

# SLATER SIGNALS

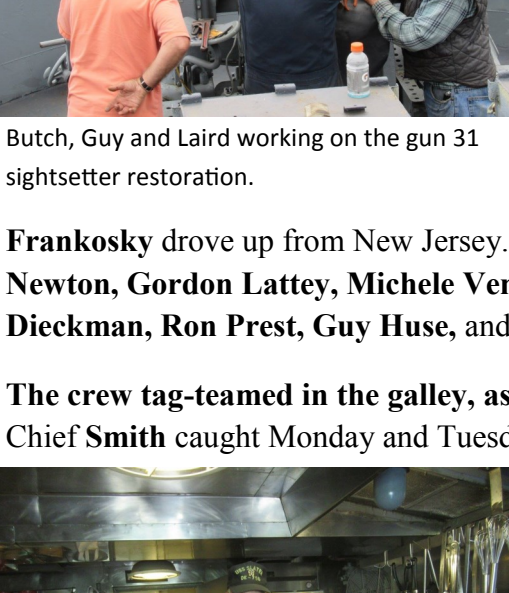
The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

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The month started with our Fall Work Week, as eighteen volunteers arrived from various states to spend a week maintaining USS SLATER. John Meeker and Joe Stout traveled the farthest, coming in from Seattle,



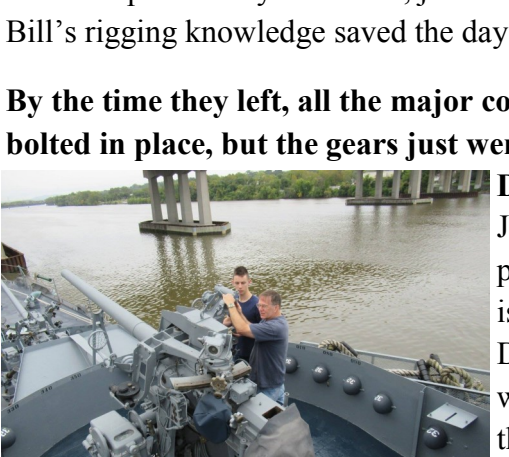
Butch, Guy and Laird working on the gun 31 sightsetter restoration.

Washington. Ken Sample came in from Peoria, Arizona, to serve as messdecks MAA. A close third was Bill Wetterau, who came in from Aurora, Colorado. Marcia Oliphant came in from Minnesota. Her father had served on USS INCH (DE-146), along with John Meeker's Dad. Chief Ed Wakeman came in from Ohio.

From Pennsylvania, we had Butch Warrender, Laird Confer, George Gollas, and Jerry Herr. Ron Frankosky drove up from New Jersey. Locals, Chief Bernard, Dave Newton, Gordon Lattey, Michele Vennard, Bob Tomlinson, Gary Dieckman, Ron Prest, Guy Huse, and Mike Marko, rounded out the crew.

The crew tag-teamed in the galley, as no one cook could stay all week.

Chief Smith caught Monday and Tuesday, Dave Newton took care of Wednesday, and Gordon and Michele handled Thursday. So the crew was never in danger of going hungry.



Gordon Lattey and Michele Vennard handled messcooking for Thursday and Friday during the work week.

Marcia was on hand to help out as their messcook, and Ken kept the messdecks clean. The crew broke into teams.

There were two groups of gunner mechanics. In Doug Tanner's absence, Joe Stout, Ed Wakeman, George Gollas, and Gary Dieckman set about reassembling the manual elevation drive on the twin 40mm gun mount on the portside, gun 42. It's never easy to put something together that somebody else took apart, and at the end of Monday, things looked pretty hopeless. But, with a rudimentary manual and some basic mechanical common sense, the team replaced all of the bearings, reassembled the gearbox, and actually had the whole thing bolted together by the end of the week. We were most fortunate that Ed Wakeman's brother Bill showed up Thursday afternoon, just as they were making the most critical lift. Bill's rigging knowledge saved the day on that one.

