

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

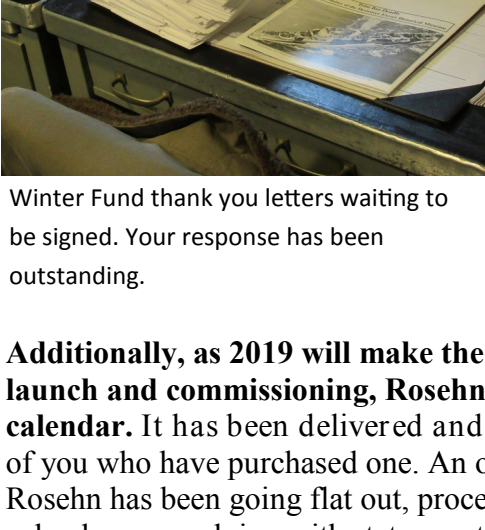
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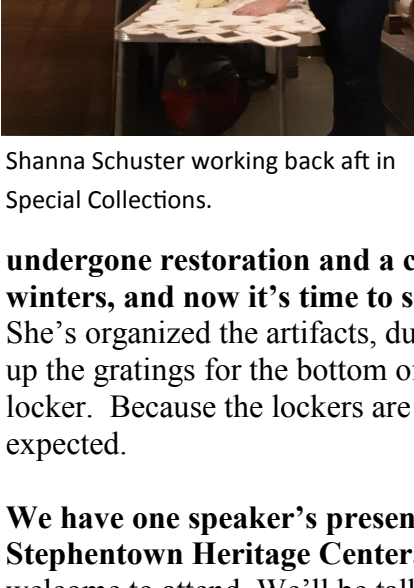
Vol. 21 No. 12, December 2018



Winter Fund thank you letters waiting to be signed. Your response has been outstanding.

**We've finished out a great year aboard USS SLATER.** Now closed for the season, the most important activity going on is the Winter Fund Drive. The November SLATER SIGNALS went out to everyone on our mailing list in print, with the return donation envelope. Your response has been astounding. There was concern that the change in the tax laws would affect our level of donations. It has become obvious that you are not donating to the SLATER strictly for a tax deduction.

**Additionally, as 2019 will make the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of USS SLATER's launch and commissioning, Rosehn Gipe created a commemorative calendar.** It has been delivered and is in the process of being shipped to all of you who have purchased one. An order form is included with this newsletter. Rosehn has been going flat out, processing Winter Fund donations, mailing calendars, complying with state grant requests, and closing the books on 2018. She's also met with the auditors, for the initial phases of the 2018 audit.

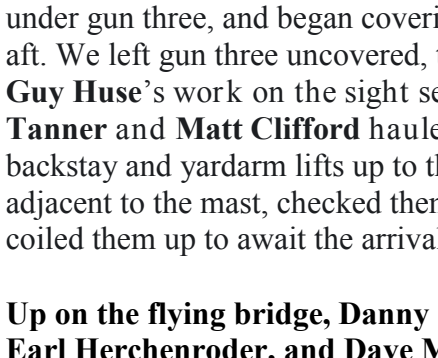


Shanna Schuster working back aft in Special Collections.

**Shanna finally got her long-delayed honeymoon, spending two weeks in Germany with Mike.** I guess that one-week-Montana marriage stuck. Now it's back to the grind, literally, as all she can hear is grinding from the volunteers hard at work in C-201 L. December is when Shanna retreats from the hectic shore side and Ship's Store filled with volunteers, interns, and the public, to the secluded supply office, where she sets up shop for collections work. She gets few visitors, except for **Gary Sheedy**, with the gossip he heard around the table in Chiefs' over the coffee break. She has wrapped up another busy season, and now it's on to the second half of her job description.

**Our Special Collections Compartment has undergone restoration and a complete inventory over the last couple of winters, and now it's time to set up the space and ready it for visitors.** She's organized the artifacts, dusted and vacuumed out the footlockers, cleaned up the gratings for the bottom of the lockers, and started fitting them for each locker. Because the lockers are not uniform in size, this is taking longer than expected.

