

SLATER SIGNALS

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

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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Seventy-six years ago, on 2 September 1945, Japan formally surrendered aboard USS MISSOURI. General MacArthur stated, "It is my earnest hope—indeed the hope of all mankind—that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past, a world founded upon faith and understanding, a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish for freedom, tolerance, and justice."

We remembered the nine Destroyer Escorts that were present in Tokyo Bay for



Barry Witte is training our new batch of RPI Midshipmen.

the ceremony: USS GOSS DE-444, USS ULVERT M. MOORE DE-442, USS KENDALL C. CAMPBELL DE-443, USS WATERMAN DE-740, USS LYMAN DE-302, USS WEAVER DE-741, USS MAJOR DE-796, USS WILLIAM SEIVERLING DE-441, and USS ROBERTS DE-749.

Shanna's team commemorated USS BUCKLEY in this month's episode of our podcast. Captain Abel gave an order that hadn't been issued in the U.S. Navy since 1814, "Standby to repel boarders." Learn how the sailors of the BUCKLEY



Walt Stuart, hanging our hand woven manila fenders.

defended their ship with anything they could get their hands on, including hammers, empty projectiles, and coffee cups. You can listen to Episode 5 of DE Classified, USS BUCKLEY at <https://ussslater.org/de-classified> on our website, or download it anywhere you get your podcasts.

On the 20th anniversary of the September 11th World Trade Center Attack, former tour guide Kira Zaikowski Gorman shared a memory about being aboard USS SLATER that day. She wrote, “Twenty years ago, I was working as a tour guide/curatorial assistant on the USS SLATER. It was not a tour day, and I was below decks, cleaning and dusting out a museum space that was new. My boss came down with the news and the few of us on the ship listened



Check out our podcast episode on USS BUCKLEY to hear how her bow was bent.



Volunteer Tour Guide, Fred Sirois shows off the 20mm guns to his tour group.

in horror to the radio broadcast, as we had no TV aboard and there was no livestreaming or smart phones then. I remember we tried to go about the day “as normal,” and ran some errands in Albany, but eventually we were told to go home. I will never forget the perspective and wisdom that came from the WWII veterans and other veterans that week. We still hosted our ship reunions, but our flag was lowered, and as the weeks unraveled, we felt truly honored and united to work and volunteer at that location.”

The shipmates and wives of the USS HUSE (DE-145) Association held their final

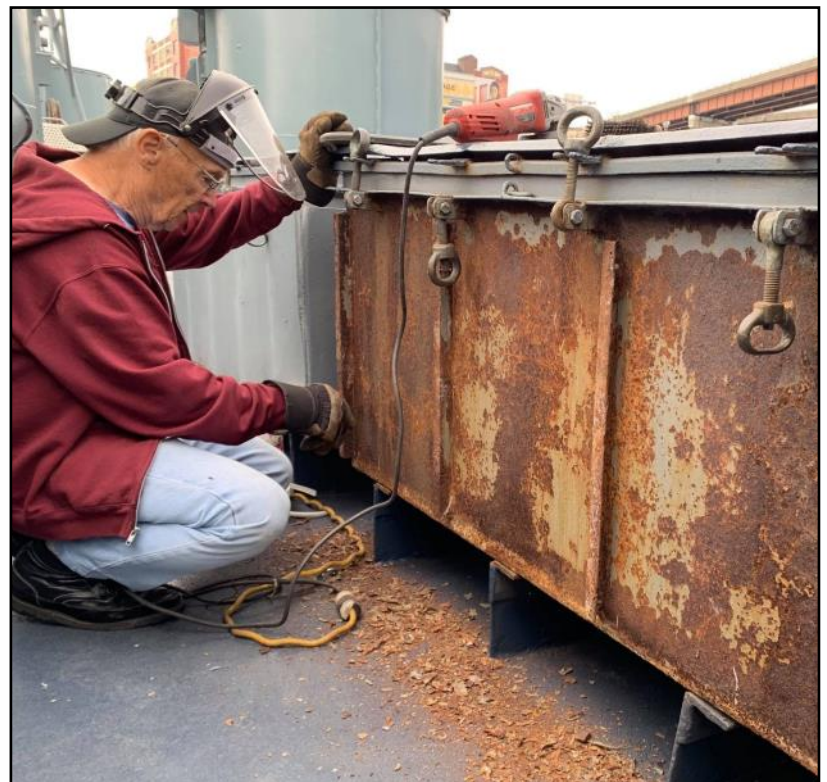


The last reunion of the USS HUSE Association.

reunion aboard USS SLATER this month. The group members have been strong supporters of the project, providing work parties to the ship for over twenty years. Our thanks go to group leaders **George Amandola, David Perlstein,** and all of the members who have been so supportive of USS SLATER. It's like a final decommissioning when a ship's reunion group comes to an end.

