

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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The radio gang operating during the Historic Ships Radio Weekend.

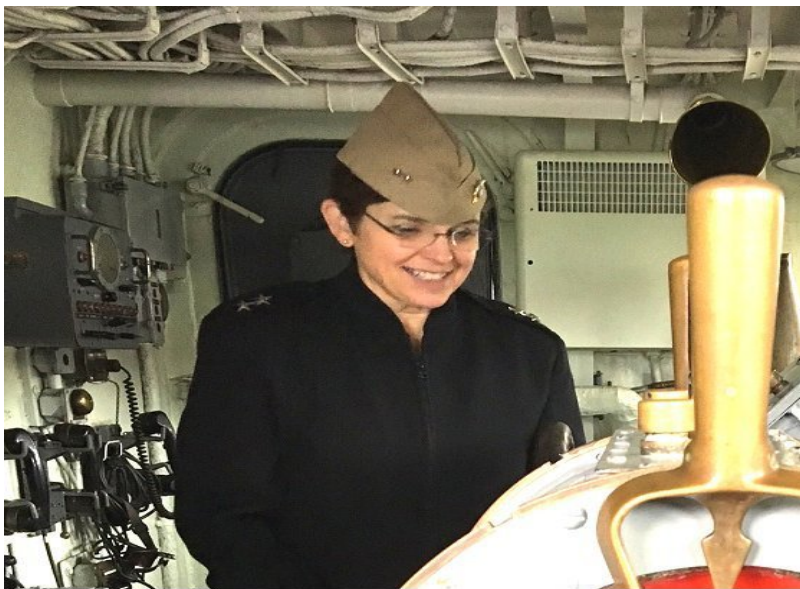


The month of June opened with the "Historic Ships Radio

Weekend" event. One hundred six historic ships participated in making ham radio contacts around the world. Many used vintage equipment. Our Radio Gang, **Joe Breyer, Mike Wyles,** and **Stan Levandowski** manned the radio shack on June 3rd.

Using SLATER's vintage TBL-8 transmitter on AM voice, they communicated with another WWII radio, an Army Signal

Corps BC-610, located in northern New York. That was a nice historical "handshake," to mark the occasion. The gang made several other contacts, using both voice and Morse code. They chatted with battleships, submarines, traded information with both Great Lakes cargo vessels, including an icebreaker. This annual activity helps to publicize the great warships in our history, and also calls attention to civilian working vessels.



The Chief of Chaplains, RADM Margaret Kibben visited our ship.

On June 6th, the 73rd anniversary of "D-Day Today," the Chief of Chaplains, RADM Margaret Kibben, visited the ship. Board Chairman **BJ Costello** was on hand to show her around. RADM Kibben's father, **Bill Grun**, served on the destroyer escort USS WILLIAM SEIVERLING DE-441 in WWII as a carpenter's mate. Bill is alive, kicking, and is an active member of DEHM. He retired as a Lieutenant Commander. It is

interesting to note that both the USS SLATER and the USS WILLIAM SEIVERLING were named for men who died during the battle of Guadalcanal.



The World of Warships film crew from St. Petersburg.

Also, we had visitors from St. Petersburg, Russia. The computer gaming company, **World of Warships**, has been developing their "Naval Legends" series of documentaries and computer games based on historic ships. In conjunction with the game development, they have been sending teams around the world to photograph and document the historic naval ships that are still in existence. They contacted us this spring about

documenting USS SLATER. In addition to the computer game, they will also produce an online documentary about the role destroyer escorts played during World War II. As part of the documentary, they requested that they be allowed to interview four destroyer escort veterans. Accordingly, Karl Herchenroder (EN, USS OTTERSTETTER DER-244), Bill Scharoun (GM, USS OSMUS DE-701), and Stan McMillan (SoMM, USS BATES DE-68) all consented to be interviewed.



Our engineers ran the B-3 diesel generator for the World of Warships film crew.

