

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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Summer is now half over and our visitation has been very good. Now that we have the new shoreside building, our most delicate archival pieces, such as documents and photographs, are being moved inside the building. This is important for reasons outside of having a humidity and temperature-controlled environment. SLATER is fortunate to be in wonderful condition, despite her age and having over four decades in her Naval career. There are no leaks! But it is important to be prepared for anything that may happen in the future. C-305M is just about at the water level, so a good first step is to relocate our paper collection. John began the process of organizing the main artifact storage area.

For those who don't remember, the former depth charge magazine, C-305M, was restored during our 2014 drydocking. This is our primary collections storage area. Without a humidity and temperature-controlled building with storage, this was the best we could do. It is deep inside the ship and generally a few degrees cooler than the berthing compartment directly above it. The downside? You are hunched over the entire time you are there and it's small.

Another great reason to move our archives inside the visitor's center is to be able to show family and friends of DE sailors the primary source documents and



Dennis completed repainting the seawall railing, to make Shanna happy.



Warren and Super Dave tested all of our lifelines under Doug's supervision.

photographs in person. We have already been able to do that. A family of a WWII DE veteran asked if we had anything for their father's ship. We showed them the typical binder of information we have but we also got the chance to show them newsletters printed on the ship while he was aboard. This wouldn't have been possible if they had remained inside deep storage. A trend in museums is opening their collections and making them more accessible to the public. We are in the early stages of doing this in multiple ways, and it will be exciting to see what comes of it!

Finally, items from thirty-three destroyer escorts have been added to our website. Ships are being added periodically, in alphabetical order. Including the postwar ships, over 600 destroyer escorts were built, and we have something for most of them. Do the math-it's going to take a while to add everything! Item descriptions and images are being updated, and you can see what we have uploaded so far by going to this website: <https://usslater.pastperfectonline.com/> If you see an image or document you would like to learn more about, feel free to contact us.

The maintenance volunteers continue to make progress despite the heat. Bill Wetterau and Ron Prest have been chipping and priming away on the 01 level. Thomas Scian has been touching up the camouflage topside and repainted the whole forward main deck house on the starboard side.

James is working to cut his way into the B-3 ships service generator tank. The interior of the tank is in desperate need of preservation. He is planning to cut an access hole in the top of the tank and has made a template and stuck it on top of the tank. This should work just fine for getting people in and out of the tank. It should also be accessible with a Sawzall to make the cut without needing to move any plumbing.



Larry Williams and Dale Setford set up the new blower donated by the Albany County Convention Bureau in memory of Gordon Lattay.

Doug and his shipfitters have several projects going, as usual. They removed a leaking section of the fire main over

Angelo's sewing machine, made the repair, reassembled it, and found the source of the leak on the main deck. Water was getting in a fire plug on the starboard side of the main deck, so they installed a temporary blank. They replaced the plug with one that was a proper fit, so now Ang can leave his raincoat at home.



Chuck Tanner adjusting the dogs on the deck gear locker.

Chuck Tanner did a lot of work on dogs, both on watertight doors and the swing dogs for gun 31 ready service ammunition locker. Danny continued work on the repair of the gun 33 ready service ammunition lockers. Doug repaired a loose lifeline on the 02 level Starboard side, forward of 40mm gun tub. He has done a complete lifeline test and inspection.

Dale removed the rotted-out sound powered phone selector switch from the gun 33 tub for repair and replacement. He also

started cutting and making the stand offs for the ammo boxes in the gun 33 tub. New volunteer and retired tool and die maker, **Leonard Deroo**, machined a replacement part for the drill press table and installed it. The drill press is operational again. The crew started planning for making the door to the upper sound room on the flying bridge weather tight. It's been leaking badly for several months.

With all the heavy rain, stopping new leaks was another issue. The crew re-caulked a stuffing tube by the aft mast, where water was migrating down into aft crew's washroom. Next, they repaired the deck drain in the aft crew's head and located the source of a leak going up ladder access to the flying bridge and repaired that. The crew also re-caulked several stuffing tubes on the deck of the main battery gun director platform, where water was migrating down the wires and leaking into CIC. They are still looking for the source of the leak over the plotting table in CIC. In addition, they welded up a hole by the flying bridge hatch that was leaking outside of CIC into the passageway.



Danny Statile has involved all the shipfitters in the restoration of the Gun 33 ready service lockers.

Almost 2,000 visitors walked over our gangway in July. It's been a very busy month filled with hazy, hot, and humid New York weather. You might not have realized it because our crew is so good, but both **Shanna** and I took a week and a half vacation to escape the humidity. I went to southern NY while Shanna ventured west to Montana.

We were open on the 4th to celebrate Independence Day and we had a good turnout of visitors. We also welcomed aboard 21 members of the Canastota Cub Scouts for an overnight on the 15th. It was our warmest overnight of the year, but the scouts handled it like champs.



We've had such a busy summer that even our Coast Guard storekeeper, Dick Walker, became a tour guide

You read in June that we were honored to be the chosen charity of the Capital Region AHEPA Golf Outing this year. Their outing raised thousands of dollars for the Capital Region AHEPA Chapter scholarship funds as well as for SLATER. This month they delivered \$4,000 to us to be used toward the restoration and preservation of the ship. It is this same chapter of AHEPA that helps us plan and produce our Oxi Day ceremony each October.



Curator John Epp received the \$4,000 check from our local AHEPA Chapter.

Charles traveled to Ravena, NY, this month to give a presentation on "Saving SLATER" to the patrons of their local library. We have got quite a few

more presentations coming up this fall. We're excited to get into different communities and share the history of Destroyer Escorts.

Finally, we lost two volunteers this month. Phil "Cat" Catalfamo crossed the bar at the age of 97 on Tuesday, July 18, 2023. At seventeen years old, he left Philip Schuyler High School in Albany to join the Navy during WWII. Philip proudly served from 1944-1946. He was a Gunners Mate on the destroyer escort USS CHAFFEE DE-230 in the Philippines. Phil kept us supplied with coffee and pastries for over ten years. When he could



Phil kept the crew supplied with coffee for many years.

no longer drive, his son Dave chauffeured him down so he could continue to fulfill his mission.



Mike Marko receiving the USS SLATER Volunteer of the Year Award from the Capital District Chief Petty Officer's Assn. in 2018.

And we lost longtime volunteer Mike Marko, age 85. Mike had been volunteering as a tour guide with us for years, and has earned a place of distinction with our Wednesday crew. A former DE sailor, Mike's involvement with the Navy goes back to a week after graduating high school. (His mother insisted that he get his diploma.) He served four years above the waves on USS BROUGH DE-148 and USS PETERSON DE-152. At the time, he was involved with Operation Deep Freeze, spending much of his time in Antarctic waters. Our condolences go out to the families of these two

wonderful volunteers.

**See you next month,
Tim**