



SLATER SIGNALS

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

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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As I write, the final preparations are being made for opening the ship to the public. **Shanna** did such an excellent job preparing **Jo Ann** and **John** for her maternity leave, that I haven't had the need to call her. Jo Ann and John anticipate everything I need, and every time I ask them about the status of something, their response is always, we've got that worked out. They have been amazing. They got all the new interns hired, and are in the process of training them, as well as getting the ship cleaned-up and ready to open. Jo Ann had help from her mom, **Mary Beth**, to get the store stocked and ready for sales. We're in the process of putting together the first quarter 2024 "Trim But Deadly".

We have sent out the last call list to about four hundred people on our postal mailing list who we haven't heard from in two years. Thus, if you haven't been in touch with us in a

while, you may be getting our "Last Call" letter. Keep in mind that we don't need money for you to stay on the list, though we appreciate it. We just need to hear from you that you are alive and still interested in getting our mailings. The mailing is at the printer now.



On the left is Ken Kaskoun, who turned 90 on the 28th. No cane, no walker, no restrictions. He'll take you anywhere you want to go.

The three projects that are on track for timely completion are: the wardroom, the aft magazine, and the food serving table. On the messdecks, **Ed Zajkowski** provided **Barry Witte** with all the original documentation so he could faithfully replicate the original serving table and all the associated steam piping. Barry's Saturday team consists of welder **Dom DeCapria**, **Chuck Longshore**, **Seth Powers**, **Scott Dessingue**, and **Jeff Newsome**. The messdeck has really come together. **Chris Soulia** has also been doing a

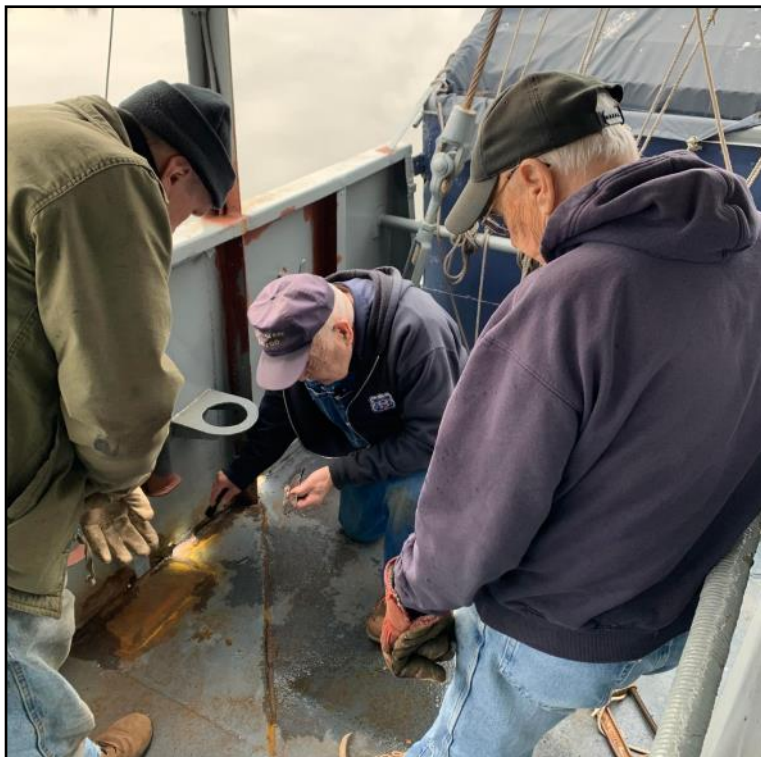
lot of touch up painting on the messdeck and the galley passageway.

For the shipfitters, this winter has been the winter of unpleasant surprises. Doug and his team Dave, Earl, both Chucks, both Bills, Warren, and Danny repaired the wasted starboard bulkhead in the pilothouse and investigated the Exec's stateroom for wastage under the bunk. The starboard bulkhead of the wardroom has been completely welded up. After that, **Gary and Ed** replaced the insulation and repainted the whole bulkhead. A little insulation aboard, and a little paint, followed by a lot of cleaning, and the wardroom is now ready for inspection. There was also the issue of rehabilitating the second working air compressor, which is ongoing.



Barry and his crew put the finishing touches on the replica serving line.

The shipfitters continue to find wasted metal in the superstructure and flying bridge. Those repairs will continue through the tour season in such a way so as not to interfere with tours. They completed work in the wardroom and the executive officer's stateroom, and all the displays have been reset. They also found a wasted stanchion under the port 40mm gun that needs replacing. They started pulling together the material to make that repair.



The shipfitters continue to find and weld up leaks.

They pressure tested the whole fresh water and sewer systems, and brought fresh water back aboard just in time for the big freeze. We had a week of temperatures in the teens, which necessitated running water at night and keeping a lot of electric heaters running, which jacked-up our electric bill.

