



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Aboard USS SLATER, March is exactly the opposite of the colloquial saying, "In like a lion, out like a lamb." As the month progressed forward, everyone's "to-do list" was growing longer and longer, all gearing up for the opening day in the first week of April.



The deck gang lowered the accommodation ladder for the season.

The month started with setting up an artifact display at the Rensselaer Public Library. On the 4th, **Stan Levandowski**, one of our radio expert volunteers, gave a presentation to the **Peekskill-Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association.** The presentation was focused on SLATER's three lives, her service in WWII, Greece, and the historic fleet.

Interviews for new interns and

meetings with new volunteers took up much of the beginning of the month. We hired four new interns, **Alex, Noel, Lorna, and Patricia**, all students at UAlbany. We also brought aboard **Greg Healey, Richard Wallace, and Carl Camurati**, who's already famous on our Facebook page, from maintenance volunteering this winter. **On the 22nd, Shanna traveled to Malta, New York, to present her brand new STEM Tour to the Technology and Engineering Educators of New York State.** The main point Shanna focused on was that students need to come see the ship, not only for the historic experience, but also to take a look at the science and technology that filled the

ship during WWII. On the tour, students experience how sound waves are used in SONAR and sound powered phones, how Morse code was used for communication and decryption, and how submarines could hide under thermoclines in the ocean. We compare DRT (Dead Reckoning Tracer) and GPS for tracking location, and learn what variables the fire control computers have to account for, before aiming and firing 40mm guns. Lastly, we experiment and answer the age old question, "How do ships float?"

We had 30 tour guides (in addition to regular maintenance volunteers) aboard for our annual Refresher Lunch on the 24th. Proving once again, if we feed them, they will come! Returning guides followed Shanna, as she delivered the STEM Tour she's slaved away over the winter. New guides followed **Andrew** for the history tour, and learned some tips on how to keep

The whole gang gathered for tour guide refresher training to prepare for opening day.

their guests entertained while they wait for everyone on the ladders, and the importance of keeping everyone, including yourself, hydrated on those summer days. We praised all guides for an amazing season last year, one of our busiest summers to boot!

A lot of emails and phone calls back and forth to guides on availability and vacation time are exchanged, as Shanna sets the schedule. As I write this, she is sending out the first schedules to the crew. The Ship's Store is restocked, reorganized, and dusted. With a few new items in the store, including a new t-shirt design, we are





Uncovering the motor whaleboat.

looking forward to visitors! Make sure you come see what's new!

Coming up in April is opening day! SLATER will open Wednesday April 4th, as long as the snow is minimal. Shanna will teach lessons to children on Dazzle Camouflage on the 3rd and 11th at multiple locations. Art will be at the Cohoes Public Library on the 11th, and Charles is at the Kinderhook Library on the 28th. The calendar is also

filled with tours and overnights. We're back, people!



Boats Haggart and his crew re-hung all the racks in aft berthing.

On the maintenance side, two Mondays before opening there was a flurry of activity going on, as we make preparations. Over this past weekend, **Doug Tanner** and his shipfitters brought water back aboard the ship, and activated the heads. Doug has had multiple projects going. **Andy Sheffer, Gene Jackey, and Tim Benner** are completing repairs to the aft deckhouse and aft cross passageway. **Danny Statile** is working on replacing the signal

bridge belaying pin pipes. Ashore, the crew has finished up the trailer restoration by hanging new gutters. All that remains is the painting.

Kevin Sage completed spray painting, trim work, and deck painting in berthing compartment C-202-L. Boat's Haggart, Walt Stuart, Rich Mouzakas, Gene Jackey, and Carl Camurati all turned to re-hanging the bunks. Faced with the usual "what



Cathy Wheat prepares the Captain's cabin for inspection.

chains go where problem," the crew figured it was best to just start from scratch. **Cathy Wheat** made sure that all the bunks are matching, with the green flameproof covers on. I've got to say, the place looks pretty darn good.

The only thing we are lacking in this crew is a sign painter, to stencil all the piping and duct work. If you live in the Capital District and have a talent for such

things, we could certainly use you as a volunteer.



Time to uncover the guns and stow the canvas.

Boats Haggart and his crew then went to work topside.

They've had a busy month. They got all the guns uncovered and stowed the canvas, and then they uncovered the whaleboat. They lowered the accommodation ladder, in preparation for **Anthony Renna** putting the paint float back into the water. Then, they rigged up the sewer line run and connected it. They put out the SLATER name board, the anchor buoys, and put the battle helmets

back in the racks. Boat's and his crew moved steel plate into the muffler room to get it out of sight, and get the weather decks cleaned up. If it all goes well, they will do our first topside washdown soon.

Gary Sheedy has been putting the finishing touches on after officers' country. He restored a desk set and hanging locker, and is just waiting for **Ed Zajkowski** to bring



We need five more of these bedspreads for the aft officers' stateroom. Do you have one to donate?

him his medicine cabinet. Here's your chance to help with our restoration. The restoration of after officers' country is necessitating a search for five of the old officer's bedspreads. Any of you have one to donate? Or, do you know where to find one? Just aft of the stateroom, in the steering gear, **Barry Witte's** crew continues to make progress on the smoke generator replica, even earning kudos from **Ed Zajkowski** for their authenticity.

Gary got a company at the Watervliet Arsenal to fabricate the rolled conic sections of the smoke replica. That was something that Barry couldn't make at school.



Gary Sheedy putting the finishing touches on the aft officers' stateroom.

