



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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On Saturday, the third of April, we hosted most of our tour guides for their annual refresher lunch. We gathered them together to talk about what went well last season and what we need to improve. We honored the “Best Reviewed” Intern and Volunteer too. That is, who received the most reviews online and onsite. Next, we made sure everyone knew the Covid guidelines we need to adhere to, and how to execute the new Special Collections Tour!



Shanna is teaching our interns how to conduct a Collections Tour!



Charles is back for tours this year! He made it through COVID and chemo treatments. We're so happy to have him back.

With all the work John and Cassidy did over the winter, you bet that we have that Collections Tour up and running this season! Our visitors will be able to buy a \$5 ticket and we'll escort them down to the after berthing compartment, C-203L. From there, visitors can see artifacts donated from DE sailors and their families. **Shanna, John, and Cassidy** researched and wrote an accompanying booklet that lists every artifact that is on display. The booklet also features historical articles about multiple ships, and each class of DEs. This History Booklet is a great source of DE history and is available for sale in the Ship's Store.

Wednesday the 7th, we opened to the public. It was an amazing opening week! With the area schools on spring break, and the weather 70 and sunny, we had just as many people as we could handle, given the new Covid protocols. Over the first five days of our season we hosted over 400 visitors.

Shanna purchased a 360-degree camera and took photos around the tour route. Tour guide, **Austin**, then helped her assemble the photos to create a Virtual Tour. We are offering this tour to groups who cannot make it to the ship for a physical tour. Whether they can't make it to the ship due to Covid safety or simply cannot make it up and down the ladders, this tour is for them. By using Google Meet or Zoom, our tour guide will "walk" each group around the ship and give you all of the information that is shared within a normal tour. We are also including the Engine Room tour, which is usually closed for anyone under 13 years old, and always a separate ticket from the main tour. The tour guide will be with you live, not previously recorded, so you are able to ask them questions and get answers in real time. Tickets for this tour are a flat rate of \$75, no matter how many members are in your group. Contact the Ship's Store to book.



A busy first week, and Carl shows off 20mm shells to his tour group.



Kevin Sage was back and painting the anchor windless compartment.

Shanna launched another brand-new educational program this month. USS SLATER is starting a podcast, DE Classified! Each month, a member of the Education Crew will dive into the history of a specific Destroyer Escort. Inspired by the historical articles that fill our quarterly newsletter, Trim But Deadly, this podcast will focus on one ship per episode, and we'll explore all of the details that make these ships so fascinating. You'll find our introduction episode on our website (usslater.org/declassified), and the first full episode will be available on 15 May. Also, online, Tim finished updating the archive of Signals. Everyone should now be able to view every issue back to 1998!



Cathy Wheat is a cleaning machine.

At the beginning of the month, we had Kevin Sage back. He did a beautiful job of spray painting the anchor windlass room, the forward crews head, passageway, and the CHT compartment. He also did all of the gray trim, painted out the decks, and all four spaces look like they just came out of the shipyard. **Gary Sheedy and Thomas Scian** have set about the process of organizing all of our deck hardware, fittings, line, and restowing it all in the anchor windlass room. This will create a museum quality display, but a functional one, so we can find everything we need, when we need it. As of this writing, the process is ongoing.

Our Chief custodian, Cathy Wheat, went above and beyond the call of duty to get the ship ready for opening day. Bunks had to be made up, staterooms outfitted, the wardroom table display set up, and the whole ship needed a good cleaning. Cathy

was up to the job and put in several extras days to get us ready for our visiting public. **Walt Stuart** was right behind her, doing the first washdown of the season, as soon as the shipfitters had water aboard.

After reactivation of the fresh water and septic systems, the shipfitters, Doug Tanner, Tim Benner, Danny Statile, Dave Mardon, Warren Brozio, Chuck Teal, and Earl Herchenroder had multiple projects going. First, they made a temporary exterior door up, so four badly wasted watertight doors could be removed, one at a time, for repairs and new gaskets. The first of these doors, adjacent to the radio room, is presently at the welding bench.