**We have one speaker's presentation set up for 6 January, at the Stephentown Heritage Center, in Stephentown, New York at 1400.** All are welcome to attend. We'll be talking about "Saving Slater," and how she became the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum. The illustrated program will present stories about the history of destroyer escorts, SLATER's involvement in World War II, her service in the Greek Navy, and all of the restoration that turned her into a world-class museum. Presented by a SLATER volunteer, you will get a first-hand look at the hard work that goes into keeping the "Old Girl" afloat.

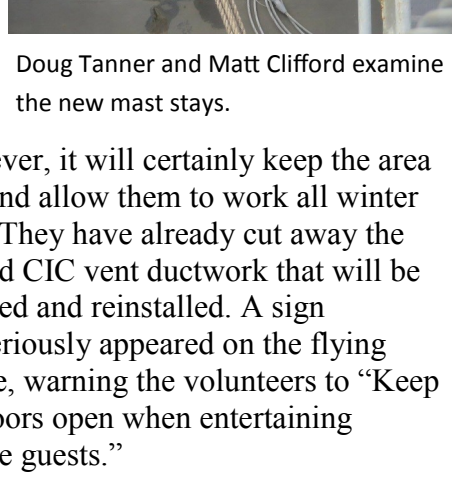


Boats Haggart and Walt Stuart covered the hedge hog projector.

**December began on a foggy Saturday morning, with USS SLATER still moored port side to, at the Snow Dock in Albany, New York.** The way the deck log would describe it, the plant is still cold iron, and we're taking all services, telephone, electric, and internet, from shore. Water and sewer have been disconnected for the winter. That first work day, we had thirty volunteers aboard, and Smitty made ham and potatoes au gratin for chow.

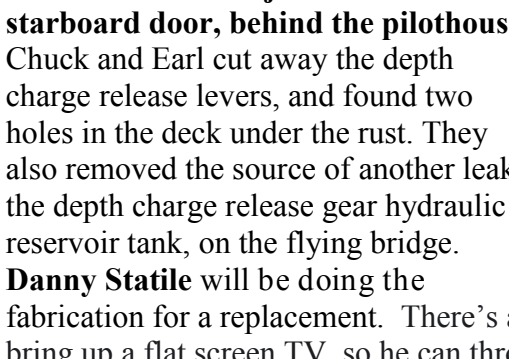
**Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, and Paul Guarneri broke out the canvas stowed**

under gun three, and began covering the guns aft. We left gun three uncovered, to facilitate **Guy Huse's** work on the sight setter. **Doug Tanner** and **Matt Clifford** hauled the new backstay and yardarm lifts up to the 01 level, adjacent to the mast, checked them, and then coiled them up to await the arrival of a crane.



Doug Tanner and Matt Clifford examine the new mast stays.

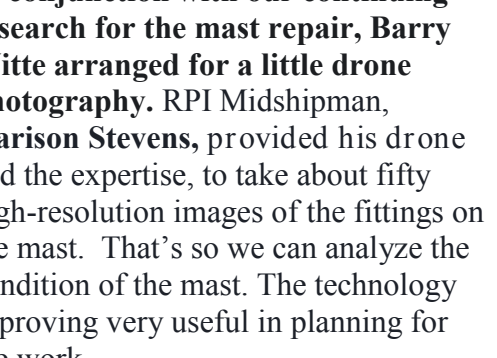
**Up on the flying bridge, Danny Statile, Earl Herchenroder, and Dave Mardon completed the framework, and covered the entire flying bridge with shrink-wrap.** From my point of view, they haven't exactly improved the appearance of the ship over the winter. I will be happy when this job is complete, and the cover can come down.



Danny Statile applies the heat to the shrink wrap over the flying bridge.