We also had the family of **USS SLATER's WWII Executive Officer Harold Poulsen; Tad Chitchester, Karen Poulsen Chitchester, and Keith Poulsen** aboard this month. They visited their dad's old stateroom. After his service aboard SLATER, Harold went on to command the USS FESSENDEN (DE-142).

The maintenance gang continues to move forward. Having finished up the 20mm ready service



Super Dave Mardon found out what was lurking behind the ready service locker head shields. It's rust.

lockers forward of the pilothouse, and the one on the fantail, the shipfitters, **Danny Statile, Doug Tanner, Andy Sheffer, Tim Benner, Dave Mardon, Chuck Teal, Gene Jackey, and Earl Herchenroder** have gone to work on the midships 01 level ready service lockers. **Dave** removed the sheet metal heat shield, and found a mass of rust underneath. That got scaled, primed, and painted. **Doug** decided that the side heat shield was in such bad shape that it needed replacing. So he had a new heat shield fabricated and bent to cover the three sides of the locker. That's now been primed and painted, and is ready for installation.



Danny and Doug are fitting the heat shields on the gun 33 ready service lockers.

They've also been working on the aft three-inch gun ready service lockers. They have had new top heat shields fabricated and installed. **Gene** and **Earl** got the mounting holes drilled on the gun 33 ready service locker heat shields. **Earl** has been replacing missing dogs on the lockers, and we are now considering whether to replace the sheet metal on the sides of the lockers.



Alex Titcomb and Tim Benner got the lathe operational in twelve speeds.

Dave and **Benner** got the gasket installed in the 02-level watertight door. The door is in place, but **Doug** is still tweaking the dogs. He's also identified two new holes on the 01 level amidships that need patching, as well as one forward, adjacent to the hedgehog projector. In addition, we also have welder **Matt Clifford** back with us, who welded handrails on to the hatch leading down to compartment C-201-L, to make access safer.

Danny Statile is experimenting with a new technique for his second depth charge repair. Rather than trying to braze the light sheet metal casing, he has filled the depth charge with closed cell foam, and is using a top layer of Defcon Epoxy and grinding it smooth. It remains a work in progress. Our resident machinist, **Alex Titcomb**, was back, and got the lathe operational in twelve speeds.

Thanks to a Facebook request for some engineer assistance, Mike Dingmon has a new group of diesel mechanics to break in. James Niemynski, James Miles, and Jim Skewes all reported aboard, so now it looks like we have a new “J” Team. **Skewes** was an engineman aboard USS DEWEY (DLG-14) and EXULTANT (MSO-441). They have been joined by **Chuck Tanner,**



The engineers ran a test of the emergency diesel generator.

Doug Tanner’s nephew. Chuck was an engineman aboard USS JOSEPH P. KENNEDY JR, (DD-850), my first museum ship. **Mike** has been reviewing systems with them, and they did a test run of the emergency diesel generator. I think that's the first time it's been run since we got back from the shipyard. **Mike** is starting to make noise about all the added responsibility, and that maybe a pay raise, or at least another stripe is in order. We have several additional volunteer applications still pending.



Walt and Angelo started installation of the new straps on raft four.

Angelo Bracco is almost finished stenciling the life jackets with the names of former crew members. The last one he did was for

Captain Blancq. **Angelo** has now moved on to fabricating life raft straps. **Walt Stuart** painted the new grating **Doug** made for raft number four. **Thomas Scian** painted out the raft, so the deck gang is now installing the straps on the raft, prior to installation of the grafting. **Barry Witte** has a new crop of RPI Midshipmen volunteering aboard. Their first project is insulating the forward supply vent fan room, a project that is long overdue.



Key Bank employees volunteering aboard!

We've gotten a lot of painting done. Bill Holt finished the 01 level forward around gun 32, and is now painting out the two 20mm guns up there. While I was on vacation, **Thomas Scian** painted out the old bread locker, which we now use as our cleaning gear locker. He also painted out the starboard side of the main deckhouse aft. On Tuesday, 14 September 2021, ten **Key Bank employees** reported aboard, as part of **Key Bank's annual Neighbors Make a Difference Day**. They cut

in and rolled out non-skid deck paint on the 01-level aft. This followed **Thomas Scian** and **Bill Wetterau's** month of surface preparation, to get the deck ready for painting. Thank you all who worked to complete this project. We hope to see the Key Bank crew again next year!

All of our old radiomen gathered together, to try to get the TBL transmitter back online. It was a reunion of **Walt Stolte, Terry Yoder, Steve Syrotynski, Jerry Jones, and Joe Breyer**. We hope to get the old gang back together again soon.



Radiomen diagnosing the transmitter!



Bill Holt touching up the paint on gun 32.

On Saturday, 18 September 2021, we celebrated our annual Volunteer Appreciation Night Lasagna Dinner. This is the one night a year when all of our volunteer guides, maintenance crew, and interns finally gather at the same place at the same time. As you read these monthly reports, it becomes clear that we could not exist without the help of our volunteers. A special thanks goes to **Chief Smith** for cooking and to all our volunteers and interns for all they do to make this ship so successful! We're looking forward to our fall work week starting 3 October.

