

Hello everyone and welcome to *DE Classified* a podcast showcasing the history of Destroyer Escorts. Each month a member of the USS SLATER's education crew will highlight a specific Destroyer Escort and share the stories of the sailors who served aboard these Trim But Deadly ships. I'm Shanna Schuster, the visitor engagement and program manager aboard USS SLATER and today we are going to DE classify USS ULVERT M. MOORE (DE-442).

USS ULVERT M. MOORE was a John C. Butler class destroyer escort. The ship was 306 feet long, 36 feet wide, and powered by two "D" Express boilers and 2 geared turbine engines capable of 12,000 horsepower with a top speed of 24 knots. She was built in Newark, New Jersey at the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

The ship was armed with 2 five-inch 38 caliber guns, 4 forty mm anti-aircraft guns, 10 20mm anti-aircraft guns, 3 21-inch torpedo tubes, one mark 10 hedgehog projector, 8 mark 6 depth charge projectors or K-guns, 2 mark 9 depth charge stern rolling racks, 186 enlisted sailors, and 14 officers. These small ships really were prepared for anything.

As you've heard in past episodes, every destroyer escort is named in honor of a hero... this ship is no different. Ulvert Mathew Moore was born on August 26th, 1917, in Williamson, West Virginia. He enlisted in the Naval Reserves on October 15th, 1940, in Washington DC and served as a seaman 2nd class until appointed an aviation cadet on January 14th 1941. After flight training in Jacksonville, Miami, and Norfolk, he was assigned to Torpedo Squadron 8 aboard USS HORNET.

Moore was the pilot of a Douglas TBD Devastator torpedo bomber and took part in the pivotal Battle of Midway on June 4th, 1942. Moore and the rest of the squadron attacked the Japanese aircraft carriers without fighter cover and in the face of withering anti-aircraft fire and heavy Japanese fighter opposition. Though all 15 planes within Torpedo Squadron 8 were shot down, they succeeded in diverting Japanese forces and preventing further launches of Japanese carrier aircraft. These efforts were essential contribution to the victory of the US Navy in this battle. Moore was killed in this attack and was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously and shared in the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the Squadron for their actions during the Battle of Midway. Bravery of men like Moore crippled three enemy carriers that day, paving the way for the victory that turned the tide in the Pacific.

In honor of his sacrifice, USS ULVERT M. MOORE was laid down on December 2nd 1943 and she was launched on March 7th 1944 sponsored by Ulvert's mother, Mrs. L.E. Moore.

Less than six months later the ship was commissioned on July 18th by Rear Admiral William L. Monroe, Commandant of the Third Naval District. Elmer Milton Fisher a gunners mate aboard the MOORE remarked "Destroyer Escort sailors always took great pride in their ships, ours maybe more so, because we felt that we were a little bit special because our skipper was the president's son Franklin Roosevelt Jr." That's right our little ship, the ULVERT M. MOORE

was placed under the command of Lieutenant Commander Franklin Delano Roosevelt Jr. the son of the President of the United States of America.

FDR Jr. was born on 17 August 1914, the fifth of six children to FDR and Eleanor. Frank was born before his father was president – but Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He was 19 when his father took the Oval Office. He was educated at Harvard and the University of Virginia Law School. While at Harvard he participated in Naval Reserve Officer Training (ROTC). His family thought that he, out of the rest of his siblings, was most similar to his father in appearance, speaking voice, smile, and charisma.

FDR Jr. was commissioned an ensign in the US Navy Reserve on 11 June 1940. He was decorated for bravery during the Battle of Casablanca, served aboard the destroyer MAYRANT (DD-402). In July 1943, the destroyer participated in the invasion of Sicily. While in Palermo, the ship was nearly hit by a bomb dropped by the German Luftwaffe. Though the ship did not take a direct hit, five crewmen were still killed, and six other wounded. Official reports state that FDR Jr. “put his life at risk by exposing himself to enemy fire and carrying a critically wounded sailor to safety.” For his bravery, the Navy awarded him a Silver Star and he received a Purple Heart for sustaining a shrapnel wound in his shoulder. He was soon promoted to lieutenant commander on 1 March 1944 and was given command of his own ship, a destroyer escort, USS ULVERT M. MOORE (DE-442).

Having a famous leader can usually go one of two ways: swimmingly well or horribly disastrous. So let’s hear from a few of his crew members hear what they thought of their famed skipper. Bill Powers was the Chief Gunners mate, “We had an eager beaver for a captain on the MOORE, was FDR Jr. his father was president, but he didn’t get any favors. He was very casual, it was military and casual. It was no spit and polish, it was get the work done and take it easy. You only had to salute once a day.” Elmer Milton Fisher was a gunners mate second class, “great communicator, just like his father. He was a very capable officer. Fact of the matter is he has order down to the radio shack, that if anything could interest him to come over, even when he’s asleep he wanted to be awake. Cause he wanted to volunteer for it. He picked his own Executive officer, he was a Whitney, they went to Harvard together. He was also a fine officer. He had the ability to give commands and always brought the ship around to the most advantageous position when we were being attacked by kamikaze. He was a good seaman.”

Jack Blackburn was a Radioman aboard the MOORE, “our skipper was FDR Jr. he was a great skipper, he got us through typhoons and attacks, he did a great job.” Ensign Alan Guard said “he was a very accomplished skipper, he certainly knew his business and had the highest respect from the crew.”