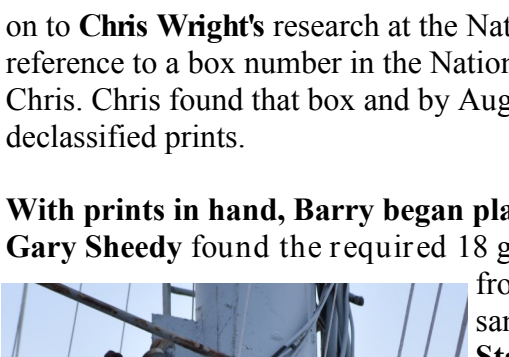
However, it will certainly keep the area dry, and allow them to work all winter long. They have already cut away the wasted CIC vent ductwork that will be restored and reinstalled. A sign mysteriously appeared on the flying bridge, warning the volunteers to "Keep the doors open when entertaining female guests."

**For years, there has been a steady leak and wet insulation just inside the starboard door, behind the pilothouse.** Chuck and Earl cut away the depth charge release levers, and found two holes in the deck under the rust. They also removed the source of another leak, the depth charge release gear hydraulic reservoir near the flying bridge.



Earl Herchenroder cutting away the CIC vent fan.

**Danny Statile** will be doing the fabrication for a replacement. There's a rumor that **Tim Benner** is going to bring up a flat screen TV, so he can throw a Super Bowl party. They've got themselves a real man cave.



Drone view of USS SLATER.

**In conjunction with our continuing research for the mast repair, Barry Witte arranged for a little drone photography.** RPI Midshipman, **Harison Stevens**, provided his drone and the expertise, to take about fifty high-resolution images of the fittings on the mast. That's so we can analyze the condition of the mast. The technology is proving very useful in planning for the work.

**One of the big additions to the mast will be replicating the vertical fighting lights.** **Ed Zajkowski** and **Barry Witte** are obsessed with getting things historically accurate. All of our historic research seems to start in **Ed's** basement and his extensive collection of images and blueprints, and then moves on to **Chris Wright's** research at the National Archives. Barry found an online reference to a box number in the National Archives, which Ed passed on to Chris. Chris found that box and by August we had a full set of officially declassified prints.



Vertical fighting light installation aboard USS HAZARD in Omaha.

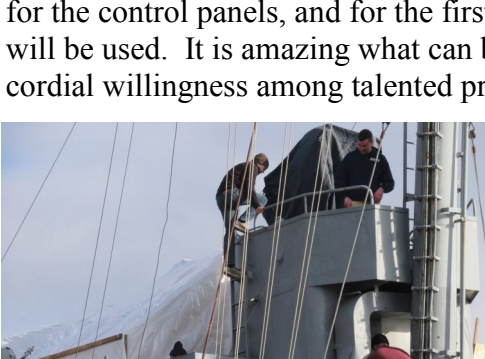
**With prints in hand, Barry began planning the fabrication.** Barry and **Gary Sheedy** found the required 18 globe light fixtures onboard, salvaged from other ships long ago. **Alex Metzger** sandblasted them, and **Danny Statile** brazed them together, using a template sized from the prints. Meanwhile, our favorite machinist, **George Christophersen**, made all of the machined parts to fit the fittings from the prints. Barry used AutoCAD software to lay out the VFL enclosure pieces. RPI engineering student **Vince Montuori** is working to arrange water-jet cutting at RPI. Trustee **Diane Watters** of **Metal Supermarkets**, donated the material. Once the water-jet cutting is done, **Mike Arnold**, at Board Vice President **Hal Hatfield's** shop, will supervise the stainless welding.



One of two ships in the world with vertical fighting lights, BNS BAURU, formerly USS McANN, on display in Rio.

**My small contribution was finding a photo of USS HAZARD's mast that showed she still had her fighting lights.** She is a minesweeper that is a museum ship in Omaha, Nebraska. She, and the Brazilian DE BAURU (BE-4), are the only two ships in the world that have them. BAURU was formerly the Cannon-class USS McANN (DE-179), and is preserved in Rio de Janeiro. Since I'm too cheap to authorize a trip to Rio, and Barry doesn't speak Portuguese, Barry got in touch with **Duane Gallagher** on HAZARD. Duane has happy to send many detailed photos of their fighting light installation. Barry returned the favor, by creating several missing phenolic labels for Duane, and mailed them to HAZARD in Omaha.