Prior to the birth of Shanna's son, Theodor Douglas Schuster, born February 3rd, Shanna's mother, Nancy, made the trip east from Montana to spend

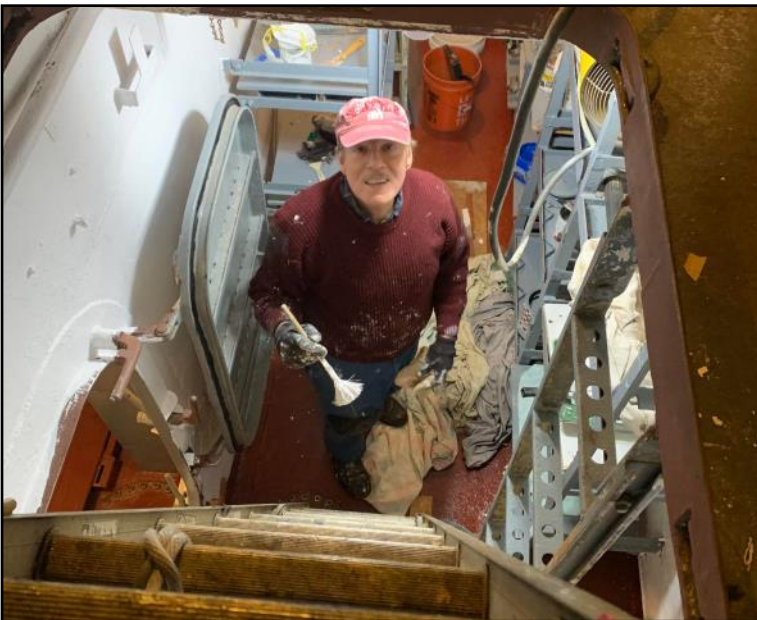


All work stopped when Shanna arrived with Theo, for his first visit to the ship.

time with her new grandson, and she even spent a few days helping on the ship. Sadly, Nancy passed away several weeks after returning home. Her passing had bittersweet ramifications, because as a result, Shanna, Michael, and Theo all traveled to Montana for the funeral. However, the entire Schuster-Hopson clan were introduced to Theo much sooner than they would have otherwise. Thus, some joy was gleaned from an otherwise sad event.

Gio, John, and James continue producing more content for our YouTube channel. They

have been working on a series of videos that will highlight our volunteers. They will hopefully encourage new volunteers to get involved, attract new donors when they see how hard these guys work, and make our online friends feel more a part of the gang! **John** and **James** are still cooking up more YouTube videos, and John and I keep everyone up to date on Facebook, with what our volunteers are up to.



Ed, Dennis, and Thomas spent most of the winter restoring the aft magazines.

Gary's team of Ed, Dennis, and Thomas have completed painting out magazines C-302M and the amidships space C-303M. The space looks amazing with the new paint! With new shelving, we have easy access to our newly organized ordnance spare parts.

Up in the radio shack, Steve Syrotynski, the father and son team of Steve and Dave MacMinn, and Steve Page, have been keeping busy. They finished attaching all the receivers on local operating position number one to the antenna selector switch. They also started repairs to the RAO-2 radio receiver, and are replacing a filter capacitor in the RBO-5. They continue to organize the spare tubes in the electronics storeroom below the messdecks, and have used the TBL-8 transmitter to make new contacts. Steve also spent several weekends making sure that our sound effects, music, and radar simulation are ready for opening day.



Danny fabricated hooks for the bunk straps Angelo is making.

Tour Guide, Carl Camurati, has developed into a valuable member of the

maintenance crew. Initially, he took on the project of repainting our topside battle helmets. He is working with John to stencil the helmets and is casting new foam liners for the talkers' helmets. He then took up the restoration and maintenance of our compartment fans, making sure that all the spaces that the public has access to have the "safety" fan guards, as opposed to the traditional old style "finger chopper" guards.



Carl and Angelo, getting helmets squared away. Carl does the painting and Angelo is making the new straps.

Aft, under berthing space C-202-L, Gary Sheedy has been beating Thomas, Ed, and Dennis to complete repainting magazines C-302-M and C-303-M. As of this writing, 302-M, is finished and Gary is carefully organizing and stowing all our ordnance spare parts there. Amidships, 303 is in the process of being painted out, and we plan to have the berthing space ready for the spring work week coming up on April 28th.

It's been a long winter for the engineers, but they finally got a much-needed win with the

whaleboat on 18 March 2024. After the whaleboat refused to start in early September of 2023, there has been a lot of back and forth between diesel shops, and the engineers themselves. First, we bled the pump, and it still couldn't pump fuel. The lift pump was pushing fuel through the injection pump, but nothing else. Next, we attempted to resurrect the injection pump with an off the shelf seal kit. "It's already broken, we can't break it any more than it already is " Jim N said. He was right. The pump didn't pump after that either.

Next, we swallowed our pride and brought the pump to a local shop, who happily told us they could save it. They disassembled it, cleaned everything, then told us they couldn't rebuild this, they didn't have access to parts. In addition to the frustration of this, they also told us the pump was still in pieces and piled into a box. We would have to pay \$175 for them to put it back together. That was an expensive cleaning! They offered us a rebuilt pump for \$2500. We declined.

