

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Chief Smith shows his sensitive side.

As our 18th season in Albany winds down, the preservation and interpretation of USS SLATER continues unabated. On October 4th, the fall work gang showed up to supplement our local volunteer effort. Mess cooks **Roy Brandon** and **Jim Ray** assisted **Chief Bernard "Smitty" Smith**, keeping the crew fed three meals a day all week long. Jim was a water tender on the USS DOUGLAS A MUNRO, and he went skydiving

to celebrate his 90th birthday. He's finally stopped saying, "This is my last work week." I guess he really likes mess cooking.



Dick Walker and Mike Marko tidy up the flying bridge.

We also had two welders visit. They were **Tom Skufca** from **Ohio** and **Laird Confer** from **Pennsylvania**. Between them, they patched a couple of holes in the fantail, replaced a section of deck in the chemical warfare stowage compartment, and did several jobs for **Gary Sheedy** in the steering engine room. Those jobs included installing new stuffing tubes.



Frank Heckart traveled all the way from Texas to work with us.

This way, Gary can run the armored cable for the steering motors under the deck the way they were originally run. **Guy Huse** and **Gary Dieckman** assisted our engineers with the installation of the new high-pressure air compressor. Gary also traced out the lube oil system in B-3 and tagged all the valves. **Frank Heckart**, from Texas, worked with **Tommy Moore**, putting water seal on the observation deck planking.

Firecontrolmen Mike Marko and Michigan Dick Walker spent the week up on the flying bridge, cleaning up, touching up paint, and putting the instrumentation and lookout binoculars away for the winter. The "Two Ronnies," **Ron Mazure** and **Ron Prest**, spent the week scaling in the steering engine room. Electrician **Butch Warrender** spent the week assisting Laird and helping Gary with electrical work in the steering engine room. Our thanks to Michigan **Dick Walker**, who coordinated the event, and **Earl Herchenroder** and **Danny Statile**, who put in extra days working with the "Reserves" from out of town.



Our CPO Association celebrates the Navy Birthday.

**Our next big event was the celebration of the Navy Birthday on Tuesday, October 13th. The Capital District Chief Petty Officer Association gathered to commemorate the 240th anniversary of the founding of our Navy, cut a birthday cake, and served lunch to our crew. This year they honored Earl Herchenroder with their "USS SLATER Volunteer of the Year Award."**

Earl has been a volunteer since 2006 and is unusual in that he has never served in the Navy. He is a former Army Specialist 4th class, who served 19 months in Panama from 1954-1956. He retired after a long career in government, specializing in computer operations.



Fitting up a new hatch coaming for the landing force locker.

**His involvement with USS SLATER is a result of his longtime friendship with the late Don Miller, who served in the Navy as a storekeeper aboard USS HICKOX DD- 673. He was also influenced by his "Older" twin brother, Karl, who served in the Navy as an engineman aboard the destroyer escort USS OTTERSTETTER DER-244.**

Somehow, between the two of them, they talked Earl into coming down and volunteering and the result was that USS SLATER received one of our most friendly, dedicated, and hardworking volunteers.



Bill Wetterau touching up the paint on new life rafts.

**Earl is one of those guys who will readily admit that he has no definable skill, but is prepared to do anything for anybody and always willing to learn.** It always seems that Earl is the first one out of the CPO mess in the morning, ready to go to work. He is the dirty job guy; always will to do the dull, mundane, and unglamorous jobs that no one else wants to do. Those jobs include grinding, needle gunning, fire watch, sweeping or putting the tools away.

A lot of people in the crew have come to depend on Earl's helpfulness and versatility. There isn't a major project on the ship that Earl hasn't had a hand in, always in the background, supporting the skilled volunteers. Those being supported, like **Doug Tanner, Gary Sheedy, Danny Statile, Boats Haggart**, and Earl's own brother **Karl**, all vie to be the first to get Earl as their assistant. He's the guy always willing to put in an extra day if the welders need a hand to speed up a project. You old timers will remember the comedian **Red Buttons**, who used to talk about the guys "Who never got a dinner." That would be Earl, the guy who sat there, embarrassed at being singled out for this recognition that is so deserved. Our thanks to Chiefs Art Dott, Sean Robbins, and Bernie Smith for their efforts in putting on the event.