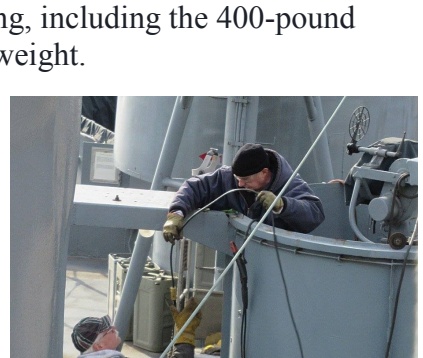
**When the welding is done, the fixtures will be pickled, primed, and painted.** I'm in the processing of ordering armored cable from Anixter, and we will be ready to make the installation when we go to the shipyard. As for the control panels for the pilothouse, fabrication has begun, again in compliance with the original prints. **George Christophersen** will be machining needed parts for the control panels, and for the first time on SLATER, some 3D printed parts will be used. It is amazing what can be done with a good set of prints, and a cordial willingness among talented professionals to work together.



Ballston Spa Sailors removing postwar electrical additions.

**We've had several Ballston Spa Sailors helping us out on Mondays.** They have been involved with several projects, including lubricating the 20mm gun mounts and removing post-war add-ons and wiring from the mast. When we needed some strong backs to move the sight setter parts out of the aft three-inch gun tub, they rigged a davit and moved everything, including the 400-pound counter weight.

**The welding team of Dave and Chuck has done several repair jobs.** When Barry found a hole in the Amidships passage way, they cropped and renewed the area, and also repaired a hole in the adjacent bulkhead. They then tackled the wasted deck in gun 42 MK-41 gun director tub. We've got big plans for them on the flying bridge.



Dave and Chuck replacing wasted metal in the director tub.

**In berthing compartment C-201 L, all the bunks, mattresses, artifacts, and uniforms have been moved aft, and renovation has begun.** **Gary Sheedy** has been fabricating missing duct work. The electrical gang has removed all the locker lights and wiring that hark back to the early days, when that compartment was our special collections space. They are now straightening out the cable ways and removing post-war cable.



Gary Sheedy fabricating missing duct-work in the aft berthing space.

**Our volunteer machinist, George Christophersen, has had several projects going.** He machined all the new brackets that we will need to install the new 40mm shell chutes on the gun mounts next year. He is presently fabricating 20mm ratchet handles that are used to put tension on the 20mm ammunition drums, when the sixty rounds were being loaded one round at a time.

**We remembered Pearl Harbor at the Zaloga American Legion Post, on Friday December 7<sup>th</sup>.** Our Board Chairman, **BJ Costello**, was the emcee of the event, and **Ken Kaskoun**, **Art Dott**, and **Cathy Wheat** joined the **Christian Brothers Academy** cadets to parade the colors. We want to thank all the good staff at the **Joseph E. Zaloga** American Legion Post, for putting on their annual traditional Navy Breakfast, and all the Veterans who joined us.



Even though we are closed, Cathy Wheat is still cleaning.

**Our local RPI Midshipmen put together a spirit video for the Army Navy Football game.** Out of hundreds of videos, only a couple will be shown during the game. We used our social media to try and get their effort more exposure, in the hope it would be shown. But this wasn't Navy's year.

**Thanks to our Board President Tony Esposito, Chief Smith, and Trustee Art Dott, we had our annual Christmas Party on Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>.** **Thomas Scian** and **Cathy Wheat** decorated the Christmas tree and the messdecks, our cooks served up roast beef and all the trimmings, and the crew sang Christmas carols.



Tony, Smitty and Art put on the Christmas Party.

**On Saturday, 22 December 2018, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute NROTC Midshipman, Brian Wisbauer, became ENSIGN Brian Wisbauer, as he chose USS SLATER as the site of his commissioning.** About fifty midshipmen, family, friends, and the unit's Commanding Officer, CAPT Jeffrey Joseph, USN, were on board to witness his achievement. Brian's sister, LT Tara Wisbauer, administered the Commissioning Oath, and his mother placed the new cover on his head. It's nice to see that USS SLATER still serves.



The Wisbauer Family, with Captain Joseph.

**Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.usslater.org](http://www.usslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.**

**See you next month!**