

SLATER SIGNALS

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

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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Every year we forget, and every year October reminds us it's the busiest month. Yes, March is hectic; trying to finish up maintenance projects, and open for the season, but October takes the cake. Weekends are still busy with tours; we were open on Monday for Columbus Day, Navy Birthday Ceremony, and honoring our Volunteer of the Year. We held our SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club fundraiser, honored Oxi Day with a ceremony, and ran overnights. Also, we held a CPO workday, completed Trim but Deadly and Signals, and created DE Classified podcast episodes. In addition, we hosted special



Jo Ann, myself, and Shanna at our Fort Orange event.



We were lucky that Blair was in town for two different weeks this month!

visitors, and held community organization workdays. Each of these big tasks are composed of many smaller tasks within them. Don't ask **Shanna** to see her "to do list," unless you're going to take responsibility for an item and get it done.

The month began with our annual fall work week. Due to Covid-19 precautions, the event was scaled down this year, but we did manage to have a productive week. **Ed Zajkowski** and **Blair Sandri** were back to keep everyone fed and happy. Monday, October 3rd, was one of our

biggest volunteer days this year, with 27 volunteers aboard. The day was washout, so the paint crew of **Ron Frankosky**, **Bob Barth**, and **John Meeker** painted out the captain's stateroom. Mind you that John came all the way from Seattle to work aboard.

Monday was also a big day for birthdays, as Jo Ann Mulligan baked cakes for Gary Sheedy and Blair Sandri. The weather cleared on Tuesday, and the paint crew, now including **Gary Dieckman**, went to work scaling and priming the fantail. By the time they left on Saturday, they had completely cut in the whole fantail, and rolled it out with nonskid deck blue.

We found we had another wasted chock on the starboard quarter, so Chief Ed Wakeman spent the week grinding

and cleaning it for repair. Matt Clifford completed the repair after the work week gang departed. Gene Byers and Steve Whynot came over from Massachusetts, and spent the week doing gun maintenance on the three-inch mounts. They exercised and lubricated all of the sight setters, as well as the train and elevation mechanisms.

George Gollas spent the week continuing repairs to the e-call buzzers. He got the system working between the emergency radio room and radio central. He also worked with Barry Witte, to effect emergency repairs to a



Ron Frankosky has been chipping aboard SLATER longer than she's been in Albany.



Cathy is such a good sport, with all these guys making messes and giving her a hard time.



Tours continued this month. Here Tom is going over the many uses of the wardroom.

defective automatic bus transfer box.

Gary Sheedy surprised everyone with his new invention he called the “Chip - A - Way Walker Model 2021.” The concept combined a walker with three needleguns, so even the oldest members of the crew could keep chipping decks. He is presently working to refine his invention.

By Saturday, the 9th, the last of our work week volunteers departed, and fourteen of our regulars were back to continue guiding tours, and continuing work on our maintenance projects. Doug Tanner made breakfast for the crew, and Thomas Scian reheated Blair's chili for chow. Walt and Angelo repaired the fantail awning, broke it down, and stowed it for the winter. The whole crew got together to drop



Sheedy and his new invention, Chip-A-Way Walker.