By the time they left, all the major components that had been loose were bolted in place, but the gears just weren't meshing right. It would take



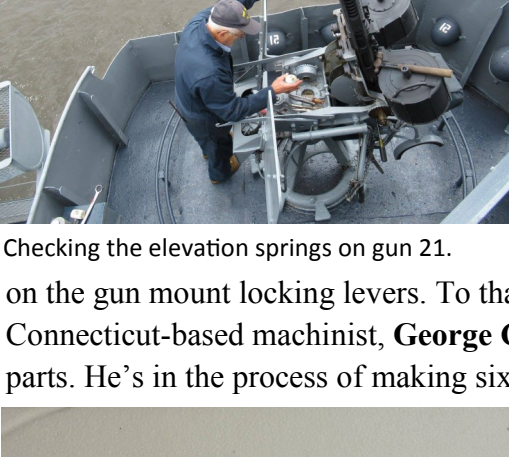
Remounting the telescopes on gun 32. Note the painted deck.

Doug Tanner, and a little magic "Tanner Jiggle," and that got the drive working perfectly. Unfortunately, total completion is still on the horizon, as every time Doug has been available this month, the weather has failed to cooperate, during the rainiest October I have ever seen.

The ordnance project we started was the overhaul of the sightsetter on three-inch mount 33, the aft gun mount.

Guy Huse, Laird Confer, Butch Warrender, and Jerry Herr tackled that project. They unbolted and lifted off the counter weight, so they could lubricate and loosen the bolts underneath, to prepare the sight for eventual disassembly after we are closed to the public.

The paint crew consisted of the two Ronnies, Ron Prest and Ron Frankosky, as well as Bill Wetterau and John Meeker. They managed to



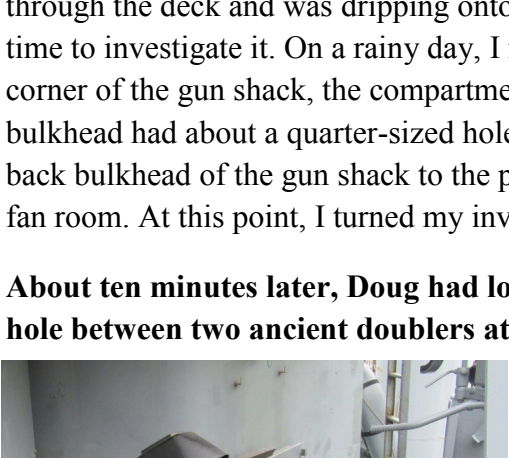
The 2 Ronnies, Prest & Frankosky, priming the signal bridge during the work week.

paint out the exterior of the aft three-inch gun tub, scale, prime and paint the signal bridge, and finished painting the deck on the 01 level forward, around gun two. John Meeker worked on painting the waterways, and completed everything from amidships aft, all the way around the ship. They had a very good week.

Mike Marko spent his time on the flying bridge, and working on his directors. Bob Tomlinson continued his good work, painting 40mm shells and clips.

At the tail end of the work week, we had Boy Scout Troop 21 out of West Winfield, New York, aboard for an Overnight, and Warrensburg Middle School brought their 8th graders on a tour. We stepped out of the ordinary on Monday the 8th, and were open to the public for Columbus Day. On the 11th, we welcomed students from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, from a War, Science, and Society class. The students were filled with excellent questions about destroyer escorts involvement in the Battle of the Atlantic.

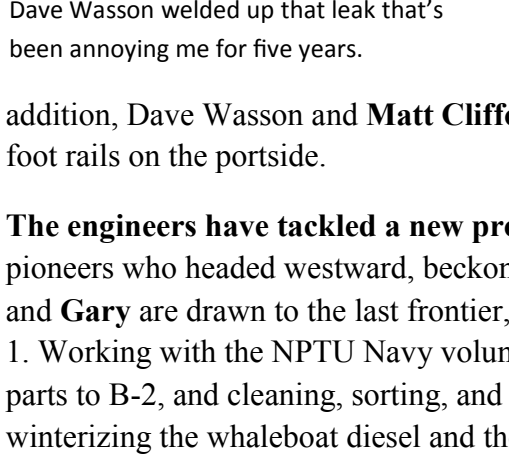
When our out-of-towners left us, the crew was back to picking up the slack and continuing on their projects. We took delivery of the new backstay and yardarm lifts. Doug is making arrangements to get a crane with a basket, so we can change those out. At the same time, we are planning to pull down the air search radar, so we can overhaul it and get that running again.



