



## **SLATER SIGNALS**

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

**Destroyer Escort Historical Museum**

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We get visitors from all over the world. This tour group is from China.

**May 1st is always a significant date for us, as it commemorates the date of our commissioning into the United States Navy.**

Seventy-three years after our commissioning, May 2017 has been filled with school groups and overnights. We've kept busy with 5th graders from Mekeel Christian Academy, first graders from Maimonides Hebrew Day School, 8th graders from Christian Brothers Academy, and 150 7th graders from Crispell

Middle School. Sunday the 21st we hosted 35 of the Middleburgh / Schoharie Junior Bowlers. We were also visited by 90 Chinese tourists, escorted by L & L Travel, on three different Saturdays throughout the month. They were thrilled to see the ship and train the guns, as well as head up Madison Avenue to take a look at the tulips in Washington Park.

We've hosted well over 100 overnight campers from East Greenbush, Schenectady, Albany, and Poughkeepsie this month. The overnight on May 19th was unique. We hosted Girl Scout Service Unit 192. They, united with our two female tour guides, Jo Ann and Merissa, manned the ship for the night. With the exception of a couple dads, we had "Ladies Night on the SLATER."



**Ladies Night aboard USS SLATER with Girl Scout Service Unit 192.**

**All month we've had artifacts on display at Schenectady County Public Library, in downtown Schenectady. On the 27th, volunteer Bob Herbst gave a presentation to about 30 of the library's patrons.** Bob's program explored the fascinating history of destroyer escorts, the USS SLATER, and the lives of two men who served in the United States Navy during World War II. These men were tied to these trim but deadly warships, each in a different way. The first is Frank Slater, killed in action at Guadalcanal, and for whom the USS SLATER is named. The second, Leonard Roy Harmon, came from different circumstances. He served alongside Frank Slater, aboard the USS SAN FRANCISCO. Like Frank, Leonard also lost his life, and would receive the posthumous distinction of being the first African American to have a ship named in his honor.



**This gang is the public face of USS SLATER--part of the 2017 tour guide crew.**

**Shanna has slowly been making progress back aft in the museum space.** She has interns, with extra time on their hands on rainy days, take inventory for her. One Wednesday she sent two newly-hired interns to the magazine below the museum space. They could not locate a light switch to control the lights in the magazine, so they worked in the dark with flashlights for half an hour before Shanna went to check on them!



Rosehn and Shanna are constantly restocking our shelves, and designing merchandise for the Ship's Store. Our new merchandise includes new dog tag keychains with our color logo, long sleeve t-shirts, and ladies tank tops featuring a line drawing of SLATER. We are selling SLATER ball caps through our Facebook page. If this new process works out well, we will add more.



Auditors Joleen and Jennifer are digging into the books to make sure all your donations are accounted for properly.

**Aboard USS SLATER, we rarely are able to take time off for professional development, however on Tuesday, May 16, Rosehn attended the Charities Bureau Symposium, "Doing Well While Doing Good."** It was presented by the New York State Attorney General's office. Bureau Chief **James Sheehan** and **Kelly Mathews**, from the New York Council on Nonprofits, provided the full house with interesting information and financial

reporting updates. It's good that Rosehn could meet with people that share her interests. She rarely tries to explain what she does to the rest of us anymore, since she's frequently met with blank stares or uncomfortable fidgeting. Rosehn has also set up meetings with our auditors, **Joleen** and **Jennifer**, for the 2016 audit. This was Jennifer's first SLATER audit. However, she felt right at home, having been a former aircraft mechanic who served three years aboard USS TARAWA (LHA-1).



A gift from our DESA Chapter friends-- two fresh water heat exchangers.

**On the maintenance side, if you've been following the story of the cooling issues with the B-3 ship's service generator, a real team effort has solved the problem. Dean Pryor** latched on to the issue of locating a new fresh water heat exchanger, and found two of them in Tacoma, Washington, at Commercial Sales Inc. **Terry Jensen** gave us a break on the price. Then we reached out to the NORPAC and LA Chapters of DESA, to try to raise the money to purchase them.

In early May, **John Meeker**, who is the NORPAC Purser and Yeoman, went to **Ron Reiersen**, the Chapter President, with the deal. Ron stopped by and saw them. John and Ron then decided to ask their shipmates at the NORPAC DESA Luncheon, scheduled for 6 May, to contribute. At the meeting they had about 20 active duty officers and sailors from three ship commands, as well as three shore commands from Naval Station, Everett, WA. There were also, in attendance, about 37 regular NORPAC members total. They passed the hat. John had already said he'd throw in \$100. Ron said (unfortunately for him) that he would MATCH all other contributions. It was intended only for NORPAC members. Ron figured he might have to lay out a hundred or so. Little did Ron realize that the active duty folks would dig deep also. They all contributed \$326! So Ron swallowed the lump in his throat, and wrote a matching check at the table. They were now up to \$752.

