



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The big event of September was our opportunity to host the 56th conference of the **Historic Naval Ships Association**. With the largest attendance of recent conferences, over 130 people traveled to Albany, to attend four days of seminars on various aspects of operating a historic vessel and learning from other organizations. We heard updates from most museum ships and subs either during the seminars or in conversations. Some of the seminars included updates on USS TEXAS and USS NAUTILUS dry dockings, USS MIDWAY's experience with underwater modifications, and USS IOWA's cofferdam work. There were also sessions

on underwater archeology, where we saw video footage of recent shipwreck discoveries, and a presentation on new coating advances by **Dexter Mackall** of PPG Paints.



A few of the SLATER crew who were aboard to greet the HNSA attendees.

SLATER staff and volunteers presented on several topics. **Shanna** shared how she works to market SLATER, and offered strategies everyone else could implement to ease the burden of fundraising. **Ed Zajkowski** talked about attracting and keeping quality volunteers. **Doug Tanner** talked about welding safety procedures, and I participated in a session on Drydocking Small Ships. **Barry Witte** brought eager maintenance-minded pupils aboard

for demonstrations on detection and maintenance of the ship's electrical system.

As the host, we were in charge of planning and organizing evening events for all the conference attendees.

Shanna planned a Museum Ships Pub Trivia at **Fort Orange Brewing**, with help from **Kevin of Trivia Nights Live**. On Wednesday, we welcomed everyone aboard SLATER to show off our hard work in restoration and how our tour guides educate the public. Our SLATER time was followed by a cruise aboard our neighbors, **Dutch Apple Cruises**, with a BBQ dinner provided by **Saati Catering**. Barry even prepared the Fighting Lights to greet us as our cruise arrived back to the pier after dark. The events culminated in a closing banquet at the **New York State Museum** overlooking the capitol building, with a buffet dinner by **Nicole's Catering**, delicious drinks, author **David Sears** as our keynote speaker, and awards presented by HNSA and NHHC (Naval History and Heritage Command). We were especially proud of Shanna who received the Russell Booth Award from HNSA. This award is for outstanding achievement for a period of about one year. Shanna was nominated for her great work in all aspects of opening our new building.



John showing off the Collections Space to HNSA attendees from USS COD.



Gio prepared Wally for his transfer to USS MIDWAY, the host of HNSA 2024. We don't think he is going to need his homemade knit sweater in San Diego.

The big day for us was Wednesday. That afternoon the group arrived to tour our ship. We had a large contingent of our volunteers aboard to show off USS SLATER and talk about how we do things. The crowd certainly



Over 130 HNSA attendees filled the ship and the shoreside deck for their tour of SLATER.

seemed to be impressed with what almost thirty years of volunteer work in Manhattan and Albany has accomplished. Shanna, John, and I heard compliments from just about every attending person whether they were impressed with the cleanliness of the ship, the quality restoration, how our excellent tour guides share information and stories about the ship, or the Mr. Roberts referenced palm tree. Everyone was so impressed with the work and passion that goes into USS SLATER. We've said it before – we wouldn't be here without our volunteers.



Our Westerbeke diesel has fuel pump problems.

The conference was over on Friday, but down at the ship Shanna was busy meeting with the HNSA treasurer as well as other ship's YouTube teams, to film for their prospective channels. Make sure you check out videos from Battleship NEW JERSEY, USS KIDD, and USS COD. We look forward to the upcoming episodes.

For maintenance, it was a month of frustrating breakdowns. First, two weeks before the HNSA conference, the fuel pump on our motor whaleboat broke

down. Attempts to resurrect it failed, so the idea of giving boat rides during the convention went out the window. As it stands now, it looks like repairs will be over one thousand dollars.

The second failure involved consumptive use of an artifact and will be much more expensive. After twenty-six years of faithful service, our Ingersol-Rand low pressure air compressor finally bit the dust. It started one day with a frightening rattle, and it was immediately secured. Investigation by **Doug Tanner** showed that the rings had failed, and lube oil had burned inside the piston. This was a piece of original equipment, and Ingersol-Rand no longer has parts for this model of compressor.



Our main air compressor is out of action. Doug and Super Dave are working to get it repaired so we can use the air tools.



Our two Ronnies chipped out the 20mm gun tubs. You can't needle scale without compressed air.

