

# 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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**I expected the malaise to continue into June and July, but one phone call changed everything.** The day after **Jo Ann** sent out the May SIGNALS, **Ed Zajkowski**, our shipyard coordinator, got a call from the shipyard Vice President of Engineering, **Joe Eckhardt**. Ever since our first overhaul in 2014, Joe and Ed have developed a special relationship. You have to understand guys such as Joe and Ed are both in their seventies, and by their own admission, just hitting their stride. But if they are not up drinking coffee and doing business by 0500, call the coroner. It was thus that on 2 June 2020, at 0618, Ed's phone rang and it was Joe, from Caddell's. Joe tells Ed, "A couple of shipping businesses aren't doing well and cancelled their overhauls, want to bring Slater in during July?"

**To back track for a minute, we received the Maritime Heritage Grant in 2017.** After a year of fundraising and planning, we had planned to take USS SLATER to Caddell's drydock and shipyard in Staten Island on 29 March 2020. However, we made the extremely difficult decision on 19 March to cancel the trip, due to rising COVID-19 fears.



*After postponing our shipyard trek, we are back on the schedule for July!*

**After we all settled down with that decision, we discussed a new schedule, assuming the virus situation would somewhat clear.** After discussions with yard VP, Joe Eckhardt, they found a spot for us starting the first week of October 2020. Things quieted down and life became one of masks and isolation. As the liaison person for Slater and Caddell's, Ed would periodically call Caddell's for updates.

Of course, we had packed up the ship for the yard, and secured all the displays. On the assumption that we would try for limited visitation in the summer, that meant unpacking and setting up the artifacts, and then restowing everything for the October overhaul. A July overhaul meant we could leave everything packed up, do the overhaul, and have the yard crew clean up the ship for visitation before we returned.



*Warren and Earl chipping in the shade.*

Ed didn't have the authority to say "Yes", but said yes, pending a call to me around 0715. I said "go with it but pinpoint dates". And Ed knows that when you don't have engines, no matter how noble our intentions and desire to get to the yard, you aren't going unless tugs are available.

As soon as I hung up with Ed, I called Rob Goldman of NYS Marine Highway, our towing company, and asked how much notice he would need to move SLATER. Rob responded that he could have tugs with 48 hours notice. We planned a sailing date of Sunday, 5 July. Ed made one more call to Joe at the yard for agreement, and bingo, in less than 24 hours all involved had a solid plan. Immediately, out came the punch list that we had put on the shelf in March.



*Danny fabricated a new door for Officer's Country to fit air conditioners.*

That exchange created a flurry of activity aboard USS SLATER. This again made us realize how important people's generosity is to this project. First and most importantly, was our cook, Blair Sandri good with the new schedule? Blair could make it. The second problem was that now we would be dealing with intense summer heat. To rectify that problem, we came up with a solution that Katie Kuhl used back in collections years ago. Danny Statile fabricated a new door at the forward end of officer's country that mounted two window air conditions. An air handler would exhaust the hot air out the forward hatch, keeping officer's country cool. Window fans would be used to draw the cool air from the passageway into the staterooms.



We felt we needed more refrigerator space and ice, so we approached that problem from two directions. Storekeeper, **Dick Walker**, USCG, got in touch with our friend **Jake**, at **Cornwell Appliance**, about a refrigerator with a cold water spigot. Jake agreed to loan us one for the duration of the shipyard period. **Gary Sheedy** got the refrigerator mounted on deck outside the muffler room, and hooked up the water supply. **Gary** also dusted off a project he had been planning for years and mounted a compressor in the original wardroom pantry refrigerator. He got that going, as well as an old ice-making machine that we had aboard. **Hal** and **Mike Hatfield**, of **Maximum Security Products**, loaned us a gas generator so we can keep the food cold if we have a problem with the ship's service diesel generator.