**After dismissing their active duty friends, they had a brief Board meeting.** Ron entertained a Motion and a Second, to supplement this contribution with funds from the NORPAC Chapter Kitty, making up the \$1,050 total, including freight costs, to get this moving. Two new Harrison heat exchangers are now safely aboard USS SLATER. Speaking for the Chapter, Ron wrote that "It was a distinct pleasure to write those checks to help our ship. Glad they arrived safely." **Not to be left out, Earl Johnson and the LA Chapter picked up about \$500 from begging.** Earl let me know that his chapter is sending a check for \$1,000 this week which will support engine room maintenance. They didn't move quite as fast as NORPAC, but they moved with the same spirit.



Karl and Mike installing the safety guard on the B-1 LP air compressor.





Installing the smoke generator tank.

**The main recipients of all this generosity, our engineers, have their work on two fronts.** They have run the B-3 ship's service generator several times, as they tweak it to perfection. Now they are waiting to coordinate with the electricians, so that they can run it under electrical load. It's always great to see real smoke coming out of the stack. They have also been working to bring a second compressor in B-1 online, so we'll have a backup for ship's service air. It would be terrible if we couldn't needle gun.

**Karl, Mike, Ken and Gary** installed the guard that **Ed Wakeman** fabricated last month. **Barry Witte** installed the circuit breaker on the main distribution board, and **Larry Williams** is wiring in the controls and pressure switches.

**Having wrapped up the galley watertight door project and the gangway roller, the shipfitters are now embarked on repairing the starboard deck gear locker, located under the whaleboat. Dave Mardon and Andy Sheffer** have been leading that effort. The project involves modifying another watertight door, to replace the wasted door on the locker. Another portion of the project will be to replace wasted steel at the base of the locker, and replacing a scupper above the locker. Then the interior will be scaled and painted. Some of the old paint that has already been chipped out was three quarters of an inch thick. **Danny Statile** has been fabricating new fife rails for the signal bridge, with stainless steel that Doug got donated from his friends at Petrochem.

**Back aft, in the laundry, Gary Sheedy has progressed to the point where he is priming the laundry equipment.** In the steering gear compartment, Barry Witte's Colonie High School industrial technology students have fabricated both the fog oil and diesel tanks for the smoke generator. Both **Tim Benner** and **Andy Sheffer** had a hand in fabricating the brackets for the tanks, which have since been bolted in place. But not before Barry, thorough as ever, primed and painted the back side of the tanks. Gary's friends at **Albany Burner** donated several antique pumps, motors, and electrical fittings, to be used in replicating the ancillary equipment. The original mountings still exist. The students have been doing a beautiful job on the fabrication.

**We're also continuing to make progress on the replacement of the mast shrouds, the cables that support the mast. Doug Tanner** removed a second set of shrouds, where the cable had rusted to the point of needing replacement. The shrouds were so badly rusted into the deck padeyes that we had to cut the pins to remove the shroud. That left a rusted padeye, with a rusted pin in it. Our crew drove the starboard pin out with considerable difficulty, but couldn't get the port pin. More on that later.



Our radio gang gearing up for the Historic Ships Radio Weekend.

**The radio gang has been gearing up for the big Museum Ships Radio Weekend.** They have fired up the TBL several times, including making contact with the FDR encampment at Hyde Park. The host ship is the Battleship New Jersey, and the event will be the weekend of June 3 and 4. There are 93 ships listed so far. In addition to the SLATER's K2 station, **Mike, Stan, Joe, Paul, and Jerry** will be bringing their favorite rigs.

Jerry and Joe hope to use their expertise to fire up the TBL and RBC. They have some interest from other hams, including Mark KB2RJF from Watertown, and Sam N1PDL in Vermont. So, if you're a ham, try to make contact with us.



Boats Haggart takes care of our boat falls.

**The deck gang, Boats, Walt, Bill, Thomas, and Paul spent most of the month working on the replica floater nets.** They have completed four of the five. **Bill Holt** rigged the paddles and provision canisters on the aft life rafts. Our friend **Chris Stein**, up at Adirondack Studios, is in the process of fabricating replica water casks. They also rigged, and then broke down, all the running gear for lowering the whaleboat this month.





