



# 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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*It has been so cold, the circulators have run continuously throughout the month.*

**We've had some miserable Januarys in our 25 winters here in Albany, but this must be one of the worst.** We haven't had much snow, but the cold has made it one of the worst months since I've been here. Last year, we hardly had to run the circulators at all. This year, they've run continuously for the past three weeks. The "January thaw" got us up to 37 degrees, for one day. Then, it was back to the teens and single digits. We've had several nights below zero. I dread looking at the next electric bill.

**Our volunteers cleared all the artifacts, bunks, and furniture out of officer's country, the CPO mess, passageway, and forward berthing.** These spaces haven't been repainted since the fire in 2006, so they are certainly due for a facelift. Thanks to the **National Park Service's "Save America's Treasures" Grant Program,** we are able to utilize contractors to do this work. They began actual scaling and preparation for painting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. This grant is a matching grant, which means we have to ask you come up with the match to receive the full grant amount. More on that later.

**Despite the weather, Doug Tanner and his shipfitters have several projects going.** The starboard side watertight



***Tim Benner and Super Dave Mardon finished priming the watertight door.***

door to the pilothouse is just about complete. **Super Dave Mardon** and **Earl Herchenroder** moved it into the aft head, where there is a heater, and got it primed. The next phase will be to lift it up to the pilothouse, hang it, and determine where all the swedges and hinges need to be welded on, and then fit the gasket and paint it.

**The hedgehog restoration project is in full swing.** The projectiles that were on display were beautiful replicas, fabricated by the volunteers in Manhattan back in 1994 and 1995. They were a composite of PVC pipe, wood, and steel tail sections. **George Christophersen** and **Erik Collin** detailed them by working together to



***Doug picked one of the coldest days of the year to move the door to the O-2 level.***





*The beautiful hedgehog fuses machined by George Christophersen.*

them on the projectors. The composite replicate will be displayed inside.

**Going back to the Manhattan volunteers, over 25 years ago when they made their replicas, they fabricated excellent wooden fuse caps that they mounted on each projectile.** When George made the replica aluminum fuses, we removed the wooden replica caps and put them in storage. The crew calls me a hoarder because we don't throw anything away, but now we need the wood caps to complete the display of the composite projectiles.

**Trust me, I'm going somewhere**

create replica fuses. The problem is that, even though we store them inside every winter, after 25 years, the wood has started to rot.

**Many years ago, we received a donation of twenty-five steel training hedgehog projectiles from Peter Papadakos of Gyrodyne Corporation.** About half of these were missing their tail sections and have been displayed internally in the hedgehog magazine. It was determined that these would be a lot more durable than our composite replicas, so we decided to restore them. We put **George Christophersen's** detailed aluminum fuses on them and mounted



*"I can't find that bucket of fuse caps anywhere".*

**with this.** I found the wooden caps in the magazine, in a 40mm ammo can, and brought a single sample up to **Danny Statile**, so he could figure out how to mount them. A couple of months went by, and Danny was ready for the rest of the wooden caps. By that time, my memory had slipped, and I told **Gary Sheedy** that they were in a bucket in the aft magazine. Well, over the course of a week, Sheedy tore the ship apart, looking for the bucket of wooden hedgehog fuse covers. He couldn't find them.

**I finally took it upon myself to retrace my steps and try to find them.** Sure enough, I rediscovered them in the aft magazine in the 40mm ammo can, labeled "Replica hedgehog fuse caps." If you've been in service, you'll understand that this was too good an opportunity to pass up to tease Gary. I transferred all the replica fuse caps to a plastic bucket and stuck the



*Danny installs the fuse caps following their rediscovery.*

bucket under the log room desk, a place **Sheedy** had checked several times. I tipped off **Danny** so that he, in the presence of Sheedy, could "discover" them there, and inform him of his "careless searching." Anyway, the project is well underway, with **Danny, Earl, and Warren** restoring both the steel and composite hedgehog projectiles.



*Warren carrying completed hedgehog projectiles back to hedgehog locker.*

**The final mystery of the hedgehogs, besides why Sheedy couldn't find the fuses, concerns color.** The postwar manual, OP 2238 "Identification of



Ammunition,” dated 17 September 1957, says that hedgehog projectiles were painted olive drab, with a yellow band around the nose. However, an uncredited chart found on Wikipedia shows the projectiles with a red band around the nose. We are trying to determine what is correct for 1945, so if anyone has any insight, please help us out.

