

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

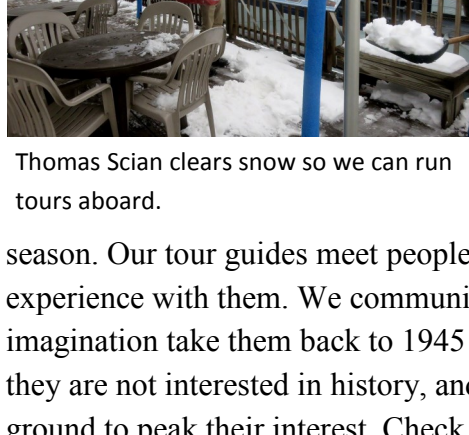
USS Slater DE-766

PO Box 1926

Albany, NY 12201-1926

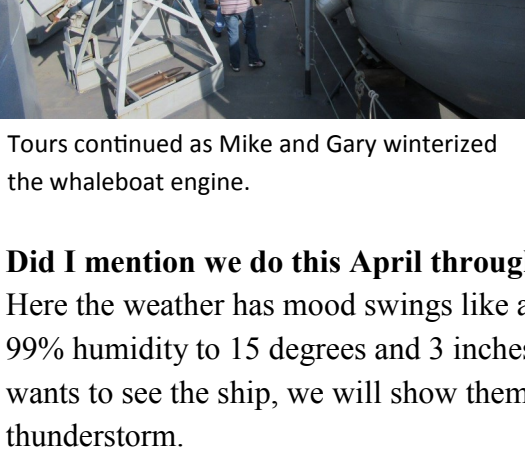
Phone (518) 431-1943

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Thomas Scian clears snow so we can run tours aboard.

Our tour guides meet people from all over the world and share an experience with them. We communicate the Navy Ways and let people's imagination take them back to 1945 aboard this ship. We get people who think they are not interested in history, and 99% of the time we find some common ground to peak their interest. Check out our reviews on TripAdvisor if you don't believe me!



Tours continued as Mike and Gary winterized the whaleboat engine.

Did I mention we do this April through November in Upstate New York? Here the weather has mood swings like a 14-year-old. From 95 degrees and 99% humidity to 15 degrees and 3 inches of snow, if someone arrives and wants to see the ship, we will show them – rain or shine, snow or raging thunderstorm.



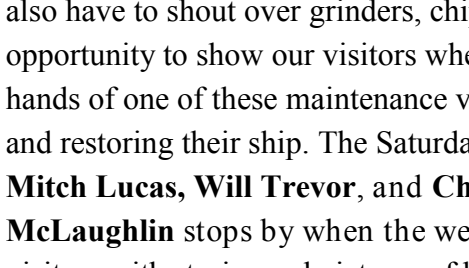
Volunteer Charles Starks explains the fusesetter.

The Thursday crew has had time for a lot of coffee in Chiefs' at the end of the season. But, throughout the summer they certainly didn't have time for chitchat. They are **Don Cushman, Carl Camurati, Richard Wallace, Bob Herbst** and, before he left us to pursue more education in London, **Dan Healey**.



Intern Patricia explains the operation of our ship control equipment.

bring their out of town guests. It's also maintenance day aboard SLATER, so guides have to re-route their tours around welders, painters, and cooks. They also have to shout over grinders, chippers, and traffic. This is an excellent opportunity to show our visitors where every donation goes; straight into the hands of one of these maintenance volunteers, to keep them busy preserving and restoring their ship. The Saturday volunteer tour guides are **Paul Guarnieri, Mitch Lucas, Will Trevor, and Charles Starks**, pulling double duty. **Tom McLaughlin** stops by when the weather is decent, and entertains the visitors with stories and pictures of his service. Tom can't do the ladders anymore, but helps out where he can.



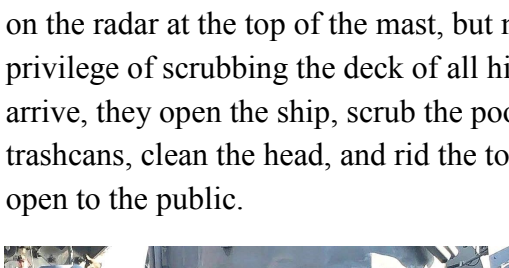
Chief Art Dott closed out the season with the last tour.

interns. They receive a paycheck or college credit but, oh boy, do we make them earn it. We all love to see and point out the falcon that likes to hang out on the radar at the top of the mast, but no one really considers who has the privilege of scrubbing the deck of all his droppings. Every morning when they arrive, they open the ship, scrub the poop, and refill water coolers, empty trashcans, clean the head, and rid the tour route of spider webs – all before we open to the public.