The engineers. Mike Dingmon, Gary Lubrano, and Karl Herchenroder, were on hand to crank up the B-3 ship's service generator, so World of Warships could capture the sound of a running engine. The shoot included some aerial drone photography by Chris Famelette, of Filmworks 109. Chris generously shared some of his images with us that can now be seen on our Facebook page. While this whole concept of computer gaming is totally foreign to most of us old timers, apparently it really puts us on the map with today's youth. Some of the Facebook comments included phrases like, "Now you're famous! Awesome!" Hey, if it helps us reach a younger audience, that's all the better. To give you an idea of their popularity, USS SLATER has 13,000 Facebook likes. World of Warships has 483,000 Facebook likes. We're hoping to make some new friends.

The third Saturday in June has been commemorated as "DE Day" ever since the USS SLATER's arrival in the United States in 1993. That tradition continued this year, as veterans, volunteers, and local dignitaries remembered the over 1,300 Destroyer Escort Sailors who died in the line of duty. While the number of DE Sailors is dwindling, the desire of the current generation to honor them is not fading. This year, our "DE Day" commemoration was one of the best attended ever. We had five WWII veterans present, including **Stan McMillan** (USS BATES DE-68), **Howie Fox** (USS ESTES AGC-12), **Jack Madden** (PT-305), **Clark Farnsworth** (USS LEYTE CV-32), and **Bill Scharoun** (USS OSMUS DE-701).



Our DE-Day commemoration was a well-attended event.

Dignitaries in attendance included U.S. Representative Paul Tonko, New York Assemblymember Phil Steck, Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino, and Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan.

USS SLATER Board Chairman BJ Costello opened the event and introduced the guests. President **Tony Esposito** did the invocation, and paid tribute to three SLATER former crewmembers that passed away recently. They were **Joe Clarke, Ed Lavin, and Harold Newman.** He also remembered several USS SLATER Volunteers who crossed the bar since Veterans Day 2016. They included **Les Beauchaine** (USS FORMOE DE-509), **Frank Beeler** (USS SAVANNAH CL-42), **Sherry Biggs** (USS LEWIS HANCOCK DD-675), **Bob Bull** (USS GANDY DE-764), **Bob Lawrence** (USS CAVALLARO APD-128), and most recently, **Don Shattuck** (USS HAROLD C. THOMAS DE-21).



The flag flew at half staff for Don Shattuck, Sherry Biggs, Art Morgan and the USS FITZGERALD Seven.

Don passed away on June 6. He was best known by his deep, infectious, hearty laugh, and happy disposition. He enlisted in the Navy as soon as he could after WWII started, getting his doctor to fudge his eye exam so that he could serve. He became an Electronics Technician, and was assigned to serve in USS HAROLD C. THOMAS (DE-21), in the South Pacific. He served on board in the Combat Information Center, using his skills with electronics to work with radar, sonar, and communications. After the war, he attended college at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, starting by studying in the night program while working during the day. After doing well, he was admitted to the day



program, where he earned a BS in Electrical Engineering in 1951. Then Don had a long career with GE. Aboard SLATER, he was part of the electrical gang and the color guard for 15 years.

After remembering our shipmates, Steve Long gave a presentation on the meaning of DE Day. WWII Vet, Bill Scharoun, then read the list of ships lost in action, as Jim Gelston tolled the bell and Marianne Donovan joined Jack Madden and Clark Farnsworth in dropping carnations for each ship lost. Steve Stella was on hand to do a live rendition of Taps, followed by the Navy Hymn. It was a very moving and well-attended event.

Don Shattuck's laugh will be missed by all of us.

After the ceremony, it was back to work. Among our visitors were Scott Dessingue and his family. As a student, Scott had volunteered with Barry Wittwhen the ship first arrived in Albany in 1997, twenty years ago. Barry was one of our first Albany volunteers, and Scott was one of the first students Barry invited to become involved in working on SLATER. Nineteen years (and about 19 pounds each, it would seem) later, Scott returned to the ship with his wife and two sons for a tour. Perhaps in a few more years, one of Scott's sons will become a SLATER volunteer?