So it seems Franklin was pretty well liked, and was no slouch in the ways of ship handling. According to Bill Powers he knew when to ask for help as well. “We had 90% reserves on the MOORE, and there were only a few of us with any experience. So the Captain would come

down into the Chiefs Quarters, directly, to have dinner with us to talk over any problem he had, because his officers were fresh out of college, they were a great bunch of guys, but they just didn't have the experience."

But we all have our rough days, Elmer Fisher tells a story about when his gun sight wasn't sighted in properly and he was having a rough day. "I'll tell you a funny one. I was rather proficient with a 20 mm anti aircraft gun, my job was to explode the floating mines. One time we went into port, and the fire controlmen had overhauled the gun site, and you couldn't hit the broadside of a barn with it. He was standing up on the bridge and says "Fisher, you're making a damn fool out of me today!" It's a real problem when your job is to explode floating mines before they explode your ship and shipmates, and just can't seem to hit them.

The ship remained in Newark while she was outfitted until 5 August, when she departed for shakedown. After completing their shakedown in Bermuda, MOORE made her way to New York where she escorted USS SHAMROCK BAY (CVE-84), an escort carrier, or jeep carrier, or mini carrier – whatever you want to call them. SHAMROCK BAY was on her way to Norfolk and MOORE made sure she arrived safely on 18 September 1944.

If you've been listening to this podcast regularly for the past 13 episodes, first of all thank you! We truly do appreciate your support. You may or may not need this reminder, but for many of you who may be more casual listeners, lets just dive into what exactly a DE is supposed to do. Jack Blackburn was a radioman aboard the MOORE "Destroyer Escorts are primarily there to screen for carriers who are on anti-submarine duty. Or chase the subs away and chase the kamikaze away and stuff like that. We had depth charges, we had hedgehogs, we had 2 five inch guns, 20mm 40mm. A lot of armament for a little ship, its only the length of a football field. I always say it was made for the Great Lakes and not the ocean."

Because DEs were so small, and not very heavy they were tossed around like you wouldn't believe out on the open ocean. In fact Bill Powers says that "they could roll a lot more than the big babies. We had an inclinometer on the bridge, and I believe we went over 60 degrees at one time and we were just about saying our prayers, that this was the end of the road, and she popped right back up again." Sixty degrees? Imagine a ship out at sea and their mast is standing straight, its pointing at the 12 on a clock. All of a sudden a wave kicks your mast over 60 degrees, to the two. And it doesn't stop there, instead of standing back up straight it overshoots the twelve and heads sixty degrees in the other direction to the ten. And all you can do it ride out the storm, ten to two and ten to two for hours. It's enough to make you wonder and Jack Blackburn too "we wonder, are we coming back up? From about New York to Norfolk I think I traveled all by rail. I was sick as a dog. I can still remember one Chief Bosuns Mate he'd been in for 25 years, and he just really enjoyed walking by all these new sailors eating a candy bar and sending us all back to the rail. That was his idea of a joke."

Back to the guns, Jack Blackburn was a radioman by day and “I was assigned to the stern 5 inch gun mount for a battle station. So I went on there and the Gun Captain gave me these asbestos gloves and said you’re our hot shell man. You load it and you made sure it gets out of the mount after we fire. Okay, I’m ready, cause it comes out pretty hot. The first one that came out I missed by a mile, and it bounced all over the gun mount, and hit our gun captain, George Bokul on the leg. I think he was ready to throw me overboard. I said I guess I’m not a very good trainee, but that’s where I ended up spending all my time it on the 5 inch gun mount.”

So DEs are built to escort the bigger ships, protect them from submarine and airplane attacks, and we’ve got a lot of weapons to do just that. Before departing Norfolk, MOORE joined USS KENDALL C. CAMPBELL (DE-443) and the two ships escorted two Fleet Oilers to Aruba, Dutch West Indies, through the Panama Canal, and north to San Diego arriving on 22 October. These oilers, TULAGA (AO-62) and AUCILLA (AO-56) are very important to the US Navy. As their job is to replenish other ships with fuel, food, ammunition, and other necessities while at sea. They could also deliver mail to other ships. The process of replenishing supplies while at sea, is called Underway Replenishment, or UNREP. “V-mail is what they had, where the crew would write letters, then they would be microfilmed. They could get a thousand letters down to a little package. Then they’d blow them up when they got back, that was pretty much the way. When we would pull into a port that we were assigned for maintenance our mail would be there. But a lot of times it had to be transferred from a larger, a carrier, cruiser, I don’t think we came across any battleships. But they were able to get mail and move it over to our ship while you’re at sea, the same way we got our ice cream.”

Speaking of ice cream; have I got a sea story for you. Before the MOORE and the CAMPBELL left Norfolk, they were supposedly equipped with industrial sized ice cream makers. These were pretty normal for large ships, but no destroyer escort had one, there simply wasn’t enough space. But according to Richard Warner, the Executive Officer aboard the CAMPBELL both of their ships were gifted to them from none other than President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Warner was just reporting aboard his ship as the XO, and the Captain said all he wanted was an ice cream machine and didn’t care how he got it. Warner just happened to run into FDR Jr. at the Officer’s Club that night. Frank put a call into his father and two machines were delivered and aboard the two ships before they left port.

Now, I listened to four oral history interviews, read three books, and read countless documents on the ULVERT M. MOORE. There is no mention of an ice cream machine aboard by the captain or any of the crew. Radioman Blackburn said “We used to love to pull up next to an Aircraft Carrier or something out at sea because they were the only ones who had ice cream, and they could transfer it over across on the lines.” Ensign Alan Guard went on “We were plane guard for the carrier on flight operations from time to time and every once and a while a pilot would go in and we would have to go in and pick him up. We got him back on the carrier via the

breeches buoy and they sent us back 20 gallons of ice cream. That was the standard pay for picking up a pilot.”

