



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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The 2018 USS HUSE Association work crew.

The month began with the USS HUSE Association work week.

The group has grown into a large mix of volunteers from all over the country. Nothing gets done without a good galley crew and, thanks to **Ed Zajkowski** putting us in touch with two Tin Can Sailor cooks, **Blair Sandri** and **Phil Zieglin**, the crew was fed gourmet meals. The organizers of the event, **George Amandola** and former supply officer **Dave Perlstein**, were on hand to handle supply duties and, once again, **Wally Bringslid** was the messdeck master-at-arms.

**The crew split up into teams.**

The biggest job was reassembly of the gun 31 sightsetter. With all the components now free and moving easily, it was time to put it all back together. This involved lifting several very heavy components, including the gun counterweight, into place. **Guy Huse, Anthony Amandola, Ed Wakeman, Ray Clark, Mark**



Ed Wakeman and Ron Frankoski helped Guy Huse get the gun 31 sightsetter back together.



**Sudzak, Paul Sudzak, and Jaye Robbins** all joined forces to accomplish this job. By Tuesday morning, all the major components were essentially in place and secure. Ed Wakeman stayed on the gun project for the remainder of the week, helping **Guy Huse** free to reinstall the telescopes, sight drums, and indicator dials. The crew also got the gun 22 barrel cooling tubes repainted and mounted back in place.



Together again, chippers Ron Frankosky and Bill Wetterau.

**Bill Meehan, Jeff Robbins, and Joe Delfoe** took care of the paint locker, kept the different types of paint straight, and kept everyone supplied with paint. **Robin Larner and Jan Schweiger** did touch-up painting topside. **Brandon Easley, Ron Frankosky, and Bill Wetterau** took on the task of scaling the outside of the gun 42 gun tub. This was starting to look a little shabby and, since it is prominently visible as you board

the ship, we decided it was time for a complete repainting. The guys did an amazing job. Local welders, **Danny Statile** and **Andy Sheffer**, welded on angle brackets and rigged planks so that they could scale the face of the shield. They went at it with needle scalers and by Monday evening, they had it down to bare metal and a coat of primer on it. Tuesday they painted it out with a second coat of primer and, by noon on Wednesday, completed the topcoat of epoxy haze gray. Following Brandon's departure on Wednesday, Ron and Bill retired to the fo'c's'le, and spent the remainder of the week priming up there. **Paul and Mark Sudzak** joined the painting crew later in the week, and repainted the accommodation ladder.



Sue Strieter gently points out that the Executive Director failed to notice and thank Gail and Sharon for the flowers that they purchased and planted before they left.

**Gail Esker and Sharon Roberts** stained the Observation Deck on Monday and spent the remainder of the week painting waterways on the starboard side. I would be remiss if I failed to mention that they also did some landscaping with Doug and Susie Streiter. They cut all the grass and bought and planted some flowers that the Executive Director failed to notice in a timely manner.



**Reluctantly, Ed let his crew take a break for a picture.**

**Doug and Susie also removed fiberglass insulation in Wardroom Stateroom 101 and the ship's office, in preparation for some welding repairs in those spaces.** They also cut fifty flatbar spacers for Ed Zajkowski's upcoming 20mm foot rail project.

**Trustee Gary Dieckman spent the week doing odd jobs.** He oiled all the chain on our chain falls, to keep the rust from running onto the deck, did some cleaning in B-3, and sanded and repainted several seawater valves, handrails, and ladders. He organized all of our latex paint, discarded the bad stuff, and mounted several condition tags topside.

**Finally, Steve Klauck stepped outside of his IC rate, and beautifully restored the wooden signboard that hangs off of our lifelines at the bow.** Steve also continued working on the alarm circuit in B-3 and B-4, for the main engine lube oil and cooling water. In addition, he repaired the sound-powered phone circuit between the fo'c's'le and the boat deck. Steve also single-handedly cleared a ground in a lighting circuit, proving that IC men are really electricians, as well.



**The week was marked by two ceremonies.** On Tuesday, Dick Walker presided as Chaplain in a Memorial Service that remembered the late Roland Robbins. Then, during the middle of the HUSE workweek, on Thursday, RADM Marty Leukhardt and the members of our local Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge commemorated the heroism of the "Four Chaplains" in a well-attended event. The "Four Chaplains," also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains," were four United States Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other civilian and military personnel, as the troop ship SS DORCHESTER sank on 3 February 1943, during World War II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats, and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.