Good fortune smiles on USS SLATER.

**A little rain didn't stop our Oxi Day celebration on October 28th.** We honored the forty years that USS SLATER served in the Hellenic Navy as A/T AETOS by commemorating this Greek National Holiday. Our thanks to all who came out and celebrated with us, and a special thanks to the Greeks who said "No!" to Italian forces when they tried to invade Greece in 1940. This is the patriotic Greek national holiday that recognizes the day that Greek

Premier **Ioannis Metaxas** rejected **Benito Mussolini's** demand that Axis forces be permitted to occupy Greek territory. On the morning of October 28, the Greek population took to the streets, irrespective of political affiliation, shouting "Ochi!" or "No!" The heroic resistance of the Greek Army against the Fascist invaders forced Hitler to intervene the following April, thus delaying his attack on Russia. That delay had history changing ramifications, bogging down the Nazi advance when the Russian winter set in, and setting the stage for the defeat of the Nazi's on the eastern front. After this resistance, **Winston Churchill** said, "...until now we would say that the Greeks fight like heroes. From now on we will say that heroes fight like Greeks."



The Greek flag flew over the A/T AETOS on Oxi Day.

**During the day, the Greek flag flew from the battle gaff, and our St. Nickolas icon was displayed on the quarterdeck during the commemoration. St. Nickolas is the "Protective Saint" of Hellenic Navy, Hellenic Merchant Marine, and Hellenic Coast Guard, and is celebrated each year by the Greek Marine community on the 6th of December, according to Greek Orthodox Church traditions.**

Because of this, all Greek Ships

carry at least one St. Nickolas' icon to protect the ship and her sailors. One has to assume that the icon was removed when the ship was scheduled to be scrapped. Once the decision was made to save her, we'll probably never know who the person was that placed the St. Nickolas icon back aboard AETOS, before she was towed out of Souda Bay for the trip to New York. However, we'd really love to know who that person was! No wonder our ship has been so lucky. Our thanks to **Dennis Nagi** and Father **Patrick Legato**, for their help with the commemoration.



Ron Mazure and Mike Marko cleaned out the sound hut.

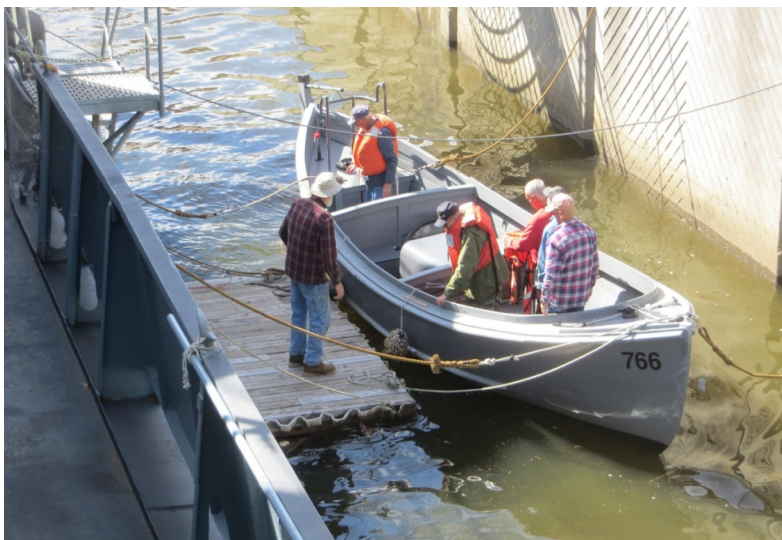
**The maintenance crew continues to move forward on several fronts.** In the steering gear compartment, **Gary Sheedy** discovered that the deck around the manhole in the shipfitters shop was completely wasted away. Rather than do the repair in place, they decided it would be a lot easier to do as much of the work as possible on the welding bench. **Matt Clifford** and **Barry Witte** cut out a two-foot square section of deck that included the manhole

