

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The next generation is taking the watch. Bill Maloney's dad served in USS BANGUST DE-739. John Meeker's dad served in USS INCH DE-146. Barbara Lite's dad- Frank Heckart- served in USS LeRAY WILSON DE-441.

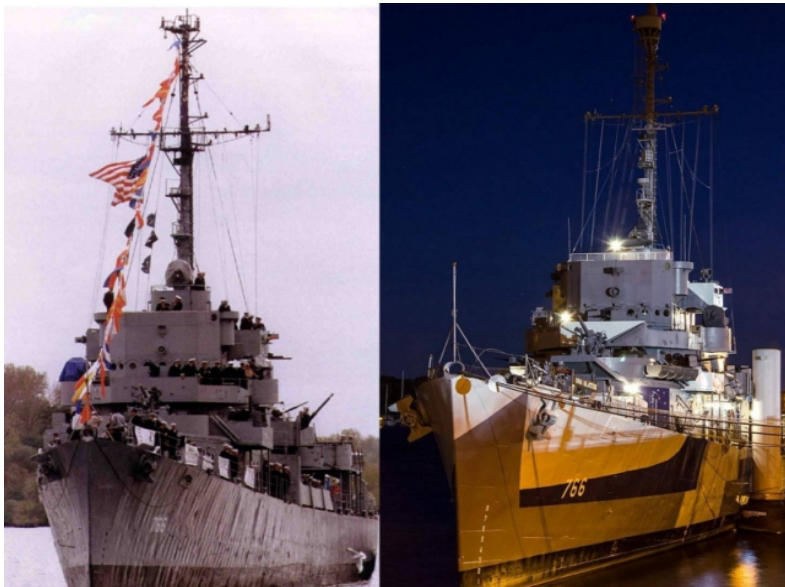
The month started with our **Fall Work Week**. Seventeen volunteers converged on the ship from Washington, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Colorado to support the regulars. The group included four sons and daughters of DE Vets, as the next generation is taking the watch. **Bill Maloney's** dad served in USS BANGUST DE-739. **John Meeker's** dad served in USS INCH DE-146. **Barbara Lite's**

dad, Frank Heckart, served in USS LeRAY WILSON DE-441. Frank was with us this week. And, **Jim Shannon's** dad served in the fourpiper USS TATTNALL DD-125, WILKES DD-441, YORKTOWN CV-10, and PHILIPPINE SEA CV-47.



Tom Skufca and Laird Confer replaced a wasted section of deck.

The big job was the replacement of the wasted deck on the 01 level forward. **Laird Confer, Tom Skufca, and Butch Warrender** managed to crop out a 4'x4' section of rotted metal, grind it smooth, cut out a replacement, and got it fitted and top welded by the end of the week. They didn't want Doug Tanner to feel unneeded, so they left the overhead welding for him.



Day and Night. SLATER arriving in Albany 20 years ago and a recent shot by Bill Maloney.

John Meeker, Joe Stout, and Frank Heckart comprised the gun gang. The previous Work Week, they had overhauled the train gear on mount 32, so having experience with the job, this time they did mounts 31 and 33. This involved removing the base ring covers, cleaning out all the gear teeth, greasing the gears, scaling and painting the covers, and putting everything back together. **Butch Warrender and Guy Huse** worked on mount 31, loosening

the lubricating bolts for the ultimate overhaul of the sight setter mechanism this coming winter. Butch and **Mike Marko** also got the main battery director freed up on the flying bridge. **Bob Nersasian** and his friend **Moose Umbley** came over from Massachusetts for a day, and did a lot of cleanup work on gun 32. That gun was Bob's brother's GQ station on the LEOPOLD DE-319, when she was sunk.

We had a great paint crew. Ron Prest, Bill Wetterau, Walt Stuart, Jim Shannon, and Bill Maloney finished the prep work on the 01 level aft. They finally painted out the deck with non-skid, and covered all that primer that has been showing since May. They also did a lot of haze gray touch-up on the gun tubs, ventilators, and the shield around gun 32 forward.

None of this would have been possible without the support of Chief "Smitty" Smith, and his assistant Barbara Lite. Together, they prepared breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the crew Monday through Thursday and even did omelets on Friday. The galley crew is ultimately the most important crew aboard. The weather was perfect and it was a very productive week.

The local volunteers picked up where the out-of-towners left off. Most of the activity over the course of the month was on the completion of the seawall safety rail. **Doug Tanner, Gary Sheedy, Danny Statile, Andy Sheffer, Tim Benner, Dave Mardon, Gene Jackey, and the ever-dependable Earl Herchenroder** all had a hand in completing the project. After much discussion about the color, the "Committee" decided to go with black railing, to minimize the visual impact. To top it off, Thomas Scian and Sheedy painted the toe plate emerald green, and the top of the seawall white. Sheedy described the visual impact as stunning.