Now, why would these sailors remember getting ice cream delivered over 50 years later, if they could just make their own every day? I don't know if the MOORE never got the ice cream maker from Warner's story. I don't know if they had it and couldn't get enough materials to keep it producing ice cream. Or if they were all sworn to secrecy and are very loyal. If you know anything about industrial ice cream makers aboard Destroyer Escorts during WWII, please let me know. I'm starting a full blown investigation.

Snacking aside, lets return to San Diego with the MOORE.

After their duty to San Diego was complete the two destroyer escorts were sent to the Hawaiian Islands. They escorted Battleship COLORADO (BB-46) to Pearl Harbor, arriving on October 30th.

While in Pearl, after refueling, ULVERT M. MOORE was urgently ordered to join a hunter-killer group based around USS CORREGIDOR (CVE-58) which was searching for the Japanese submarine I-12. The sub sunk American cargo ship JOHN A. JOHNSON on October 30th, the same day MOORE arrived in Pearl.

JOHN A. JOHNSON is a cargo ship crammed from bow to stern and top to bottom with 7,000 tons of military supplies. Even her deck was filled with trucks bound for the Pacific Theatre. JOHNSON carried a crew of 70 – 41 from the Merchant Marine, 28 Navy armed guards, and one Army officer in charge of the cargo. JOHNSON makes her way through the seas solo, with no escorts and travels an average speed of 9 knots, that's 10 MPH, you can go faster than that on a bicycle.

Cargo ships are not glamorous ships. They are workhorses, their jobs are so vital to America's stability to carry on the war effort, not just for America, but for all the Allied countries. Without these provisions - sailors, soldiers, marines, and pilots are without materials they need to fulfill their duties. Just after 9 PM on October 29th, JOHNSON is a third of her way to Hawaii. She's running in total darkness and under radio silence. That's when a sailor's worst nightmare becomes reality. The lookouts spot a wake that is not their own, and it's coming right towards them. They know it immediately and shout “Torpedo to Starboard!”

Before any other crewmembers can react, an explosion rocks the ship. It rips the trucks on deck from their moorings and sends them flying. Before they know it, another explosion blows from the back of the ship. They hear an order ring out “Abandon Ship” and everyone races to a lifeboat or jumps over the side into the pitch-black water. The water itself is dark enough, but now it is covered with thick, black, oil making it difficult to swim through. Just then, when the crew may have felt some relief that they survived the explosions, their attacker a Japanese

submarine rises out of the water and begins spraying the lifeboats as well as the crew inside of them with machine gun fire.

Miraculously, of the seventy crew aboard JOHNSON, sixty make it back to shore. But it isn't hard to imagine the rage and frustration that comes from instances like this.

ULVERT M. MOORE and the rest of the hunter-killer group she has joined are tasked with hunting down this submarine and sinking it. This group operated between Hawaii and the west coast of the US until 19 November – when they returned to Pearl Harbor, empty handed. Can you imagine playing hide and seek in the middle of an ocean for twenty days and never finding your target? The crew remembers a great deal of frustration.

After some repairs were made in Pearl, MOORE was assigned to Task Group 12.4 escorting USS TULAGI (CVE-72) bound for the Caroline Islands. They conducted antisubmarine patrols while enroute.

Gunners Mate Elmer Fisher remembered Christmas 1944 aboard ship. “Dec 25th, 1944, Capt. Roosevelt led the ship in prayers, he did a fine job, food was great. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt sent Christmas trimmings for the mess hall.”

On New Year's Day 1945, MOORE was underway as part of the screen for 14 escort carriers, in Task Group 77.4. This group would provide air support for the landing operations on Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines. On the 3rd Japanese planes showed up – but they were apparently just on a reconnaissance mission, as they were careful to stay out of range of the ship's guns. Bill Powers, Chief Gunner's Mate tells us “General Quarters was always tense for me because I was like the coach for the teammates playing. I wasn't actually shooting myself, but they were my people that I trained, and it was my equipment they were using. If you were in an imminent danger area, just before dawn and just before sunset you go to general quarters automatically and stay there until the area looked pretty good. The radar swept the area and there were no blips on the screen, and of course, you'd go to general quarters anytime there was a report of enemy activity in the area. In the imminent danger areas, you can count on at least twice a day. And then in the meantime they had to do their work, stand their watches, and try to keep clean. We got better at it as time went on. The captain would put a stopwatch on and try to see. The first general quarter we went to it took about 30 mins, and people wound up in the wrong gun stations and on the wrong decks and after we'd been at it a little while, we could get to battle stations in under five minutes.”

On January fourth, MOORE went to General Quarters twice in the morning, refueled, and then spent the afternoon using the highline chair to deliver mail to the other ships in the task group. While she was leaving USS MINNEAPOLIS (CA-36) her lookouts spotted a Japanese plane trying to sneak into the flight patterns of the American planes trying to return to their ships. This Kamikaze crashed into OMMANEY BAY (CVE-79) – just 1,000 yards from MOORE's

starboard bow. "Jeep Carrier OMMANEY BAY was right on our starboard quarter when it got hit by a kamikaze. We picked up some of the people from that." Jack Blackburn took this event to his heart. "Did you ever feel stress or pressure? My answer to that was every time I went to General Quarters. I think I had a lot of stress. I wasn't out in the open like the guys on the 20 mm and the 40mm I was inside the gun mount. Probably so stupid at that age, to think that they can't get me." "One Kamikaze pilot slipped through a screen and sunk the carrier OMMANEY BAY. They lost 19 guys on that ship, and we picked up four survivors." When we picked up the survivors from the OMMANEY BAY I suddenly realized that, you like they say when kids are teenagers think they will live forever. It's the first time the value of human life came through to me. I was not a believer in those days and didn't have a great faith. But as I look back now I think God was watching over me the whole time."