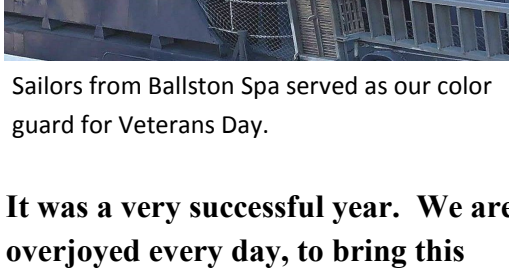
Sailors from Ballston Spa served as our color guard for Veterans Day.

It was a very successful year. We are overjoyed every day, to bring this history to life for thousands of visitors from all over the world. We are thankful to Albany and the Hudson River for keeping us berthed safely, our interns and volunteers who keep people coming and the ship looking amazing, our Board of Trustees for all their support, but especially you, our visitors, donors, and dedicated readers, who keep us sweating for a cause in August and freezing for the same in January. We couldn't do it without you!



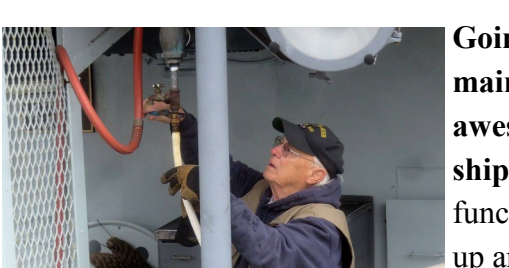
Dignitaries aboard for Veterans Day included Assemblymember Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, Assemblymember Pat Fahy, and Museum Board Chairman BJ Costello.

Going on behind the scenes is all the maintenance that leaves visitors awestruck when they finish touring the ship. There are a hundred different functions that it takes to keep USS SLATER up and running. We had our last overnight encampment on November 10th. Doug Tanner wasn't able to get around to draining down the water system until the following Saturday and, since it got into the teens that week, we had to blow down the sewer line, disconnect and drain the fresh water hose, and use a lot of electricity to keep the spaces warm that aren't heated by our furnace. But, now the water is off, the system has been winterized, and we are back to using the shore head and the Port-a-John.



Dave Mardon and the shipfitters drained down the fresh water system for the winter.

The deck gang got the whaleboat covered. After we close to the public, they will cover the guns, and haul the circulators and coco mats up on deck. Last winter was mild enough that the river was ice free in February and we were able to stow the circulators a month early. We'll see what this winter brings.



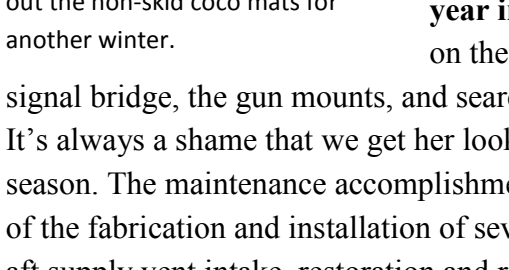
Angelo Bracco supervises breaking out the non-skid coco mats for another winter.

The maintenance volunteers had a great year in 2018. With all the repainting we did on the decks, the 01 level around gun 32, the signal bridge, the gun mounts, and searchlights, the ship looks better than ever. It's always a shame that we get her looking her best at the end of the tourist season. The maintenance accomplishments this past year included completion of the fabrication and installation of seven 20mm foot rails, fabrication of the aft supply vent intake, restoration and repainting of berthing compartment C-202L, replacement of the bearings on the manual train drive on gun 31, replacement of the bearings on two gun mounts, and we got the gun 31 sightsetter operational.



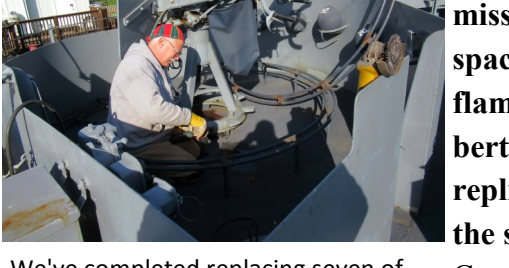
We've completed replacing seven of the nine 20mm gun stands.