Checking the elevation springs on gun 21.

on the gun mount locking levers. To that end, we have enlisted the help of our Connecticut-based machinist, George Christophersen, to fabricate the missing parts. He's in the process of making six complete train locks, fabricating a broken selector switch for gun 31, making some missing locking pins for the three-inch gun sightsetters, as well as the supports for the wasted 40mm shell chutes. We're keeping George quite busy.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was years ago, when



Some of George Christophersen's handiwork, elevation locks for the 20mm guns.

Walter Rybka said to me, "Remember, these ships rot from the inside out." Well, about five

years ago I noticed a puddle under my desk after it rained. I didn't worry about it. Over time the puddle grew. When I prepped the deck for painting this year, I noticed that the water had rotted a small hole in the outboard bulkhead at the aft end of the compartment. Now it was self-draining. Finally, this fall, it rotted through the deck and was dripping onto the wardroom sofa. I figured it was time to investigate it. On a rainy day, I moved a pile of junk from the starboard corner of the gun shack, the compartment just forward of my office. Yes, the bulkhead had about a quarter-sized hole. I followed the water trail across the back bulkhead of the gun shack to the portside, and then forward to the supply fan room. At this point, I turned my investigation over to Doug Tanner.

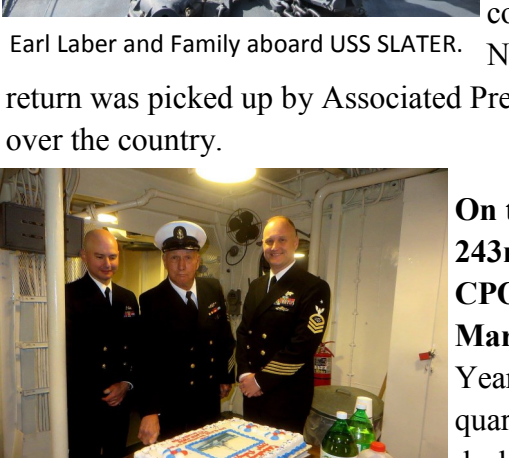
About ten minutes later, Doug had located the source of the leak, a small hole between two ancient doublers at the base of the fan room bulkhead.



Dave Wasson welded up that leak that's been annoying me for five years.

Doug enlisted the help of Dave Wasson and Chuck, who ground away at several small doublers, and replaced them with a very clean looking single one. I should have brought it to Doug's attention years ago. Doug also got Chuck and Earl to fix a loose dog on the watertight door, adjacent to my office, that's been dropping down unexpectedly and annoying visitors for twenty years. Danny Statile has been making repairs to the wasted metal on the starboard 40mm spent shell cage. In addition, Dave Wasson and Matt Clifford have been working on the 20mm foot rails on the portside.

The engineers have tackled a new project. Much like the 19th century pioneers who headed westward, beckoned by the untamed west, Mike, Karl, and Gary are drawn to the last frontier, the un-restored forward engine room, B-1. Working with the NPTU volunteer, they have begun moving spare parts to B-2, and cleaning, sorting, and straightening. This is in addition to winterizing the whaleboat diesel and their two shipboard diesel generators.



The whaleboat is back aboard.

