



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

USS SLATER DE-766

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October is probably our busiest and most intense month. We start off with the Fall Work Week, then dive into Navy Birthday, crash into our annual fundraiser at the Fort Orange Club, and finish off with our Oxi Day commemoration. We also managed to get the third quarter TRIM BUT DEADLY produced and off to the printers, finished up another edition of SLATER SIGNALS, and of course our usual tours and maintenance projects. Let's dive into it!

We had ten attendees for our Fall Work Week, organized by George Gollas. John Meeker and Joe Stout were back from Seattle, **Steve Whynot and Gene Byers** joined us from Massachusetts and our regulars **Gary Dieckman and Ron Frankosky** were joined by first timers **Bob Spiro and Jay Kennan**. With our cook, **Blair Sandri**, on the mend due to a hip replacement, **John Meeker** stepped up to coordinate with Blair to set a menu and shopping list for the week.



I got most of the crew to pose for a photo, because I did it during their coffee break, when they were in the same place at the same time.

When local volunteer and Sunday tour guide, Chris Soulia, heard that we needed some galley help, he stepped forward to assist. John took care of cooking our breakfasts. **Chris** helped with the lunch and supper. We were well fed for the week and had a special meal on

Wednesday as **Gary Dieckman** treated the crew to a steak dinner.

With the near simultaneous failures of both our B1 & B4 ship's compressors, the chippers were off to a slow start. On Tuesday, **Doug Tanner** arranged for a dockside compressor, loaned by **Walter Pratt and Sons**, to be delivered. **Danny Statile** and **George Gollas** worked on connecting it to the ship's air main. **Ron Frankosky** led the chipping and painting group. New volunteer, **Bob Spiro**, chipped and primed the optical gun director platform, **Jay Kennan** worked with **Ron** to chip and paint the fo'c'sle and the MK-51 gun director tubs. They were assisted by **Joe Stout** and **Gary Dieckman**, who also painted out the port 40mm gun as well as **Ron Prest** and **Bill Wetterau** who came in to do some deck painting as well.



Ron is back scaling the fo'c'sle.



Ron Frankosky oversaw the Corpsmen from Saratoga Springs.

On Thursday, the work week crew was joined by seven members of the U.S. NMRTC New England detachment, from Saratoga Springs. These are corpsmen, so painting is not in their usual line of work. They got the interior of the aft 40mm gun painted. But they were also the first responders when we had a heat-related emergency on board. They were in the right place at the right time. Go Navy!

Bob Barth spent the week working with George Gollas, restoring more E-Call circuits. At times they were assisted by Bob



Gene and Steve finished the gun lubrication.

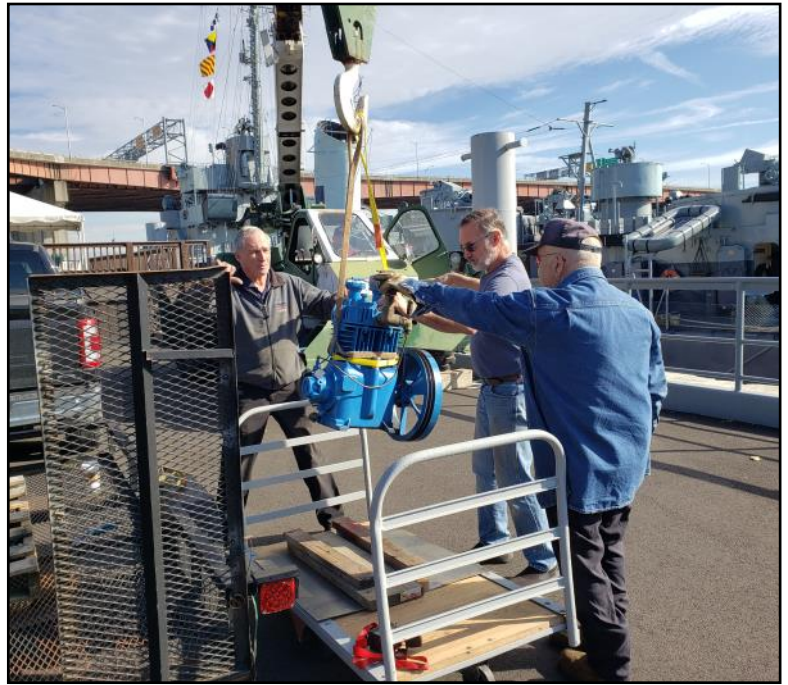
Spiro. George also spent time with **Barry Witte** trying to resolve an intermittent noise issue with the IMC announcing system.

