

SLATER SIGNALS

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

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December is always a change of pace for all of us aboard USS SLATER. As we close to visitors and secure the ship for the winter, our focus shifts. We are no longer welcoming visitors, our tour guides aren't visiting on the deck, and we stop raising money from ticket and merchandise sales. This December is not so different, though it follows a short season, in which we didn't get enough time with our guides, or the visitors that follow. We are thankful for the time we did get, and the visitors we could share our story with.



You can purchase Liam's mask, shirt, and bullet thermos from our Ship's Store and support SLATER!



We've got a brand new 3-D metal ornament of SLATER! Perfect for your tree and all year round!

Shanna Schuster's refocus on merchandising and online donations couldn't have come at a more critical time. With attendance drastically reduced because of Covid-19, her creation of the online gift shop, and a vastly expanded selection of inventory, was almost prophetic. Also different in 2020, is the merchandise that we can move! Hand-in-hand with the new

website, we have an online Ship's Store, where you can find your SLATER merchandise and get it shipped right to your door. Shanna has stayed very busy processing, packing, and shipping orders, and we are blown away by your support! Volunteer and Coast Guard Storekeeper, **Dick Walker**, has taken some of the pressure off Shanna by taking most of the packages to the Post Office for her once a week.

Interns, John, Cassidy, and Liam have come in a few days this month to assist in getting the Special Collections space put together again. Shanna feels this is the same

story every winter, but she is once again confident that we'll get that space ready for visitors this spring, for the third year in a row. The three interns have inventoried and stored all the logbooks we have in the collection. They are working on finalizing the displays and getting descriptions ready to insert into the self-guided tour booklet. They are going through

documents that have been in storage for 10+ years and sorting them so Shanna can determine their relevance and whether they are still needed. The rest of the To Do List is about two pages long, so we'll keep you updated as we go!

Shanna announced at the Board Meeting this month that we had 2,000 visitors in three months. Now, that is very low compared to years past, but actually pretty good for



Interns, Liam, John, and Cassidy completed inventory of the Ship's Store.



Not even 30 inches of snow can keep our volunteers away. Earl is shoveling a path to the head.



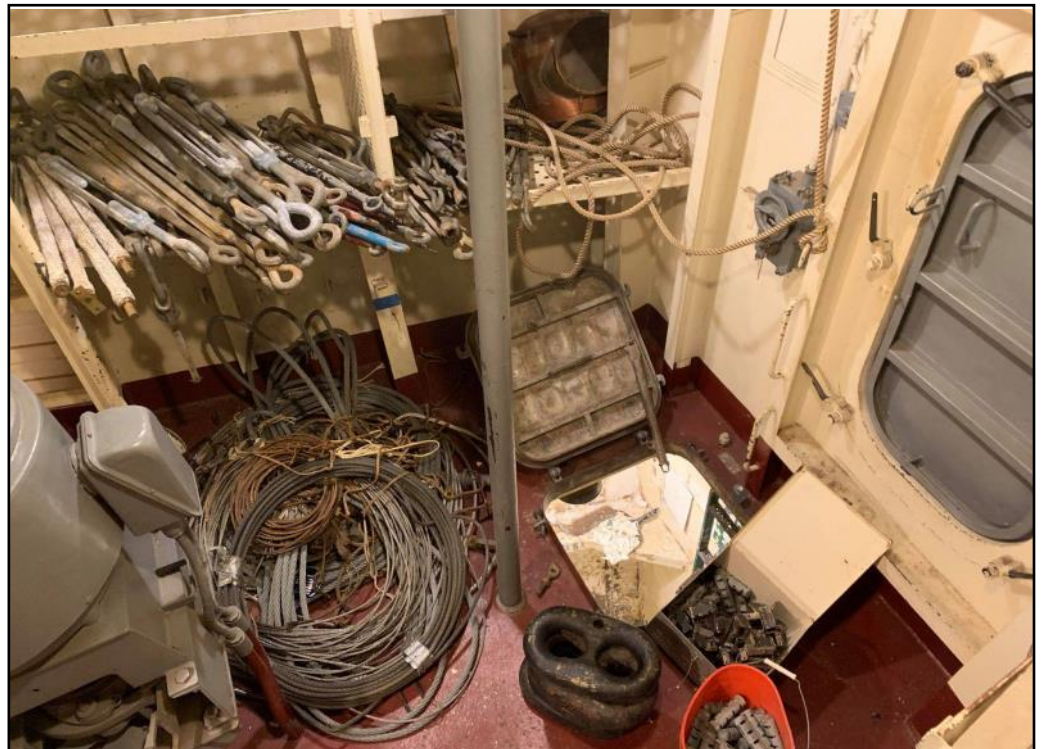
Get those guns covered!

COVID times, when most museums are struggling to even open their doors to the public, with the safety of the public in mind.

The maintenance volunteers have several projects going over the winter. On shore, Doug Tanner, Dave Mardon, Warren Brozio, Earl Herchenroder, and Chuck Teal are doing an extensive rebuild of the shore head to replaced rotted wood. You may recall that the structure was original a prefab shed that we purchased as our first ticket booth in 1998 and was later repurposed as our head when we restored the trailer in 2002. Doug's crew went so far as to jack up the east side of the head to replace rotted wood underneath. Of course,

the ongoing work has forced some of us to have to resort to using the port-a-john on some very cold mornings, rather than interrupt the work. But that is preferable to the discomfort you feel when you're sitting on the commode with five guys standing outside in the cold waiting for you to finish, along with the associated commentary. There is now talk about pulling the commode to insulate the drain piping. Everyone will be grateful that we have the port-a-john at that point.

