



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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A sure sign of spring is when Doug Tanner reconnects the water and sewer hoses.

**Another "winter that wasn't" is almost over.** I was afraid to mention it before now, because I didn't want to jinx it. I don't think we ran the circulators more than one day. We had a few days of skin ice on the river, but never anything to worry about. We joked about the Coast Guard cutters looking for ice to break. This being Albany, we know that anything can still happen snow-wise, but insofar as extreme cold goes, I think we're out of the woods.

**I put up a post on Facebook about preparing for deployment, and someone asked if we were "going back into service."** In a sense, we are going back into service on opening day. That's when we again start to perform our primary mission, educating the public about the role of destroyer escorts in the history of our nation. And, like a Navy ship getting ready to deploy, this means that we have a deadline to meet, a hundred things to do to get ready, and not enough time to do them all.

**The person who hates deadlines most is Gary Sheedy.** Gary is a perfectionist, and Gary hates to be rushed. Gary's life philosophy is do it right the first time, no matter



Barry Witte getting ready to install the smoke generator tank that his students fabricated.



Gary Sheedy reassembling shelving for the ship's library.



Kevin Sage painted out all the compartments aft that we've been working on all winter.

how long it takes. That's why it took him fourteen years to restore the reefer deck. He was down there alone, with no deadlines, and no external pressure, and it is the showpiece of the ship. The pilothouse should shine like Gary's reefer deck.

And, that's the way he intended it to be back aft, when he set about restoring the steering gear compartment. Alone, and as far away as you could get from everybody else on a 306' ship, Gary could take as long as he wanted, when he started the project back in 2014. But things happened along the way. First, he expanded the scope of the project to include the laundry, after officers' country, chemical warfare stowage, and the adjacent passageway. Now, the adjacent passageway has served as our library, with bookshelves and file cabinets for our archival records. So there is a bit of pressure from "curatorial" to complete that space, so we can have access to our archives again.

**Then another issue came up. The restoration of the spaces back aft had pretty well trashed the adjacent berthing area, C-203-L, that is our special collections and museum space.** So, with Gary's encouragement, we made the decision to re-insulate and repaint that space. That meant that all the contents and collection items had to be moved into the berthing spaces forward. However, it so happens that those two compartments, now totally junked up, are utilized by our volunteers during the spring workweeks. The first work week begins April 23rd. So, guess what Gary, you've got a deadline.





Our interns paid a visit to the steering gear compartment as part of their orientation tour.

**As much as Gary would have liked to have another six months in the berthing space, he sucked it up and went to work.** With the insulation work complete, Gary assisted **Kevin Sage** in spraying out the aft berthing space with a primer and topcoat of gloss white. Kevin worked his way aft, doing the supply office, passageway, laundry, and chemical warfare stowage. Then a cold snap forced us to wait a week before we could spray out the shipfitter shop and steering gear space. In the meantime, Gary and his crew set about putting things back together. Shelving was re-assembled, lights were re-installed, and the supply office re-outfitted to serve as the curatorial office. **Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Nate Shakerley, Bill Holt, and Gene Jackey** undertook the task of cleaning all the bunk frames, bunk canvases, and re-hanging all of the bunks. All the laundered sheets and mattress covers came back to the ship, so they had to be put back on the mattresses. **Barry Witte** utilized his student volunteers and the **RPI Midshipmen** to clean up and paint all the fireman fittings and install the emergency lighting. The final step is moving the artifacts out of the other two spaces and getting them cleaned up for berthing. But, for now, everything is tracking okay. Once the "pressure" is off, Gary's plan is to first take his time restoring the laundry equipment, while Barry completes the smoke generator installation, and then take his time with the restoration of the actual steering gear machinery.

**Barry has several other projects going.** In addition to the emergency lighting and firemain fittings, he's had his students at Colonie High School fabricating the replica smoke generator, for installation in the steering gear compartment. This work is all made possible thanks to the trip Barry made to Galveston last month, to get the



Tim Benner welding up a new hose rack to replace one that had been removed.



Guy Huse has been working to free the gun 32 sight setter.

dimensions off of USS STEWART. Barry also has students working with **Andrew Smith** on the radar simulation in CIC, and reactivating the azimuth indicator on the SC radar indicator.

**Doug Tanner and his crew replaced the roller and bearings under the aluminum gangway.**

His gang also got the missing piece of overhead ductwork installed in the aft head, a piece we had fabricated about ten years ago. In another sure sign of spring, Doug pressure-tested the piping system, brought fresh water back aboard, and reconnected our sewer hose. With **Super Dave Mardon and Earl Herchenroder**, they replaced a wasted section of overhead drain piping in berthing compartment C-201-L.