**The other fun project that has been keeping the shipfitters busy is the “battery locker.”** There was a locker mounted along the main deckhouse on the port quarter, and it has generated some debate. We don’t really know who first used the term “battery lockers,” but since it is lined with fiberglass and lead to prevent internal corrosion, it would certainly appear to be a battery locker. But we always used it for stowing safety gear. The locker and the bulkhead behind it were showing signs to



***Despite the cold, Doug and his crew continued work on the “battery locker”.***



***They completely replaced the bottom of the “safety gear locker”.***

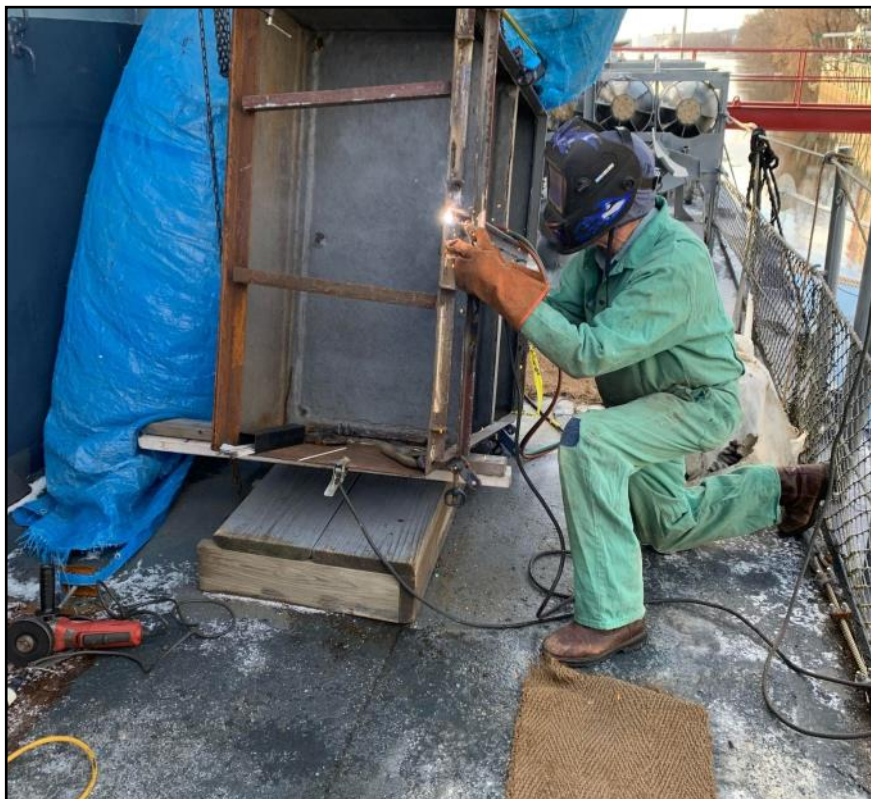
severe corrosion, so the locker was removed for restoration, and so the bulkhead could be accessed.

**The controversy comes from the fact that when “my friend Ed Zajkowski” read about the battery locker, it struck him that he had never heard of an external battery locker on a destroyer type vessel and began his research.** After many hours studying blueprints and ALNAVS, he determined that SLATER never had an external battery locker, and accused us, much like the “Red seat,” of creating another myth. This was a Greek addition and an integral part of A/T



AETOS. Maybe some of our Greek friends can enlighten us as to the origins of the external battery locker. Or maybe I should make Ed happy, and just start referring to it as our “Safety Gear Locker.”

Regardless of what we call it, it has been very functional for as long as USS SLATER has back been in America. The bottom was completely wasted, so **Doug, Dave, Earl, Bill Holt**, and anybody else who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, replaced the bottom six



***Former boilermaker, Andy Sheffer is one of our most accomplished welders.***



***Steve continues to promise that the TBL transmitter will be online shortly.***

inches of the sides, and the entire bottom. Kudos to our expert welder and retired boiler maker, **Andy Sheffer**, who has been coming in on Tuesday to finish welding up the tack that the Monday gang put in place.

**There has also been a considerable amount of cropping and renewing of wasted steel on the deck house bulkhead, in the aft head and emergency radio room.** Doug is also planning to fabricate a new mount for our huff/duff receiver, which is displayed in the emergency radio room. We're counting on **Steve Syrotynski** to eventually do a restoration of that space.





***James Miles continues his work cleaning muck and debris out of the bilges.***

out, or at least remove the leaking fitting and seal it back up. They spent the month monitoring the oil mats that were placed in the bilges in December. They replaced any that showed signs of oil on them. In checking these often, we were able to identify the machinery that is still leaking oil. The main culprits being the blower end of the emergency diesel generator in B-4 Diesel, and the heat exchanger on the inboard 16-278 main.

**The team will be looking into solutions for catching the oil before it gets into the bilge.** The other task that they have been working on is addressing a pile of grease and bolts that were dropped near the aft bulkhead in B-3 many years go. The piping prevents James

**Speaking of Steve, he and Chuck have been busy in the Radio Room.** The TBL oscillator power supply had failed due to both of the resistors being "fried". They were put back together and had 1500 volts, but we noticed a little fluctuation that did not look normal. Steve then tested all the diodes in the power supply. They all were replaced with (4) 4 amp at 8kv diodes. It now puts out about 1640 volts.