Even with the compressor issues, quite a bit of work was done. By the end of the week **Ron and Jay** had the whole fo’c’sle chipped, primed, and painted. The interiors of all the MK-51 director tubs and the deck on the rangefinder platform had been scaled and primed. The exteriors of the MK-51 director tubs were painted haze gray, as well as the interiors of the amidships, 40mm gun tubs, and the port 40mm gun. All in all, it was a great week.

If you are interested in attending our work weeks for a few days or the entire week, please let us know by emailing tim@usslater.org. Our Spring Work Week will be April 28 to May 4, 2024. We look forward to hearing from you.

The local crew has been mainly occupied with solving the air compressor problem. **Doug** changed the oil in the small Home Depot compressor in the forward pump room. That hadn’t been changed in 20 years, and now that we are dependent on that compressor, we need to start taking better care of it. While we put together an RFP for a new replacement compressor to go into B-4, **Doug and Chuck Tanner** decided to investigate the Quincy 20 CFM compressor in the forward engine room. They took it apart and found that the crankshaft was too damaged, making it unrepairable.

We had two other old Quincy compressors resting down there in storage, and they were just at the point of taking them apart to check their condition, when a miracle occurred. Our tugboat guy, **Rob Goldman of NYS Marine Highway**, offered to donate two Quincy model 240 single stage compressors. Doug and I drove up, looked them over, and decided they would do the job. **Danny Statile** picked them up the next day and as I write this, **Doug** and the crew are in the process of lowering them into the forward engine room.



Gary, Bill, and Doug offload the donated compressors. Danny was the crane operator.

Topside, Doug and Chuck are finishing welding the leaks on the flying bridge deck over CIC. Thomas and Ron Prest finished scaling the deck on the gun director tub above the flying bridge. In doing so, they punched five holes in the deck there, so those are next on the list to be repaired. Talk about job security!



Chuck Tanner, investigating the condition of the Quincy compressor in B-1.

The repairs to the gun-33 ready service ammunition lockers are complete, except for fitting the brass dogs on the doors. Danny is working to put a deck drain in the gun-31 tub. Danny, Dale Setford, and Bill Kubizne have also started working on a watertight door for the forward end of the maindeck passageway.

Machinist Len Deroo, was back working on the repairs to the manual train drive on gun-32, but he's headed south for the winter, so that work will hold off until he returns. However, Ed Nowik is

back with us for the winter, and he painted out the interior of the spray shield on the port side, and worked with **Bill Wetterau** to paint the interiors of the MK-51 gun director tubs. Ed was also under the Visitor's Center, helping **Gary Sheedy** with the water line. New volunteer, **Ashley Morrison**, joined the paint crew, and painted all of the 40mm ammunition cans, the aft ready service lockers, and the gun-27 interior of the gun tub. She's also been assisting **Cathy Wheat** with cleanup.



Warren, Earl, and Dale finished mounting the heat shields on the ready service lockers.

Trustee, Greg Krawczyk, delivered three MK-14 gunsights, donated by the Museum Ship, SS JOHN W. BROWN, in Baltimore. SLATER volunteer, Richard Bourgeois, has been working to make a couple MK 14 gun sights operational. John Epp posted a video to our YouTube Channel of Richard starting the compressor and witnessing the gyro assisted sights "track" a target.



Richard Bourgeois is becoming an expert on the MK-14 gunsights.