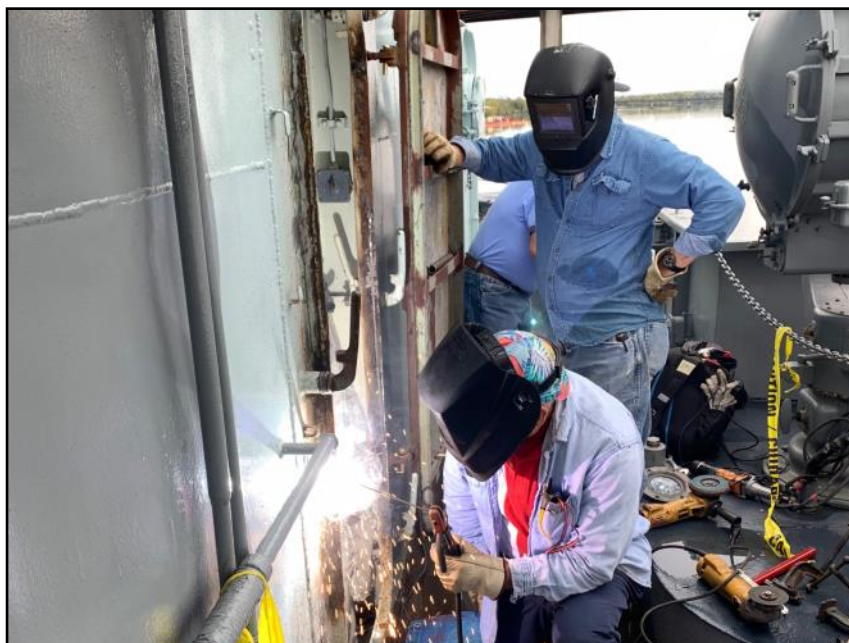
the new grating into liferaft number four. Then Walt and Angelo got the grating properly lashed into place.

Under Barry Witte's direction, the RPI NROTC Midshipmen have continued their involvement. Their primary project this month has been cosmetic restoration of the receiver regulators on gun 32. In the same area, **Richard and Henry Burgeois** are continuing their restoration of a MK-14 gunsight air compressor, in the hopes of getting a gunsight operational.

Our shipfitters completed repairs to the watertight door on the 02-level adjacent to CIC. They next tackled repairs to the starboard pilothouse door. They lowered the door to the main deck, and hauled it back to the work area. They decided that it was beyond repair. Fortunately, we have four spare quick-



Tim Benner and Super Dave working on those watertight doors.



Chuck and Doug also work on the watertight doors.

acting doors in storage up at **Hal Hatfield's** shop, so **Mike Hatfield** had them delivered to us. **Doug** has already started the conversion process, to turn them into manual doors. **Danny** also completed mounting the heat shield on the gun 25 ready service locker.

The heavy rain has caused an incredible amount of debris, vegetation, and tree limbs to come floating down river. All this crap gets hung up on the work float and the whaleboat, keeping the crew occupied with boat hooks, trying to clear the debris. **Walt Stuart** and

Tommy Moore are the main keepers of the work float, but **Jo Ann** was so disgusted by the appearance that even she took a turn at clearing it out.

Chuck Chandler is coming back on Saturdays now, joining Steve in the radio shack. Our availability is most often on the following days, times, modes and frequencies: Saturdays 0900-1130 local time: 3885 kc AM, 7062 kc or 14062 kc CW, 7262 kc or 14262 kc SSB, 146.52 mc FM as WW2DEM. They have the motor generator set, TBL power supply, and master oscillator sections all working. They are diagnosing a mechanical issue with the Oscillator Tuning Coil, which we hope to repair within the next few weeks. After that we will test the power amplifier and antenna matching sections, and install the receiver muting circuits.



Chuck and Steve are determined to get the TBL transmitter back online.



Charles Starks, our 2021 USS SLATER Volunteer of the Year!

The education team was busy with our podcast, DE Classified, this month. Liam dove into the history and conspiracy theories surrounding USS ELDRIDGE DE-173. Liam released a bonus episode on the History of the Navy, which he released on the Navy Birthday. **John** also released an episode this month, focusing on Oxi Day. If you're looking for a couple of comprehensive history lessons in only 30 minutes, these guys have got you covered!

On the 13th, we celebrated the 246th birthday of the U.S. Navy. With support from the **Capital Area Chief Petty Officers Association**, we

heard the History of the Navy from tour guide **Liam Mitchell**. **Ken Kaskoun** trained interns, **Christian** and **Xavi**, to be the color guard, and CPOA President, **CUCS John Roth**, was our Master of Ceremonies. The CPO Association also honored the SLATER Volunteer of the Year, **Charles Starks**.