Bringing the whaleboat around.

We asked Eric Iverson, the foreman from Scarano's Boatyard, to come up and assess the condition of the whaleboat before we put it in the water. His assessment was that the keel needed the professional attention of the yard, and he was concerned about the starboard strake. He also recommended putting a sling under the boat when we lowered it. **Doug Tanner** borrowed a nylon sling from his friends at **3-D Rigging**, in Glenmont, and secured the sling to a chain fall on the forward davit.

We lowered the boat on Saturday, the 20th, and let her sit in the falls to swell up for a few days. The USS HUSE Veterans Association volunteers rolled into town on Sunday, May 21st, ready to work. The crew broke down into work gangs that night. Organizer George Amandola, and Albany Fire Department Captain Dave Newton ran the galley, with an occasional assist from Jan Schweiger. Wally Bringslid took over his old post as messdecks MAA. Roland Robbins and Bill Meehan took watch over the paint locker, a job more complicated by having to keep track of oil base paint, water base paint, and two different brands of epoxy.



The 2017 USS HUSE Association volunteers.

**On Monday, we moved the whaleboat around to the work float on the port side by the accommodation ladder. Mike Dingmon and Cliff Center** worked to get the engine running. **Karl Herchenroder** put **Fletcher Longley** to work in B-3, cleaning bilges and securing deck plates. Fletcher happily stayed on that task all week long. **Guy Huse, Doug Strieter, Paul Sudzak, Jeff Robbins, Anthony Amandola, and Joe Delfoe** all went up to the 01 level forward to work on the gun 2 sight setter reassembly. The task of lifting the 300-pound counter weight onto the gun was accomplished by rigging our pipe scaffold forward of the gun, running a heavy wall pipe from the scaffold to the bridge face, and hanging a chain fall off of it. Over the next three days, the major components were primed and bolted back into place.

**Sue Strieter worked on cleaning the fuse setters on guns one and three, and installing new dials.** We had more rain showers on Monday, so **Gaye Phipps** and **Sharon Roberts** went down to the lower level of the aft motor room, and repainted the deck plates. **Ron Frankosky, Brandon Easley, and Ed and Dennis Tracy** stayed topside, and scaled and feathered in the rusty areas on the 02 level aft of the superstructure.

**Tuesday was our first sunny day.** We wanted to give any of the HUSE crew who had never ridden in the whaleboat, a chance to ride it before we took it down to the boatyard. **Mike Dingmon** came in on his day off to serve as engineer. Since **Cliff Center** owns a tugboat, we figured he was qualified to be Coxswain. His father was the WWII skipper of USS GRISWOLD (DE-7). Cliff took a first group up to the railroad bridge and brought them back to the ship. We loaded a second group and Cliff headed down river to Scarano's. Eric was waiting for them on the dock. I served as duty driver, to get them all back to the ship and more importantly, back to work. Everyone really appreciated the opportunity.



The HUSE ladies painted the deck around gun 31.

**Joe Delfoe remarked that the last time he was in a whaleboat, he was leaving the Korean Coast after a gunfire spotting assignment, carrying a BAR. That afternoon and through Wednesday, Cliff went to work, scaling and priming on the 01 level forward. Guy, Doug, Paul, Jeff, and Anthony continued the sight setter reassembly. Ron, Brandon, Joe, and Ed and Dennis finished scaling the 01**



level aft, and got all the bare metal primed. Gail Esker, Sharon, and Gaye painted the upper level deck plates in B-4, then primed and trimmed in the fo'c's'le, and painted the deck around gun one with nonskid. **Robin Larnner, Jan Schweiger, and Ron Prest** finished deck paint under the roller loaders. On Thursday, Doug and Anthony removed that broken pin from the port shroud that I referred to earlier. We had two Sailors join us. **Tim Peterson** and **Coleen Purdy** scaled and primed on 01 level, and helped Fletcher with deck plates in the engineroom. Sue Strieter freed up, cleaned, and polished the dogs on the chain pipe covers. Jan and Robin trimmed the deck paint on the upper level of B-4, and Jan cleaned the whole interior passageway from the cleaning gear locker to the machine shop.



Some things never change. A Navy volunteer cleaning the B-3 deckplates.

**The crew departed that Friday, and the month ended with a rainy Memorial Day.** But that didn't stop visitors. The weekend was our most profitable this year, as a crowd of visitors braved the weather to honor our nation's fallen warriors. It humbles us to realize that visitors now come to USS SLATER to pay homage to our nation's fallen servicemen. That is why we are here.

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

**See you next month!**