We also set up the 20mm ready service locker display, completed replacement of missing handrails in the aft machinery spaces, completed fabrication of flameproof mattress covers in the aft berthing spaces, repainted all 40mm replica projectiles and clips, and replaced the signal bridge belaying pin rails. Continuing projects include the fabrication of six sets of fighting lights for the mast, fabrication of the replica smoke screen generator, fabrication of the fantail vent duct, and overhauling the gun 33 sightsetter.



The deck gang got all the guns covered for another winter.

Now that we are closed for the season, the crew has gone to work doing the winter preparations. Gary Sheedy stripped out all the bunks in compartment C-201 so we can begin repainting. The deck gang is in the process of covering the guns. The shipfitters are in the process of building a temporary enclosure over the flying bridge so they can work up there this winter. **Cathy Wheat** stowed all the bedding and broke down the wardroom display. All hands are used to the drill by now.



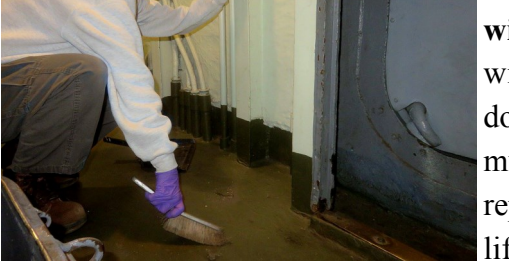
Cathy Wheat plays a vital role as our ships custodian.

Doug and his team are also planning a major overhaul on the flying bridge this year. This is in an effort to stop the various leaks in the pilothouse and CIC once and for all. They are planning to put a temporary cover over the area, so they can work over the winter. Having removed the CIC exhaust vent, they also plan to investigate the condition of the deck and stuffing tubes underneath.



The shipfitters are enclosing the flying bridge for winter work.

We are also planning restoration of the aft berthing space C-201-L, sickbay, and the aft cross passageway. The passageway took a beating during the supply vent project. This will involve removal of all the bunks, chipping, reinsulating, and straightening out the electrical cable runs, spray painting, and reassembly of the bunks.



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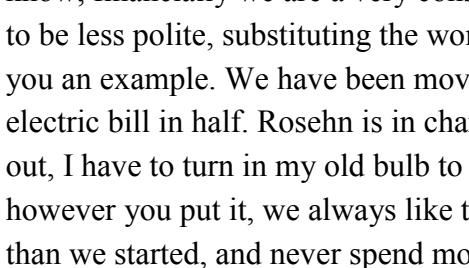
All these plans take money, and if you haven't guessed what I am leading up to, you must be a new reader. It's Winter Fund Time. In case you don't know, financially we are a very conservative organization. The volunteers tend to be less polite, substituting the word "cheap" for "conservative." Let me give you an example. We have been moving to LED lightbulbs, and we have cut our electric bill in half. Rosehn is in charge of the LED light bulbs. If a light burns out, I have to turn in my old bulb to get a replacement. Cheap or conservative, however you put it, we always like to end up each month with more money than we started, and never spend more than we make.



The shipfitters are enclosing the flying bridge for winter work.

That's where you come in. As the weather forces us to close for the season, we are coming up on four months with no operating income. But, while we are closed to the public, it is the best time to tackle the big projects that we can't do when people are around. With that in mind, we hope you will support our Annual Winter Fund Drive, which enables our volunteers to keep working all winter long. This pays for the heat, supplies, and the contractor support that the crews needs to complete our projects by spring. I ask each of you to support this project with a \$100 donation to help "keep a volunteer warm this winter." More if you can afford it, less if you can't. As I have done for the past 21 years, I have already made my \$100 donation to set the example and show how much I believe in this effort. There is a form included with this issue of Signals, or you may go online and click on the "Donate" button on our website, or give us a call at 518-431-1943 and make your donation by phone.

Please give as generously as you can to our Annual Winter Fund Drive.

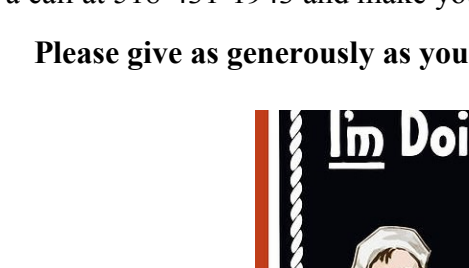


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