The interim solution is to use a smaller Quincy compressor located in B-1. To make this operational, we ordered new belts and realigned those belts and motor, and re-piped the compressor into the low-pressure air system. **Danny** is fabricating a water separation pot for that compressor. We also have the small sandblasting compressor forward below CPO head, and a portable compressor loaned by **Jo Ann's** father. Gary changed the plug on this compressor so it would fit the ship's 220-volt system. Thankfully, we will have compressed air to run the needle scalers during the work week.

The long-term solution goes in two directions, replacing the current compressor and keeping the artifact of the old one. As having compressed air is essential to ship maintenance, we plan to purchase a modern replacement with the same capacity. These units don't come cheap, and the initial estimates Doug has received are in the \$12,000 range. However, the thinking is that a new unit will be so much more efficient that it will eventually pay for itself in terms of electricity usage. At the same time, we will tear down the original ship's compressor to diagnose the failure and do a cosmetic reassembly, while we continue to search for the parts to repair it.

Meanwhile, as the rain continued, so did our search for leaks. We are still dealing with the leak in the overhead in CIC, waiting for a dry Monday to weld it closed. The crew worked on containment in the CIC overhead to prepare the area for hot work. They also found a new leak by the CIC vent duct on the flying bridge that was the result of loose bolts on the vent flange, we hope. We are also dealing with leaks under gun three, over John's Collections Space. We don't want to do hot work there if we can avoid it, as we would need to relocate many of the artifacts to do so safely.



Bill and Ron painted out the spare 40mm barrels.

Danny and his crew have completed the hot work in the aft three-inch ready service lockers. They are now in the process of bolting on the top and side heat shields that keep the ammunition cool. **Dale** has been repairing the faucet, to get the sink in the aft crew's head operational. Barry has been manufacturing and installing label plates on our darken ship switches, and getting a few of the switches operational. Now the guides can demonstrate to visitors how the system worked. The engineers spent the month getting their spaces ready for the HNSA visit, and struggling with repairs to the motor whaleboat fuel pump.



The shipfitters mounted the heat shields on the gun 33 ready service lockers.



Bill finished rolling out deck blue on the 01 level.

In the world of paint, Ron Frankosky and George Gollas spent a week aboard during the HNSA convention. Working with **Bill Wetterau, Ron Prest, and Thomas Scian,** they completed painting the 01 level and the amidships 20mm gun tubes in time for the HNSA visit. Ron has since started our annual rescaling of the fo'c'sle in preparation for repainting.

As this edition goes online, we are starting our fall work. Our hope is to complete repairing of the fo'c's'le, do a lot of preservation on

the flying bridge, which has been neglected for a long time, and do preservation and repainting of the 40mm guns and gun tub interiors.

The month started with Shanna setting up an artifact display at the Highland Library. It was great timing, as volunteer tour guide, **Fred Sirois**, also gave a presentation there on the 18th. Fred also made his way to Grafton, NY, and presented to their historical society about the efforts made to “Save SLATER.” **Bob Wheelock** also presented at the Rensselaer Public Library this month. We love when we get opportunities to share our story with the public!



The New England Region Chiefs and Chief Selects gathered for a photograph on and around Mount 31.

We had two groups of Chief Petty Officers come aboard for volunteer workdays. On September 2nd we had the **Ballston Spa NPTU** Chiefs and Chief Selects aboard. They did

general restoration, cleaned machinery spaces, and painted the main deck on the starboard side. The following weekend, SLATER volunteer, **Chief Art Dott**, organized an Overnight with CPOs chiefs and chief selects from the **New England recruiting district**. Using the whaleboat, they pressure washed the port side, to get the ship looking clean for HNSA convention. They also polished brass and primed the deck within the Mount-33 gun tub. Thank you all for your support!