Our Fall Work Week crew.



Danny Statile repairing a 20mm cooling tube.

Elsewhere, **Andy Sheffer, Danny Statile, and Earl Herchenroder** picked up on the overhead welding under 20mm gun 22.

This is where Tom and Laird replaced the deck section during the Work Week. Danny also repaired a couple of wasted 20mm cooling tubes. Andy's also been working on replacing the wasted belaying pin rails on the signal bridge.

Tommy Moore has been dealing with the undesirable task of scaling under the **MK51 director tubs aft**. This is overhead work, and has not been touched since the ship's arrival from Greece in 1993. He's finished the starboard side, and moved over to port. We've been spreading a lot of paint. The NPTU Sailors, under the direction of Chief **Lucas Kasper**, repainted the 01 level forward around gun 32, and got the new metal primed in the gun 22 tub deck. Tuesday volunteers, **Dick Walker** and **Ron Prest**, continued painting the ventilators on the 01 level amidships. Then, Bill Holt got the port side of the bulwark on the 02 level forward of the pilothouse repainted. This took care of a very visible eyesore.



Barry Witte's students continue to make progress on the smoke screen generator replication.

Down in the machinery spaces, Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon, and Larry Williams have been winterizing the machinery. They are also continuing to work on the pyrometer issues on the B-3 ship's service generator. **Barry Witte,** his students, and Midshipmen have been busy doing detail work in B-4, cleaning out old spare parts boxes, and installing missing handrailing. Back in the Steering Gear room, RPI engineering

students **Vince Montuori, Nick Guzicka, and Devon Urbano** continued to work on the details of the replica smoke generator system that is under construction.

Elsewhere around the ship, Cathy Wheat cleans, Jim Gelston keeps the clocks wound, and Angelo Bracco keeps making bunk straps and mending the signal flags for the last time this season. Guy Huse has kept busy locating and reinstalling various parts off the 20mm guns that were removed for reasons long forgotten, and have been lying around the gun shack ever since. **Boats Haggart and Walt Stuart** got the rigging ready to hoist the whaleboat. In the meantime, they have continued weaving fenders, and teaching marlinspike seamanship to the NPTU Sailors. Even engineers should know their knots.



The Capital District CPO Association honored Chief Smith on the Navy Birthday.

The Capital District Chief Petty Officer's Association celebrated the 242nd Birthday of the United States Navy aboard USS Slater on October 13th. Chief Bernard Smith was recognized as their USS SLATER Volunteer of the Year, for his ten years of cooking for the crew. Since 2006, a committee of Chiefs has selected a SLATER Volunteer of the Year, and presented a plaque to recognize this achievement at a luncheon held aboard the ship.

"Smitty" was recognized for his efforts to provide meals aboard SLATER for the regular volunteer workforce on a weekly basis, and for a myriad of special events. He has also provided meals to support the annual Work Weeks aboard SLATER for the past seven years and for Chief Petty Officer Selectees from NPTU. Additionally, he frequently served as a member of SLATER's color guard. Our thanks to Chief's **Art Dott** and **Sean Robbins**, for organizing the event.



The attendance at our 20th Anniversary Event was almost double previous years.

The highlight of a month of highlights was our 20th Anniversary fundraiser at the Fort Orange Club. This year's event focused on celebrating our incredible 20-year odyssey in Albany, taking the ship from rust bucket to National Historic Landmark. The night, done in the traditional Fort Orange Club style, featured h'ors d'oeuvres, music, and drink, bagpipers, and wonderful company. After an hour of socializing, Board Chairman

BJ Costello led everyone up to the President's Room, where we honored Frank Lasch for the leadership role he played in the earliest days of the project. His accomplishments included starting the endowment fund, reincorporating the Museum into a New York-based corporation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, acquisition of the trailer that now serves as our visitor center, getting funding for the initial whaleboat restoration and hull painting, and last but certainly not least, bringing his friend BJ Costello aboard. Eight members of his family were present, as BJ Costello presented them with a framed certificate honoring Frank for his service.



The Lasch family had a major turnout at the Fort Orange Club.

