



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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If there's one thing that our regular readers should have learned over these past twenty-five years, it is that our lead shipfitter, **Doug Tanner**, lives to be challenged. His day is not complete unless he is given a new problem to solve, and he has never failed to rise to the occasion.

This is very fortunate, because Doug has been blessed to have a loyal, dedicated team of volunteer helpers, who continually find new ways to challenge him. **Danny Statile** and **Andy Sheffer** both came to us as experienced welder fitters. They are Doug's "go to" guys when things get complicated.

The rest of his crew had had little metalworking experience before they came to USS SLATER, and Doug has patiently developed them into a reasonably competent

group of shipfitters. **Tim Benner**, **Super Dave Mardon**, **Earl Herchenroder**, **Chuck Teal**, and **Warren Brozio** all enthusiastically, and sometimes over enthusiastically, take their direction from Doug, as he faces one challenge after another. Take for instance the pilothouse watertight door that is being replaced. Once the door was hung, Doug realized that the depth of the door was not as deep as the original, and that the old dogs would no longer work. The search for new dogs began, complicated by the fact that all the new dogs would need machining to fit.



*Doug gets his crew organized.*



***Danny Statile has become quite the expert on hedgehog projectile restoration.***

**The battery locker installation challenged Doug when he found that his original plan of welding the supports to the deck wasn't practical, because of the cable ways running in the overhead below. With help from Danny Statile and Andy Sheffer, he modified the plan by planning to support the locker from the bulkhead, and carefully marking where the brackets would be located. I challenged Doug when I had Thomas paint over all the bulkhead markings where the supports for the battery locker would go, because I was so happy to have a warm painting day in February.**

**Most recently, prior to planned restoration in the muffler room, Doug**

**and Gary Sheedy went to great lengths to prepare the space for the contractors. The muffler room is a main deck space in the amidships deckhouse, below the stack. It contains four large cylindrical mufflers, to quiet the sound coming from the main propulsion diesel engines. Into this space, we have added a 275-gallon diesel oil storage tank, and our heating furnace, which warms the ship with a mixture of antifreeze and water. Gary and Thomas Scian went to a great deal of trouble to clear out all of the stored material we had in the space, including steel plate, pipe, copper tubing, folding chairs, and shop vacuum cleaners and furnace parts, prior to the commencement of work.**

**For his part, Doug made sure that the heating oil tank was topped off, the fuel oil filters changed, and the furnace cleaned and ready for service, prior to the commencement of**



***Angelo Bracco helped with masking Officer's Country.***





*Dave Mardon and Tim Benner are determined to beat the watertight door until it fits.*

**abatement work.** This was important, since we would not be able to access the space while the abatement work was underway. We made every effort to think of everything that might go wrong, and prepare for every contingency.

**On Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, it was exceptionally cold again.** This was made worse by the fact that the ship's furnace was out. Our initial assumption was that an exceptionally strong south wind had blown against the furnace exhaust in the stack, blew the fire out, and failed to reignite. The plan was to look into the problem when the abatement was complete. We were dependent on a few electric space heaters until then.

**And so it was, that despite the lack of heat, everything proceeded well until Monday morning, President's**



*Our man in the bilges, James Miles, under the B-4 generators.*



**Day.** It was an unusually warm day, with the volunteer crew out in force. All was going well until our engineering team, **Mike Dingmon, James Miles, Jim Skewes, and Jim Niemynski** reported something unusual in aft motor room (B-4) bilges. There was diesel oil, and a lot of it, that had not been there the previous Monday. The initial “Where’d this come from?” was quickly answered. A small valve in the muffler room that was used to gravity feed the diesel engine day tanks from the heating oil tank had leaked. Oil had drained from the heating oil tank into the B-4 diesel tank, and then leaked through the upper sight glass gasket and into the bilge, until the heating oil tank was empty. That’s over 200 gallons of oil now sitting in the bilge.



***Chuck preparing the hedgehog locker to receive the restored projectiles.***

**That answered the question as to why the furnace didn’t work.** Of course right away, we thought of all the things we could have done, removed the valve handwheel, wired it closed, or had a secondary valve installed in the engine room. Double checking this valve was the one contingency that we overlooked, and as they say, that is always the contingency that will bite you in the ass.