frame. **Danny Statile** cut the manhole frame off the deck, and cleaned and welded up the holes in the frame. They then fit a new piece of plate, welded the manhole frame to it, and cut the manhole out of the new plate. Next, it was back to Matt, who welded the plate and frame back into place. They are working on a similar repair in the deck adjacent to the forward bulkhead, and fabricating stuffing tubes for the power cables for the hydraulic motors. While all this was going on, Gary has been busy cleaning up the deck drain fittings and the submersible pump manifold. His dedicated chippers, **Bill Wetterau, Ron Mazure, Ron Prest,** and new volunteer **Nate Shackerly,** continue the process of scaling the space. **Gene Jackey's** been working on replacing missing tie down railing on the aft 40mm gun.



Thomas Scian cleaning bilges.

The engineers, **Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon, Ken Myrick, and Gary Lubrano,** replaced the B-1 compressor with a new water-cooled unit. Running the cooling water through a steam space heater located adjacent to the compressor will do cooling. **Larry Williams** ran the electric and installed the fan motor. The unit has been test-run, and it looks like it will take a lot less time to build up air pressure to start the diesels.



The whaleboat made her last run of the season.

In preparation for winter, **Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Paul Guarnieri, Rich Brumley, and Thomas Scian** took down the fantail awning. They pulled up and stowed Nelson Potter's cargo net. Rocky Rockwood wanted to take the whaleboat back to Scarano's boatyard for the winter so he and Bill Wetterau could work on it under cover.

So, on the morning of the 26th, Larry Williams, Mike Dingmon, and Ken Myrick got underway and made the last run of the season. The following weekend Boats and his crew moved the paint float over to the Dutch Apple dock, pending hoisting out of the water. Then, they raised and stowed the accommodation ladder for the season.



Stern view as the paint float is moved close to the sea wall.

the trim and some of the lower siding is soft and rotting away. The jury is still out on the condition of the sub floor and the box beam support. Doug did finish the roof the following weekend, but decided that needs replacing, too. Then, he spent a Saturday crawling around in the mud under the observation deck reinsulating and waterproofing the fresh water line. That's another reason why he's getting the 2015 Trustees Award.

**Also in the way of winter prep, Doug Tanner and Dave Mardon put a coat of roof cement on the trailer roof to stop any potential leaks.** Rain stopped the first attempt when the job was 25% complete. While waiting for the rain to stop, Doug Tanner started poking at the trailer exterior wood with his marlinespike. By the time he was done prodding, he figured that we were in for a \$2,000 repair job, using volunteers to do the work. It seems that almost all

**While the maintenance gets the lion's share of ink in the newsletter, because their story is one of constant progression and improvement, the true unsung heroes of USS SLATER are the tour guides who are the public face of the project.** They interpret the history and restoration to our visiting public. In this age of instant communication, if a visitor isn't happy with their experience, the world knows about it thirty seconds later on Twitter.



Tour guide Vince Knuth talking to his group about depth charges.

We are fortunate to have one of the best interpretative teams around, giving the same tour week after week, but always managing to be fresh and enthusiastic. Interpreters can't ever have a down day.

To prove the point at how fortunate we are to have these volunteers and interns, I'd like to put in some of the visitor comments from [tripadvisor.com](http://tripadvisor.com):

"Best ship tour I have ever taken!" -- Reviewed September 20, 2015

My girlfriend and I were visiting Albany for the weekend, and wanted to do some touristy things. This was recommended to us by the great people at the NY State Museum! First off, the USS Slater is the only floating WWII destroyer afloat in the US, and to add to that awesome fact, everything works on board (lights, water, the kitchen is still in use)! The staff is 100% volunteer, and the admission and all purchases at the gift shop go to maintain the museum. Our tour guide, Andrew, was great. He answered all of our questions and provided lots of great. He answered all of our questions and provided lots of great facts for our tour. My favorite part was we were allowed to sit on all the guns, play with the controls and wear the helmets for as many pictures as we wanted, I felt like a kid!! Overall we had such a good time. We are from NJ, minutes outside NYC, and have done the USS Intrepid Tour so many times. That tour is overwhelming, having so much inside the ship, and not having a "true dedicated tour". The USS Slater is a must for any tourist or history buff that visits Albany.