The explosion shook the escort carrier and large fires broke out along her starboard side. MOORE made her way to the scene at full speed and picked up four men, one of whom died before they got him aboard. All the rescued sailors suffered from burns and shock. OMMANEY BAY continued to burn and eventually needed to be sunk by an American torpedo fired from the destroyer BURNS, an hour and a half after the Kamikaze hit.

With planes in the area, MOORE went to general quarters four times in preparation for battle on the 5th of January 1945. At 5 PM she received reports of approaching enemy aircraft, and soon after Japanese Torpedo planes attacked the starboard side of the formation, giving MOORE a few moments to prepare before three "Oscar" fighters approached from port. She opened fire from her 5-inch guns at 5,000 yards and her 40 mm guns from 3,000 yards. One plane burst into flames and disintegrated. They got one!

Unfortunately, the other two "Oscars" were not stopped in time. One plane crashed into an Australian heavy cruiser (HMAS AUSTRALIA) and the other into USS STAFFORD (DE-411) tearing a hole on her starboard side aft. This hole was between her aft engine room and fire room. It looked like the ship was going to be a complete loss as fire broke out. MOORE closed in and took 54 crewmen and 3 officers aboard. USS HALLIGAN (DE-584) pulled alongside the opposite side of STAFFORD and pulled additional crew off.

MOORE and HALLIGAN stood by STAFFORD while she was in tow by QUAPAW (AT-12). Gunfire from MOORE and HALLIGAN splashed a "Val" dive bomber early on the 6th and MOORE's gunners splashed another Japanese plane on the 7th. MOORE was under sporadic air attack until 12 January during this part of the Lingayen Gulf invasion, after which she retired to Mindoro for fuel, ammunition, and supplies.

Once again MOORE was called away to help search for a Japanese submarine. So, she transferred the STAFFORD crewmembers off and made her way to Mindoro Island to join Task Unit 77.4.1. The group searched all night for the submarine who was surfaced when spotted by a plane – but no sub was ever found.

The next day, 31 January 1945, MOORE was called off that search and onto another. She now joined Task Group 77.4 – while en route to join this group MOORE received a message from cruiser BOISE (CL-47) that they spotted a surfaced sub 8 miles southeast of them. Two destroyers BELL and O'BANNON left BOISE to investigate. BELL closed to 4 miles and the sub submerged. ULVERT M. MOORE detected the sub at 2152 but briefly lost the contact. They regained it at 2210 and MOORE fired her first hedgehog pattern four minutes later. The advantage of the hedgehog over the depth charge, was that the Sonarman never lost contact by having the water get riled up as you do with the explosions from the depth charges.”

At 2227 she fired another pattern, and three explosions rumbled up from below, muffled, and crunching noises followed. Remember, hedgehog projectiles only explode if they hit something hard like a submarine hull, or a poorly placed rock. With no real evidence of a sunk sub, MOORE fired two more patterns of her hedgehogs at 2302. They hit the water and dove. Twelve seconds later, a sharp crack was heard as well as “distinct and definite bubbling and hissing noises.”

Fisher The hedgehog was a rocket, 7.2 inches in diameter, it laid out a pattern in the water. You could either fire off the pattern off the port side or the starboard. In our case we always fired off the port. We made a pass at this sub, and continued to, usually scored a hit every time. And on the 6th pass over the sub, the sub blew up underneath us.

MOORE moved in closer to the target. She once again fired her hedgehogs, they plunged for fifteen seconds. And then, three explosions sent out concussions felt by the crew of the MOORE and the three other ships. One more explosion rose to the surface and the sailors reported a bluish light similar to burning gas. Alan Guard remembers “Around Luzon we made several hedgehog attacks on the submarine. On the 7th attack I can still see it the whole surface of the ocean, below the surface rather, lit up with greenish blue white light, from the explosion of these hedgehog projectiles hitting the submarine. After the war we found out that it was the Japanese submarine RO-115, and it had about 50 men on it. And that was that for them.”

For two more hours the ships searched to confirm the kill. Everyone topside could smell diesel, soon they saw what looked like a life jacket, small boxes, pieces of deck planking, and a considerable amount of paper. Jack Blackburn says “And we made 8 passes, we never saw lifejackets or clothes or anything like that come up. But there was an explosion, and no more contact. So they gave us credit for a kill and we’ll take all the credit we can get.”

As the official ship’s WWII history was written 28 September 1945, the author states “the MOORE had to leave the area immediately and obtained no concrete evidence in the nature of human flesh, etc. that action later received a “D” assessment, but there is no doubt in the minds of any one present that a Japanese submarine was destroyed that night.” Today we know and it is accepted that she had sunk Japanese submarine RO-115. “And for that we received the Presidential Unit Citation from the Philippine Government due to the fact that there were two

Japanese Generals aboard trying to get back to Japan. So that was a feather in our cap, I was proud to see that submarine painting on the bridge.”

