

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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I thought we were done with the flying bridge.

With the restoration of CIC and the pilot house fully underway, we started to notice that, once again, with the snowmelt, we were getting water on the deck in CIC. So, one Monday, when **Doug Tanner** stuck his head into my office and said, “You want me to try to find out where that water is coming from?” the only response I could make was, “Sure, go for it.”



The shipfitters continued work on the wasted stuffing tubes in the gun director tub.



Yup, it looks as bad as I thought.

Thus, **Doug** and his trusty team of ship fitters, **Gene Jackey, Earl Herchenroder, Super Dave Mardon, Tim Benner, Steve Klauck, and Chuck Teal** began making the climb up three ladders, to try to find the leak. In fact, they found two. The first one was a wasted large stuffing tube, in a corner by the port lookout station. A level above, in the gun director tub, Doug found a series of seven stuffing tubes, nested closely together, that were all rotted out. The first step in the repair was a liberal application of roofing tar, though I doubt Doug would use the word “Liberal” to describe anything.

In both locations, doubler plates indicated that these areas had been worked on before, while SLATER was in Greek service. Both repairs necessitated cutting away the adjacent bulkhead, to access the backsides of the stuffing tubes. They decided to work on the director tub problem first. With great difficulty, the wires were cut and pulled out of the tubes. That was so they could be reinserted into the new stuffing tubes, giving them the appearance of being complete. This will surprise some future fire controlman, when he tries to get the main battery gun director operational.



The new stuffing tubes, ready to be welded in.



Bye bye, hot water heater. You've served us well for twenty years, but it's time to replace you.

The old stuffing tubes were ground flush. A new doubler plate was fabricated, with seven drilled holes. Over each hole, the ship fitters welded a new pipe nipple, and then threaded on a new pipe coupler. The whole unit was lined up

with the existed holes and welded to the deck. The wires were stuffed back into the couplers, and packed with sealing gum. (You EMs remember what that was nicknamed.) Viola, repair complete. They saved the other repair job on the flying bridge for February, as to not run out of work. Now, bear in mind that a job like this requires a bunch of old men to make countless trips up and down three flights of ladders with tools and equipment. However, **Steve Klauck's** wife takes exception to me calling him an "old man."



This is a hell of a thing, to make an old man climb.



Gary Sheedy, reinstalling cable supports in CIC.

The flying bridge is not the only place that the ship fitters have been busy. Andy Sheffer has been working in the forward passageway, behind the hedgehog projector, repairing a rotted-out section of deck and bulkhead. The area of corrosion was just inside the hatch, where rainwater collects when the hatch is open. And, following a bout of bronchitis, **Danny Statile** was back at the bench, forming his next section of replica waveguide.

Andy has also been helping Gary Sheedy and Barry Witte in the pilothouse and CIC. Again, using **Ed Zajkowski's** research, there has been a good deal of rearrangement of the electrical equipment on the back bulkhead of the pilothouse, to accommodate the installation of the recognition light panels.



RPI Midshipmen, Branden and Jack, staged the new mast part by the gangway for blasting and painting.



RPI Midshipmen have been working on the restoration of the plotting table

Preparations continue, prior to going to the shipyard in April. Rick Meyerrose completed the “Trip and Tow Survey,” and submitted it. Doug Tanner is making the arrangements for the crane to lift the gangways, and getting stands to set them on. He is also planning to obtain a lightweight temporary gangway that we can remove without a crane.

The RPI midshipmen have really been contributing this month. Jack Carbone has been assisting with the planning work for the upcoming shipyard period. He has gathered all of the pre-fabricated kits, inventoried the pieces, labeled everything, and set them out to be picked up by **Hal Hatfield's** shop. Meanwhile, **Brendan Lutz** has disassembled our new CIC plot table,

and begun its restoration. He and his team have set up shop in the aft crew's head, where we can heat it enough to paint things. All of the parts to this table are present, and once completed, it will replace the incomplete one we have had on display in CIC.

Buffalo University engineering students, Grant Eastman and Ian Canetto, were home over the Holiday break and were looking for a good mechanical engineering project. They decided to look into whether one of the 40mm dual gun mounts could be restored to train and elevate under power. They did a lot of research and investigation over the break, and will be back over the summer to continue their work.

Other students have been working on Ed Z's pre-yard punch list. Items include removing and storing fragile equipment from the work zone, sorting and storing the signal flags, and covering flying bridge instruments with plywood. In addition, they have been freeing up a few davits that will be used to hoist provisions and equipment on and off of the ship, when in drydock. These tasks may not be glamorous, but it is essential that they get done, so that everything is ready when SLATER arrives in the shipyard.

