



# SLATER SIGNALS

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

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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**Tours continue through the last month of summer, and we welcomed several special groups aboard this month.** We were happy to host the crew and family from USS CHARLES P. CECIL (DD-835), one of the last GEARING class FRAM 1 destroyers in commission. I actually have a little bit of history with that ship. When I was curator of JOSEPH P. KENNEDY in Fall River, CHARLES P. CECIL was one of the DESRON 30 reserve ships that used to call on us for parts. These parts were vital to keep their aging machinery and fire control systems running.

**In a very fun tour, our Chairman of the Board, BJ Costello, class of 1972 from the Albany Law School, hosted his fellow alumni aboard the ship. Chief Art Dott and first year tour guide Kara gave their usual energetic tour. BJ was recognized by the school for his excellent service with multiple not-for-profits in the Capital Region. One member of the group,**

**Diane Bodman**, was so moved by the experience that she instructed her family foundation to gift \$25,000 to USS SLATER's education efforts. We don't know who we are more indebted to, Diane, Art, or BJ, but someone certainly made a good impression. Thank you, Diane.



**Chairman BJ Costello, Art, and Kara, with the Albany Law School Alumni.**

**On Saturday, 24 September, it was another beautiful fall day on the Hudson as many people toured the ship. Among the groups was the Adirondack Battalion of the US Naval Sea**

Cadet Corps. They were aboard to learn about the role of Destroyer Escorts during World War II, and had a great experience learning how the old Navy lived and served.

**This month on our podcast, DE Classified, Andrew shared with us the story of USS HOLDER.** HOLDER had a very eventful maiden voyage, and finished her career with a different hull number painted on her bow. Hear the whole story on our website, [usslater.org/de-classified](http://usslater.org/de-classified), or wherever you get your podcasts.

**It's been a slow month in Collections.** Donations continued to trickle in, such as Separation Papers, photographs, and a Domain of Neptunus Rex certificate from USS MAJOR (DE-796). Uniforms and a hammock also made their way to the museum this month. John says it's starting to get hard to move around his office, as he has shifted his focus to a new project.



***USS CHARLES P. CECIL reunion group.***



***Wednesday Crew, Greg, Bob, Tom, and Mike in their matching jackets!***

**As many of you know, 2022 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SLATER arriving in Albany.** In celebration of that, John is reading 25 years' worth of SLATER SIGNALS to summarize the restoration work of our dedicated volunteer corps. With this, we hope to produce a special episode for our monthly podcast, DE Classified, to go up at the end of October. Hopefully a video portion will be uploaded to our YouTube channel, featuring photos and videos of the restoration work of the 90's and early 2000's.

**In anticipation of our Fort Orange event presentation on the discovery of USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), an online exhibit will go live at the end of**

**October as well.** You'll be able to find this on our website. It is John's hope to create an easy-to-read, yet informative, site detailing the sacrifice of Taffy 3 at the Battle off Samar. Histories of all the ships involved will be available, along with any documents/artifacts the museum holds. So, keep an eye out for that in the next few weeks.

**The maintenance crew continued working on several projects.** One of our continuing problems has been water lying in the stuffing tube wells of our twin 40mm gun mounts. Starting with gun 41, the shipfitters drilled a drain hole in the well base, and then worked out a drainage system in the junction box below the gun mount. This involved opening up, scaling, and preserving the inside of the junction box. If this fix is successful, we will do the other two mounts.



***If we can push him a little higher, we can bolt the cover on.***



***Chuck and his scuttle project.***

**While working on the gun mount deck drain, Doug Tanner noted that the cease fire alarm on the train or right side of the mount was rotting away.** He had Larry Williams disconnect it and then Doug took it home for complete restoration. The result looks like it just came out of the factory.

**During one rainy Monday, Chuck noticed water dripping from the aft 40mm ammo passing scuttle on the 01 level.** It has been leaking for 25 years, so I was relatively unconcerned, but Chuck decided it was time to address the problem. Over the course of the month, he removed and reworked the

scuttle mechanism three times before he finally eliminated the leak.

**In old business, the portside pilothouse door is nearing completion.** The shipfitters spent a good deal of time building up the knife edges, to get a tight fit against the gasket. The final step will be installation of the porthole, and we can consider that job complete. Work also continues on the fo’c’sle hatch, which is still on the work bench.

**We owe a special debt of gratitude to Guinevere Gorman, of Grace Roofing, Inc.** Thanks to **Doug Tanner’s** efforts, Guinevere sent one of her roofers down to recoat the trailer roof in preparation for winter.

I’m hedging my bets here, because if all goes well, we will have a new modular visitor center

by the time we open in April. But I figured that if I didn’t take advantage of the opportunity to seal the trailer roof one last time, I’d jinx the project, and the replacement structure would be delayed another year.