**A lesser man, like me, would have tried to empty the bilge with a coffee can and a five-gallon pail.** But I’m not **Doug Tanner**. This was a challenge, and Doug always rises to challenges. He and his crew came together to meet this new task. He immediately suspended work on his battery locker and watertight door projects, and



***Dave and Doug searching for new dogs for the pilothouse watertight door.***



***Gary Sheedy repairing insulation in the forward berthing compartment.***

refocused his attention on the new problem. He ordered the B-4 hatch secured, so that welding and grinding sparks didn't find their way into the engineroom. The effort to empty the bilge into five-gallon pails started, with the knowledge there was a better way. Doug began making plans to pump and filter the oil directly from the bilges, and back up the fill line into the heating oil tank in the muffler room. A list of necessary parts, pumps, filters, and fittings was made and ordered from McMaster Carr. Plans were made to install the backup valve that should have been installed twenty years ago.

**Despite all these challenges, work continues to progress.** The starboard side watertight door of the

pilothouse is now hanging in place. Doug, challenged by the fact that the bulkhead has been warped, is adding steel to the knife edge so the door will seal properly. The supports for the "Battery Locker" are in place, and the locker is nearly ready to be set back against the bulkhead. All the hedgehog projectiles are being repainted, prior to being stenciled, and placed back into the hedgehog magazine.

**Work is progressing well in the forward living spaces and officer's country. All the contract work is done under the Save America's Treasures grant. Thomas Scian, Gary Sheedy, Ron Prest, Cathy Wheat, Bill Wetterau, and Ed Nowick have completed masking all of the areas for**



***Barry Witte continues to teach our RPI Midshipmen volunteers.***



spray painting. **Barry Witte** and the **RPI midshipmen** have completed removing post war electrical wiring, and are installing missing piping systems. Painter **Kevin Sage** has begun spray painting the compartments, so we plan to have everything back together for our April 6<sup>th</sup> opening. The month of March is sure to go by quickly.

**Up in the radio shack, Steve and Chuck** have begun preparations for the **Annual Museum Ships Radio Weekend on June 4-5, 2022**. Organized by the Battleship NEW JERSEY, everyone is excited about the event as we recover from Covid. Steve has been making great progress with the TBL Transmitter restoration, and he has made a few AM contacts on 74 and 40 meters with good signal reports. In the adjacent gun shack, **Richard and Henry Burgeois** continue



***Shanna is really happy to see Kevin's spray painting started, since the bunk rooms will be filled with campers in a month!***



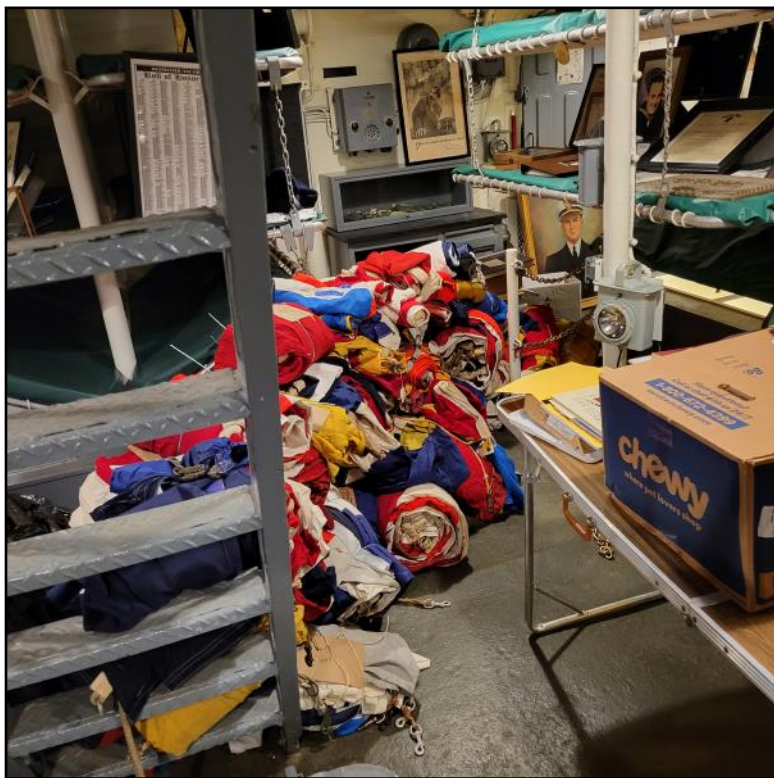
***Hopefully we've seen the last snow of the season.***



their restoration of our MK-14 gunsights.