We had three visits by the Coast Guard this month. BMC Holly Campbell's USCGC LINE spent two nights alongside, while her crew underwent training. While they were alongside, I got a call from BM1 Dan Torres with the UCCGC HAWSER in Bayonne, requesting permission to lie alongside for a night. Since this was HAWSER's first visit, I photographed the way LINE was tied up and emailed the pictures to Dan. HAWSER tied up on the night of the 28th without any assist from us. I was on hand to cast her off the following morning. USCGC WIRE joined us on the night of the 30th.

We've had some great support from our Trustees the past couple of months. Board President, Tony Esposito, continues to keep us supplied with eggs and sausage for our Saturday morning breakfast, usually prepared by Chef Doug Tanner. **Board Treasurer, Alan Fox,** is on hand several days a week, signing checks and preparing mailings. His most recent assignment involved coffee packets. Someone donated a box of coffee in packets, and Alan and **Bob Callender** cut all of the packets open and poured them into coffee cans. Alan said he was working up to his full potential.



The Coast Guard tugs have made regular visits this month.



Board Treasurer, Alan Fox, preparing Winter Fund thank you letters for mailing. Thanks to all of your who have supported us!



The deck gang stripped the rigging off the boat davits.



Shanna, Diane and Jo Ann have kept our administration humming along.

By far, the greatest support we have received from a Trustee has been that by Diane Watters. She has taken on the task of volunteer bookkeeper, and is in the process of teaching our database manager, **Jo Ann Mulligan**, how to use our accounting software. The plan is that Jo Ann can transition to doing the accounting permanently. Previously, Jo Ann had been maintaining our donor records, recording donations, making address changes, and generating acknowledgements. Thus, she has been a quick study, and she is now performing almost all the accounting functions on her own, with Diane reviewing her work on Saturday mornings. Jo Ann is also helping us out with bringing in lunch for the crew, while Smitty has been away.

If that wasn't enough, Diane recently acquired a carpet store, and donated new carpet for the gift shop, office, and classroom. On top of that, one of her installers, **John Gregory**, agreed to donate the installation of the carpet. **Shanna** and Gary worked with John, moving all of the furniture around and installing the new carpets. We are extremely thankful to both Diane and John for their much-needed donations. The trailer has a whole new fresh look, and we can't wait for May, to show off the new look to our visitors.

You know we prefer to live as if it were 1945, but in order to do business in the present; we have to keep up with social norms, like the Internet. Shanna and Jo Ann fought with the Internet all month long, but solved their problems when Jo Ann got a new modem installed.

Shanna invited interns, John and Cassidy, to help her out in the collections space. She put them to work, cataloging and packing up the displays, so we can move the ship to the shipyard without damaging any artifacts. They are also helping out by writing descriptions for the displays that we hope you all get to see this season. This requires a lot of research, and John is very excited to dive in headfirst. Cassidy also cleaned out the on board ship's store, making room for additional merchandise.

Shanna has been renewing our brochure contracts, searching for new merchandise for the Ship's Store, completing inventory, and working on some of the programming we will be offering in 2020. On the 10th, Shanna had her first training day as a fellow in the Emerging Nonprofit Leadership Accelerator. Over 60 people applied, and she was one of 16 that were accepted. In the first session, this professional development program has shown Shanna how to better use her strengths to build relationships with our visitors, interns, and volunteers. Future sessions will cover nonprofit finance, strategic partnerships, fundraising, and marketing.



From Florida, Dave Wasson's wife sent a box of delicious homemade cookies for the crew.



Shanna, John, and Cassidy began the collection inventory, prior to packing up the collection before going to the shipyard.



Barry and Rich began mounting the recognition light switch panel.



Our resident machinist, Alex Titcomb, at the lathe.

And speaking of fundraising, we can't thank you all enough for the generous support you have given us through your Winter Fund donations. Since the start of the drive on 1 October, we have raised \$55,000. So thus far, your generosity has enabled us to stay even with our expenses, and not dip into our savings, despite the fact that we have no operating revenue during the winter months. And we're now half way through the closed season. In addition, you've donated \$148,000 of the \$200,000 we need to make our match for the Maritime Heritage Grant. Your generosity has been amazing!

Thank you all. We couldn't do it without you.

See you next month,

Tim



The end of January and we're ice free.

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