

## **SLATER SIGNALS**

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

**Destroyer Escort Historical Museum**

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**Vol. 17 No. 8, August 2014**



**Navy veteran Heinz Granderath and crew take the whaleboat out for our weekly exercise.**

**August has slipped by all too quickly, but it was a fine month with both the weather and the tourists.** The work to put USS SLATER together, following the shipyard overhaul, continued. If you remember where we left off at the end of July, we had emptied out three of the four POD storage units into the aft crew's quarters and returned them to end the rental fees. That left one POD on the pier full of museum artifacts and financial records, and a mass of stuff in the aft crew's quarters that had to be stowed so the spaces would be habitable for the upcoming fall workweeks.

**Tommy Moore completed the shelving in magazine C-304M. Ron Mazure and Bill Wetterau** spent a couple of days cleaning and wiping down the space before we could begin stowing gear down there. When it was relatively clear, down the hatch went enough dress uniforms to outfit the whole crew, a hundred teak planks from the heavy cruiser LOS ANGELES CA-135, and an assortment of miscellaneous hardware. Then we put the freshly-laundered mattress covers and pillowcases on all the bedding, and cleaned, swabbed, and dusted the berthing spaces. The aft berthing spaces are now ready to receive the volunteers. We also got the after officer's country squared away for the first time in about 14 years.

All the artifacts that were in the last POD were moved into the special collections space, C-203L. It will probably be winter before Heather gets a chance to put the exhibits back together. **Claire Oesterreich** has been back with us on Saturdays, trying to get the shipboard library and archives back in order. **Heather Maron** has been on my case to try and get all my non-historic shipboard junk out of her space. She has her work cut out for her this coming winter. Right now she is preoccupied with her guides and tourists.



**Super Dave Mardon moving financial records...**



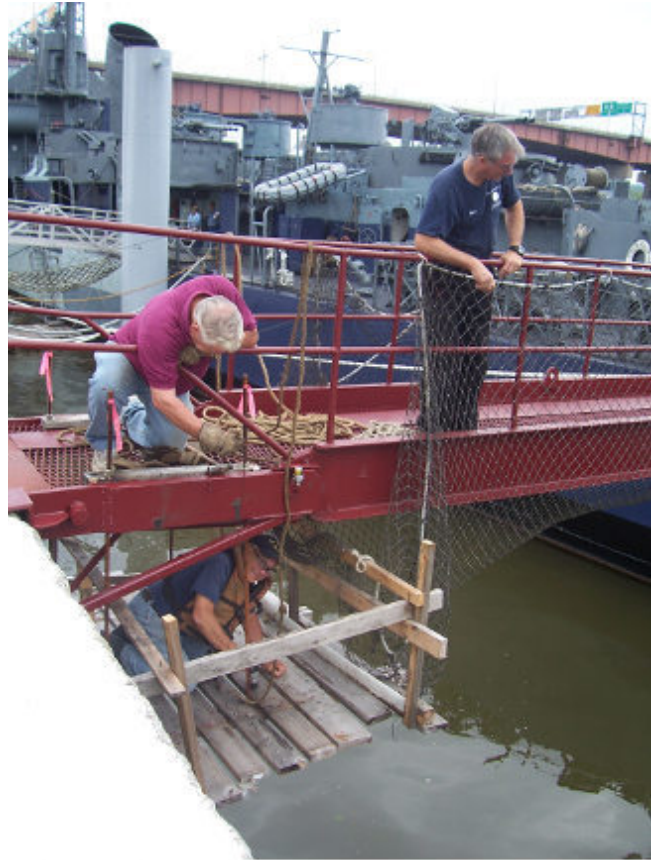
**... while Gary Sheedy moves stores to the reefer deck.**

**We put together an all-hands working party one Saturday and got all Rosehn's financial records stored back down in the reefer space.** That emptied out the last POD, so the following Monday we made a phone call and are now POD-free. We have all our parking spaces back. Speaking of the reefer deck, the place has made a remarkable transformation. **Gary Sheedy** had been required to tear out all the starboard insulation during the overhaul so we could fire-watch where the doubler plate was installed. Since returning from the shipyard he got his lower storeroom painted and replaced and pop-riveted all the metal sheathing he had taken out. Then, he restowed all his electrical spare parts. He also brought all his food crates and baskets back aboard and reset the cold room display. The reefer space has returned to its rightful place as the most magnificently restored space on the ship. We can't wait to see what he does with aft steering.





Walt Stuart and Earl Herchenroder stowing teak decking.



Super Dave gets ready to drop the gangway work platform.