We were honored to have the new Commanding Officer of NPTU Ballston Spa, CDR Judd Krier aboard, along with three of his Chief Petty Officers, led by the new Command Master Chief Courtney Roach. They presented USS SLATER with a check for \$6,000 on behalf of the NPTU Chiefs Mess, raised over the course of the year. Our guest speaker was Captain Scott F. Robertson, who described his experiences as commanding officer of the cruiser USS NORMANDY, and a round the world tour that captivated everyone's attention.

I followed with a presentation that documented the high points of our twenty-year history in Albany. Images were shown of the ship's discovery in Greece as she awaited scrapping, to the pristine restoration that you see today, and the volunteers who made it all possible. A series of before and after pictures told the story of our amazing transformation. This year's event had almost double the attendance of previous years, and netted over \$30,000 for the project.



The Greek Flag flies over the AETOS again on Oxi Day.

The final ceremony of the month was our Oxi Day commemoration on October 28th. Each October 28th, millions of Greeks around the world commemorate Oxi Day, or "No" Day, a day honoring Greece's courageous resistance against the Italians during World War II. In 1940, Mussolini delivered an ultimatum to Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, demanding the entry of the Italian army and the occupation of Greek

territory. The Prime Minister refused, and the response was quickly echoed by the people of Athens as "Oxi," meaning "No." The Italian forces entered Greece through the steep Pindos Mountains. There they met fierce and unexpected resistance. Hitler was forced to delay the invasion of Russia, and extend their campaign into the winter, in order to subdue the Greeks after the Italians failed in their efforts. This ultimately resulted in the failure of the Russian Campaign. Dennis Nagi narrated the background for the commemoration.



John added a little bit of color to our Oxi Day color guard.

We were especially honored to have Nick Athanassiou present. Nick's father, **Athanassios Athanassiou**, was the first Greek commanding officer when SLATER became A/T AETOS, following her transfer at Boston in 1951. He sailed her to Norfolk, and then to Greece. Nick is a graduate of the Greek Naval Academy, and a retired college professor, living in Massachusetts. He trained on AETOS while at the Academy, and was back for our 20th Anniversary party and Oxi Day, to visit his old ship. Shanna Hopson embraced modern technology and streamed the event live on Facebook. It's posted to our page and has had 4,100 views.



Intern Merissa starts another tour on Quarterdeck.

October has been a busy month for our education department.

We've welcomed groups from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts – History class, Mountainside Christian Academy, Ballston Spa High School French Exchange students, Columbia County ARC, and RPI students and parents in town for Parents' Weekend. We also played host to many Boy Scout and Cub Scout groups for overnights.

We have four presentations given by our Volunteer Speaker's Bureau coming up in November. The first will be Bob Herbst at the Gloversville Public Library at 1730, followed by Alan Fox at the Philmont Library on the 10th at 1400. On the 13th, Charles Starks will be at the Bach Branch of Albany Public Library at 1400, and later Charles will be at the Saratoga Senior Center at 1000 on the 29th. All month we have photographs and paintings on display at the Voorheesville Public Library, so make sure to check them out if you are in the area.

November will be the last month for tours for 2017! Make sure you come and take a tour with one of our awesome tour guides, and see the last DE afloat in America. Our last day is November 26th, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We offer tours Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. We will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. It's going to be a long winter without the public to keep us entertained, so make sure you visit before it's too late!



Art Dott and Clark Farnsworth have a lot of Navy years.



We were shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of volunteer tour guide Chuck Boone, at age 74, this month. The cause was a sudden massive brain aneurysm. Chuck was a favorite among the visitors and the Thursday crew, known for his cheerful disposition and great sense of humor. In 1961, Chuck graduated high school, and soon after enlisted. He served as a gunner's mate through 1965, serving during the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was assigned to the USS VULCAN AR-5, and the World War II era USS NANTAHALA AO-60. He had experience on 3"50's as well as 5"38's, and would finish his naval career as a GM 2/C. Thanks to the GI Bill; he was able to earn a Bachelor's of Science degree. He later began a career with the New York State Police that would last 28 years. He began as a road trooper, and eventually worked his way up to the security detail of Hugh Carey, Governor of New York, from 1975-1982. He then became a thruway detective, and went on to spend 20 years working with the forensic crime lab.

Thinking back to his time aboard NANTAHALA, Chuck said that the thing that drew him into the SLATER was the flood of memories that come back to him as he experienced the same sights and smells. Reminiscing, he said that stepping aboard SLATER was "like I hadn't been off." He will be missed greatly by all of us.

Finally, brace yourselves, because it's that time of the year. Next month's SIGNALS will include our annual Winter Fund Appeal. We're not counting on global warming, so be prepared to "Help keep a Volunteer warm this winter," as the work goes on to honor those who are no longer with us.

See you next month.