**Despite the cold, the engineers, James Miles and Jim Skewes, discovered that there is a heat exchanger on one of the main 16-278A engines that is leaking oil into the bilge, as well as a coolant line that is currently draining into a bucket.** They plan to discuss the problem with **Mike Dingmon**, and drain it



***There is no break here. It's just as cold in the engine room as it is outside.***

from accessing the bilge, so a long claw, a brush on a stick, and some cleaners have been used each week to get those sections cleaned up and ready for paint. Looking forward, they plan to address the diesel oil tank under the messdeck that they checked out, where there is surface rust developing from condensation. Then, it's on to bilge cleaning, with a Scotch Brite pad and Simple Green, in preparation for preservation.



**On the curatorial front, John Epp has been working to create a publicly accessible collections and exhibit page.** This will hopefully give visitors who are unable to make the trek to Albany a

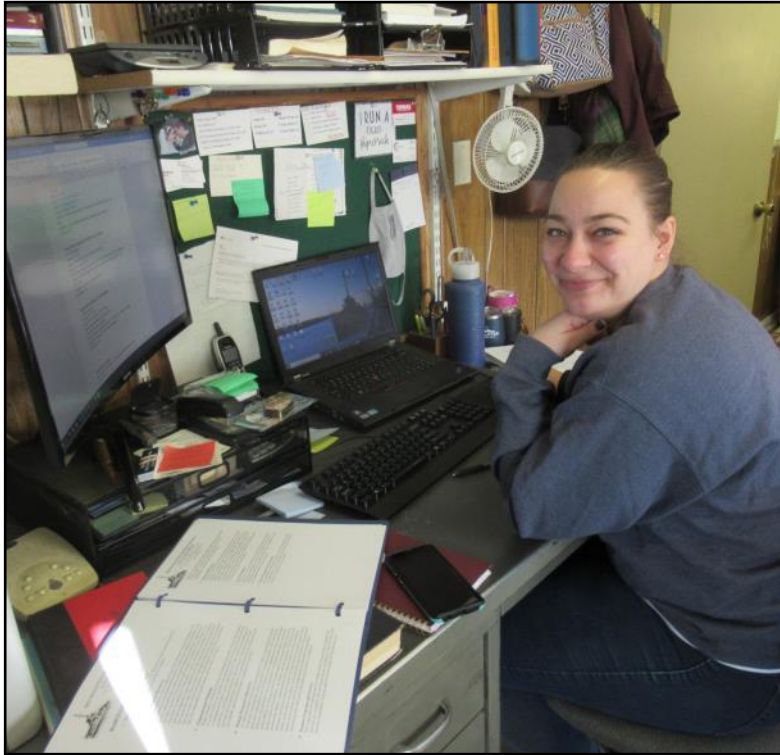
***Curator John Epp continues to seek more storage space down in the depth charge magazine.***



chance to still view and learn about the heroic actions of destroyer escorts. Our first online exhibition will feature the USS MASON (DE-529), the first predominately African American crewed ship in the U.S. Navy. Like many of her fellow DEs, her lifespan was short, and she was scrapped shortly after the war ended. But her contribution to the war effort and the eventual desegregation of the armed forces, with Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces (1948), cannot be understated. When SLATER returned to NYC, some of MASON's crew members helped begin the lengthy restoration process.

***Earl and Gene prepare another group of hedgehogs for restoration.***





***Shanna is preparing to hire new tour guides and getting ready for a busy spring!***

**In other news, we received a generous donation of documents pertaining to the Submarine Chaser Training Center in Miami, Florida, from Bill Roberts. He also sent over some dinner menus from USS TRUMPETER (DE-180) and USS EDGAR G. CHASE (DE-16), his father's ships. These will be great additions to our collection; thanks Bill!**

**Inside the trailer, the classroom has stepped up and served the functions of Chiefs, the mess deck, the galley, and part time Tim's office. It's also held a meeting or two. Did we mention how eager we are to have the contract work done in the forward compartments? Jo Ann continues to**

serve lunch on Mondays for the crew, process all your generous donations, and keep the grant paperwork in order.

**Not three feet away from Jo Ann, sits Shanna.** She's been busy preparing for our upcoming season, our 25<sup>th</sup> in Albany, so she's trying to make it an extremely successful one. She's designing t-shirts, investigating new merchandise, and planning new presentations for our crew to present to the public. Shanna is also starting to advertise to hire our college interns for this season. Their training begins in March. If you know any college students with a passion for ships, or WWII history make sure they grab an application on our website.



***This is dedication. Your support keeps this crew coming back in the cold.***

**Getting back to the “Save America’s Treasures” grant that we talked about in the beginning, all of you on our mailing list will soon be received a solicitation about matching the grant, asking you to “Double our Money” with your contribution.** This is only the second federal grant we’ve ever received, so we want to make sure we make our match and get the full \$176,000 that was awarded to us. We’re quite proud of the fact that the National Park Service has finally recognized the effort that all of you have put into restoring and supporting our ship. Let’s show them we can come up with enough money to match their grant!

See you next month!

Tim



***You can double your money if you bet on USS SLATER.  
Keep an eye out for the Save America’s Treasures Grant Match request.***