With another Albany winter just around the corner, we started our preparations for the cold weather. On Saturday, the 20th, we hauled the whaleboat aboard. I was coxswain for our last run, with Thomas Scian the engineer. As usual, the evolution took about two hours. Watching us in action, the tour guides have a hard time believing that a trained crew would get it done in fifteen minutes, in the middle of a rolling ocean. The following week, Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, and some NPTU volunteers moved the work float over to the Dutch Apple, to be hauled out. Then, they hoisted the accommodation ladder for the season. Tommy Moore commenced scrubbing the barnacles off of the bottom of the whaleboat with a wire brush. The fantail awning has come down and been stowed for the season.



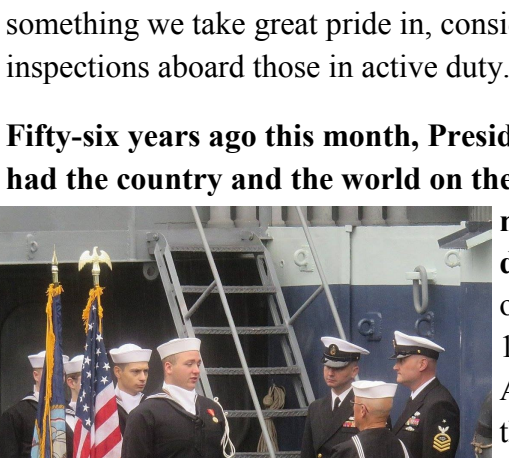
Tommy Moore commenced scrubbing the barnacles off the hull.

We had a special visitor on October 12th. Earl Laber came over from Vermont, with his sons Scott, Gary, Greg, and grandson Joshua. Earl served as an electrician's mate, aboard SLATER during World War II. He came aboard in Tampa, after Ed Lavin was badly burned in an engine room fire shortly after the ship was commissioned. After the War, he founded a successful electrical supply company that his grandsons now operate. Now 93 years old, the story of Earl's return was picked up by Associated Press, and showed up in newspapers all over the country.



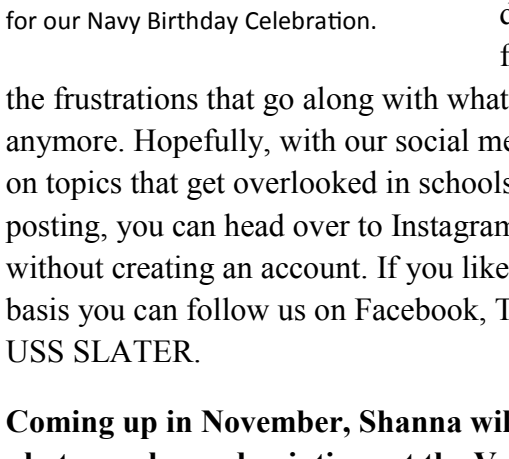
Earl Laber and Family aboard USS SLATER.

On the 13th, we celebrated the US Navy's 243rd birthday with the Capital District CPO Association. They presented Mike Marko with their SLATER Volunteer of the Year award, complete with a ceremony on quarterdeck, brunch, and cake in the mess deck. Thanks to Art Dott, Chief Smith, and Sean Robbins for organizing the annual event.



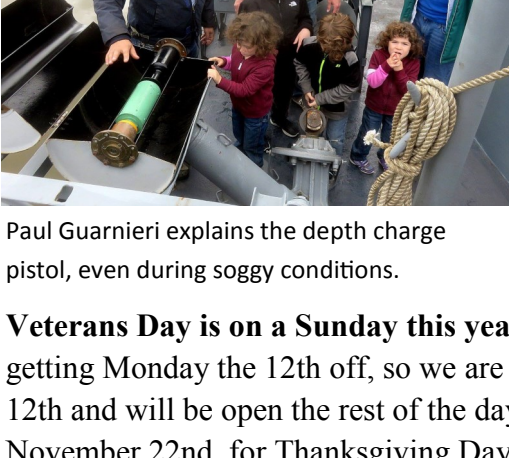
The Capital District CPO Assn. honored Chief Mike Marko for his years of volunteer service.