Finally, I had dreams of bringing the whaleboat back aboard using the radial davits and the capstan. The last time we hoisted it aboard was 2018, and it is an ability I didn't not want to lose. Handling a whaleboat with radial davits is a lost art. However, Doug Tanner gave me a reality check, and noted that the aging process was taking a toll on the crew, and unless I could find some additional muscle, bringing it aboard wasn't a good idea.

In addition to the manpower problem, the boat falls were last

replaced in 2016, so they are due for replacement. So, I called upon **Rick Scarano** at **Scarano Boatyard**, and asked if he could haul us for the winter. Not only did he agree to haul the boat out, but on the last day of the month, he sent his boat up river to pick up the whaleboat and tow it down to his yard. **Ed Nowik** handled the tiller as the whaleboat made her last trip of the season. In the meantime, the engineers will continue to work to solve the fuel pump problem. We thank all the folks at Scarano's and all of the rest of you for your continued and generous support.

And that's only your maintenance report for October, we've been busy with tours and events too!

On October 13th, the Capital Area Chief Petty Officer Association joined us in celebrating the 248th birthday of the US Navy. For the last 17 years they have selected and honored a SLATER Volunteer of the Year. This year they honored two, **Larry Williams** and **Jim Gelston**. We were joined for the ceremony by NYS Assemblymembers **Phil Steck** and **Pat Fahy**, and the **Pitch Hitters** from



Scarano's Boatyard sent a boat to tow the whaleboat to their yard for the winter. Ed handled the tiller for the trip downriver.

Racing City Chorus performed the National Anthem and God Bless America. The celebration was also attended by 45 SLATER Volunteers and Friends.

Larry Williams was one of the first volunteers to report aboard when **USS SLATER** arrived in Albany in 1997. Larry served aboard the destroyer escort, **USS SNOWDEN DE-248**, as an electrician's mate, based in Key West, during most of his service. Following his release from active duty, Larry went on to work as an electrician at the General Electric Plant in Schenectady. Upon his retirement, Larry began working with the electrical gang aboard **USS SLATER**, doing all the initial checks and equipment installations to make the ship electrically habitable. Working with **Gary Sheedy** and **Barry Witte**, they became famously known as the "Three Fuses." Larry has continued to work with us since that day,



Thanks to the whole crew who participated in our Navy Birthday celebration.

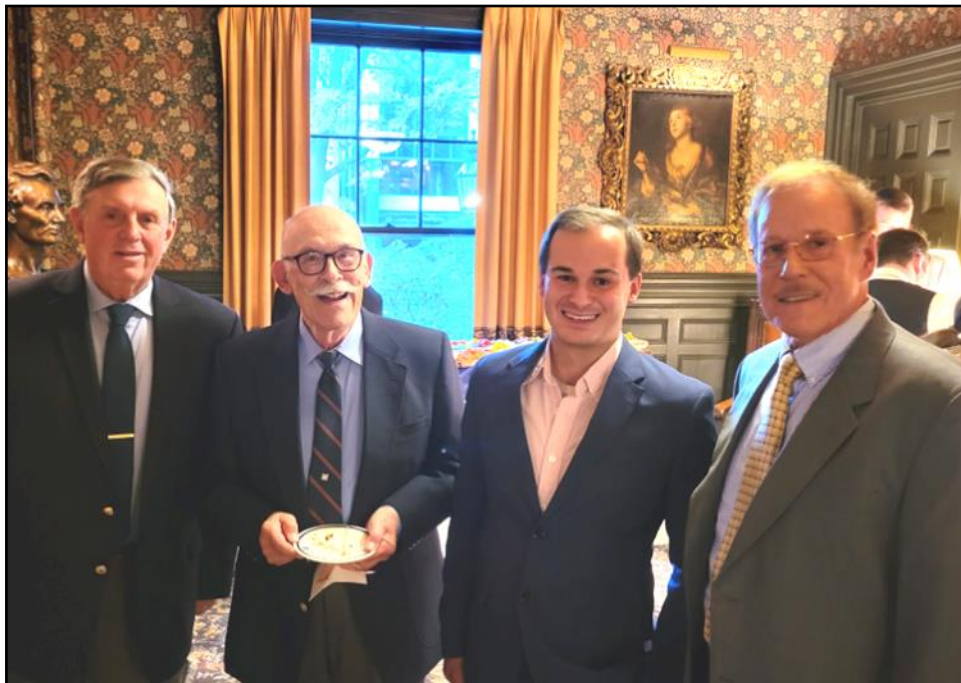


Volunteers of the Year, Larry Williams & Jim Gelston cut the Navy Birthday cake!

guiding tours, doing electrical work, and serving as our primary whaleboat coxswain. This is an award that is long overdue.