Our tour guides remained busy throughout June. We welcomed 5th graders from West Canada School in Newport, New York, 2nd graders from Green Meadow



The late Don Shattuck getting interviewed on DE-Day.

Elementary in Castleton, 7th and 8th graders from Woodland Hill Montessori in Rensselaer, Oswego Middle School's History Club, and a group of home schoolers from the Albany area. On the 16th, **Shanna Hopson** attended "Museum Day" at the East Greenbush Community Library. This event brought a dozen museums from the Capital District together to showcase their artifacts and talents to the children and adults who stopped by.

On the 18th, we had a very busy Father's Day! Dads from all over the region were treated by their families to a visit, soaking up some WWII history. Gloversville Public Library played host to **Alan Fox** and his presentation, "Saving Slater," on the 21st. On the 24th, we hosted Cub Scout Pack 17 from Spencer for an overnight. Scouts enjoyed their time training the guns, sleeping in the forward berthing, and swabbing the mess deck. Scouts learned how ships communicated during wartime. The various methods included Morse code over the radio or using signal lamps, semaphore, or signal flags.

On tour, we love to have the public ask questions. It truly is one of the best ways to learn and keep everyone engaged. But sometimes, the questions they ask are not as informed as we'd hope. Guide **Paul Guarnieri** said that he had a couple of boys on his tour. They were in the Officer's Country and they noticed the typewriters. They asked Paul how the computers got power, how they printed, and where the screen was. Paul attempted to explain that a typewriter is mechanical, so it doesn't need electricity. You type right on the paper, so it doesn't need to print or have a screen. The parents of the boys got impatient with this conversation, and urged Paul to move along, but Paul was still left with the impression that these kids did not understand how the "magical computer" worked at all. **Jo Ann** also had children on her tour ask about WiFi during WWII on the ship. We can't give the kids too hard of a time though. **Bob Herbst** has told the story of a young woman, currently serving in the Navy, who wanted to take a tour and show her boyfriend what it was like onboard a ship. Yet, she was still surprised

at the equipment differences. She'd ask questions like "Where is the air conditioner?" and "How do the computers stay cool?"



Marianne Donovan, Jack Madden, and Clark Farnsworth dropped flowers for each Destroyer Escort lost in action.

Chuck Boone was explaining the berthing spaces, when a lady asked, "Who was having babies aboard?" Chuck explained the difference between an "i" and an "e." We do get some very intelligent questions asked, as well. Sometimes they even stump me, and I have to call friends for information. "How far away can you read signal flags?" 3,000 yards is the answer, after a call to Board member **Steve Long**. "How fast can the Morse

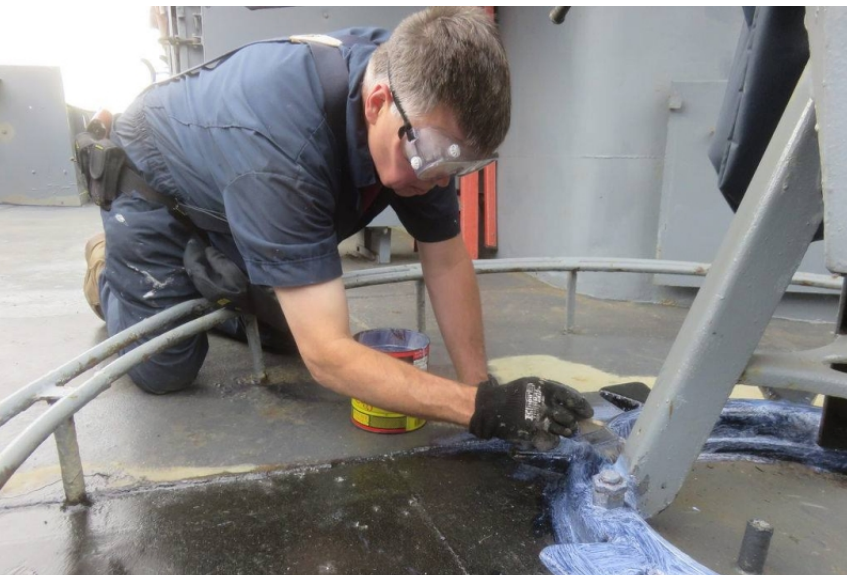
Code messages be decoded?" We still don't have an answer for this one yet. Everyone seems to know about the Navajo code talkers in WWII, and it is quite difficult to convey to people that the Navajos had nothing to do with long range radio communications during World War II.