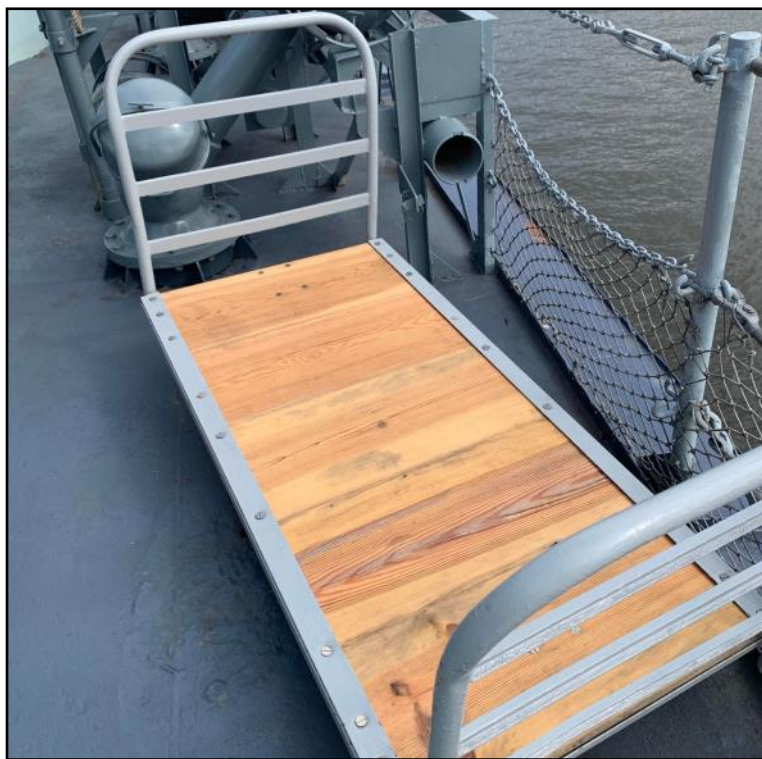
Pressure washing the side. Despite the heat, no one took a swim.

John and intern Tyler were instrumental in bringing aboard 20

budding museum professionals as part of their Public History classes at SUNY Albany. Our staff shared their experiences working aboard a historic ship, and how each of them should consider the trials of working aboard an artifact while it houses thousands of other artifacts. The students were then taken on an extensive tour of the ship, and many showed interest in applying to become volunteers or interns in the near future. I think it was a great opportunity for all involved.

It is always exciting when an education volunteer can find a maintenance project that speaks to them and their individual skillset. For

years we had a pier cart that sat dilapidated on the fantail. Our regular maintenance crew had



The pier cart was a wreck on the fantail for years. She shines now.



All tours learn the story of Frank O. Slater, S2c, the ship's namesake, in the Wardroom. Charles has been working overtime this month by volunteering extra days. We'll make sure he gets a raise.

enough other projects going that it was never anyone's priority. But, Sunday volunteer tour guide, **Chris Soulia**, would pass by it with tours groups and think 'what a sad little cart'. When the yellow caution tape appeared around the cart this past May, he knew that he had to act. It took most of his Sunday shift to disassemble it. And there it sat until John wondered aloud one August Sunday afternoon "hmmmm, I wonder if the cart will be done in time for the Conference in mid-September..." Being that it was late August, Chris figured it was time to get started with the actual restoration, which took about 50 hours and admittedly stretched his ability level, however with the help of **The Old**

Goat Wood Shop in Voorheesville, who donated the 200 year old Douglas Fir for the decking, as well as the incredibly helpful people at **Woodward Fasteners** in Albany who miraculously had 2.5 inch slotted machine screws (apparently they are antiques), the project was done on time! Shanna is starting to worry that she'll lose a tour guide with Chris' great success with his maintenance project and now Tim has him working in the galley during the work week. What potential!

The last day of the month was our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. **Mary Beth Mulligan** provided the traditional lasagna main course, while Shanna's husband, **Michael Schuster**, prepared green beans, salad, bread, and an apple cake for dessert. Shanna and Jo Ann took care of the last-minute preparation to give our volunteers an evening off. There was a lot of excitement when Intern, **Gio** brought in his homebrewed **Tin Can Ale** to share with the crew. We love to have this event every year, to make sure we take the time to express our appreciation to all of our volunteers. This year's event was even more special, as we had all the compliments from HNSA fresh in our minds. We wouldn't be here without our volunteers.

See you next month,
Tim



Everyone ate well at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner!



John & Art at their first HNSA conference.



Shanna & Jo Ann taking in the view at the HNSA banquet.



Tim and Ron with Travis from Battleship Texas (center).



Doug receiving a certificate from Ryan Szimanski, Battleship New Jersey.



Ed Zajkowski, Mary from LILAC, and Bill from INGHAM.



Shanna took home an award for her hard work on our new Visitor's Center this year.