Knightowl77 Visited September 2015

"Don't miss the USS Slater if you come to Albany!" -- Reviewed September 6, 2015

I've lived in Albany a long time, but had never thought to bring adult visiting relatives to see the USS Slater. After all, who would think that Albany would be a place to have a naval historical experience? So our visit to the Slater was a huge, and extremely pleasant surprise! We took the \$8 (adult price) tour, and were rewarded with a quick but



informative introduction to the importance of destroyer escorts during the earliest stages of WW2; an intimate look at the living conditions in a vintage destroyer escort; lots of information about guns, battles, and strategy, and many anecdotes told by our knowledgeable and considerate guide. It was a blazingly hot day, in response to which our guide, a Vietnam vet with experience on a similar ship, took care to show us to shaded parts of the ship, let us sit in the officers' stateroom, and took other considerate steps to make our tour both informative and comfortable. The visit took approximately 2.5 hours in total, a little longer because the guide sat and talked with us for a little while after the formal tour ended. This is a winner!

Teresa H. Visited September 2015

"Best WWII ship tour because of the details" -- Reviewed September 6, 2015

There may be more famous WWII ships to tour, but you'll not likely find one with more attention to the details of fighting and living on a ship in a historical setting. The Slater has been lovingly restored with countless artifacts, turning it into a time machine. The staff is friendly, and our guide had assimilated many stories from sailors who served on these ships. Even members of my family not usually interested in history were captivated by the story. Attention WWII buffs...you cannot find these kinds of details in books.

mark12533, Visited September 2015

If you'd like to read what many others have to say about SLATER, go to TripAdvisor site.

**Walk to USS SLATER!** We would like to thank Mayor Kathy Sheehan, the City of Albany, and the Heritage Tourism Working Group for including USS SLATER among the 100 "Walk Your City" signs that have been placed throughout downtown Albany. The SLATER has two signs up. One is behind the Capitol building and the other one is at State & Pearl Streets. Check out the signs and come WALK TO THE SLATER!!



Autumn has come to the Hudson Valley as Gene and Larry enjoy a fall afternoon.

**It's getting close to the holiday season and you might have started thinking about holiday gifts.** Remember, there are a couple of ways to shop online and contribute to SLATER at the same time. We are registered with Goodshop, an online shopping mall that donates a percent of your purchase price to your cause when you shop at one of 3,000+ partner stores.

You can also find 25,000+ active discounts and money-saving coupons so you can save money and give back at the same time! Learn more about Goodshop. Also, we are an eligible charitable organization at AmazonSmile. When you shop at Amazon Smile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. Remember that when you sign up for either program, look for our official name, Destroyer Escort Historical Museum.



**Coming up in November, we will hold our annual Veterans Day commemoration on Wednesday, November 11th on board the ship at 0900.** Friday, November 13th, the Friends of the USS SLATER will host their benefit at the Fort Orange Club to raise money for our upcoming mast restoration. In addition to a presentation by Captain David Fowler, the Trustees will honor Doug Tanner as the recipient of the 2015 Trustees Award for his 17 years of dedicated service in preserving USS SLATER.

**Tickets are still available by calling 518-431-1943 or emailing [info@usslater.org](mailto:info@usslater.org).** And, our last tour day of the season will be Sunday, November 29th, so there's still time to see the ship in 2015. Then, we will go into winter restoration mode until next spring. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.usslater.org](http://www.usslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

**See you next month.**