Charles is a tour guide who has been volunteering with us for the last five seasons. He is a constant joy to be around, and we love to hear his stories of adventures with New Jersey's brightest criminals as

he worked as a Postal Inspector

catching cases of fraud. Charles volunteers two days a week, and is always coming in extra days when we have big group tours. Charles keeps all of us looking on the bright side of life. He is constantly learning new aspects of life aboard the ship, updating his tour, and going the extra mile to keep his tour groups happy and entertained. Congratulations Charles, we are

grateful to have you!

The Navy Birthday ceremony always runs smoothly, due mostly to the planning powers of Art Dott and Sean Robbins. The partnership they fostered with Shanna worked seamlessly, and we are all looking forward to next year. The CPOAs provided brunch and we had cake too!

Our annual USS SLATER Night, at the Fort Orange Club Fundraiser was a very successful event. Over 85 people attended the event that raised money to match our Save America's Treasures Grant, to fund the interior



Charles demonstrating the weight of the 3 inch shell.



Ed, Tim, Parks, Tony, and Blair enjoy another excellent meal, cooked by Blair.



Ed and Parks had a great three days together aboard SLATER.

restoration and remediation this winter. Our goal is to raise \$176,000 to match the federal share, and we are up to \$138,125. Our guest speaker for the event was former Naval Officer and historian **Parks Stephenson**, who was instrumental in locating and photographing the wreck of the heroic USS JOHNSTON (DD-557), sunk in the Battle of Samar. Parks spoke on the ship's brief history, described her final engagement, and presented photographs of the wreck. He also showed computer models of the ship before the action, and the condition of the wreck today.

Parks stayed aboard three days, along with Ed Zajkowski and Blair Sandri, who returned to make sure Parks was well fed. Parks spent his time documenting elements of USS SLATER. He is confident that he and his team will eventually find the wrecks of USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413) and



Thank you all for your support of USS SLATER, our Fort Orange Fundraising Event was very successful.

USS HOEL (DD-553). His last Facebook post said, “Last night aboard. Listening to Glenn Miller and the Army Air Force Band, while sitting atop some 20mm ammo lockers and looking between a couple of gun director tubs toward the aft end of this little fighting ship. This, after a nice meal, fixed by the ship’s cook for a bunch of new-found friends. Coming back to reality is not something to which I’m looking forward to.”

Chairman BJ Costello presented the USS SLATER Trustees award to Barry Witte, in recognition of his 23 years of volunteer service to the project. Barry was the first from the Albany area to volunteer.

Since then, he has contributed over 8 hours a week as our leading electrician, present every Saturday over a period of 23 years, except when he had to perform Navy Reserve Drills. He



RPI Midshipmen continue to work on various projects under the supervision of Barry.



Barry Witte and the Trustees Award for his years of service to USS SLATER.

has allowed himself to be number two on our alarm call list, to respond whenever the ship’s alarm system detects any abnormal condition and is effectively “on duty” 24/7.

Barry has brought an uncompromising restoration vision to our organization. Despite the age and condition of this ship, he has meticulously restored important electrical systems to full functionality, while restoring their World War II appearance. He has invited and trained many student assistants, to join him in the SLATER’s electrical division.

Barry also serves the SLATER by making us a regional center for Navy



Keep the decks clean, Austin!

training. He has been working with the NROTC unit at **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**, bringing students to SLATER to work alongside our volunteers. This opportunity to become familiar with a real Navy ship presents a unique opportunity for these young servicemen and women.

Most recently, Barry was instrumental in identifying and obtaining our Key Bank Payroll Protection loan. He was also instrumental in identifying and obtaining the **Naval History and Heritage Command** Maintenance Award that we received this year. He followed the award ceremony by sharing a PowerPoint presentation on the preparations and the work accomplished during last year's

shipyard overhaul. This demonstrated for all why he is so deserving of the Trustees award.