Jim Gelston, has been keeping the crew of the **USS SLATER** on time since 2007. Jim retired from the New York State office of General Services as a Purchasing Officer. Prior to that, he served on four minesweepers: **USS PIVOT MSO-463**, **USS WIDGEON MSC-208**, **USS LOYALTY MOS-457**, and **USS GUIDE MSO-447**. He

passed the exam for Boatswain's Mate Third Class, and joined the SLATER crew, expecting to spend his retirement years chipping paint with a needle scaler. However, fate intervened, and he was diagnosed with cancer a few months after reporting aboard. Limited by the effects of treatment, which is still ongoing, Jim volunteered to become our weekly clock winder, assuming the duties of quartermaster. Since 2007, Jim has faithfully kept our twelve ships' clocks running and on time. His attitude in overcoming adversity is a testament to the spirit of all



Four SLATER volunteers Dennis, Dick, Thomas, and Ed.

USS SLATER volunteers, and an example that we can all learn from.



Tim, Rear Admiral Lacore, and DEHM Board Chairman BJ Costello.

On Thursday, 19 October 2023, our staff, volunteers, and dedicated supporters came together for an amazing night at the Fort Orange Club, for our annual USS SLATER Night Fundraiser. I expertly entertained our audience with our crew's achievements over the last year. Our keynote speaker was Rear Admiral **Nancy Lacore**, and we honored SLATER volunteer **Richard "Dick" Walker, SK1, USCG**, as the recipient of the 2023 Trustees Award.



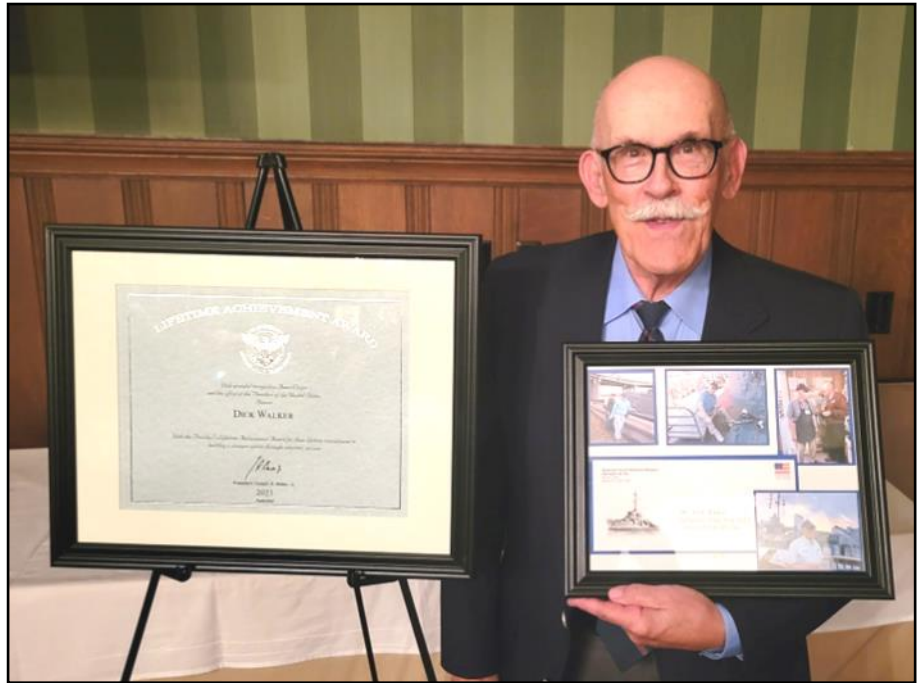
We can't thank our supporters enough, the event matched our goal of \$60,000!

