

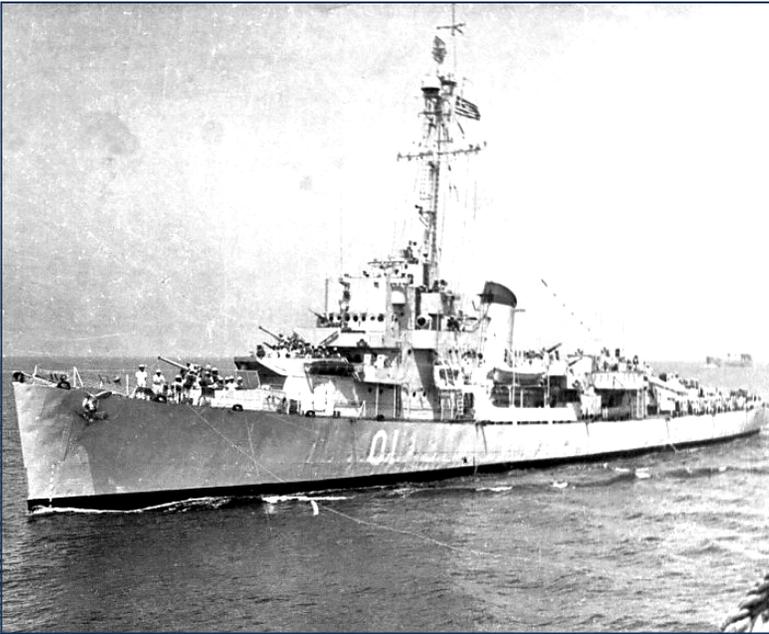


*USS Slater*, Albany, Albany County

The transformation of the *USS Slater* from a derelict warship into a waterfront educational asset is a remarkable success story marked by outstanding leadership and the extraordinary commitment of hundreds of volunteers who helped to sustain the project. Moored on the Hudson River in downtown Albany, the *Slater* offers visitors the opportunity to tour a rare surviving, fully restored World War II warship and learn about its important role during the war and what it was like to serve on the ship. Listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (and soon to be designated a National Historic Landmark), the *Slater* is operated by the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum, which was established in 1993 to preserve and interpret the ship.

Built in 1944, the *Slater* is a CANNON class destroyer escort that served in the United States Navy during World War II. It was one of 563 similar ships constructed between 1943 and 1945. Despite the large number of destroyer escorts built, the *Slater* is now the last of its type still afloat in the country. Destroyer escorts were built as a result of a critical shortage of anti-submarine vessels in the Atlantic Ocean at the beginning of the war. Developed in cooperation with the British Navy, the destroyer escort incorporated both anti-submarine and anti-aircraft weaponry as well as the latest radar technology. The high speed, long range, exceptionally maneuverable ships could be built quickly due to their all-welded (instead of riveted) construction, a modern ship building advancement that accelerated during the war.

Destroyer escorts played a critical role during the war, protecting supply ships as well as attacking enemy aircraft, submarines, and shorefront installations. The *Slater* was active throughout the war, serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Decommissioned as an active United States Navy vessel in 1947, the ship was subsequently transferred to the Greek Navy in 1951, renamed the *Aetos*, and used for training and patrols. It was deactivated in 1991 due to declining use, stripped of useable equipment, and sent to Crete for disposal. Fortunately, the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association, a nationwide organization dedicated to recognizing the importance of destroyer escorts and those who served on them, came to the ship's rescue. The Greek Navy donated the ship to the association, which raised money to bring it to New York City and established the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum to take charge of its restoration.



When the *Slater* arrived in New York in 1993, a team of volunteers began the long and arduous task of repairing the deteriorated ship. The vessel was moved to Albany in 1997 where a comprehensive restoration effort began under the leadership of Tim Rizzuto, an experienced ship restorer hired to oversee the project. With the help of private and public funds, including state preservation grants administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and teams of volunteers, the *Slater* underwent a thorough overhaul. Every square inch of the ship's hull, deck, and bulkheads were scraped and painted, and later modifications were removed and replaced with authentic World War II destroyer escort equipment, returning the ship to its original condition and configuration.



The *Slater* is one of the Capital District's star attractions, drawing thousands of visitors to the riverfront each year. The project's great success is a testament to the effectiveness of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum as well as the dedication of its volunteers. In addition to being one of the finest naval ship exhibits in the country, the *Slater* has become an important patriotic symbol, honoring all those who serve our country in the military, especially the United States Navy. The museum continues to nurture community support and has launched a fund raising campaign to sustain its efforts and ensure the ship's long term preservation.



*The USS Slater at sea during World War II (top); the ship before restoration (above middle); one of the ship's restored interiors (bottom left); and the restored ship moored on the Hudson River in downtown Albany (bottom right).*