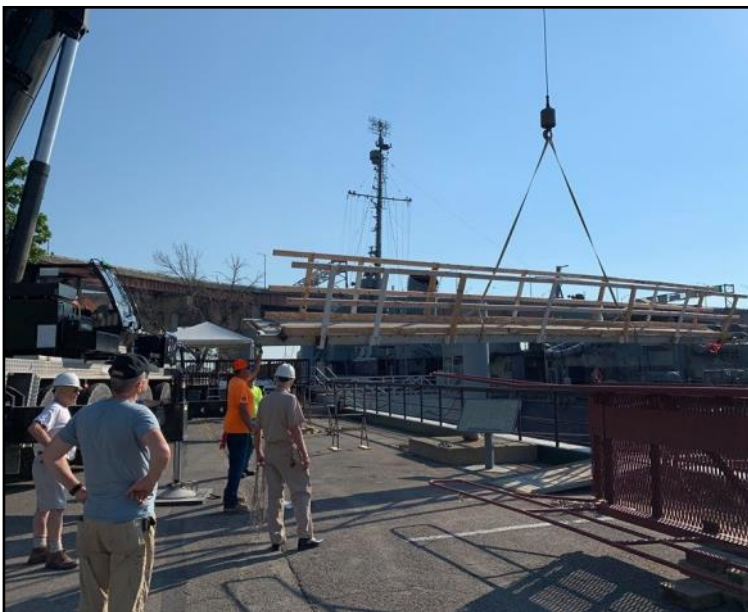


*Gary Sheedy mounting a compressor in the wardroom pantry refrigerator.*

We purchased several large air circulators to draw air from the officer's country passageway into the staterooms and a gas grill so we don't have to be dependent on the electric ranges. We also purchased a month's supply of galley paper products.

It wasn't all about creature comforts. We purchased 15 new life jackets for the riding crew. **Barry Witte** and his team did preventative maintenance on the anchor windlass brake, freed up the turn buckle on the pelican hook and lowered and raised the port anchors, all without scratching the paint. **Steve Syrotynski** got all of our portable radios working.

The biggest task of all fell to **Doug Tanner**. He arranged with his friend, **Hank Digeres** of **Three D Rigging**, to donate a crane to lift the gangway. On the morning of Tuesday June 23rd, Hank sent **Nick Fretto**, **Pat Fretto** and **Mark Quinto** to lift the gangways for our pending departure. Former Marine, Hank remarked, "The Marines had to bail out the Navy again."



*Three D Rigging donated crane service to get our temporary gangway in place.*

Then there was all of the paperwork involved with the move. The tow survey and tow plan were dusted off and reapproved by the Coast Guard. Rob Goldman made arrangements for a pilot. We worked with our agent, **Bill Bergan of Amsure**, to arrange for the insurance needed for the trip. The insurance cost looks to be about three times the amount we paid for the 2014 trip.

Volunteer tour guide, **Bob Wheelock**, gave a presentation on the History of USS SLATER, over the phone, with Community Caregivers and Albany Guardian Society in their Lunchtime Chats. We were very grateful for this opportunity, considering all our other speaking engagements were cancelled for this summer.

Shanna made sure that the artifacts in the collections space were stored safely and covered in plastic sheeting, with the help of interns **Liam, John, Austin, and Evan**. She also has started training our three newly-hired interns, before the ship leaves for a month. Shanna is putting finishing touches on the ship's store, and ensuring every product is entered correctly in the newly programmed register.



*Dick Walker picked up a gas grill, water storage containers, and electric fans.*

Shanna picked up new responsibilities since Rosehn left last October. She is making her way through all the paperwork that is necessary to hire new employees and informing the payroll company. She's sent out press releases for our trip to drydock, interviewed with two different radio stations, **WAMC** in Albany and **WPDH** in Poughkeepsie. She is trying to keep up with the hundreds of questions from people wanting to make sure they know where to be when the ship floats past them! **Tamani Wooley** from **Spectrum** stopped by with a camera and got the scoop while aboard, and the same day we had a photographer from the **Times Union** snap some photos of **Thomas Scian** painting.



*Bill Holt painting, making sure we look to all those drone photographers.*

We are collaborating with our neighbors **Dutch Apple Cruises**. They will host a cruise and follow the ship for an hour down the Hudson, leaving at 0500. Tour Guide, **Evan Sanders** will be aboard Dutch Apple to share the history of SLATER. Tickets are available on their website.





*Thomas is getting the deck primed and painted.*

*New interns Bri, Sarah, and Xavier on tour with John.*

*Testing the battle lantern emergency lighting system.*

**On Friday the 26<sup>th</sup>, I got a call from Rob Goldman, confirming that our departure time will be Sunday morning 5 July at slack tide, which is 0500.** Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> will be a busy day for us. The wires will have to come off, the diesel tank topped off, the generators tested and the watch bill set. The first days of July will be a busy time for us.

**And now we look to you.** We are still short \$200,000 of the funding we need to completely cover the shipyard cost. To date we have raised \$274,000 and with the \$200,000 Maritime Heritage Grant we have a total of \$474,000. That leaves of \$226,000 short of covering the total shipyard bill. So please continue with your generosity, in the hope that we won't have to use our endowment funds for this project. Stay tuned and follow our Facebook page for continuing shipyard updates. Also on our Facebook page, is our Facebook shop, filled with merchandise of our favorite ship. We promise you an exciting month ahead.

**Remember, to send us your photos!** If you get some great shots of the ship make sure you send them to us. They may end up in our 2021 calendar!

*See you next month,*

*Tim*

**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.**