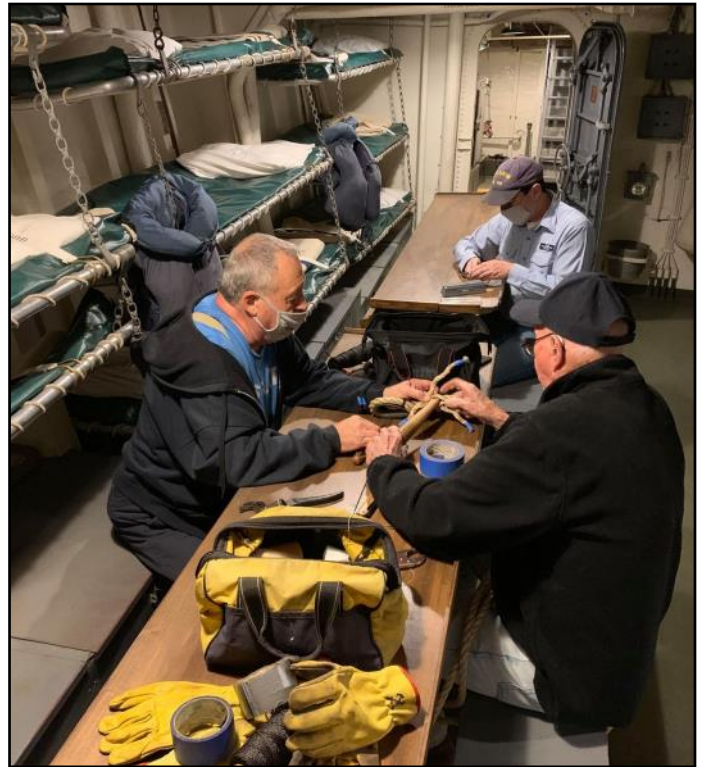
Their second project was addressing the wasted 20mm ready service lockers, forward of the pilothouse. The port locker was removed and turned



Scott Clayton is on tour in the Pilot House.

upside down, so the bottom could be cut out and replaced. That job is about 50% complete. They will be moving on to the starboard locker next month. Meanwhile, **Danny Statile** fabricated a new cart for moving our steel plate around and has been making the tedious repair to the wasted MK-6 depth charge that rotted out.

The deck gang, Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, and Paul Guarnieri, lowered the accommodation ladder and got the paint float back alongside, in time for the HUSE crew to do their side painting. They are now rerigging the davit guys and monkey ropes on the whaleboat davits. **Tommy Moore** has the whaleboat ready to go back into the water. He is working with **Mike Dingmon** to get the engine ready, and they anticipate a launch and return date at the end of May.



Paul, Walt, and Boats working away or aweigh.

Barry Witte continues to make progress with his Sunday maintenance crew. Gabe Tambellini is restoring one of the scuttles leading to C-202-L. Richard and Henry Bourgeois have learned how to apply plaster and fiberglass pipe insulation to the service steam piping they have been restoring in B4, the aft motor room. Jack Carbone has the whistle pull cable finally adjusted, which is a holdover item from last year's mast work. Brendan Lutz wanted a short term project, since he is graduating in a few weeks, and decided to restore the lathe and drill press spotlight fixtures in the machine shop.



Radio Steve keeping in contact.

Up in the radio room, Steve Syrotynski and Chuck Chandler continue to man WW2DEM every Saturday, and are making a lot of new friends and members for us. Steve has put in a lot of extra time and continues to get the receiver shelf ready to accept the RAL-6. He also worked on the power supplies for the RAL-6 and its companion RAL-7. In addition, he continued work on the Audio Patch

panel. Chuck traced the power leads for the exhaust fan in Radio Central, and confirmed its operation, along with the bulkhead fans in Radio Central, and in the Coding Room, in anticipation of warmer weather. They both moved some spare parts to the Electronics Storeroom, and boxes of donated tubes to the Tube Storeroom. Chuck made CW contacts in CO, NY, FL, IA, NC, VA, Scotland, and Switzerland.

The last week of the month, we had the USS HUSE Reunion Association aboard for their annual work week. George Amandola organized the group of twenty volunteers. Only three of



The HUSE crew was back this month! They fit so much work into their one week stay.



We touched up some paint on the portside.

Delfoe, and Walt Stuart handling lines for them. They did a great job on the sides and waterways. We were fortunate to have **Bill Wetterau** come in and finish the port waterway aft.

The second main project was repainting the maindeck on the portside. The main tour route had taken a beating over the winter, and we wanted to spruce it up, since it is the first thing the

the group actually served aboard HUSE. The fact is that the annual work party has become a social event for a group of close friends, whose only bond is a love for each other and USS SLATER.

There were five main projects we hoped to accomplish. The first was repainting two camouflage panels on the portside that are very visible to the public and had been scuffed up during our visit to the shipyard. The key men on that job were **Brandon Easley** and **Jerry Meehan**. They spent two days down on the paint float with **Boats Haggart, Joe**

visitors see. **Ron Frankosky** was the straw boss on that project, supervising **Gail Esker, Jan Schweiger, Gary Dieckman, and Jill Simaras**. On Monday, they got all the rusted areas chipped and coated with two coats of primer. By Tuesday evening, they had the whole deck from the port breakwater to the gun 31 tub cut in and rolled out, including the waterways. We rerouted the tours on Wednesday up the starboard side, so the deck had two days to set up and dry.