Gary Sheedy discovered the laundry press, the one piece of original equipment in the laundry room.

The maintenance crew wrapped up a couple long-standing paint projects, in conjunction with the drone photography for World of Warships. We wanted the ship to look as good as possible, so we got the primer on the whole main deck covered, and the decks around gun 32 and in the gun 33 tub painted. That primer has been showing for almost a year. The "Chip-it and Paint-it Crew," **Ron Prest, Ron Mazure, and Bill Holt** are now concentrating their

efforts on gun 32, as well as 20mm guns 21 and 22. When that area is totally finished, they will move on to the 01 level deck, aft of the superstructure. We've got a lot of primer that the USS HUSE crew put down that we have to get covered up.



Bill Holt scaling on the 01 level forward.

The shipfitters have several projects going. **Andy Sheffer** finished up the welding in the deck gear locker, and replaced a lot of wasted metal. **Tommy Moore** tackled chipping the locker out. **Doug Tanner** is modifying the new watertight door for the deck gear locker. I have orders not to let anyone else touch it. **Danny Statile** fabricated new stainless steel belaying pin racks for the signal bridge. They are awaiting installation. Super

Dave Mardon and **Gene Jackey** have been installing a scupper on the port side amidships, to eliminate another rust streak. **Earl Herchenroder** has been working on freeing up all the turnbuckles that came off the mast shrouds and stays that are being replaced. Andy is getting ready to replace the wasted stuffing tubes at the secondary conning station. **Steve Klauck** got all of the wires disconnected and pulled out for him. And **Tim Benner**. Yes, Benner has been around, keeping up with his texts. Did I mention he is graciously loaning us a Canadian flag, so that we can properly celebrate Canada Day? And, did I mention that we have new USS SLATER 20th Anniversary shirts available for sale in the gift shop, and that Benner thinks **Rosehn** is going to give him one in return for loaning us the flag? Anyone want to place bets on that?

Barry Witte has several projects going, most notably the continued work on the smoke generator and detailed cosmetic restoration of the drive motors in B-4. He is also working with **Patrick McGuinness**, a U.S. Merchant Marine Academy - Kings Point engineering cadet, who is doing a two-week internship with us. Barry has him developing inspection check-off lists that the Navy recommended we keep records of. Back aft, **Larry Williams** has been helping the engineers wire in the ship's service air compressor in B-1, and helping **Gary Sheedy** back aft. Gary continues his painstaking



Cathy Wheat seems to have taken over supervision of the awning rigging.

work, restoring the laundry equipment. **Boats, Walt, Thomas** and the whole deck gang put the fantail awning up, and then took it down for the drone photography. Before it was put back up, **Angelo Bracco** took advantage of the opportunity to make some repairs to the awning. They are now replacing the rotten manila line on the Jacob's ladder, discovered by the executive director as he climbed up from the whaleboat. And no, there was no evidence

that it had been cut with a knife.



The Ship's Store is now selling new 20th anniversary t-shirts.

Elsewhere around the ship, the crew continues with all of the little tasks that make the **SLATER** great. Cathy Wheat cleans, **Smitty** cooks, **Jim Gelston** winds the clocks, **Shanna** sells the tickets, **Jo Ann** records the donations, **Rosehn** pays the bills, **Bob Callender** counts the volunteer hours, and the raspy voice of Bosun **Mike Muzio** continues to annoy everyone, with his regular recorded announcements over the

1MC. Just like a real ship.

Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

See you next month!