Every year on 28 October, we pay homage to SLATER's service in the Greek Navy as A/T AETOS, on Oxi Day. We fly the Greek flag, and display the Greek icon of Saint Nicholas and our AETOS nameplate on the quarterdeck. Oxi Day is celebrated throughout Greece, Cyprus, and the Greek communities around the world on October 28 each year. The day commemorates the rejection by Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas of the ultimatum to occupy Greece made by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini on 28 October 1940. The Greek flag will fly over A/T AETOS once again. Of the Greek resistance that followed when the Italians invaded Greece, Winston Churchill said "...until now we would say that the Greeks fight like heroes. From now on we will say that heroes fight like Greeks."

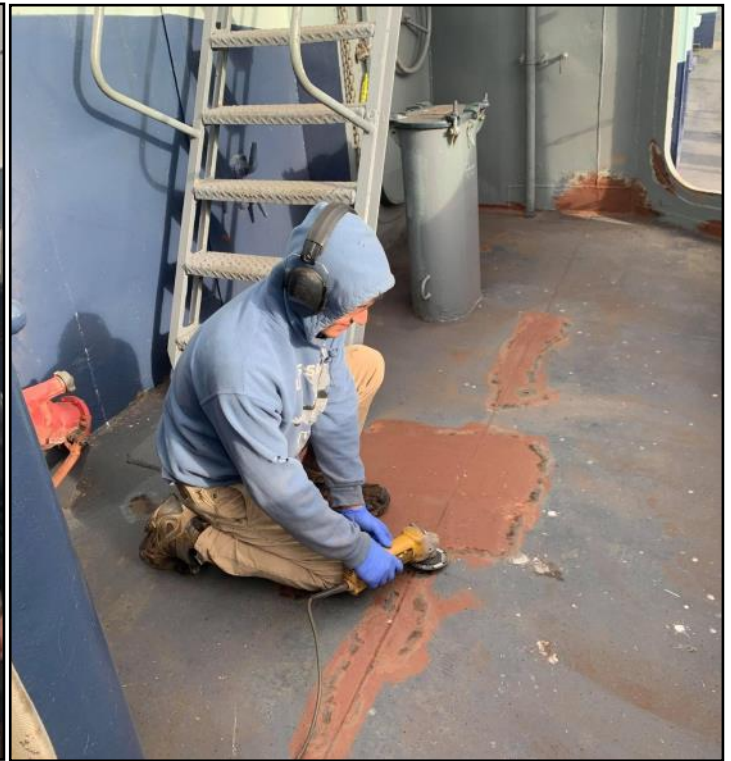


James Miles, a new engineer volunteer, has taken it upon himself to survey the bilges.

Thank you to Albany Mayor Kathy



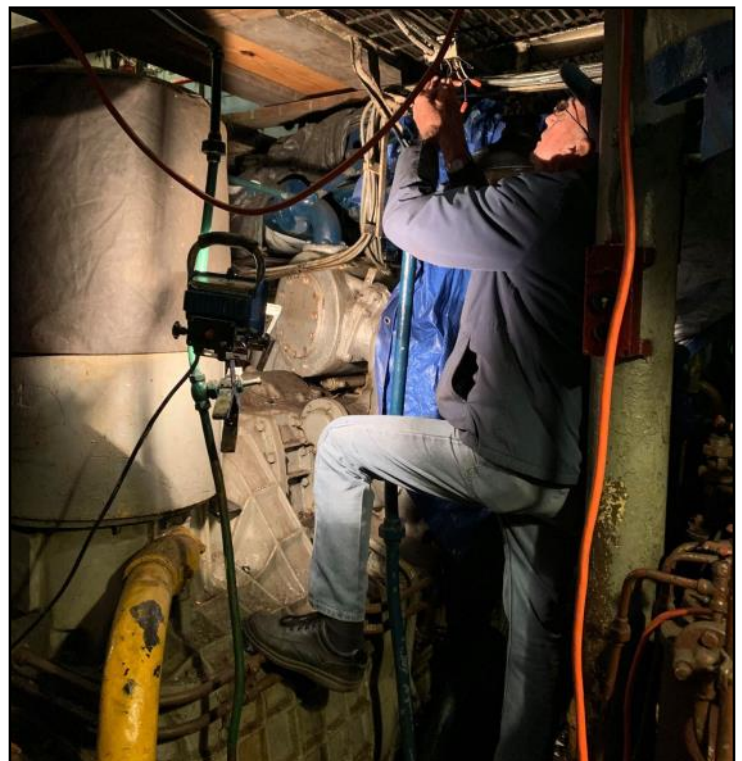
USS SLATER Board Chairman, BJ Costello, with John Polydouris and Mayor Sheehan.



