Jim Gelston** can't bear to let his clocks run down, so he comes aboard for an hour per week to wind clocks. Coast Guard storekeeper, **Dick Walker**, comes in on Wednesdays to fold and stamp the donation acknowledgements for mailing.



*Jim Gelston keeps the clocks running.*

**Shanna and Jo Ann continue to come in on alternate days, to practice social distancing.** I pick up and open the mail on Tuesday mornings. **Jo Ann** always arrives at



*Jo Ann is grateful she has more space to process all your donations these days.*

0700, sometimes beating me, to unlock the gate. Jo Ann enters the donations in our donor data base program, PastPerfect, and into QuickBooks. She then generates all of the thank you letters, and presents the stack of letters to me to sign. I double check the entries in the computer, and sign all the letters. I then tally up the checks, and prepare the deposit ticket for my Wednesday bank run. The bank now only permits one person in the lobby at a time, so I have to call to make an appointment to make the deposit. If the weather is warm, it's a nice walk. **Jo Ann** next cuts the checks for any bills that need to be paid.

**Wednesday is Shanna's day.** On site, **Shanna** has assembled and cleaned the ship's store, printed price tags, and programmed the replacement register we purchased. She comes in one day a week, so this is pretty good progress, even if **Gary Sheedy** says different. It's never enough for him. From home, **Shanna** has been keeping in contact with our tour guides, who are anxious for our season to begin.



*Shanna completed inventory of the Ship Store's merchandise, before we installed the new carpet.*

**Shanna wishes she had a better answer to their questions of when we will be able to open, and what tours will look like when we are allowed.** She has interviewed three interns she is excited about, and is hoping we'll get to meet them in person soon. Our previous interns are struggling without their part time work, as their classes continue online, and their rent is still due.

**The Non-Profit Leadership training program Shanna was accepted to back in January, meets online every other Friday.** She continues to make connections within the non-profit community here in Albany, stretching those marketing and sales muscles, and learning skills that are beneficial to all of us at the ship.

**On Thursday, Jo Ann is back to mail the bills and reconcile her accounts.** Presently, she is preparing our "Last Call" List. If you have been receiving our quarterly print newsletter TRIM BUT DEADLY, and we haven't had a donation or contact with you in the past two years, you'll be getting a letter from us asking if you want to remain on the mailing list. As long as you drop us a note, email or phone call, your back on the list.

**When I finish my office work, I go back to my passion.** I start the compressor, and begin needle scaling. Now that we've discovered the secret of Rusty Metal Primer, I decided to take the main deck portside down to bare metal and recoat everything. Not wanting to let the whole spring go by without any progress, I emailed twenty of my closest friends, and invited them to come down, two at a time, by appointment, to scale decks with me.

**I figured that since the deck is 200 feet long, social distancing isn't a problem.** We're working in protective gear anyway, so this also shouldn't be a health issue. I got three responses, from **Warren Brozio, Chuck Teal, and Thomas Scian.** **Thomas** was first one to jump on the invitation. The man is an animal with a needle scaler. He's been coming up from Monticello 3-4 days a week, and is making incredible progress on the deck. Hopefully, we can have it all chipped and painted out by the end of May.

**Since we can't do our education programs on the ship, the focus has shifted to educating the public via social media.** Seventy-five years ago, there was a lot of destroyer escort history being made, in the Pacific at Okinawa, and in the Atlantic as the U-boat war drew to a close. We've been commemorating these events on Facebook, to remind our readers of the sacrifices made by the greatest generation. On 11 April, MANLOVE (DE-36) was hit by shrapnel from a kamikaze that her gunners splashed close aboard. One man was killed and ten were injured. On 12 April, WHITEHURST, RIDDLE, and RALL were hit. A total of 56 DE Sailors died in these three separate attacks.

**On 19 April, BUCKLEY (DE-51) sank U-548 with a single hedgehog pattern off of Halifax, Nova Scotia.** On 24 April, USS FREDERICK C. DAVIS was sunk with a loss of 115 DE Sailors. But after a ten hour search, her division mates put her assailant, U-546, under.

**And on the British side, HMS EKINS hit two mines on the night of 16 April 1945.** Thanks to her design and the Herculean efforts of her crew, they managed to get the engines going and keep the ship afloat, and got her to Sheerness with her keel broken. She was declared a total loss, and scrapped after the war. HMS REDMILL had her stern blown off on 27 April by U-1105, with the loss of 28 men. Her hulk was towed to Belfast, and she was scrapped after the war.



*USS WHITEHURST DE-634*



Things don't always go according to plan, but thanks to Thomas Scian for the great photo from 2014.

**The last DE lost in the Atlantic, HMS GOODALL, was torpedoed off Kola Inlet.** U-286, commanded by 35 year-old Oberleutnant Willi Dietrich, fired a torpedo at the frigate, causing its ammunition magazine to blow up. The power of the explosion forced the bridge structure back over the funnel, and casualties were very heavy. The Captain and 111 other crewmembers were killed. The hulk was sunk by HMS ANGUILLA by gunfire, and she went down on 30 April. When we don't have an event to commemorate, we've been posting a lot of vintage photos of lonely Sailors, to make the point that apparently social distancing is nothing new to our Bluejackets.

**Doug Tanner has been making good use of his time at home, taking online courses to improve his professional competence.** Are you playing attention Dave and Tim? Thus far, Doug has emailed me certificates certifying that he is professionally competent with respect to electrical safety, fall protection, confined space entry, and lockout and tag out procedures. Other certifications include power tool safety, crane safety, safety signs, arc flash protection, deciphering NFPA codes, and material data safety. You would have thought that he might have found time for a little sensitivity training. Its kind of scary to think about how cranked-up he may be when he gets back.

**We recently lost two significant volunteers, who bear remembering here.** This past winter we lost **Ray Windle**, one of the last DEHM founding Trustees. Ray hailed from Plano ,Texas and served as an electrician's mate aboard USS FIEBERLING (DE-640) in the Pacific at the end of World War II. After the war, Ray founded a very successful communications equipment business, and played a major role in convincing me to come to Albany. Our condolences go out to Lois with Ray's passing.

**And tonight, as I was writing this, I got a call from Dick Walker that Jack Madden had passed away.** Jack was one of our original tour guides, a true patriot, with a great sense of humor. Jack was a gunner's mate on PT-304, in Squadron 15, in the Mediterranean. He was always quick to remind us all that PT Boats did win World War II, in case anyone wanted to argue with him. His Korean War service in destroyers didn't count much to Jack, because his heart was always in the "Boats". Our condolences go out to the entire Madden family.



*Jack Madden , WWII*

**Here's the part where I can save some effort, and just cut and paste last month's closing.** We're now hoping to go to the shipyard in October and November. If that doesn't work out, we'll have to push it to 2021. Beyond that, I can't say when we will be opening to the public, and what safety restrictions will impact the tours. But we're hoping to get couple months of visitation in before we leave.

**All I can offer is stay safe, follow us on Facebook, and please keep those donations coming.** We're totally dependent on your contributions at this point in time. We thank you all for your help and support in these difficult times.

*See you next month,*

*Tim*



*They are all gone now. WWII Vets Bill Svihovec, Mike Milian, Jack Madden and Emmett Landrum.*

**Don't forget the donate button on our homepage, [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.**