Ed Zajkowski's crew fabricating new 20mm foot rails.

**As soon as the HUSE crew departed, Ed Zajkowski arrived on board to prepare for his three-day work week.** He had a handpicked crew of welders that included several of his former co-workers from the Limerick Nuclear power plant, **Ed Carson, Rick Espenshade, Bob Lalley, and Joe Zygmunt.** They were supplemented by Tin Can Sailors **Gene Byers and Steve Whynot, Kendrick Giambattista,** cook **Mark Petrozino,** photographer **Bill Maloney,** and three of our regulars, **Ron Prest, Thomas Scian, and Bill Wetterau.** Ed had put a lot of planning into this. His main project was the replacement of the wasted 20mm foot rails that were added in 1945, to enable the 20mm gunners to depress their guns to fire at suicide boats. Over the course of three days, they removed four wasted 20mm gun foot rails and replaced them with new steel.



Mark Petrozino cooked for Ed's crew.



Ed and his team replacing wasted metal on gun 41.

telescopic camera so we can plan repairs to the mast. This was all made possible by **Doug Tanner**, who asked his friends at **Petrochem** to loan us two diesel welding machines, so we could keep all of this talent busy.

**They also removed and replaced the wasted diamond plate deck from the loading platform of gun 41.** They welded pipe to the top of the whaleboat davits to increase the height of the davit guys, so they wouldn't foul the davits when the davits were swung. They also welded brackets on four fuel oil vent lines, and investigated a rain leak in officer's stateroom 101. Finally, **Bill Maloney** took 600 detailed photos of the mast with his



Work continues on the aft supply vent fan intake.

with any other projects until the ductwork fabrication was completed. But, just as the sight setter on gun 31 was almost all back together, I got word that the mount had jammed in train. Since that's our demo gun for the public, that repair became a priority project. Since our best welder is also our best mechanic, I had no choice but to take

**Our local volunteers have kept busy supporting the out-of-towners, and progressing with their own projects as well.** The shipfitters have all been busy refabricating the aft supply vent ductwork. The original vent intake was removed several years ago, as it interfered with the tour route. Doug has come up with a modified design that will be close to authentic, without being a "head knocker" for our visitors. I was determined not to bother him



Doug off the vent duct and put him on the gun train repair. **Doug, Earl, Bill Holt,** and **Chuck** got the upper drive disassembled, and found that everything was bone dry, and that several bearings were bad, including one that had disintegrated. The parts are presently spread all over the workbench in the machine shop.



Nick Grocki's parents came in from Hawaii to celebrate Nick's graduation and commissioning.

**Barry Witte's team continued to make progress on several projects. Vince Montouri** and his assistants, **Jack Carbone** and **Devon Urbano** continued working on the smoke screen replica. Ken Powers began the electrical fitting work for the igniter circuit. **Nick Grocki** and other RPI midshipmen worked on B4 and B3 handrails. Those parts were made by **George Christophersen**. George was also back with the completed mounts

for three MK-1 telescopes, which he mounted on the signal bridge. He also sanded and repainted the telescopes. Earlier in the month, ET1 **Kyle Caton** and his team wrapped up the CIC improvements. **Nick Grocki** graduated from RPI, was commissioned an Ensign, and will be heading to Washington DC for duty. His graduation was celebrated by his parents, Rear Admiral **Alma Grocki**, and Captain **Russ Grocki**, grandfather Captain **Chet Grocki**, grandmother Dorothy Lau, and Nick's brother Ensign **Dan Grocki**. It's a three-generation Navy family.

**Saturday May 12 was the 100th anniversary of the Naval Communications Base Station, NSS.** NSS was the station that broadcast the Fox Schedule to all naval ships and installations. Many historic ship stations were online for the event. **Joe Breyer** summed up the results with, "We struck out." On the bright side, **Jerry Jones** showed up. We could only hear NSS on 5Mhz SSB, where he was working simplex. We could hear him best with the antique RBC, which was pretty amazing. They were plagued by problems. Foremost, the bands were abysmal. Two of the vertical antennas that we tried to use were dead. Next, both rigs had receiving problems. Jerry disassembled the coaxial antenna jumpers from the K2 to diagnose the problem. He found nothing obviously wrong. After reassembly, the K2 worked okay, so the problem was probably corrosion.