MOORE then retired to Ulithi and remained there from 6 to 18 February 1945. She then joined Task Unit 50.7.3 to provide antisubmarine protection for the carriers that would provide air support for the landings on Iwo Jima. “We had 78 days of continuous anti-sub duty. Where we never pulled in anywhere, the boilers never cooled down. That was probably our biggest confrontation with kamikaze pilots.”

This was the start of the crew’s most arduous period, steaming for 78 days, to support this operation and the next one in Okinawa Bill Powers remembers the struggle they had for food, without replenishment. “When we could the food was good. But by the time of a long cruise, like 78 days at Okinawa we were down to eating stale bread with Ketchup on it. We got ketchup in number 10 cans. We had a euphemism called a “Red Light Sandwich” ketchup on two stale pieces of bread, that’s how bad it got.”

It was during this operation that the whole fleet, the nation, and the world was hit with the loss of President Roosevelt. “I was on watch, the 13th of April, back in the states it was still the 12th. Pacific became extremely calm, it was like the top of a billiard table. I’ve never seen it like that before and never saw it like that afterwards, that’s when we received the news that President Roosevelt’s death.” This loss hit the crew of the MOORE especially hard, as the President’s son was their commanding officer. On the morning of 12 April 1945, Captain Roosevelt was shaken awake by his executive officer, Robert Whitney. “I must tell you, that we have just been informed that your father, the president, died a few hours ago at Warm Springs, Georgia.” After a couple of minutes, Whitney got up and left. FDR Jr. said “I sat stunned, I suppose, 10 or 15 minutes, then put on my cap and walked slowly to the bridge and sat down in the captain’s chair. I asked on of the signalmen to give me a cup of coffee and began to slowly pull my thoughts together.” The rest of the day crew members came to express their sympathy. Elmer Fisher remembers it well, “we expressed our condolences, I got allergies very bad.”

ULVERT M. MOORE returned to Guam on June 6th and made her way to Ulithi for major repairs. The only “engineering casualty” in their extremely long availability had been “one bilge pump.” By the 19th the destroyer escort joined up with Task Group 30.8, their mission was to provide logistics support for Admiral Bill Halsey’s air strikes against the Japanese home islands. On 22 June Lcdr. Roosevelt took his leave. He was relieved by Lcdr Garrett Eddy. MOORE operated with this group until 24 July, when she returned to Guam and joined a hunter-killer group operating on antisubmarine patrol northeast of Luzon.

After victory over Europe, on May 8, 1945, Frank left the combat zone to attend the U.S. Naval War College’s Preparatory Staff course as a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve in July 1945. Upon his discharge from the Navy in January 1946, Frank resumed his law career and eventually entered politics. He served as a US Congressman and, like his father, ran for the Governorship of

New York. “He was instrumental in our first reunion in Washington DC in 1962. He gave us a VIP conducted tour of the White House as well as a cocktail party at the Hotel Washington, which was our reunion headquarters. He held a flunky job during the Kennedy administration, asst. sec. of commerce. Or something. His ambition was to be secretary of navy, unfortunately he was disliked by Robert McNamara sec. of def. so that was the end of that. I’ve often thought that Franklin would have been a better Secretary of Navy than McNamara was Secretary of Defense.

Unfortunately, the next captain was not up to Fisher’s expectations, “The captain that replaced Roosevelt was entirely different. As a seaman he probably didn’t have the ability to command a motor whaleboat let alone a destroyer escort.”

On August 6th and 9th the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. ULVERT M. MOORE was east of Taiwan at the time, where she was on duty until 25 August when she pulled into Leyte. She then screened for Task Force 32 en route to Tokyo Bay for the official surrender of Japan. To be in the area and witness the surrender on September 2 1945, the crew felt like it was a “fitting culmination to 14 months of strenuous operation.” Jack Blackburn was amazed “The most amazing gathering of ships that I saw was at Toyko Bay. As far as the eye could see, we had ships.”

In the following months, MOORE conducted antisubmarine and mine patrol duties around Japan. They escorted Japan-bound transports unloading occupation forces and destroyed floating mines with gunfire so they would not strike another vessel unexpectedly.

MOORE arrived in San Diego on 22 November 1945 and was decommissioned there on 24 May 1946 and placed into reserve. The ship got some well-earned rest and relaxation. That is, until the Korean War started in the summer of 1950.

The Korean War gets overlooked in American History all too often. Korea had been controlled by the Japanese since the beginning of the 20th century. After WWII, it was up to the Soviets and Americans to decide what should be done with it. We know from WWII history; the US and Soviet Union were not agreeing on much, other than defeating Germany. Once they accomplished that, they had very few common interests. So, in August 1945, we split Korea, half would be run by the US and half by the Soviet Union.

The war began on 25 June 1950, when 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean Army poured across the 38th parallel – the border between the Soviet-backed Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the North and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the South (backed by the United States). This invasion was the first military action of the Cold War. The United States stood behind the Truman Doctrine – which stated that the US would do whatever it could to help stop the spread of Communism. Aboard SLATER we give examples of this when the ship was transferred to Greece – but the US military would also go to war on behalf of nations being

threatened, like South Korea. US officials feared if these actions were not taken it would lead to a massive war with the Soviet Union and China, some feared it would lead to World War III.

But, neither of the leaders of Korea wanted to stay on their side of the border. Skirmishes were common, and nearly 10,000 Koreans were killed in battle before the “war” even started.

In July 1953, the Korean War came to an end. Over 5 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives in what many in the US refer to as “the Forgotten War” for the lack of attention it received compared to other wars. The Korean peninsula is still divided today.