Boats Haggart, and the deck gang, Paul Guarnieri, Bill Wetterau, Thomas Scian, Walt Stuart,



Twenty years of accumulated junk has to go somewhere. The beginnings of the anchor windless restoration project.

Bill Holt, and Warren Brozio got all the guns covered with canvas for the winter. They stowed all the helmets and the hedgehog projectiles. Then, they finished the replacement of all the mooring lines with new rope. They have gotten very good at making eye splices.

Their next project is cleaning out and repainting the anchor windlass room. The original plan was to confine the project to that one space, but we were fortunate to get **Gary Sheedy** involved, and Gary immediately recognized the need to go a step further. The hold below the anchor windlass room is labeled on the damage control drawings as “Boatswain’s Stores.” Aboard SLATER it is a rat’s nest of old line,

wire rope and deck hardware that has been accumulating ever since the ship came to Albany in 1997. If we don’t know what to do with something, we just open that hatch and drop it in the hold. Gary and **Thomas Scian** took it upon themselves to completely empty the hold. All the line, wire, canvas, and hardware has been piled into the forward head and the passageway for sorting.



Cathy stays busy keeping us looking ship shape.

The plan is to paint the hold first, restow everything that is worth keeping, and then repaint anchor windlass room. With the hold now empty, scraping has begun. It is hoped that the end product will approximate the quality of Gary’s restoration of the reefer deck and aft steering.

Cathy Wheat is well into her winter routine. She stripped all the beds in officer’s country and broken down and stowed all the display artifacts. She covered everything with sheet plastic in anticipation of a repair job on the overhead ammunition



Merry Christmas Danny!

passing scuttle that leads to gun 32. The she did the same in the wardroom and stowed all the china and silver. Along the way she found time to break out and decorate the Christmas tree in forward crew berthing.

Danny Statile had a great Christmas.

First, thanks to our friends at Haun Welding, they swapped welding machines to get a nice 480volt Lincoln AC/DC stick welding machine. If that wasn't enough Christmas joy for Danny, we also bought him a brand-new Miller plasma cutter. Tis the season. He has spent the bulk of the month fabricating new hose guards for the MK-14 gunsights on the 20mm gun mounts. Thomas noticed they were badly wasted when he was covering the guns, and Danny took it upon himself to fabricate replacements.



Shanna and Jo Ann take care of it all. Accounting, marketing, merchandising, curating, cooking, and spreading cheer.

His next project will be repairs to the 3” ammunition passing scuttle for gun 32 on the 01-level forward. The scuttle coaming is badly deteriorated and there are several holes in the adjacent deck that need to be repaired. This work will create a lot of dirt in Officer's Country, so we must wrap that up before we reopen in spring.



Barry and Jack working on the whistle pull.

Up in the radio shack, Steve Syrotynski has been working with Dave Stinson from Texas to get parts for the RAK receivers. He is now at the point where he's sure he can get them running. The RBM receiver will also be working soon. He is working on getting the original connectors and plugs. Steve also replaced tubes in the RCK-13 before it got too cold. He

cleaned the antennae lead contacts on the exterior two large insulators which did help the TCS set work a little better. He is in the process of replacing a broken meter on the modulator box for the TBL and found a replacement that he should have soon.

Recently Mr. Jared Hale from Ballston Spa, who had been on board for tours, donated about 800 or so electronic vacuum tubes, and Steve has been going through them, sorting, and testing them. So far, he's found lots of good spares for the receivers we have on board, with more to come for sure. When all the receivers are working, he will come up with a patch panel to have all the receivers work off one speaker, as well as an antenna switching system to share on antenna connection for all with an antenna switch of WWII Navy vintage which he donated. In the spring we will start a restoration of the aft emergency radio room. Also donated this month was a new hot water tank. Thank you to



Steve cleaning the antenna contacts.

Kevin Mulligan and John Tremblay for donating it.

As always, Barry Witte is supervising several projects. Jack Carbone has been working on overhauling the pulleys for the whistle pull cord system. **Barry and Ken Powers** attached the new labels that **George Christophersen** made for the smoke generator. **Alex Titcomb** had been working on machining bushings for the fighting light setup panel.

New volunteers Richard and Henry Burgeois, a father and son team, have been replicating missing steam



Father and Son team Burgeois replacing steam lines.

lines in the aft motor room, under Barry Witte's direction. They have also taken an interested in getting one of the MK-14 gunsights operational, and to that end have undertaken scanning all the relevant manuals. We may eventually get them up on our website.

As always, we can't thank you enough for your support of our Winter Fund Drive.

Donations continue to come in on a regular basis, enabling us to keep up with expenses. This, despite that fact that, our Winter Fund solicitation went into the mail at the end of November, it is apparently gathering mold in a warehouse somewhere. I know I have yet to receive my own solicitation, and very few of the new Winter Fund envelopes have been coming in.

However, thanks largely to Shanna, relatively new dimension of our Fundraising has been online giving through credit cards and PayPal. This, coupled with Shanna's greatly increased online gift shop sales have offset the loss of revenue that the postal delays, probably due to Covid-19, have cost us. To give you a comparison in quarter 4 of 2019 we sold \$8,035 in merchandise. In 2020 we sold \$12, 926, the majority of this year's total was online. We are also greatly encouraged by the large number of first time donors and memberships we have received, help our support base continue to grow. We are rapidly approaching 25,000 friends on Facebook, So, despite the disaster 2020 has been, our future continues to look bright. And that is all thanks to you. We couldn't do it without you.

See you next month,

Tim



***Winter is here, thanks for your support
keeping our volunteers warm!***