**The whaleboat is back.** Following a winter and spring of continual restoration by **Rocky Rockwood** and **Bill Wetterau**, the boat motored back from **Scarano's Boatyard** to SLATER early this month. The first mission for the boat was taking **Erik Collin** around to the starboard side forward, and touching up the pale gray paint where the tugs scuffed us up moving us out of drydock. With **Larry Williams** as the coxswain, and **Ken Myrick**, **Mike Dingmon** and **Gary Lubrano** alternating as boat engineers, we've been exercising her every Monday to keep that aspect of destroyer escort history alive.



Super Dave and Earl Herchenroder free up a frozen line reel.

**Topside, Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Paul Guarnieri, Thomas Scian and Ron Mazure finished replacing all the mooring lines.** Boats held class and was making good progress teaching his apprentices how to do eye splices. Suffice to say, the ship looks a lot better and is a lot more secure now that our fifteen-year-old mooring lines have been renewed. Following that project, Boats renewed the safety ropes on the edge of the wharf. Then he took his team to the 01 level where they are now engaged in replacing the manila on the davit guys.

**Doug Tanner and his shipfitters, Dave Mardon and Tim Benner, finished reinforcing the shoreside supports for the steel aft gangway. Earl Herchenroder went down on the platform and put Corroseal primer on all the new metal, then painted it to match the rest of the gangway. Doug had hung the platform off the gangway with all thread and welded steel, so **Super Dave** put life and limb at risk to climb down and cut the angle brackets. He climbed back up and we backed off the nuts on the threaded rod. Next, we gently lowered the whole platform into the river. We pulled it upstream to the paint float and hauled it aboard the float, where Earl and **Jon Palmer** broke it down and hauled the wood ashore. The wood will probably soon find another life as shelving in one of the magazines.**



The brain trust contemplates the davit repair.



Doug Tanner fitting in the replacement piece.

**With the completion of that project Doug turned his attention back to the aft whaleboat davit pedestal.** There was a lot of debate about whether or not we should have let the shipyard handle that project, and now we're all wishing we had. That said, Doug completed and pressure-tested the deck doubler inside the pedestal to make sure the welds wouldn't leak. He then added some reinforcing to the inside of the pedestal, and has got the inboard half of the outer shell fitted up. The next part will be the most challenging. He has to build a platform hanging over the side of the ship so he can work the outboard side. The lower portion of the outboard side of the pedestal, which has rusted paper thin, will be cut away and replaced. Then, all the bolts that go through to the engineroom to hold the pedestal to the deck will be replaced. I've said before this is a project near and dear to my heart, since I'm usually the one in the whaleboat when they haul it aboard.





**Gene Jackey and Ron Mazure replace a ladder in the starboard fresh water tank.**

**Our other shipfitters, Gene Jackey, Clark Farnsworth, and Ron Mazure, have been working in the aft water tanks under C-202L.** The steel ladders that access from the manholes into the tanks had wasted away to the point of being unsafe. So, they cut away the old ladders, fabricated new ones, and mounted them inside the tanks. Suffice to say, it was a tight fit through the manholes to work on the lower portions of the ladders. They also helped Boats free up a frozen line reel on the 01 level aft.

**Down in the machinery spaces, work continues in two directions, the fire and bilge system and engine cooling.** Karl Herchenroder, Mike Dingmon, Ken Myrick and Gary Lubrano have been continuing work to get cooling water and the discharge line put together on the number four main engine, so that they can fire it up one day. They are also planning to tie the ships service generator into the loop, to provide reliable cooling and be able to

serve as a standby generator in case of a power outage. Karl also remounted all the manhole covers on the bulkhead tanks in B-3.





Happy engineers working on fresh water cooling for their diesels.



Barry Witte and Mike Fitzgerald overhaul the fire and flushing pump.

**Barry Witte, Colin Steve, Zach Flagler, Tulsa Scott, Griffin Keegan, Sam Spicer, James Conlon, and Charles Burgard all put time in this month on the B-3 fire and flushing pump.** Barry is using the system as a teaching tool, taking it apart and restoring it piece by piece so the students can get some practical mechanical experience. This pump has not run in over 20 years. Working with Kings Point grad **Mike Fitzgerald**, they were able to remove the impeller. It was frozen in the casing by decades' accumulation of calcite from the seawater. The motor seems to be in really good condition. The pump impeller just needed to be cleaned out, and a small repair made to the packing gland. A replacement packing follower needs to be fabricated from scratch.



Erik Collin touching up the starboard camouflage.



Chief Smith serves up lunch in the galley on Mondays and Saturdays.