On the evening of October 23rd, the local Chapter of the American Welding Society met aboard USS SLATER. They honored our local volunteer welders with certificates for their service to the project. Congratulations and thank you to our shipfitters, Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, David Mardon, Gene Jackey, Earl Herchenroder, Dan Statile, Andy Sheffer, Chuck Teal, Joe Breyer, Dave Wasson, Matt Clifford, and our senior welder, Chief Clark Farnsworth. Thank you for playing a key role in making USS SLATER what she is today. In honor of the meeting as we were setting up, Albany was blessed with the brightest and clearest rainbow I have ever seen. Surely a good omen for the future. Special thanks to Tony Esposito, for helping Clark to attend the event.



Our volunteer welders with their AWS certificates.

We held our annual USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club, in downtown Albany, on Thursday the 25th. Fittingly, this day was also the 74th Anniversary of the Battle of Samar, where the Destroyer Escort, SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, earned her nickname and fame as the "DE that fought like a battleship." Board Chairman, BJ Costello, walked us through a history of that battle, followed by my review of the year. I highlighted the progress we've made this year, and gave an explanation on the mast renovations we are going to accomplish with our Maritime Heritage Grant. Our special guest speaker, Rear Admiral Jeffery A. Harley, President of the U.S. Naval War College, spoke last. He complimented the SLATER crew in their dedication and hard work. He also said that they aim to instill the same work ethics in today's sailors at the Naval War College. He spoke highly of the cleanliness of the ship, something we take great pride in, considering he conducted many ship inspections aboard those in active duty.



Over 80 people attended our annual Fort Orange Club Fundraiser.

Fifty-six years ago this month, President John F. Kennedy and his advisors had the country and the world on the edge of their seats, trying to avoid nuclear war with the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis. On our Instagram page, we highlighted those 15 DEs, DERs, and APDs that earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for their participation in the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. All of them were built as Destroyer Escorts, but may have undergone refit, hence the different designations. These ships played a critical role during this crisis, demonstrating the importance of naval forces for national defense. We all know the frustrations that go along with what is not taught in history courses anymore. Hopefully, with our social media platforms, we can shed some light on topics that get overlooked in schools today. If you want to see what we are posting, you can head over to Instagram.com/UssSlater.dehm and take a look, without creating an account. If you like to know what we are doing on a daily basis you can follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Just search for USS SLATER.



Paul Guarnieri explains the depth charge pistol, even during soggy conditions.

Coming up in November, Shanna will set up a display of maps, photographs, and paintings at the Voorheesville Library. Then, on the 6th at 1900 (7PM), Bob Herbst will be there for a presentation called "Heroes All Around Us." The presentation explores the lives of three WWII sailors who lost their lives in action, and had DEs named in their honor. On the 10th, Will Trevor will be at the Heermance Memorial Library, in Coxsackie, for a presentation on the "Battle of the Atlantic." That presentation will start at 1300.

Veterans Day is on a Sunday this year. State and Federal employees are getting Monday the 12th off, so we are holding our ceremony at 0900 on the 12th and will be open the rest of the day for tours. The ship will be closed on November 22nd, for Thanksgiving Day. Our last day for tours for the 2018 season will be Sunday, November 25th. Don't miss the boat! You have one more month to come down for a visit!

Finally, my workspace is the ship's office, which is on the tour route, adjacent to the radio room and the Captain's Cabin. I sit at a desk with my computer hidden from public by file cabinets. From that vantage point, I hear the various tour guides describe the radio room, ship's office, and the captain's cabin. The bad joke I make to visitors who figure out I'm using a computer is, "It's okay; we're running Windows 44." Or, that I have it a lot worse than Captain Blancq, because "Captain Blancq didn't have to worry about fundraising and keeping up with Facebook." But, I did get the ultimate compliment this month as I was proofing "Trim But Deadly." As a guest studied the ship's office she remarked in all seriousness, "He's so lifelike." She got quite a start when I turned and responded, "I certainly hope so." We strive for authenticity at all levels.



NPTU Ballston Spa provided the color guard for our Navy Birthday Celebration.

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

See you next month!

