



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

PO Box 1926

Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943

Vol. 26 No. 3, March 2023

By the time you read this, we will be closer to our April 5th opening date than any of us could have imagined. This month a lot of effort has gone into preparing the site for the new modular building. **Gary Sheedy** has led the way in getting the trailer emptied out, not only of furniture and merchandise, but electrical and power equipment too. He even recycled some of the trim and spare wood from inside. A major aspect of the job was removing all the ship parts we had stowed underneath the trailer and the observation deck.

We had a fair number of shipboard ladders, joiner doors, watertight doors, frames, pipe, and steel that had to be moved out. Thanks to **Bill, Super Dave, Chuck, Walt, James, Thomas, and Tommy** for helping move all the items squirreled away in there. We scrapped

some and what we thought we will need in the future is being stored offsite, thanks to **Diane Watters**, our friend at Metal Supermarkets.



All this work on the trailer means that Shanna and Jo Ann have lost their workspace and have been temporarily displaced. With the encouragement of Gary Sheedy, and much to my dismay, they have found temporary shelter in our shipboard wardroom. This took a lot of preparation, as

So you kicked us out of our office and you still expect us to get work done?

Barry and Gary had to move the internet equipment from the trailer to the ship's store storeroom aboard. They also moved the network switch from the small arms office to the wardroom so **Shanna and Jo Ann** can run their computers and telephone.

As much as we love having them aboard the ship, their relocation takes Officer's Country, one of our most appreciated exhibits, off the tour route as opening day approaches. Getting them out of the wardroom will be the focus of our upcoming spring fundraiser. Most of the costs of the new visitor center are being covered by grants from the New York State Legislature, the City of Albany, and Berkshire Bank. However, we find ourselves about \$50,000 short of the total cost needed to move them out of the wardroom. Be on the lookout for our spring solicitation



Jo Ann and Shanna have taken up temporary residence in my wardroom.

coming to a mailbox near you! We can't do it without you!



Life in the POD. This is the way its going to be for the next couple of months.

We've made so many considerations for the new building, it truly has been a team effort. George Gollas and Barry Witte did a lot of work planning for the alarm system and video surveillance systems. **Doug Tanner and Earl Herchenroder** worked together to weld the towing tongue back onto the trailer so she can be hauled away. **Walt, Warren, Dave, and Gene** dismantled the railing on the handicap ramp so we can recycle the wood to be used if we need to extend the deck at all. The new ramp will be aluminum.

Part of the preparation also included removal of two trees that were very near and dear to my heart. One, in the parking lot, will give us at least five more parking spaces. The beautiful tree next to the handicapped ramp had to go to make way for the new aluminum handicapped access ramp. At least I got some firewood out of the deal. Shanna and Gary met with our contractor to go over the logistics of removing the trailer and installing the two sections of the new building. The plan is set and we're ready to get the show on the road! Now we wait for the building to finish being built.



I spent 25 years trying to protect that tree, but in the end, Gary won.

Alright, enough of the shoreside

business. Aboard ship, the winter work is wrapping up and now we need to get her clean for opening day. Down on the messdecks and in forward berthing, while the pipe insulation project is not complete, Barry has stopped for the winter. This work was done by naval reservists and RPI Midshipmen.



Our RPI Midshipmen and members of Alpha Phi Omega gave us a big help with cleanup.

On Saturday, 18 March 2023, our regular crew was augmented by over 20 RPI Midshipmen and members of RPI's Alpha Phi Omega, RPI's premier co-ed service fraternity. They spent the whole day cleaning on the second deck forward and helping cleanup shoreside. But don't worry, they left plenty of cleaning for **Cathy Wheat**.

In addition, the RPI crew assisted in a topside washdown, and removed a lot of scrap metal off the ship. Steve Syrotynski used the crew to get the coding room cleaned

out, and under **Doug Tanners** supervision, they also got the coding machine cabinet moved to the radio room. **Steve** doesn't know it yet, but restoration of the coding machine cabinet will be his next project.

Doug Tanner air tested the ship's fresh water and waste systems and got them reactivated for the season. All the winter projects, including the work in the wardroom and the two portside fan rooms, have wrapped up and are in the process of being painted. The only two loose ends are the repairs to the portside breakwater door and the fo'c's'le hatch.



Doug and Warren got the fresh water system up and running for the season.

Walt also got the nameboard hung and he and **Thomas** got all the guns uncovered and the canvas stowed. Next up for **Walt** was getting the accommodation ladder down and then moving the paint float alongside. **Chuck Longshore** and **Paul Guarnieri** completed repainting the aft foam proportioner, and **Ed Nowick** and **Dennis Murray** got the starboard side storeroom below C-203-L painted out, so **John** has a new storage space in Collections.



Paul and Chuck got the aft foam proportioner painted.

In the past month or so, we have seen a lot of great progress in B-3. The bilge project, where zones previously contaminated with oil and water were to be scraped, cleaned, and coated against future corrosion, hit a major milestone. All zones that were previously

soaking in water, with an oily film on top have been cleaned and coated. The linseed coat is curing now and will soon be ready for a primer coat on top, to return the bilge to a red color again after all these years. We could happily leave it as it is now, and it would remain stable, but we want to get more coats of protection and some color down there.