Thomas is still keeping busy, chipping paint.

Sheehan, and Assemblyman Phil Steck, for attending. And special thanks to Program Manager, Shanna Schuster and Michael Koutsourades, from the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), for organizing the event. We also thank all of the participants, and all of our Greek friends and supporters.

On the last Friday of the month, we welcomed the NPTU Ballston Spa CPO Selects and Chiefs aboard, for their annual work day and overnight. James Miles organized the work effort, and the selects went bilge diving, removing oil and cleaning the bilges in the aft machinery spaces with Simple Green detergent. As James has continued his bilge cleaning efforts, he was happy to have the help, because he said they put him about six months ahead of schedule. They even fed the crew breakfast Saturday morning.



Larry Williams working on lighting in the forward engine room.

On Saturday, 30 October 2021, Shanna Schuster and her Interns put on our first ever "Trick or Treat aboard USS SLATER" Halloween event.

Seventy-five children and adults showed up to collect candy and tour the ship's weaponry. The rain made the day kind of a washout, but "Trick or Treat" saved the day.

October is also busy preparing for November, our last month open to the public. As you all know, Thanksgiving week is filled with all kinds of deals, Black Friday, and the like. As our last week open for the season, we also like to partake in these deals. **Shanna** has been getting these ready for you! You can check out the upcoming deals in our Ship's Store if you follow the [promotions](#) link.

For the month of November we are honoring Veterans of all military branches. When you make a donation to SLATER in honor or memory of a Veteran, we'll list their name



The engineers are removing an oil cooler.



Thanks to the NPTU Ballston Spa Chief Selects and the CPOs for all their help!



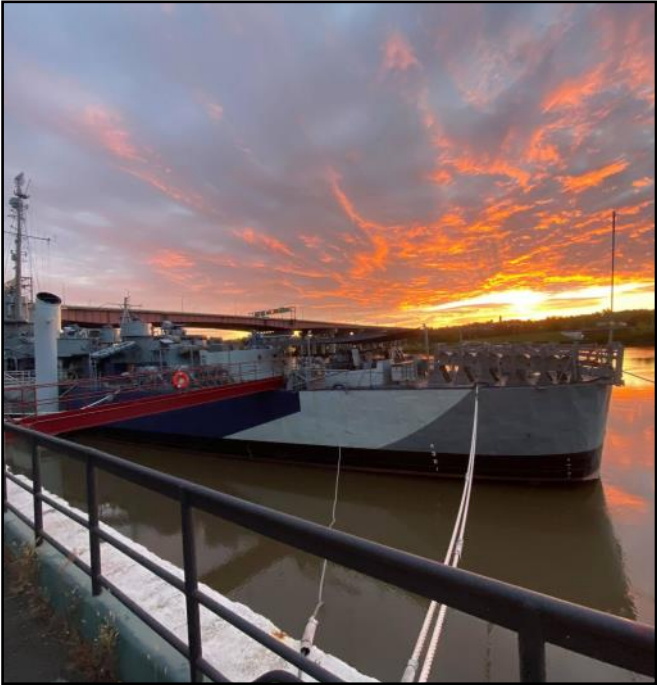
Cassidy, John, Austin, Liam, Shanna, and Fred led Trick or Treaters around a limited part of the ship for a quick lesson in DE defenses.

on our website in a special tribute, and we'll also enter your name into a drawing for a SLATER Gift Basket.

If you are in the area, join us on Veterans Day for our ceremony at 0830. All Vets are admitted free to tour the ship on Veterans Day.

See you next month!

Tim



Sunrise at the ship.