



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS Slater DE-766

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A summer view of USS SLATER.

couldn't feature some TripAdvisor reviews without mentioning our king of reviews Chief **Art Dott** who, of course, has many new accolades to his name. "We thoroughly enjoyed our visit! We learned so much about our naval history! **Art** was a wonderful guide and answered all our questions! The highlight was sitting and moving on real anti-aircraft artillery!"

We are well aware of how great our volunteer guides are. Year after year they dedicate their time to us. But, do not underestimate our college interns. They are excellent as well! Second year guide, **Austin** recently graduated from Siena College and is continuing here as a tour guide until that full-time job kicks in. "**Austin** gave us the tour; he did a great job and knew all kinds of specific details about the ship and its equipment."

We continue our summer with an exceptional turnout for our guided tours. The ship does all the work in attracting visitors, but our tour guides keep them entertained and coming back to learn more! "I thought I knew a lot when it came to WWII naval vessels, but **Alan Fox** was outstanding! His knowledge of the USS SLATER was off the charts. If I were at the helm of your group, I would steer them to be in Alan's tour. Thanks!" I



Intern Paul and Volunteer Charles on tours.

First year guide, Merissa, made the trip from Utica every other weekend to continue giving tours here. "What an amazing tour. We had so much fun, we learned a lot, and I am still in awe of the beautiful restoration of the ship. These volunteers put their hearts and souls into this, and it shows. Our tour guide, **Merissa**, was amazing. She was very knowledgeable, friendly, and super fun." Another first year

guide, **Paul**, was here frequently over the summer and always more than willing to help, even on short notice. "Toured the ship for the first time 8/16/17 with my 2 daughters. **Paul** was great! He was very attentive and patient. He answered every question and ensured our entire group was always together. My youngest, 11, loved every aspect of this ship and even ordered some dog tags before we left. Thank you so much for preserving history that is allowing the younger generations to learn and have a better understanding."

We love to host scout groups! This month we played host to three Girl Scout Troops! We had aboard **Troop 2055** from Amsterdam, New York, Girl Scouts from Arlington, New York and **Troop 1157** from the Albany area. We also welcomed **Trail to Eagle**, Boy Scouts, who are well on their way to becoming Eagle Scouts. We appreciate it every year when this group of well-behaved young men come to visit.

Loyal friends, remember that we are open for tours through Thanksgiving weekend. Our last tour day this year is November 26th. So, if you like to stay home during tourist season, this is your time to come visit! We give tours rain or shine – so come see us before the snow falls and ice covers the decks!

On August 19th, we hosted our annual volunteer appreciation night. It's a heck of a thing when the volunteers have to put on their own appreciation night, but that's the way it's always been around here. The high point of the evening was the Lasagna Dinner, prepared in the galley by Chiefs Smith and Art Dott. The weather was perfect for an enjoyable evening with the volunteers and staff. Thank you to Smitty, Art, and all our volunteers.



The weather was perfect for our 2017 volunteer gathering.

We were also honored to have three Trustees in attendance, Board President **Tony Esposito**, Treasurer **Alan Fox**, and Audit Committee Chair and newest Trustee **Bob Lazar**. **Doug Tanner** was recognized at this event, too, receiving a Coast Guard Teddy Bear presented to him by his shipfitter gang, in honor of his "gentle personality."



Doug Tanner received a special present on the Coast Guard birthday.

On Sunday August 27th, we hosted a special book signing. Author **Martin Irons** was aboard signing his book *Phalanx Against the Divine Wind: Protecting the Fast Carrier Task Force During World War II*. Admiral William Halsey's Fast Carrier Task Force was the ultimate naval armada during WWII. To protect the carriers from kamikazes, squadrons of destroyers were placed in harm's way on the outer flanks of the formation. The USS

HAYNSWORTH DD-700 was one of the nine sister destroyers that formed Squadron 62 in 1944. Her warrior-captain and his twenty-five-year-old executive officer led a mostly teenage crew through bold engagements in the South China Sea, Iwo Jima, Tokyo, and Okinawa. Seventy-two years after the kamikaze attack, the surviving families of two of the kamikaze victims met for the first time during our book-signing event. One was the nephew of **Arthur Goyer** RM2c, and the other was the sister of **John R. Dyer, Jr.** The book is available from Merriam-Press.com, Amazon, and barnesandnoble.com. "By

reading the book, I found out what kind of life my brother had aboard the ship and what his final days were like," said **Helen Richmond**, brother of **John Dyer**.



WAVE Mike Milian, Air Traffic Controller.

the bar on August 5th and, at her request, her family planned the committal aboard her beloved USS SLATER. About twenty-five friends and family attended the service. Fair winds and following seas, Mike.

We kept a promise to the late Maebelle "Mike" Milian, as we scattered her ashes from USS SLATER during a committal ceremony on 27 August. "Mike" was a former WWII WAVE, who volunteered as a tour guide from 2001-2013. During WWII, she was an air traffic controller at the Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey. Cheerful, energetic, and proud of her service, she always wore her WAVE pin aboard SLATER. Mike crossed



Mike, with some of her SLATER shipmates. Four WWII Vets Bill Svihovec (USS SLATER) , Mike Milian, Jack Madden (PT-305), and Emmett Landrum (USS BEBAS).