In this last month before we open, a lot falls on our resident volunteer custodian, Cathy Wheat. She has her weekends all planned out, as she works through the tour route, vacuuming dust out of the corners, making up the bunks, hanging uniforms, resetting the displays, and making sure everything is up to her high standards for the visiting public. She also worked with **Smitty** to whip out a delicious corned beef and cabbage lunch for St.

Patrick's Day.

I had talked back in January about how the limestone-based product called "SureFoot" is great for keeping the decks safe, but was getting tracked all through the ship. The fact that we have no running water this time of year means filthy,

streaked, and gritty decks are something we just have to live with until spring. Well, enter a Jersey farmer named **John Chitester**. John's father had served aboard USS GRISWOLD DE-7 in World War II and, since he wasn't doing much farming this time of year, he wanted to come up and help out. He spent four nights at the nearby Holiday Inn, and reported aboard each morning to take on the task of swabbing the interior decks. Since we had no running water on the ship, I took it upon myself to haul water from the shore head. He made five passes through the second deck before the water stopped coming up black. Midway through his stay, Tanner decided it was finally warm enough to pressure test the fresh water system, rig the fresh water hose, and bring water aboard into the galley. He also fired up the hot water heater. With these improvements, John thought he'd died and went to heaven. When you make things really difficult for your volunteers, it makes them appreciative of the most basic improvements. **John** was the right man at the right time.



Members of our local Patriot Flight organization helped get the ship ready for opening day.

Another gang that turned to, to help with cleanup, was from our local Patriot Flight organization.

They meet Fridays for a TGIV (Thank God It's Veterans) breakfast. **Lois Dysard** suggested that SLATER might be in need of more cleanup help, and they started volunteering on Saturdays. The first week saw **Lois, Red Newell**, his son **Tom**, daughter **Terri**, and family friend **Cindy Amyer**. We were amazed

to see Red back, because as a

pipefitter by trade, Red had volunteered to install our oil-fired furnace twenty years ago. It's still up and running. They assisted **Cathy Wheat** with sweeping, swabbing, vacuuming, and wiping. Red's son Tom is also a welder and plans on returning, so Tanner may have another shipfitter on his team.

With the assistance of several Sailors from NPTU Ballston Spa, Barry Witte is wrapping up the improvements to the interactive CIC display. They have rewired the lighting for several of the instruments, reworked the sound effects, and improved the



Touch up painting in CIC.

radar display. They also did a lot of touch-up painting. The two final improvements that are on hold are the "A-scope" display, and putting a radar display into the SL surface search radar console.

The last and heaviest piece of the gun 31 sightsetter, the yoke, was removed and hauled back to the workbench outside the machine shop by Doug Tanner and Danny Statile. It took Doug about two weeks to get the pivot pin out, using various combinations of heat and solvent. By contrast, it only took a couple of hours to get the pivot apart on gun 32 last year. The framework **Guy Huse** has assembled to hold the yoke proved invaluable. Gun 31 will look pretty stripped out for opening day, but hopefully Guy will have it ready to go and back together during the spring workweek.



Doug Tanner and Danny Statile did the final disassembly of the gun 31 sightsetter.

Our offsite machinist, George Christophersen, continues to perform minor miracles over in Connecticut. He stopped by with two boxes of polished 40mm ammunition, complete with fitted inert projectiles that he turned on his lathe. They look too pretty to put in the ready service racks topside. He also made a box of handrail fittings for Barry's engineroom restoration project, and he's helping Guy Huse with the sightsetter project. His next project is fabricating mounts for the signal bridge telescopes.



Machinist George Christophersen is now fabricating mounts for our telescopes.



Ken Powers makes more progress on the radar simulation and rewiring in CIC.

USS SLATER continues to serve the Navy. We hosted three Naval Academy future midshipmen from the class of 2022 on the 17th. As a member of the Annapolis Blue and Gold Team that assists with the selection of Midshipmen, Barry Witte does his interviews aboard SLATER. This gives the candidates a chance to begin to learn shipboard terminology, and how to get around a warship. We are still serving the active Navy by hosting such opportunities.

Our best wishes go out to volunteers Bob Calendar and Ron Mazure . Bob was recovering beautifully from a hip replacement and has even made it back down to the ship. Then an infection set in, and he is battling that now. Ron Mazure was recovering from a fractured hip, when he was diagnosed with an 80% blocked artery, and was back in the hospital for a couple of

stents. We miss them both, and hope they can rejoin the crew again soon.

A milestone was reached in destroyer escort history this month, with the decommissioning of the Philippine Navy's oldest warship, BRP Rajah Humabon (PS-11), formerly USS ATHERTON DE-169. She had rendered almost four decades of service in the Philippines, following service in the US and Japanese Navies. The former flagship started its career as the US Navy destroyer escort USS Atherton during World War II, patrolling the Atlantic in the 1940s. It was decommissioned in 1945 and



The Philippine BRP Rajah Humabon , formerly USS Atherton, has finally been decommissioned.

transferred to the Japanese government as JDS Hatsuhi. Then, it was later sold to the Philippines in 1978, and was commissioned into service in 1980, after undergoing an extensive refit in South Korea. There are plans to turn her into a Museum in the Philippines

Finally, we know how much you love voting for SLATER as the best. Albany.com is running a competition for the Best of the Capital Region, and they have put USS SLATER in three different categories--Best Museum, Best Outdoor Attraction, and Best Kid-Friendly Attraction. The "best" part is you can vote for SLATER in each of these categories, and you don't need to vote in all 37 categories for your vote to be counted. Each category you select has a pop-up for voting. Once you select USS SLATER, click "Done" at the bottom of the pop-up. Those with the most votes at midnight on April 9th will be declared the Capital Region's Best! It's easy and free. Just click on the link and allow plenty of time for the page and each pop-up to load.**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!**