There is much repair work to be done, but it was great to have the radio room active again.

**A long-awaited improvement occurred in the aft engineroom. Mike Dingmon and Larry Williams** installed a toolbox on the lower level of B-3. It was donated by Mike, and making space for it was a project that's been a year in the making. Once they get it organized, that should make it easier for the rest of us to steal what we need from the engineers.



Austin explaining Morse Code on the new STEM Tour.

**Our tour guides have been busy, with twelve schools visiting from as far away as Lyndonville, close to Niagara Falls, and Long Lake, in the Northern part of Adirondack Park.** These schools brought with them 450 students! Montessori Magnet School in Albany was the first to take us up on our STEM Tour, a tour that **Shanna Hopson** worked on all winter. The students learned how SONAR and Sound Powered phones use sound waves

to operate, and how the Navy uses both of these technologies in WWII and today. They also learned how a bathythermograph (BT) helps the Navy to adjust for thermoclines and the refraction of sound waves. Students held local control of the 40mm guns to learn how trajectory is calculated in the midst of battle, and they heard how the Dead Reckoning Tracer (DRT) tracked the ship's position compared to the modern Global Positioning System (GPS). Finally, a STEM Tour is not complete without answering the age old question, "How do ships float?" Our tour guides **Dan, Evan, and Austin** led the students in a buoyancy and displacement experiment. Memorial Day was a crusher, in a good way. We had 316 visitors, twice what we expected, on one of our best days. **Art Dott** came in on his own accord, and saved Shanna from having to leave the register and go out on tour. She summed up the day when she said. "Our guides are amazing!" If you don't believe me, read the reviews on [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com).





The Transfinder group utilized our wardroom for a corporate planning meeting.

A couple of weeks ago, **Joe Messia**, COO of Transfinder, called us asking about the possibility of having a day-long meeting aboard SLATER. He was looking for an "inspiring" location to discuss planning for the company. We talked it over and decided we could have the group use the Wardroom, but only on a Tuesday. He was happy to work within our parameters, including no air conditioning, and

scheduled for May 29. **Transfinder** is a global logistics software company headquartered here in the Capital Region. They have built their business on routing and scheduling software for school transportation. They seemed to really enjoy the experience of working aboard SLATER. Perhaps other area companies will see the possibilities here.



Jim Brown and his adopted DE, USS DANIEL A. JOY.

**Sadly, we have three departures to report this month.** Former Trustee and Chairman of our Investment Committee, **James G. Brown**, passed away from pancreatic cancer. Jim was a retired Senior Vice President with U. S. Trust Bank of America Private Wealth Management, and was a natural to advise us on investments. As a kid, growing up in Chicago, he loved going down to Navy Pier, and had a love affair with the reserve DE there, USS

DANIEL A. JOY DE-585. Though, like me, he never served, he had a life-long love affair with the Navy, and was a strong supporter of our project. Our condolences go out to Jim's wife, Alison, and the rest of the family. In lieu of flowers, they asked that



anyone who wishes to do so, make a donation in Jim's name to the Lustgarten Foundation, a very large, privately-funded organization for pancreatic cancer research.

**From Michigan came the loss of another longtime volunteer, Jim Parker.** Jim was a Tin Can Sailor who served in USS BRUSH DD-745, as well as the carriers LAKE CHAMPLAIN, BENNINGTON and CORAL SEA. Jim was a regular participant in the Michigan work parties for many years. His wife Sue wrote that, "Jim loved working on the Slater and being with all his shipmates. He really missed it when he couldn't go anymore. Thanks for reaching out to me, and yes I would love to keep receiving the newsletter. I always enjoy reading it. You and your crew are such a great bunch of men and Jim was so proud to be apart it. God bless you."



Frank Lasch addressing our 2002 Pearl Harbor Memorial Group.