USS ULVERT M. MOORE was recommissioned in San Diego on 27 January 1951 and assigned to CortRon 9. After shakedown (round 2) she left San Diego for Taiwan on 19 April. You may be thinking, “I thought the war was in Korea.” Well, remember – it is believed that if one location falls to Communism, the rest are sure to follow soon. So anywhere that Communist are threatening to spread, the US will be there to put up a fight.

17 May to 10 June MOORE served on patrol duty off Taiwan, to deter communist Chinese invasions against the Nationalist Chinese that live in Taiwan. She conducted hunter-killer exercises as she made her to Japan by 16 June.

She left Japan nine days later headed for the west coast of Korea. Here, she participated in screening, patrol duty, bombardment and covering operations, and minesweeping. In his war diary turned book, Virgil Collum, records on 14 October “Got word that we officially sank the sub on the west coast of Korea, on July 28, 1951. It was the only one sunk in the Korean War so far. It was not published, it was to be kept hush, hush because it was believed to be a Russian submarine. However, we tried to make it surface or identify itself – received no word so pow, right in the kisser.”

On August 16th his diary goes on to say “Got in close to the beach at Songjin, found mines all around the ship. Finally got out. Sounded G. Q. Opened fire on the mines (to sink them). USS THOMPSON lowered her whaleboat, sank the mines with small arms.” By the 18th he writes “Shelled Wonsan by day and Songjin by night.” He goes on for days stating that they shell railroad lines all day and they are repaired by locals overnight. Just in time to start the process all over again. On 25 August she pulled into Sasebo, Japan for refit, and more importantly, liberty.

In September, she continued her operations off the coast of Korea and proceeded towards Okinawa, conducting hunter-killer operations as she went. However, Typhoon “Ruth” prevented a successful journey, and she was forced to turn back to Korea, resuming her duty. This Typhoon impacted Japan October 13-15. It killed 572 people and left 371 more unaccounted for. The storm damaged 221,000 homes, 9,500 ships, and 3.5 million bushels of rice. Peak wind gusts were 121 mph and over 25 inches of rain was recorded.

On 17 October, Virgil writes “Well, today was a sad day for all of us. We went close to shell the city, and an enemy gun opened fire on us, they had our range perfectly. Hitting us in our after-engine room, with others landing close by.”

One shell hit the after-steering compartment. Fragments killed one sailor instantly. His name was Seaman Alan W. Kruegar from Wisconsin, he was 19 years old. Wounded was Fred Priest and our Executive Officer, Mr. Bennett. Priest had 9 pieces of shrapnel in his back, and Bennett got a piece in his ankle, both recovering just fine. The crew’s excellent damage control work repaired the damage to steering and the ship returned to action in about an hour. The starboard depth charge roller was beyond repair while at sea. Virgil continued “We went back and fired on the gun emplacement. Don’t know if we got it or not, they didn’t fire back.” She continued conducting shore bombardment, serving on antisubmarine patrol, and destroying enemy floating mines until she departed Korean waters on 6 November 1951, arriving in San Diego twenty days later

While in the states, she underwent an overhaul at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. One of the turbines had some operating problems that required a whole section of the deck to be removed while they repaired and replaced the low-pressure turbine. The ship’s crew also trained in antisubmarine and air defense while in port.

While the MOORE was undergoing this overhaul, Ensign Robert Schwier, Damage Control Officer, joined the crew. In his book “The Navy and Me” he writes about a hurricane that hit San Francisco. The ship had been refloated, meaning they were out of drydock, but still tied up to the dock. Schwier says that he would much rather have been out at sea during a hurricane, it is much safer because there is less chance of obtaining damage from rocks, docks, or hurting civilians. The ship was “cold iron” meaning that there was no steam being generating by the ship and therefore no power. They were hooked up to shore power traveling through big cables to power lights and some equipment. They obviously couldn’t leave the dock in this condition. Every ship that could, raised power and set to the sea. Additional lines were run to strengthen the hold of the ship to her berth, extra logs and bumpers were secured to the side of the ship to create a barrier when the ship rocked against the dock. As the storm rolled in the lines stretched and the bumpers were damaged. The lines were “tripled” on the number 2 line at 0130. At 0540 “the stern wire parted” or snapped, it was a one-inch diameter steel cable and it was replaced with a doubled up 8 inch manila line. By 0900 lines were snapping all over the place and every time they were replaced a seaman couldn’t get them as tight as they were before, meaning the ship was slowly moving farther and farther away from the dock. Every time the MOORE would roll away from the dock until the lines would jerk her to a sudden stop, she would roll back crashing into the dock. This process would be repeated over and over and over again, taking her crew with her. Bob wrote “As you can imagine, most men were seasick, including me. It was terribly depressing to be seasick tied up to the dock.”

By 1030 the crew gave up on taking power from shore and decided to attempt to get one boiler running so they could get away from the dock. They succeeded! They rode the rest of the storm out while at sea, just off the coast of San Francisco. The ship would carry dents in the portside from this day onward, never forgetting the experience.

By 15 April the repairs were finished, new crewmembers had made it aboard, drills, trainings, and trials had been completed, and the boilers and engines were tested and running well. Ammunition had been loaded and finally, the MOORE was on her way once again, out of San Francisco and heading south to San Diego for availability.