Rear Admiral Nancy Lacore, an Albany native and current Commandant of Naval District Washington, was our guest of honor. Her incredible resume includes being designated a Naval Aviator in 1993 as a helicopter pilot. Her flying tours include Helicopter Combat Support Squadrons Eight in Norfolk, Virginia, and Three in San Diego, California, as well as Commander, Helicopter Tactical Wing Pacific.

Her staff assignments include Naval Air Wings Pacific, San Diego, California, and Commander Amphibious Squadron 4 Detachment 104, Bessemer, Alabama. She served as executive officer of Tactical Air Control Squadron 2186, and Commander Strike Force Training Atlantic, and as chief staff officer for Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet Joint Force Air Component Commander, Norfolk, Virginia. She mobilized to serve as Chief of Key Leader Engagement at Headquarters, International Security. She spoke about her history and how important her father and his own Navy service inspires her every day. She continued to praise the flexibility and the professionalism of the Navy Reserves and how they work to keep the Navy ready today.

The 2023 USS SLATER Trustees' Award was presented to Dick Walker, by Board Chairman BJ Costello.

This award has been a long time coming and Dick deserves it and more for all his service. Dick began volunteering aboard SLATER in 1998, our first year in Albany. After church one morning, his late wife **Maralyn** suggested they visit the ship that was in the Port of Albany. So down they went, and joined a few other tourists in walking through the early stages of SLATER's restoration.



Dick Walker was presented a certificate and a collage to commemorate his dedicated service to USS SLATER.

Anyone who knows Dick, knows how kind, thoughtful, and patient of a man he is. Well, he trailed the tour and pointed out interesting equipment to

Maralyn and any corrections he had about the tour. At the end, he was stopped by a volunteer and interrogated as to how he knew everything.



Dick and Maralyn Walker helping to tie the ship up in 1999.

After denying a Naval background, he revealed he was former Coast Guard.

"Awwww...well you shallow water boys at least know port from starboard and bow from stern. Here is an application; fill it out and return it." He did just that. He and **Maralyn** spent many years together, helping to restore SLATER. Twenty-five years later, Dick is at the ship each week,

stuffing and mailing all the donation “Thank You” letters you receive. It's a fitting job, of course, since he is also a retired USPS employee. Dick is also responsible for driving Tim to various spots in Albany and for supplies. Remember, he is a Storekeeper!

We especially want to thank all of you who supported the event. We met our goal of raising \$60,000 to support the preservation of SLATER’s bilges, voids, and fuel tanks. A special thank you to those of you who sent donations so that our Volunteers and Interns could attend. Believe me when I say, the attendees were most grateful, and a good time was had by all.

The last event we hosted in October was Oxi Day. As a reminder of USS SLATER’s forty years of Greek Service as A/T AETOS, on Saturday, October 28th, we commemorated Oxi Day aboard the ship. 83 years ago, the people of Greece said "No" (Oxi) to Benito Mussolini, resulting in the attack and invasion of Greece by Italian forces. The fighting spirit of the Greeks humiliated Mussolini, forcing German troops to enter the fight and delaying the invasion of the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Winston Churchill paid homage to the Greek resistance by claiming. "...until now we would say that the Greeks fight like heroes. From now on we will say that heroes fight like Greeks."

In 1951, SLATER was transferred to the Hellenic Navy and renamed AETOS, serving a total of 40 years in Greece. We have been fortunate to welcome aboard AETOS crew members each year who cross our gangway and remember their time aboard. The support and loyal following we have in Greece is second only to our local



Each year John Polydouris wears traditional Greek dress. Here he is with Jo Ann who took the helm running things while Shanna was away.

numbers in New York's Capital Region. This event is always such a great way to honor SLATER's Greek heritage.