**I felt deep personal loss at the passing of Frank Lasch, one of the great mentors in my life.**

Frank slipped the hook this month, following a long illness. He was an attorney and former destroyer officer, who served in USS ROBERT L WILSON and USS PARSONS. He was a major influence on the USS SLATER and in my life. When USS SLATER came to Albany, there was no real management plan, and **Mayor Jennings** tasked **Bill**

**Bantz** and Mercer Management to take the job of temporarily administering the ship. One day, Bantz asked me to take a guest down to the ship and show him around. That was Frank Lasch, and probably my most significant contribution to the project was not scaring Frank away on that first visit.

**There is no way I can express my gratitude for Frank's support and confidence over the years.** Following completion of his law degree, Frank said "No" to an Admiral, and turned down a JAG commission so he could go to sea on the destroyers. He was always proud of that. Frank came on board as President in 1998 and, with a firm hand on the helm, put the project on the road to financial stability. He successfully lobbied for \$200,000 in member items from the New York State Legislature, back in 2000. At his

own expense, he flew out to the Destroyer Escort Commanding Officers Association Convention in San Diego. He raised \$90,000 from DECO, thanks to a challenge grant issued by **Nash Broaddus**. He then organized a reunion of these former Commanding Officers in Albany in 2001.

**Frank was instrumental in the creation of our growing endowment fund.** Always the fiscal conservative, without Frank's efforts we would be living hand-to-mouth. Never a micromanager, Frank created the environment of financial stability that has made my job tenable. I came to Albany on a one-year leave of absence and, thanks to Frank's leadership, decided to stay on. One of Frank's greatest accomplishments was bringing our current Board Chairman, BJ Costello, aboard. Both these fine gentlemen have also been major donors personally to the project, leading by example. Frank resigned in 2011 for health reasons, but we should never forget what he did for the USS SLATER. She is truly his legacy.



We hosted a breakfast in the wardroom for members of the Albany-Nijmegen Sister Cities Group. Albany's association with this Netherlands city dates back to WWII.

**Despite these losses, I want to close on an upbeat note.** I've been in this business for over forty years. In that time, I have seen many Federal Grant Programs come and go. I have tediously filled out about thirty applications over the years, with so little success, that I came to believe that needle scaling was a more productive use of my time. My grant writing abilities have also been the subject of many derisive comments in the Chiefs'

Quarters. Shortly before I went on vacation last summer, the National Park Service announced the latest round of Maritime Heritage Grants. While on vacation, I wrote a proposal to go back to the shipyard to restore and repaint the mast. Having recently done the South Street Seaport Tall Ships WAVERTREE and PEKING, I knew that Caddell's now had a lot of experience with masts. We already have a great working relationship with Caddell's Shipyard, when we strengthened the hull at the waterline. And, as long as we were next to a drydock, again, it only made sense to inspect the bottom, as it would have been over five years since the last drydocking.



**When I got back from vacation, Rosehn cleaned up my proposal, included the necessary budget information, and put it in the proper format for submission.** It was a matching grant, and the largest amount we could ask for was \$200,000, meaning we would have to raise another \$200,000 from you, our members. We assured the Park Service that, based on your generosity during the Hull Fund Drive, when we raised \$1.5 million between 2010 and 2014, raising our \$200,000 match shouldn't be a problem.



Guide Mitch Lucas on the Fo'c's'le.

**You can imagine my shock when we got the call that we had received the full \$200,000, the maximum award allowed any single organization.** The National Park Service awarded \$2.6 million in maritime heritage grants to 34 projects in 14 states. The National Maritime Heritage Program grants are funded through the recycling of vessels from the Maritime Commission's National Defense Reserve Fleet.

**Preliminary work has begun.** Bill Maloney used his telephoto lens to take 600 detailed images of the mast for planning purposes. Ed Zajkowski and Barry Witte are already examining the images and comparing them to blueprints, to determine what is original to her 1945 rig, what has been added post-war, and what is missing. Bill's pictures will be invaluable to developing our work plan. Doug Tanner is working with Flach Crane and All-Lifts to complete replacement of the back stay and yardarm lifts here in Albany. That will save us some money that we're hoping we can spend on void preservation in the yard. We have two years to complete the project. For the rest of you, over the summer you can expect to receive a nice letter and one of those little return envelopes from us, as we work to make our share of the match. So, after forty years in this business, we finally got a Federal grant. In honor of men like Jim Brown, Jim Parker and Frank Lasch, it looks like USS SLATER's legacy of being every DE to every DE Sailor is ensured well into the future.

**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!**