



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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**Overall, in March, we didn't get as much accomplished as I'd hoped this past winter, due to the continued cold.**

I'm happy to report that the ship rode out the winter beautifully, with no undue strain on the sea wall or mooring dolphins and with no signs of leakage. Also, **Rocky** has been down at Scarano's, working on the whaleboat. In the engine space, he replaced the starboard seat front with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " marine plywood. On the engine cooling water feed line, he replaced the gate valve and the rotted wooden backing plate. Then, he put a ball valve in the sea cock. On the underside of the boat, he installed a scoop strainer on the through hull pipe, to keep the system from clogging up. We hope to have the whaleboat back in May.



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**Gary Sheedy's steering engine room project continues, as he tries to enlist the help of anyone he can get his hands on.** When the weather was really cold, he had plenty of friends and helpers because the electric space heater kept the place warm and balmy. But as the weather gets better, nobody wants to be cooped up in there with him, and people are gravitating towards topside projects. He calls them his foul weather friends. When summer rolls around, he won't have any friends at all. **Bill Wetterau, Ron Mazure, and Thomas Scian** have been his regulars. He latches on to **Earl Herchenroder** whenever he can, but Earl is always in great demand. Since Earl was Army, he does what he's told without coming up with a better idea on how to do a job. Poor **Mike Marko** came in on a Monday to uncover guns, but since **Boats Haggart** had already taken care of that, he got stuck chipping paint.

**Chipping paint will be an ongoing project for months, encompassing the steering gear room, the shipfitters shop, and the chemical warfare space.** All the items that were stored in those spaces have been moved to the after officers stateroom and the laundry. The plan is to get the chemical warfare space painted out first, so we have a home for the stuff and can create order. **Thomas Scian** started the prep work in the shipfitters shop and found several relics of SLATER's Greek service as AETOS under the workbench when he cleaned out. There is much more to this project than chipping and painting. There is a lot of rewiring to be done, welding in stuffing tubes and installing the original style 1MC speakers. And, replacing wasted metal where the deck has rotted away. But when Gary finishes, it will be pristine. The only downside is the impact on the special collections area. Because of the dust that is being generated, all the cases have to remain covered, so that area will not really be accessible this season.

**The engineers are back in force with the warmer weather. Their first project was to change the oil in the low-pressure air compressor.** **Karl Herchenroder** and **Mike Dingmon** got talking about it and they couldn't remember the last time it was changed. I shouldn't admit this, but it turned out that it hadn't been changed since 2009. So much for our PMS program. **Mike, Ken Myrick,** and **Gary Lubrano** also took out the main deck radiator that cools the emergency diesel generator. They found it pretty plugged up with calcified scale, the same kind of material that **Barry Witte** and the Midshipmen have been finding in the firemain. That explained why we had so much trouble cooling the engine on the way back from the yard last summer, and will necessitate cleaning the heat exchanger and the rest of the system. **Karl Herchenroder** took the radiator over to **Larry Meracle** of **Empire Auto Radiator Company**, who was kind enough to donate the cleaning.



**Barry Witte has led a team effort of students and RPI Midshipmen to continue...**



**...restoration of USS SLATER's firemain system.**

**Barry Witte, his Colonie High students, and the RPI Midshipmen continue to march aft on the firemain, one section at a time.** They have hauled some pretty hefty pieces of pipe out on deck, cleaned them, and then sent them to Barry's shop at the school for painting and preservation. Barry had one annoying leak right at the B-3/B-4 bulkhead that defied all attempts to weld it up. They had to call **Doug Tanner** and the shipfitters in to weld it up, and Doug ended up having to cut the whole section of pipe right out of the bulkhead. He is now rebuilding it with fittings donated by his friends over at **Petrochem**.



**Doug Tanner and Tim Benner working to bring fresh water back aboard.**

**This is impacting progress on Doug's other projects, including the leaking stuffing tubes in gun three and the wasted overhead in C-203L, that can only be accessed by the crawl space under gun three. Doug, Tim Benner, and Super Dave Mardon** did complete the repairs to the aft head shower drain line, replacing our shipyard Saran Wrap and duct tape fix with a permanent repair that drains into the septic tank. They also got the fresh water system back together and pressure tested it. By the last week of the month, we finally had hot and cold running water aboard for **Erik Collin's** cleanup. The davit repair project is 95% complete, too. All that needs to be accomplished is some grinding, repainting, and the removal of the scaffold.



**Boats Haggart and Angelo Bracco discussing the upcoming life raft rigging project.**

**The deck gang, Boats Haggart, Walt Stuart, Paul Guarnieri, Bob Scian, and new volunteer Dick Brumley** have kept busy getting ready for opening day. All the Kasco circulators had to come out and get secured before the ice started flowing, or they'd be ripped away. As I write, Dick is planning to pressure wash them before stowing, but they remain on the foc's'cle because we haven't had a day warm enough. Then, all the gun mounts had to be uncovered and the canvas covers folded and stowed. A line had to be spliced from which to suspend the sewer line. All the coco mats had to be swept, dried, rolled up, and stowed. Then, Nelson Potter's handmade embarkation net was rigged over the side.

**Nelson also brought back the donation box, beautifully refinished.** The awning on the observation deck had to be put back up, and everything in the Briefing Room and Ship's Store had to be moved under it so we could have the carpet cleaned.



**Erik Collin did the first washdown of the season.**

**Through it all, Erik Collin and Dave Pitlyk worked their way through the interior of the ship, vacuuming, swabbing, sponging, and dusting away a winter's worth of grime.** Pillowcases were washed, the bunks were made up, bed spreads tightened, gear stowed, decks hosed down, loose gear stowed, and displays reset. All of this was done to bring the ship up to the standard of cleanliness visitors have come to expect when they come aboard USS SLATER. As I write, Erik's interior deck painting is ongoing. We also had the pleasure of having **Heather Maron** return for a day. Our cook, **Chief Smith**, took a two-week vacation, and Heather volunteered to cook lunch for us one day. Doug Tanner covered the other two Mondays.