As always, September is a slower month for our tour guides. School starts and the leaves have not changed yet, so the interns had the chance to finish those curatorial projects Shanna assigned them in June. The visitors that do chance the rain and cool

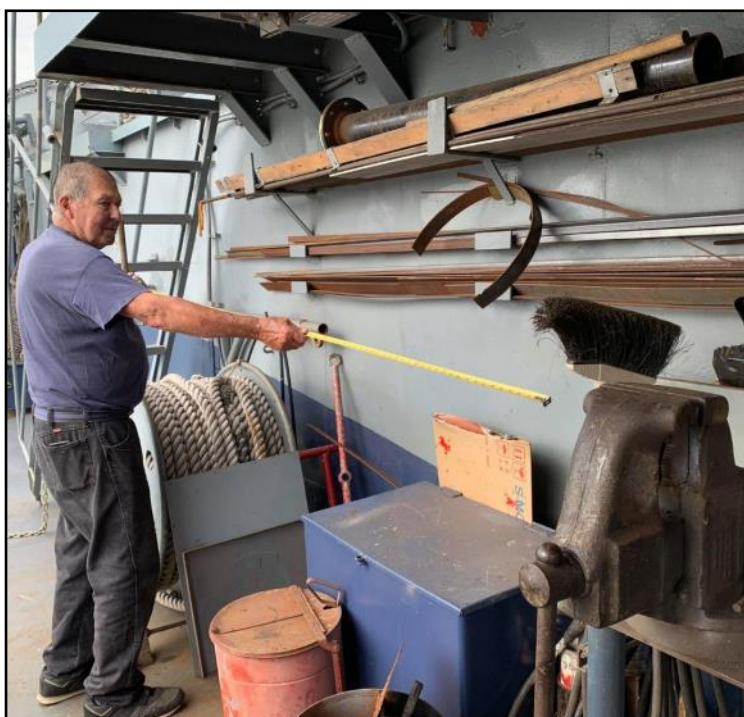


SLATER's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner! Thanks to all of our volunteers for their hard work, dedication, sense of humor, and friendship they provide to us year after year.

weather are treated with a less crowded ship and smaller tour groups. *“I toured USS SLATER with my family on Saturday; our tour guide **Austin** was fantastic. He was very knowledgeable and made the tour enjoyable and fun. You could tell he really enjoyed his job. My family and I learned so much and have now fallen in love with the SLATER. Can’t wait to go back!”*

Shanna made her way to Battleship Alabama this month as she participated in the Historic Naval Ships Association’s Annual

Conference in Mobile, Alabama. It was great to be in the company of so many people with a



Every year when I’m on vacation the crew threatens to expand the work bench. Good thing the ladder is on the tour route and Shanna will protect it while I’m gone.



Shanna accepted the Museum Maintenance Excellence award from the Naval History and Heritage Command.

commonality of dedication to preserving history and restoring their ships. She got an update from each ship as to how they made it through 2020 closings, re-openings, limited visitation, and how much work can get done while we are all closed to the public. She came back with some fresh ideas for programming that you’ll see next season. Making new friends in our “business” is always fun, she learned that everyone “loves to hate” us here at SLATER. The dedication and quality of our volunteers is the envy of every organization. We agree! There is no beating our crew!

In fact, the Naval History and Heritage Command awarded our crew their award for Museum Maintenance



USS JOHNSTON DD-557, October 1943.
Photo courtesy of National Archives.

Excellence. SLATER was recognized for excellence in preservation of the ship and specifically the restoration of the mast to its historically accurate configuration from 1945. As you all remember this work was completed at drydock in 2020. If you don't remember, take a look at our Drydock Adventures here: <https://ussslater.org/drydock>.

Shanna accepted the award on behalf of SLATER Volunteers and will formally present it to the crew at our fundraising event next month.

If you're a member, you'll be getting an invitation to our annual "USS SLATER Night" at the Fort Orange Club Fundraiser. Financier and longtime USS SLATER supporter, **Geoffrey Bullard**, has issued a challenge. He will personally match the first \$25,000 that we raise towards the Save America's Treasures Grant Match. **Geoffrey** served aboard USS ORISKANY (CVA-34) and USS TUTUILA (ARG-4) as a gunnery officer. He has a deep love for the Navy and wants to do all he can to make USS SLATER successful.

We have an exciting program planned. Retired naval officer **Parks Stephenson** has been involved in the discovery of the wreck of the USS JOHNSTON (DD-557), sunk in the Battle off Samar. Using photographs of the wreck, he has developed computed models of the ship before the battle, and the condition of the wreck on the bottom. He has carefully documented the progressive damage that the ship sustained during the historic battle, and will present his findings to our group at the Fort Orange club event. He also believes that the wreck of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS will be discovered in the near future. We look forward to an exciting and successful event!

See you next month!

Tim