Our program was filled with local support. The event was co-hosted by the **American Hellenic Education Progressive Association (AHEPA)**. This group has been very supportive of USS SLATER with a large donation earlier in the year and assisting in the planning of this event over the last several years. **Mike Koutsourades** served as our emcee, Hudson Valley Community College professor, **Matt Zembo**, share with us the history of Oxi Day. **Lainie Damaskos Christou** gave the invocation and benediction, and of course, **John Polydouris** was aboard and wearing traditional



Thanks to all our participants in our Oxi Day Ceremony.



USS SLATER (A/T AETOS) in Greece in the 1950s.



We're still doing tours. Cassidy fit a large group in the wardroom.

Greek clothing, Fustanella. Special thanks to **Jo Ann Mulligan**, who took the helm, running things while Shanna was away for the weekend.

Our tour guides are noticing a slight slowdown in visitors as the weather changes and less people are traveling, but we have had a few school groups aboard and our Overnight Program has started again.

Groups are starting to book overnights for the spring already too! So, if you are interested in getting your youth group aboard make sure you contact Shanna and get on the calendar!



Dennis starts his tour on the quarterdeck.

It's been a busy month in Collections as donations have continued to find their way to the museum. Documents and photographs related to Warren Feustel, MoMM3c's service aboard USS COCKRILL (DE-398) include a single-page diary recalling the sinking of the FREDERICK C.

DAVIS (DE-136), rescue of downed pilots, and a torpedo attack on the ship. His son also donated a cruise book, titled *Seafarer*, which contains wonderful photographs of the crew. We already have a copy, but it turns out there are errors and Warren made the necessary corrections in his. Not a lot of WWII destroyer escorts created cruise books, so this is certainly a welcome addition.



Ron tried to punch more holes on the main battery director platform deck.

USS JOSEPH E. CAMPBELL (DE-70/APD-49) is finally represented in our uniform display. A dress blue uniform once belonging to **Vernon Legg**, Boilermaker second class, was sent to us via his daughter. She also included a copy of his Separation Papers.



Interns Austin and Gio assist John in cataloging collections materials.

More documents and photographs from USS GILLETTE (DE-681) have been donated by the daughter of the ship's First Lieutenant, Julius Wiebel. About a year ago, his family visited us and expressed interest in writing a book using his wartime letters. They returned this month with a finished copy to donate to the museum. This beautifully written account offers a glimpse into the life of a DE officer during WWII and is a great addition to our library.

George McDonald, SKC, sent us his brown sub bag used aboard numerous ships including USS



Intern Viktor works to construct archival boxes.

MCCLOY (DE/FF-1038) and later in his civilian life. It looks great mounted to the rack in Chief's Quarters.

The collection of Frederick Robinson, SM1c was sent to us by his widow. He served aboard USS GUSTAFSON (DE-182) during WWII. The many photographs, documents, and ship's reunion paraphernalia will take some time to sort through.

The final donation this month came from Robert Somerville, GMG2c. Robert served aboard USS DEALY (DE-1006), reporting aboard in the summer 1966. He sent us a "Welcome Aboard" pamphlet.

Outside of processing donations, interns Austin, Dan, Gio, and Viktor helped John construct archival boxes to hold nearly 100 ship's blueprints and drawings. Pre-built archival boxes are expensive. Fortunately, we have many large sheets of acid-free cardboard. Dan and Viktor learned how to measure, score, and glue the cardboard into the correct shape. They also created a list detailing what each rolled blueprint is, making it easier to identify in the future. Four high schoolers from The Albany Academy also helped in making the list.

Remember that November is the last month that SLATER will be open for tours in 2023. Our last tours will cross the gangway on Sunday, November 26. After that you'll have to wait until April. Shanna will have her annual Ship's Store sales going on the week of Thanksgiving. Check out our website to know what she's got planned, and how you can score some deals with your holiday shopping.

As you know, maintenance doesn't stop for the cold weather. Be on the lookout for our Winter Fund mailing to hit your mailbox soon. Help us "keep a volunteer warm this winter" and keep SLATER looking and behaving like the true gem she is.

**See you next month,
Tim**



Chris Soulia has really stepped up to the plate in caring for the galley. Here he is cleaning the ovens.



Goodbye to the whaleboat until spring.