Departing San Diego to Pearl Harbor on 18 October 1952, she got underway for her second tour in Korea. Schwier recalls "it is interesting that we left for Pearl with no one absent without leave, this meant we had a good crew. No one decided not to go to war as planned." MOORE was underway in the morning with other destroyer escorts SEIVERLING, HANNA, and WISEMAN, now known as CortDiv 91 (Escort Division 91). "We had drills every day and learned to work together as a group of ships. Every day or so we would set our clocks back an hour as we moved father west."

CortDiv arrived at Pearl Harbor on Friday October 24th. Schwier notes that he never got a 24th birthday, as MOORE met the International Date Line on 4 November and emerged on the 6th. At this same time the crew had an entirely too close call with a floating mine. Scarcely missing it and relying on WISEMAN to destroy it.

Just after 1300 on November 11th 1952, MOORE passed through the antisubmarine nets and entered Yokosuka Harbor in Japan. Staying there for five days, the ship received fuel oil, fresh water, and ammunition. On the 16th MOORE left Japan for duty on the east coast of Korea.

During this tour, MOORE was assigned operations disrupting communist coastal rail traffic, and interrupting enemy logistics movements. Damaging the railroads was a vital part of the Navy's operations in Korea. Almost all the supplies to the North Koreans came from China or USSR and the Navy's job was to disrupt the flow of men and supplies south to the fighting front. Korea is filled with mountains, but few valleys. Korea had two railroads, one on the west coast and one on the east. The railroads run along the waterfront and there are many tunnels cut from stone. MOORE spent a lot of time trying to damage the railroad bed, and if possible, the trains themselves. Bob Schwier notes that local Koreans could repair the damage they had done to the railroad beds overnight. Like it never happened at all.

The other duty the Navy had during this part of the war was enforcing the blockade. International law dictates that the blockading country must cruise the length of the effected area at least once every four days to be recognized. Schwier says that one American ship, sometimes the MOORE had to make a run almost to Vladivostok, Russia and back down to Korea every four days. The water was very rough and cold. Schwier remembers having to chop ice off the bow of the ship to

keep her seaworthy. Virgil Collum writes that it was very cold and they had up to two inches of snow covering the decks, they had to work the 40 mm guns every hour to make sure they didn't freeze up.

She continued this duty for two months before she went back to her roots with a period of hunter-killer operations off Okinawa until 9 January 1953.

There is a tradition in the Navy for the first entry in the logbook of the new year to be in rhyme, a poem if you will, but it still needs to communicate the official, vital, information. Lieutenant Junior Grade Dan Francescon wrote the following:

*Anchored in berth number One Seven Five,
Buckner Bay, Okinawa, not much of a dive.
Sixty fathoms on deck makes the anchor stay,
In the hard sandy bottom 10 fathoms away.
One Two Eight and One Half, Zero Seven Four,
Zero Five Zero bear points ashore.*

*Taugen Light is the first, a right tangent is Two,
The Fuel Pier is Three, all bearings are true.
The plant is split, condition is three,
Baker is set, that's as it should be.
Rear Admiral Williamson, SOPA to you,
Is Commander of Task Force Seventy Two.*

*The SALISBURY SOUND or AV- 1 3,
Is where he embarked but not likely to be.
Ships present include from our Fleet Pacific,*

Some big some small let's not be specific.

From the US fleet, Pacific Reserve,

Are several others all ready to serve.

Also some harbor craft hither and yon,

All doing their job number one "Ichibon."

On the evening of January 1st 1953, many of the DE sailors found themselves in the coveted circumstance of being granted liberty in Okinawa. As sailors do, they all returned to their ships, drunken and not thinking straight. According to Schwier sailors from various ships started insulting each of the crews, stating which crew was the worst in the task group, they even went as far as insulting each other's captains. Officers and Shore Patrol were able to break up the brawl before too many injuries occurred, but certainly a few men returned to their ships with broken noses and soaked from being pushed in the water. Schwier states "it struck me how well the captain had welded the men together in a proud, well-functioning ship and how the men recognized and supported him."

In March 1953, MOORE was shelling the Korean shore and the shore was shelling back. The Koreans were using guns left by the Americans after WWII, they built caves and hid the guns inside of them, rolled them out to fire, and pulled them back inside the cave again. Bob Schwier states that their aim was not great, since they were moving and firing so quickly and they were never trained on the guns. Schwier was on the bridge, he gave the order to start firing the forward 5 inch gun, the shell landed in the water and exploded. I asked the crew to elevate the aim and fire again. The second shell landed somewhat farther from the shore, closer to the ship, and he ordered to "Aim up, not down!" The sailor was confused and thought he had. He fired a third shell and it landed quite close to the ship. Schwier then explains the thoughts the running through his head, happened much more quickly than he could write them or I can speak them.

1. Something was very wrong with the firing!
2. Looking at the forward gun he could see that the 5 inch gun was aimed high in the air. They were probably shelling some poor farmer's field several miles inland.
3. The North Koreans and the MOORE crew had been firing in unison. He was seeing their shells land and not his own. The Koreans didn't know how to finely adjust the aiming of their gun, so they were just walking it closer to the ship. The last was so close, the next one could hit!
4. The next thing he knew he was shouting "Right Full Rudder – All Ahead Flank!"

Flank speed is faster than full speed for those of you don't know. It was time to get the ship out of there before she took a hit again. It's important to remember that most of the crew didn't realize that the shells were coming that close or that the ship was in more danger than it had been the last two years of constant shelling. The MOORE just figuratively "stepped on the gas" and floored it. When this happens the deck gives the feeling of "falling away" and everyone is affected. The clerk's papers fly off his desk into the deck, the cook's potatoes roll off the counter, the sailor painting the bulkhead lunges for his paint can as it slides away to keep it from spilling, and everyone drinking piping hot coffee is suddenly balancing their cup to keep it off their pants. The ship escaped with no damage done, but this close call reminded everyone how close they could be to danger at any point.