**Kim and Sonia Joshi polishing the wardroom silver.**

**Erik received some unexpected help from the Joshi family in Fairfax, Virginia. Kim Joshi** contacted us about volunteering aboard. Kim's grandfather was a captain of several DEs, including USS JOYCE DE317. He was Captain of JOYCE when it rescued survivors from the USS LEOPOLD. It also sank the U-550, which destroyed the tanker PAN PENNSYLVANIA. **Kim** has spent many years preserving and researching the many artifacts her grandfather left for his family. We arranged for her and her family to help Erik with last minute preparations, and they spent two days aboard.

**Kim and her daughter Sonia polished all the wardroom silver and the surgical lamps.** Husband Willie and their son Kieran got all the battle helmets out on display, and helped with the parking lot clean up. They also vacuumed and cleaned in the aft berthing spaces, and swept down the weather decks. And, they got to experience **Doug Tanner's** lunch for the volunteers and share in the camaraderie on the messdecks with the Monday crew.

**Rosehn and Dave supervised moving everything out of the Briefing Room and Ship's Store so the carpets could be cleaned, and they restocked the store to be ready for opening day.** **Rosehn** is updating the donor boards to reflect the Hull Fund donations received in 2014, and is doing a review of our mailing list to send a last call letter to those we haven't heard from in two years. She completed organizing the collection of 10,000 rate badges that were dropped on us several years ago. Rosehn handled the media and we had many spotlight us on opening day.

**We held our annual tour guide refresher training on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Saati Deli and Catering** cooked up spaghetti and meat sauce for lunch, as we discussed the coming season. There were old faces, new faces, and people rejoining us. Guides were reminded to keep their tours to an hour, and that engine room tours will be offered on a separate ticket pending guide training. There was also a discussion of the new comment box, that is intended to give guides useful feedback about their tours. A new resource binder will be available in the shop for guides to consult this year. The ever-present need to recruit new volunteers was also touched on.



The welcome return of our tour guides signals the start of season 18.

**Shanna Hopson**, who hails from Montana, was introduced as our newest intern. Also present were **Vincent Knuth**, eating more than his fair share of the pasta, **Andrew Smith**, returning for his second season, and the multi-talented **Jon Palmer**. Sending their regrets that they were not able to attend were **Julianne Madsen** and **Claire Burgon**, who recently traveled to Scotland. We were pleased to welcome back **Donald Zuchelli**, after a period of absence. Of course, there were quite a few regulars as well. **Tom Cline**, who has been invited to become a member of our Board of Trustees, was present and volunteered to help.

**Art Dott** was there, and shared tips for keeping tour groups moving smoothly. **Floyd Hunt** and **Ken Kaskoun** discussed the importance of letting the public know that we don't receive government funding. **Nelson Potter** arrived, too, and dropped off a beautifully restored donation box. Also joining in were **Don Cushman, Mike Marko, Grant Hack,** and **Paul Guarneri**. We are pleased to have **Chuck Boone, Alan Fox, Jim Kuba,** and **Stan Levandowski** coming back for 2015. **Jack Madden** and **Tom McLaughlin** may stop by from time to time, but are currently on light duty only.



**The Clifton Park Vipers softball team came by to help with cleaning and take a tour of the ship.**

**We continue our efforts to educate the public about the SLATER and to promote her.** Our volunteer **Alan Fox** gave a presentation to the Holy Trinity Men's Club at Johnstown, New York on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Groups regularly request a presenter through our Speaker's Bureau program to bring the history of the SLATER to them and Alan jumped at this chance to do so. After delivering a well-received presentation on destroyer escorts and the SLATER, he was treated to an early St. Patrick's Day dinner of corned beef and cabbage.

**Dave Pitlyk** attended the University of Scouting event (formerly called the Pow Wow) at **Lisha Kill Middle School**. This is a yearly get-together of scouting leadership from the region where we are offered the opportunity to promote our overnight camping program. Interest and awareness were high and many groups had already scheduled their overnight this year!

**In another educational effort, if you follow us on Facebook, you know that we try to remember significant events in destroyer escort history on our Facebook page.** This is a particularly important anniversary because the Okinawa campaign began 70 years ago this month. Destroyers and destroyer escorts suffered grievously during that battle as the Kamikazes rained down. One aspect of the battle that has been overlooked was the damage done to the DEs that were converted to, or completed, as high-speed transports or APDs. They are part of our DE family. **Ed Zajkowski** has put a great deal of time and energy into compiling lists of the APDs that were present at Okinawa, and the ships that were sunk or damaged, so they, too, can be remembered on our Facebook page. The effort will culminate in an article that will be published in our printed quarterly newsletter for members, "**Trim But Deadly.**"

Finally, regarding upcoming events, on Saturday April 11 at 0930, Doug Tanner has arranged for the American Welding Society to honor Clark Farnsworth for his lifetime of welding service. Tony Esposito and Doug are having a plaque made and there will be refreshments. We hope you can be there, too. The Michigan workweek will be held during the second week of May, and we'll be having a Memorial Service to honor **Ron Zarem's** late son Mike. Then, the USS HUSE crew will be aboard the third week in May. And, we'll have our Memorial Day Service at 0830 on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Again, we can't thank all of you who donated to the Winter Fund enough.**

Throughout the past four months that we have been closed, donations have continued to come in at a rate that enabled us to pay all our bills and not dip into our savings. We grow financially stronger every day. That's a beautiful thing, and we owe it all to you.

**See you next month**



By opening day the river was finally free of ice.