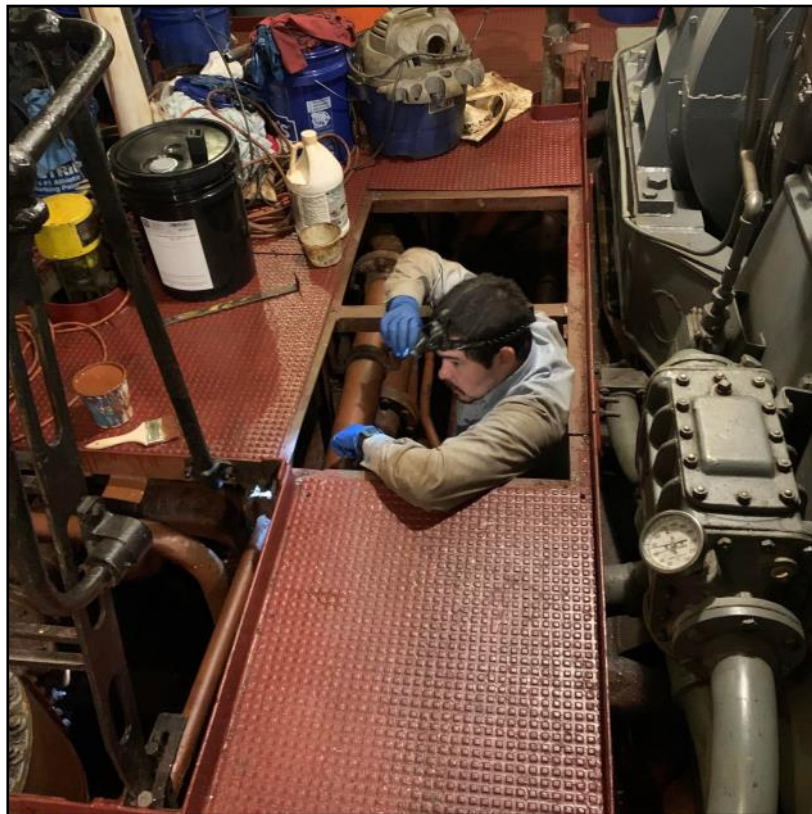
**Jo Ann and Mary Beth keep the crew fed on Mondays.**



**Another day, another scuttle repair job.**

**In the radio shack, Steve is being buried in vacuum tubes.** This month, **Richard Guthrie** sent him a picture of a box of tubes he saw at an auction place. In the picture, there were two 860 tubes as well as three 371 tubes, rectifiers, and one 805 tube. Apparently, these numbers mean a lot to the radio geeks. The 860's are a great find for the TBL, and hard to find, so there is continued excitement in the radio shack.

**Down in the aft engine room, James Miles is continuing his bilge painting.** In his last report, he claimed the painting was 50% complete. After years of experimentation, we finally found that Rustoleum Rusty Metal Primer is the most effective antidote to rust since red lead. The discovery was short lived, because our storekeeper **Richard Walker**, USCG, has discovered that the primer is on the EPA hit list because of high VOC content, and will soon be unavailable.



*James Miles in his natural habitat.*

**The engineers had a great month that resulted in firing up the 8-268A GM diesel for the first time since we got back from the shipyard in 2020.** The engine had been sitting cold for two years. Dealing with these engines is never as easy as turning the key and starting it. There are several checks to make, outlined in original Navy service manuals, and we are fighting an almost unlimited number of leaks, age, and wear issues. Over the past year, we took on several projects which allowed us to safely run this generator.



*Our YouTube video of the 8-cylinder engine starting has broken all our records. Over 25,000 views and counting!*

**The first repair done was on the water-to-water heat exchanger.** It had become clogged up over the decades and needed service. We removed that and sent it to a machine shop, to fully clean it of all the crud that was impeding flow. Next up, we

had to clean out the diesel day tank, and some of the lines that come off of it. Diesel sludge had settled inside the lines, which blocked flow and reduced fuel pressure. We removed and cleaned the lines, and **Mike Dingmon** machined a pickup tube that is slightly above the bottom of the tank. This prevents settled sludge from making its way into the fuel lines.

**Following this, we cracked open the fuel filter, and discovered that it had released all of its oil into the bilge. James** tracked the leaks to the inlet and outlet lines in two places. The gaskets had given out, and one line had vibrated a pinhole, which was weeping oil as well. These were removed, brazed shut, and we fitted them back on with new gaskets. The lines were tested to hold 2X their working pressure.



***Saturday crew getting ready for the big Sea Cadets tour! Scott, Andrew, Charles, Tom, Kara, Viktor, and Austin.***



***Doug continues "tweaking" the pilot house door.***

**From there, we tested the air start tanks and compressor.** The two engine rooms have three air start tanks in each space. We have four of the six tanks in good working order. The first test revealed that a moisture drain was leaking air. We checked each valve, and now it is building pressure normally. Lastly, we snugged up the packing gland on the freshwater pump to reduce how much it leaked, but not too much to stop it from being lubricated.