The third job was repainting the 20mm guns. Once again, **Joe Stout** and **John Meeker** came in from Seattle, and, along with **Gary Dieckman**, they took on the 20mm gun project. The assignment was to replace missing and damaged parts, including the hose guards that **Danny Statile** fabricated over the winter. Then, they scaled, primed, and painted the guns and mounts. They got five of the nine mounts completed before rain put a halt on the project.



Chuck and Earl are restoring the 20mm ammo cans forward of the Pilothouse.

The fourth job was repainting the number 2 three-inch gun. With the deck and side painting projects completed, Ron's gang piled on to gun 32 on the 01 level forward and painted out with Epoxy paint. If you put enough people on a detail project like that, it's sure to get done, and it did.



How many people can we fit onto the 3 inch gun to paint it?

Special kudos go to Stan Ray. Stan brought his Dad, **Jim Ray**, out to the work week in his 36' motor home. Jim was a water tender aboard USS DOUGLAS A. MUNRO during World War II and had been a regular with the Michigan Chapter work weeks from their beginning. Now 96 years old, he wanted to come back to SLATER, and his son obliged him. Jim worked in the machine shop, sorting hardware, and slept aboard ship, while Stan preferred the privacy and luxury of the motor home.

Stan had been a firecontrolman aboard USS CANON and DURHAM. But his special talent aboard SLATER was using

an electric sander, to feather in the edges on deck where the paint had been needle gunned. I have a terrible time getting people to do this painstaking task, and Stan took to it like a duck to water. The deck repainting will look a lot better thanks to his efforts. We hope to see them both back here for the fall work week, October 3-8.

There were a couple of mechanical issues we wanted to address. The first was the disassembly of the tank vent piping on the maindeck portside, outside the wardroom. The bulkhead behind the piping is badly corroded and is on the repair list for next winter.

Doug Tanner wanted to get the piping disassembled, to speed up the repair progress. **Ed Wakeman** and **Suzy Streiter** spent two days grinding and cutting bolts to get it apart. Then, they cleaned it up and painted the pipe sections and flanges. Then, it was reassembled with new zinc plated hardware. Suzy did a beautiful job of cleaning and repainting the disturbed areas of the bulwark.



Chippers really got their work in this week.



Danny continued repairing depth charges.

The second issue was the disassembly of a 40mm elevation handwheel. There was a lot of play in the gun 41 pointer handwheel, so **George Gollas**, **Doug Streiter**, and **Ed Wakeman** moved the aft 40mm handwheel assembly to gun 41, which is the gun on public display. With the help of **Gary Dieckman**, a lot of heat and three gear pullers, it took them three days to get the assembly apart. The plan is to have **George Christopherson** pick up the pieces, which are too valuable to ship, and machine new parts for us.

Along the way, Jan Schweiger and Jill Simaras painted out the companionway going to the flying bridge. Ron Frankosky

continued needle scaling on the fantail. **George Gollas** and **Barry Witte** continued to make improvements to the interior communications systems in the pilothouse. **Stan Ray** and **Susie Streiter** got a lot of chipping and priming done on the fo's'c'le.

The week couldn't have happened without three key people. **George Amandola** organized the whole event, kept track of attendees, and served as our messdecks master at arms, keeping the place tidy. You can't have an event like this without a great cook, and we had the best. **Blair Sandri** was back aboard, at home in the galley, preparing three squares a day for the whole crew. He maintained his cheerful disposition despite that fact that he inherited **Ed Zajkowski's** bunk in the Exec's stateroom. Fortunately, he also inherited Ed's disposition. **Bill Meehan** took care of mixing paint and cleaning brushes in the paint locker. And **Marsha Oliphant**, whose father served in USS INCH, assisted George on the messdecks and did a lot of compartment cleaning.

The highlight of the week for all of them was the Wednesday night port visit by the Coast Guard Buoy Tender, USCGC KATHERINE WALKER. She was north, tending navigational aids, and rather than tie up overnight at the port, they decided to spend the night alongside USS SLATER. Both crews gave tours of their respective ships, and it was an enlightening experience for all of us. Our only concern was that we would lose our cook Blair to the Coast Guard. My understanding is that when he saw their modern galley and mess equipment, he was ready to sign a four-year Coast Guard enlistment.

See you next month,

Tim



Such a fine group, our HUSE crew volunteers and the crew of USCGC KATHERINE WALKER.