After scouring the web, James found the diesel shop of dreams: Sheaf Diesel in the UK. They specialize in old, obsolete diesel injection pumps. James got a quote from this shop for about \$475 + shipping. They even offered an expedited exchange in case we needed the whaleboat back online sooner. Sheaf sent us a rebuilt unit, same part number, zero play in the input shaft. This pump is indistinguishable from a new unit.



Gio led the effort to get all of the berthing spaces put back together.

With warmer weather coming around, the engineers fitted the new pump, and were able to finally hear the Westerbeke 4-91 running again for the first time since last September. In the coming weeks, they will be getting everything tidied up, while Tommy gets the woodwork done. This season, the whaleboat will be coming back alongside the Slater under her own power again, as it has been and as it will continue to be.

That brings us to the reminder about the spring work week. The event is an outgrowth of USS HUSE Association work weeks, but you don't have to be a HUSE veteran to participate. The event is being coordinated by **Brandon Easley**, Work Week Coordinator, email bzeasley@gmail.com He's excited to announce that the Spring Work Party for USS SLATER is set and ready to go April 28 to May 3, 2024. You're welcome to join us for any or all days that fit into your schedule. Accommodation for sleeping and dining will be provided aboard USS SLATER, and this is a coed event, so wives and girlfriends are



Curator John had his hands full in getting the pilothouse squared away for opening day.



Quartermaster, Dennis, is preparing the chartroom for public visitation.

welcome. We're eagerly anticipating their help. We require RSVPs as soon as possible to ensure we have adequate sleeping quarters for everyone. **Blair** is returning to manage the galley and is open to food suggestions for the week. Please share your preferences, along with your RSVP. Let us know if you'll be joining us on SLATER, including the specific days you plan to attend, so we can make necessary arrangements for meals. Remember to contact **Brandon** at bzeasley@gmail.com

On Thursday, March 28, the New York National Guard's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (2nd WMD-CST) conducted a Radiation Response Exercise at USS Slater. They were supported by the New York State Police and FBI. The exercise, which was administered by instructors from the federal

Department of Energy (DOE) Radiation Assistance Program (RAP), was the culmination of three days of classroom and hands-on training and it simulated a full WMD-CST response to identify, assess, advise, and assist law enforcement agencies in a suspected radiological/nuclear hazard or threat. The 2nd WMD-CST is a 22-member multi-functional all-hazards response team specializing in Chemical, Radiological, Biological, and Nuclear detection and mitigation comprised of both Army and Air Force personnel. They are based at the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, NY.



The New York National Guard's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team.

We have more information on the big event happening June 15th, 2024 (DE Day). SLATER will be hosting the 80th anniversary of our Commissioning Party at The Hangar at 743, by Albany Airport, at 5 PM. Tickets are \$80 a person or \$150 for a couple. More details will be coming soon. We hope you will come celebrate with us! There will be live entertainment, food and drinks, as well as a SLATER Progress Report.

Financially, March is probably our toughest month. The Winter Fund donations have dried up, and we don't have any operating income coming in. However, there are a lot of expenses involved with reopening. They include restocking the gift shop, printing, and signing contracts for brochure distribution, as well as hiring and training new intern tour guides. The March cold snap after we brought the water back aboard didn't help, because it necessitated keeping a lot of electric heaters on, which caused a spike in the electric bill. But we can't thank you all enough for your continued support. If you haven't donated yet, we ask you to help keep a volunteer warm. The link to donate is [here](#).



Together we can get this leak stopped.

Our annual Tour Guide Refresher Lunch is another sure sign that opening day is quickly approaching. On Saturday, 23 March we welcomed back our seasonal tour guide volunteers, along with this season's newly hired interns. Jo Ann made arrangements for pizza to be delivered to feed our small Navy but we woke to snow and ice across the region.

We decided to continue with the lunch and around half of the expected 40 volunteers made the cold trek down to the ship. The Mess Deck was filled with laughter and the pizza disappeared in the blink of an eye. **Fred Sirois**, one of our Saturday Tour Guides, was first in line for receiving the most positive reviews last season.

Following lunch, Barry gave many of the guides a tour of the Engine Rooms. Most of our guides are trained to give Engine Room tours, but to receive a tour themselves from someone as knowledgeable as Barry was a treat. They learned some new anecdotes, which means their tours will be even longer now...

While they climbed around the Engine Rooms, John brought some of the new interns around the ship. Each season, we employ local college students to help augment our volunteer crew. Typically, there is a roll-over of interns to the next season, but this year we decided to bring on 7 new interns. Over the next few weeks, they will follow tours, and learn from the volunteers on how to provide guests with a world-class tour of one of the last remaining destroyer escorts from World War II.

By the time you read this, we will be open for our 27th season. We run tours Wednesday – Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM. We hope you are able to visit us this season, and see in person all the progress you have read about these last couple of months and years.

See you next month,

Tim



As long as we have Jo Ann and her mom, Mary Beth, feeding us, we'll have a happy crew.