**Routine work goes on. Smitty** continues to cook lunch for the crew every Monday and Saturday, a real morale builder. He has a busy month coming up, as he will be cooking for our volunteer appreciation night, the NPTU CPO work weekend, and the Michigan Fall workweek in October. We appreciate his dedication. **Jim Gelston** remounted the last of the clocks and keeps them wound and set every Monday.

Our sailmaker, **Angelo Bracco** tackled a big job. The deck gang had taken down the fantail awning prior to firing the gun to celebrate the Coast Guard Birthday; so hot embers wouldn't damage the awning. Angelo took advantage of that to haul it below to his sewing machine, and patched it in several places, a repair that had been needed for a long time. Then Boats and his gang muscled it back to the fantail and rigged it tighter than it's been in a long time.

**On Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup>, members of the US Coast Guard and US Coast Guard Auxiliary gathered on the decks of USS SLATER to celebrate the 224th anniversary of the founding of the Revenue Cutter Service which became the United States Coast Guard.** The event also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary which was first formed in 1939 as the Coast Guard Reserve. Organized by SLATER Coast Guard veteran CWO-4 **Dick Walker**, with assistance from **Charles Poltenson**, USCG Auxiliary, the event was well-publicized with top news coverage on three major TV stations and a front page article in the Troy Record. The event was emceed by **Steve Long** with a short but comprehensive history of the Coast Guard provided by **Dick Walker**, followed by a history of the Auxiliary by USCG Auxiliary Division Vice Commander and SLATER volunteer **Charles Poltenson**. In addition to our USCG volunteers on SLATER, twelve members of the Auxiliary were in attendance from three local units. The Officer in Charge of the USCGC WIRE (WYTL-65612), BMC **Jason Cross**, and his crew were special guests. The crew of the WIRE provided the color guard for the ceremony and the gun crew for the firing of the salute at the conclusion under the able supervision of **Erik Collin**. The gun crew consisted of MK1 **Jason Edwards**, SN **Michael Rosinski**, SN **Christopher Weiss** and FN **Jim Shea**. After the event BMC





**Vince Knuth leads another group of camp kids through the SLATER.**

August has been a busy month for tourists. Visitors have traveled from all regions of the United States, as well as many foreign countries. Take a look at our Visitor Log Book, and you will see that tourists from Canada, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Italy, New Zealand, and Australia have signed in--and that's just in August. USS SLATER seems to have become an international destination. Not to be outdone, we have seen U.S. visitors from as far away as California and Alaska, plus just about every state between here and there. Our volunteer guides have been successfully handling the increased number of visitors we've seen this season. Two familiar faces, **Dennis Nagi** and **Mike Marko**, have joined our Wednesday regulars, **Alan Fox** and **Floyd Hunt**.

Dennis was a regular guide in the past, as well as a successful liaison between our crew and the local Greek community. Mike has successfully made the transition from volunteering with the Michigan crew workweek to dependable tour guide.



**Visitor Bob Hemenway, former WWII radarman off USS LLOYD APD-63, stopped in and found his old rack. Not bad for 89.**



**The roster for Thursday has seen some changes, and now includes Bob Dawson, Ken Kaskoun, Don Cushman, and Chuck Boone.** This great combination of seasoned docents and newer guides has proven to be a strong team for taking on camp groups and crowds. On Friday, **Heather** oversees just two volunteers, but those two contribute enough for half a dozen. **Jack Madden** has been a familiar face, contributing his personal experience from PT boats to his tours, while **Stan Levandowski** has managed to parlay his enthusiasm for all things radio into his tours. Saturdays always bring an interesting challenge to tour guides, who must maneuver groups around the restoration projects and shout over chipping and grinding. **Chuck Teal, Nelson Potter, and Paul Guarnieri** excel at moving visitors along the tour route, taking time to answer questions while carefully staying out of the way of maintenance. Sundays are significantly quieter aboard SLATER, but not necessarily slower in terms of tour volume. **Art Dott, Grant Hack, Tom Cline, and Jim Kuba** have consistently handled the large groups that tend to appear during Sunday afternoons. Though seasonal interns augment the tour guide schedule, these volunteer docents have been the backbone of all things educational aboard the ship. Without their weekly dedication, we wouldn't be able to show off our progress or educate the public to the importance of destroyer escorts.

We've been getting some great comments on the website [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). Check us out if you get a chance. But, all in all, after all the shipyard excitement, August has been a pretty much routine kind of a month. And there's nothing wrong with the old routine, as we remain "moored as before."

**Follow us on Facebook and see you next month.**