**When the time came to put starting air to the engine, she fired up without any hesitation.** The teaser YouTube video that James made showing smoke coming out of the stack got a record 2,700 views, and then we

followed it with a full video of the test run. With the newly painted bilge, we were able to keep a close eye on any oil leaks, and I am happy to say we didn't have any.

**After the test run, we have a couple of projects upcoming.** These include rebuilding the two water pumps, repainting the important lines in the bilge for easier troubleshooting, along with normal maintenance to make sure the engine is safe, winterized, and not leaking fluids. The job is never done. You can see the whole sequence on our USS SLATER YouTube channel.

**This month we were notified by the Historic Naval Ship's Association Director, Ryan Szimanski, that two of our crew members have been recognized by the awards committee of the Historic Naval Ships Association for their**

**exceptional service.** Our Program Manager **Shanna Schuster** was selected to receive the 2022 HNSA Educator Award. As director of our tour guides, educational programming, Ship's Store, and marketing, Shanna does a great job of managing her personnel, and developing new and innovative programs.

**Volunteer Electrician, Gary Sheedy, was selected to receive the 2022 Historic Naval Ship Maintenance/ Preservation/Exhibition Award.** He has been volunteering since USS SLATER arrived in Albany, and recently participated as part of a team that went to Buffalo to assist with switch board restoration aboard



***The Adirondack Battalion of the Sea Cadets came for a tour. Fred is showing them the 40mms.***



***Our award winners, Shanna and Gary.***

USS THE SULLIVANS. His restoration work on the reefer deck and laundry compartment is outstanding, and he continues to assist with just about every project we start. Gary and Shanna were honored along with other award winners at the closing banquet of our annual conference, aboard Battleship MISSOURI, on September 16th.

**USS SLATER was awarded a third time at the conference. The Naval History and Heritage Command congratulated USS SLATER's Education Team as they were awarded the Curatorial Excellence Pennant.**



***Jeff Barta presents the NHHC Museum Curation Award to Tim aboard USS MISSOURI.***



***Shanna Schuster is presented the Museum Educator Award from HNSA.***

This award recognizes the team for accurately telling the U.S. Navy's story through excellent interpretation and curation of well-maintained and restored Navy ships. Through their efforts, SLATER's Education team is recognized for their creative expansion of the museum's educational outreach across many difference media. The work of USS SLATER represents the highest standards of the U.S. Navy, and is worthy of the recognition afforded by the awarding of the Museum Curation Excellence Award. Congratulations to all of these extraordinary individuals!

**In a final note, Albany and USS SLATER have been selected to**





***Our visit to the Arizona Memorial was a moving experience. You can see the beginning and the end of WWII in this photo with the Arizona and the Missouri.***

**host the 2023 Historical Naval Ship's Association Annual Conference.** Admittedly, Albany may seem a bit of a let down following Honolulu, but we believe that with the large number of historic ships available in the northeast, we can put on a great event.

**As the host ship for the upcoming convention, we were awarded custody of Wally, the HNSA Walrus for the coming year.** A bit of history here. The origins of the HNSA mascot are now vague and subject to legend. The story goes back to the eighties, when one of the younger, unnamed HNSA members, accused elder members of HNSA leadership as being comparable to a "Bunch of old walruses, sitting on the seawall, never accomplishing anything."

**Shortly after this acquisition was made, Wally the Walrus appeared at the HNSA convention.** At each convention, HNSA members participated in a naval ship quiz to test their historic ship knowledge. Initially, one of the members with the lowest score was awarded the privilege of hosting "Wally" on their ship for a year, until the next convention. At that point, this token of shame was passed off to another unlucky recipient.

**But as time went on, something changed.** Wally went from being a symbol of shame to a badge of honor. Wally was routinely awarded to HNSA's most and respected and beloved

members. Today, Wally is passed from the host ship of the current convention to the host ship of the upcoming convention. At the recent conference in Honolulu, Battleship Missouri CEO, **Mike Carr**, presented Wally to USS SLATER crew, and Wally made the trip to Albany. In this role, over the past three decades, Wally has traveled all over the world, from Australia to England, Canada, and to almost every historic naval ship in the United States.

**Possession of Wally gives the opportunity of the host to add their ship's pin to Wally's sash, and dress Wally in their appropriate ship's outfit.** Wally will soon be sporting a USS SLATER pin and t- shirt that he will wear for the coming year. While we



***Gary continues to progress in his Steering Gear project.***



***Shanna, Wally, and Tim together for the next year!***

have not yet received it, we understand that Wally comes with a suitcase full of the outfits he has been adorned with during his past travels.

**We are honored to host Wally during the coming year, and will give him all the hospitality that Albany has to offer.**

See you next month,

Tim