**Down in collections, John Epp remains hunkered down in the heat of the Supply Office, in after crews berthing.** From there, more donations were added to our collections, including a history of USS VANCE's (DER- 387) experience in Operation Deep Freeze:1962, Domain of the Golden Dragon, and Imperium Neptuni Regis certificates. We also received boxes of equipment manuals, as well as a Fire Controlman 3c training manual.

**When a brief increase in temperature graced the region, the remainder of the signal flags were stored in the footlockers, below our**



***John's pile of signal flags from magazine storage below the Museum Space.***



***Gene Jackey helped repaint hedgehog projectiles.***

**uniforms displayed in C-202-L.** Prior to this, they were in Bulk Stores, located below the Museum Space. Work continues on the displays in the Museum Space. By the time we open for the season, a display on USS MASON (DE-529) will be available for all to see.

**Finally, making our collections accessible online is still ongoing.** Currently, five destroyer escorts are viewable, including much of what we have from SLATER's WWII and Greek service. You can view these on our website.

**Shanna Schuster has created some new merchandise celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year in Albany.** She's been restocking the shelves in the Ship's



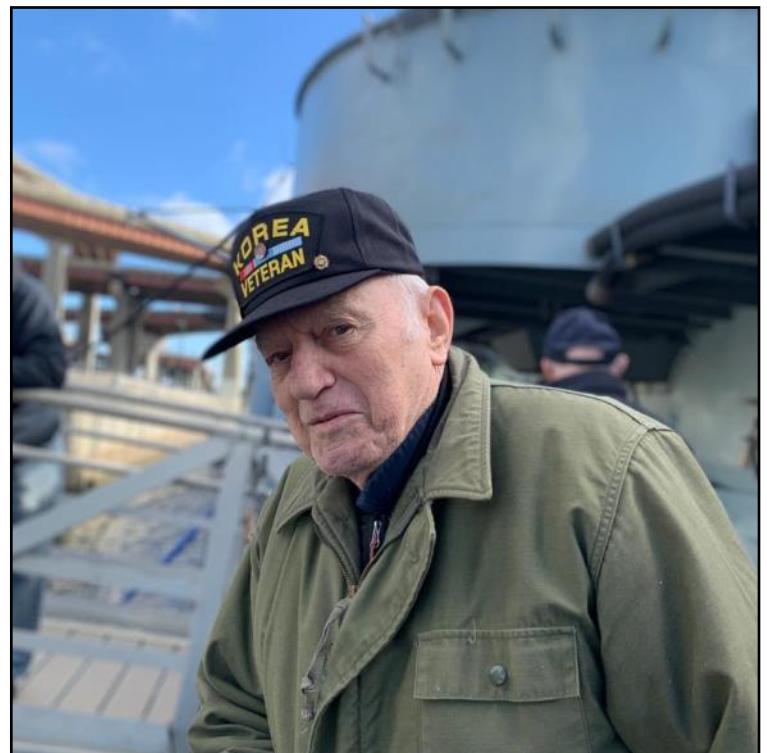
***Our engineering gang removed the fire pump priming tank to access the area under the generators.***

season. She has hired two new interns so far and looking forward to a couple more. Speaking of which, if you know of any college students looking for work who love history or ships, send them our way! We pay and train! April 6<sup>th</sup>, opening day will be here before we know it!

**Jo Ann has completed our financial review for 2021, and continues to stay very busy processing your donations, memberships, and subscriptions.** Speaking of your donations, thank you so much for the excellent response from our Save America's Treasures Grant solicitation, where you can 'Double your money.' It was Board Member **Gary Dieckman** who came up with the concept of the gambling

Store, filling online orders, and keeping our website up to date. She has been researching USS ULVERT M. MOORE for her next podcast episode of "*DE Classified*," coming up in March. If you missed February's episode on USS MASON, make sure you check it out! You can find the episodes on our website, [usslater.org](http://usslater.org), or anywhere you get your podcasts.

**Shanna has also been busy booking tours, overnights, speaking engagements, and artifact displays.** She has been reaching out to our tour guides, and ensuring we have enough people to conduct tours this



***We were sad to learn of the passing of long time volunteer Joe Delfoe.***



Sailors. He must have struck a cord with all of you, because your response has been outstanding. We have more than made our match for the grant. Your support has been incredible, and we are so grateful to have such a generous community backing USS SLATER for the past 25 years. You have given us the support we needed. Now it's up to us to have the ship all spruced up and ready to open for season 25. We couldn't have done it without you!

See you next month!

Tim



***Proof that the TBL transmitter is putting out power.***



***It certainly has been one miserably cold month.***