With the loss of so many of our volunteers as of late, our sailmaker Angelo Bracco thought of a way to remember our shipmates. On destroyers and destroyer escorts, the ships rolled and pitched so much that they were equipped with canvas bunk straps with brass hooks that clamped to the bunk frame to hold the bedding and, if worse came to worse, the sailors in place. Normally, the strap might be stenciled with the compartment or

bunk number. However, Angelo came up with the idea of stenciling the straps with the names of our departed volunteers. We also contacted **Teddy Prager** and **Bill**

Humminey, to get the names of the SOLDESA volunteers who have crossed the bar. Angelo has completed his tribute, and we hope that there will not be any additions for a long time to come. However, the word is out in the CPO mess that if your name shows up on a bunk strap, watch your back.



Boats Haggart and Walt Stuart making fenders and keeping the old skills alive.

The shipfitters wrapped up the deck gear locker this month.

The door was finally completed with the gasket fitted, the dogs reinstalled. Then it was hung and chalk-tested. **Boats Haggart** got all of his gear stowed, and in the final stage, the door and adjacent bulkhead was painted out with Navy Blue Epoxy, to match our camouflage scheme. The shipfitters moved onto the secondary conning station of the 01 level aft. Several of the

stuffing tubes had rotted out, so the electricians pulled all of the armored cable back. Then **Andy Sheffer** fabricated a new section of deck with all the stuffing tubes properly spaced. He cut out the old section of deck, and welded in the new section of deck with the prefabricated stuffing tubes into the deck. Now it's up to the electricians to get the phones and call bells wired back in. A tough job, since it's right on the tour route.



Replacing the electrical stuffing tubes at the secondary conning station.

They have also turned their attention to the well on gun one.

The three-inch guns are designed with a well in the center, where the power and firecontrol wiring comes up through stuffing tubes. The well is depressed, and accumulates rainwater. This is not a problem on an active DE, where you have a division of gunner's mate strikers to sponge them out daily, but that isn't the case on SLATER.

Danny Statile drilled a hole in the base, and is in the process of installing a drain line that will direct the water from the junction box under the gun to the forward septic tank.



The shipfitters are making great progress on the seawall safety railing.

However, the main effort for the shipfitters has been fabricating a safety railing along the seawall, about twenty years after the fact. Doug Tanner, Andy Sheffer, Danny Statile, Super Dave Mardon, and Earl Herchenroder have been cutting, shaping, welding, and grinding pipe to form the new railing. In Doug's absence, **Gary Sheedy** has assumed the role of straw boss, to keep the job going. By the end of the month, the entire section north of the gangway was complete, with plans to do the south section to meet the Dutch Apple's railing in September.



Checking the fit on the deck gear locker door.

Work has also been proceeding on the mast. Over the course of the month, we replaced the lower backstay with new cable. In reviewing some photos that were taken in 2015, we noted that the upper backstays were more badly deteriorated than we had thought.

With that in mind, we disconnected the upper backstays from the padeyes on the 01 level, and coiled them up on the flying bridge. This is a temporary solution, so that if the stays part, they'll fall onto the flying bridge and not on the 01 level below. Now it's just a matter of finding someone to climb to the masthead to disconnect the backstay so a replacement can be made.



Mike and Karl sprucing up B-3.

Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon, and Barry Witte have put a lot of attention into getting the aft machinery spaces, B-3 and B-4, looking sharp for the upcoming DESA Convention. They've gotten all the B-3 deck plates repainted, and did a lot of trim and touch-up painting. To that end, Barry Witte and his student volunteers completed restoration of the main motor cooling manifolds in B-4. The engineers and electricians all got

together one Monday, started up the ship's service generator, and shifted the load. The generator performed well, and no problems were encountered. We hope to show off the generator while the DESA Conventioneers are aboard.



The whaleboat from Scarano's...back home.

The whaleboat is back home. Down at Scarano's Boatyard, **Eric Everson** launched the boat on Monday, August 28th, and let it hang in the travel lift slings overnight. The plan was to bring it back on Tuesday the 29th. The whole gang showed up, including **Larry Williams, Mike Dingmon, Tommy Moore, Walt Stuart, Tony Esposito, and Ron Prest.** I even had my old friend **Alyce Guthrie, of the PT Boat Museum and Library** with us,

expecting to give her a whaleboat ride. But Eric was afraid that the boat hadn't swelled up enough, and wanted to let it sit another night.

So Wednesday, Tony Esposito went down to check it out and Eric determined it was ready to go. Shanna Hopson drove down a scratch team, consisting of Tommy Moore, Tony, and myself. We managed to get the engine started, and apparently Eric determined that we could use some professional help, so he climbed aboard and took the tiller and we headed north. It was fitting that Eric should get the chance to steer the boat home, after looking after it for so many years.

We have two special upcoming events. We're looking for working volunteers for our fall workweek, scheduled for Sunday, October 1 to Friday, October 6. You'll sleep aft in the old ship's bunks, and eat on the messdecks, with chow prepared in the ship's galley. We divide up the food costs at the end of your stay. We make the work assignments on Monday morning, depending on your skills and what fits you best. The age limit is 14 years old (with parent or guardian), and everybody should expect to bear a hand. This can be a great intergenerational experience, and you don't have to be a DE Sailor to participate. You just have to want to help SLATER. Pre-registration is required. You can call the ship directly at 518-431-1943, or email **Tim Rizzuto** at tim@usslater.org We'll email you the details.

Thursday, October 26th, will be the 20th anniversary of USS SLATER's arrival in Albany. Who could have predicted how we would prosper? We will celebrate the anniversary with a special "USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club." The party will be held on Thursday, October 26, from 1730 to 2000, in the West Main Lounge of the Club. Museum members will be getting an invitation to this event, which raised \$20,000 last year. The event includes the food and drink that the Club is famous for, as well as a special program and update on our progress. Mark your calendars! We hope to have a great turnout for this event. We look forward to seeing you at one or both of these upcoming events! Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.usslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

See you next month!