In other news, the engineers finally decided to look back in time over a decade ago when SLATER volunteers attempted to get one of the main engines running. After much work, they had fuel, lube oil, and starting air run to it. It "started" for a couple of seconds, then stopped. After that, they could not get a cylinder to fire again. With the passing of **Gus Negus** and the retirement of **Karl Herchenroder**, the project lost all momentum.

However, our new group of engineers has reenergized the project of getting a main engine fired up. To begin, they are going over the fuel system, ensuring the lines and filters are clean. They are also identifying any fuel injector units that are stuck. Due to the tolerances these were built to, any impurities will clog them, so it is no surprise the engine stopped getting fuel 10 years ago. The crew is taking it one step at a time and continue to think about the next steps. One of their biggest obstacles will be getting enough lube oil into the sump to be able to safely turn the engine over and build compression back up. Roughly 200 gallons will be needed.



James, Mike and, Jim are investigating the possibility of firing up a main engine.



Doug and his shipfitters wrapped up repairs to the forward supply fan room.

That's where they stand. We have a clean bilge and engine projects moving along. The engineering department is buzzing with excitement every Monday. If working on big engines excites you, you're welcome to fill out a volunteer application and join them. You can also keep up with their progress and the rest of the volunteers on Facebook and on our YouTube channel.

Shanna has continued to book overnights, tours, and events throughout this month. She spent one Saturday in Ballston Spa at the Twin Rivers Council's Boy Scout Expo. With over 150 scouts present, Shanna had a helmet with her so the scouts could try it on and take a photo and encouraged them to come to SLATER to take a tour, participate in an overnight, or make progress on earning a merit badges.

On the 23rd, Shanna met with representatives from other Cultural and Historical sites in Albany County. This group focuses on bringing people to the area and entertaining them while they are here. They exchanged brochures and worked to organize methods of supporting one another.

Interns Gio and Tyler have been researching ships for upcoming podcast episodes, cleaning up the ship, updating the Tour Guide Manual, and helping John get the displays set in the Collections Space. Make sure you check out our newest episode of DE Classified on USS GEORGE A. JOHNSON (DE-583) this month. GEORGE A. JOHNSON survived kamikaze attacks, served as a training ship in the 12th Naval District throughout most of the 1950's, was the object of a short-lived property dispute that made national news, as well as an engineering first for the crew who scrapped her on a beach. Tune in this month to DE Classified to hear the story of the DE that made her last stand on the beaches of Pacifica.

Jo Ann continues to process all the donations and pay the bills. She also serves as our Human Resources Department and worked with the auditors to satisfy them for another year. She's relieved to report that the audit is done, and she came through with flying colors!

John has been busy this month on digitization projects. The individual ship files we have kept for over 20 years contain a wealth of information for visitors seeking to learn more about their old ship or a family member's. Sometimes, they are surprised to see service pictures of their father or grandfather in these. To back these files up and make them more easily accessible to visitors and researchers, **Alan Fox and Tom Corigliano**, with the help of interns **Gio and Tyler**, worked all winter to organize them for scanning. They completed that last month and Alan began scanning.



Walt, Chuck and, Earl got the accommodation ladder rigged.

He got a few ships done before our attention turned to another scanning project. We are fortunate to have a 26-book series of diagrams for shipboard equipment. These books were given to ships for easier reference to fix or fabricate repairs. Somehow, SLATER's books survived the war, time in mothballs, and 40-years of Greek service. Since the ship returned to America in 1993, they have been sitting in a safe in an officer's stateroom. They were on the list for eventual digitization, but a phone call from longtime supporter **Rich Pekelney** from USS PAMPANITO asked that we upload manuals and diagrams to the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association's website. He has

requested us to furnish him with copies he is missing. Each book takes roughly an hour to scan but the hope is to get these to him sooner rather than later. An index will be created as well for easier searching.



Jo Ann and her mom Mary Beth continue to keep the crew fed on Mondays.



John and Gio stowing helmets to get the aft berthing spaces ready for tours.

A new exhibit in our Collections Space this season tells the story of USS STAFFORD (DE-411). The bulk of the pieces in our STAFFORD collection were donated by the son of the ship's ASW officer, Lt. (j.g.) **Carl H. Williams**. He was aboard on 5 January 1945, the day the ship was struck by a kamikaze. Captain Craig refused to give the abandon ship order, instead evacuating everyone to USS ULVERT M. MOORE (DE-442) which was under the command of Lt. **Cmdr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr.** A nucleus crew, including Williams, remained on the STAFFORD and were

successful in keeping her afloat. Some of the pieces on display are notebooks kept by Williams, fragments of the kamikaze which he saved, personal photographs, and a copy of the ship's Logbook.

Registrations are coming in for the upcoming DESA Reunion in June, including a couple of World War II veterans. There are very few of the original World War II DESA members left. Their places have been taken by sailors who served the postwar Navy. They served in the DER radar pickets and the "1000 class" ships, such as the DEALY, CLAUDE JONES, GARCIA, and KNOX class ships. For any of you who were DESA members who are not on our mailing list, please contact us, and we will keep the spirit of DESA alive. We hope that all you DESA members can come to Albany for our final reunion. See the registration info below. We hope to see you there.

See you next month.

Tim



Walt and Thomas got all the guns uncovered for the season. Now we're just waiting for you to come and visit.