**Tim Benner, and his new "friend" Andy Sheffer,**

**completed the galley sink drains.** Benner then went outside to help **Barry Witte** with another one of his projects, which is fabricating and replacing missing firehose brackets around the exterior of the ship. Down below, the engineers got their rehabbed heat exchanger and expansion tank back for the B-3 ship's service generator. Installation and testing is just around the corner. **Guy Huse** has fabricated steel channel braces that he has bolted to the gun two sight setter. He will use these braces to gently use a hydraulic jack to free the rotating pin.





Walt Stuart and the deck gang got all the bunks rerigged in C-203-L.



Cathy Wheat has officers' country squared away for our visitors.

**All of the aforementioned work has been going on in areas that are not normally accessible to the public.** There is still the issue of getting all the spaces on the tour route ready for the public, and that burden has fallen largely on **Cathy Wheat**. She's gone through all the officers' staterooms, cleaned the overhead, wiped down, vacuumed, and remade the bunks. She's moving into the wardroom next, doing all the dishes, polishing silver, and resetting the table. Down below, **Jon Palmer** supervised the interns in getting all the bunks made up, and bunk straps put in place. Final vacuuming, swabbing, and dusting will happen the first of April. Up in the superstructure, **Kevin Sage** repainted the 01 level passageway outside the radio room, and the passageway outside CIC on the 02 level, to spruce that area up.

### **If you're interested in helping**

**the maintenance crew, we have the live-aboard work weeks coming up.** They are the last week in April, the third week in May, and the first week in October. It's a tradition we've had ever since the ship came to Albany. If you're serious about putting in a little sweat on a destroyer escort again, and miss sleeping on a 2" mattress, the shriek of the bosun's pipe, the noise of a needle scaler, belltime on the half hour and that mixed smell of coffee, hot metal, diesel, paint and bacon, you may be looking for us. Drop me an email at [tim@uss Slater.org](mailto:tim@uss Slater.org). I'll fill you in on the details.



We gave eight separate orientation tours to members of the Albany Fire Department.

**On Saturday the 25th, Shanna organized a meet and greet pizza party on the messdecks.** This was a chance for the maintenance crew and the tour guides to interact and get to know each other. The guides spent the afternoon getting reacquainted with the ship, and looking over the changes since last season. We have added some new tour guides to our crew this season. New volunteers include **Scott Van Nederynen** and **Bob Wheelock**. Scott moved to upstate New York recently, and was referred to us by our old friend **Eric Rivet**. Scott spent many years volunteering at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. Bob is a retired Tin Can Sailor, who served in USS CONE DD-866 in the sixties. He took a tour last year and we roped him in! Returning as a guide this year



is **Fred Sirois**. Fred was a guide here a couple years ago, and has thankfully made his way back to us. They join returning volunteers **Chuck Boone, Tom Cline, Don Cushman, Bob Dawson, Art Dott, Alan Fox, Bill Goralski, Paul Guarnieri, Grant Hack, Ken Kaskoun, Vince Knuth, Steve Long, Mitch Lucas, Mike Marko, Tom McLaughlin, Dennis Nagi, Dave Pitlyk, Charlie Poltenson, Charles Starks, and Will Trevor**. And Dave and Vince, you're included on this list for a reason.



Our Ballston Spa Sailor volunteers helped uncover the guns.

**We also hired new interns for this season.** **Paul** is a freshman at UAlbany, from Schodack, New York. He is very interested in history, and aspires to work in the law field. **Merissa** also attends UAlbany. She hails from Whitesboro, New York, and is studying history and library and informational science. **Evan** is a sophomore, attending SUNY Oneonta in pursuit of a degree in high school social studies education. He grew up in

Guilderland and will spend his summer working with us aboard Slater. **Jo Ann**, also from Guilderland, is a second year student at Hudson Valley Community College, studying high school education and library sciences. These new interns join familiar faces from last year, **Claire, Jon, Andrew, and Austin**. The guides are the public face of USS SLATER, and the reason we continue to get such incredible reviews on TripAdvisor and Yelp. We are very thankful to have such a great group of guides, and are looking forward to the new season!

**So the laundry is done, and the fire extinguishers have been inspected.** We spent a week giving orientation tours to Albany firemen. The guns have been uncovered and the helmets put in their racks. We're ready to swab the decks, washdown topsides, and polish the helm. We're ready for opening day on Wednesday, April 5. We're ready to deploy for our 20th year in Albany. We hope to see you aboard this season. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

**See you next month!**