March 30th MOORE was assigned Fish and Game Patrol. During this patrol MOORE was to patrol and Japanese fisherman out of two hundred miles of water around South Korea, that was designated to be exclusively for Korean fishing only. Schwier says that the actual challenge was to get to the Japanese before the Koreans did so they didn't kill them. Forty years of oppressive rule can generate a lot of hate.

While on this "boring" patrol as now Chief Engineering Officer Schwier refers to it, there was an explosion of a boiler! When Bob arrived to the hatch to the forward boiler room, sailors were standing around the hatch looking terrified and dead quiet. He states here that when true heroics happen during war its because their training kicks in and they are doing the right thing, not going on instincts, but what they were trained to do. He knew what he had to do.

Live steam will burn your eyes, so Bob took a deep breath, closed his eyes and started down the ladder. The metal handrails were too hot so he decided to jump. He let go and landed on the deck's first level, it hadn't been damaged. He turned to his left, felt for the ladder and jumped again, he ran forward to another ladder and jumped one more time. He took a risk in opening his eyes. He could just barley make out the location of the boiler through the steam and haze. There was oil all over the front of the boiler and on the opposite bulkhead. Everything that was clean paint a few minutes ago was now black and greasy.

A boiler can fail from "low water" or "high water." If its low water, the crew was not doing their jobs well enough, the pipes have no water to carry away heat from the hot gases. If the heat is not carried away quickly, the metal pipes will soften and the boiler will explode. If they add more water now, it will cause the hot, soft metal to crystalize, weaken the steel, and the boiler would be lost. In low water you do not add water.

In high water, the explosion is usually caused by a structural failure. The metal would not have been overly hot and water should be added to keep the metal cool and strong until the gaes have up the stack and the boiler has cooled down. It is often that the crew down in the boiler room will not admit to a "low water I wasn't doing my job well" situation. The Chief Petty Officer that was in the boiler room when the explosion happened, kept screaming "add water" and Bob had to

warm him “If you’re wrong, I’ll follow you to the end of the earth. I’ll kill you.” The Chief reaffirmed he was watching and its high water. Bob turned to a sailor and made the irreversible commitment based on the word of a man he didn’t trust... “add water.”

It was the right call. The crew added water several times. No one had been hurt and they called everyone’s names to be sure. As things calmed down in the boiler room and the crew had clear orders on how to proceed, Bob made his way up to the wardroom to speak with the captain. It was a sad meeting between the two men. The captain had promoted Bob over a more experienced man, and usually having a boiler blow up normally meant several years in a Navy prison for the chief engineer and an unsatisfactory discharge, especially if someone was hurt. For the captain it meant the end of his career and with no other real training for civilian life. He asked for the full story, but never criticized. He told me that the main job was to get the boiler fixed as quickly as possible, no matter what.

Within two hours, things had cooled enough that the crew could get into the combustion chamber if they wore protective gear. Bob called in all the engineers, whether they were on duty or not. Within five hours they had the boiler disassembled and men were hauling soot out of the compartment and dumping it overboard. In the investigation it was found that a three-foot screwdriver was left inside a drum, the wooden handle had burned parts of the screwdriver wedged themselves in the equipment and it blew.

The Chief explained this to Bob, who simply said that he signed the engineering log, it was on him. Suddenly it seemed like prison was very close in his future. The crew began brainstorming and looking for parts to make repairs. Someone found a repair kit from WWII, they were not authorized to have it now, someone just forgot to throw it away. Well, they gave it a shot.

The pressure held on the third test. They got out the boiler manual and found the procedure for “boilers dying.” They had to start up the fire and produce the steam gradually as to not overload the system too quickly. A little over 39 hours from the time that the boiler blew, they were now, again, at full battle readiness. Apparently, one does not simply repair a boiler at sea. This was a huge feat and accomplishment for the engineering crew of the ULVERT M. MOORE.

The captain and Bob never heard a word about any punishment. Getting the boiler back in working operation saved both of their careers.

MOORE finished their second tour in the Korean War when they returned home to San Diego on 6 June 1953.

While in the states the crew conducted local operations, including antisubmarine, air defense and trainings. The Koran War officially ended in July, but with the nature of the Cold War, you never really know what hostilities were going to blow up overnight. So, they departed again for the Far East on 20 May 1954, for their third tour.

At least the crew drew some different assignments this time around. They primarily escorted fleet tankers and ammunition ships. But they also did some marine-landing exercise, a hunter-killer training operation, and conducted those tried-and-true antisubmarine exercises with Colombian, British, and Dutch naval units. She made it through three major typhoons, *Grace*, *June*, and *Lorna*. After these storms she completed her tour, made for home via Midway and Pearl Harbor. On the way she encountered an intense storm that battered her for ten days and produced very harsh seas. I'm sure those sailors were ready to kiss the ground when they finally tied up in San Diego.

Three tours down, three more to go. That's right MOORE would make three more WestPac tours into 1958. It would be all these missions that earned her the nickname "The Galloping Ghost of the Korean Coast." During one of the tours, she participated in "Operation Skyhook." This operation started as a means by which plastic balloons could be used to transmit or send instruments into the stratosphere to conduct research. By the mid-50s the project had progressed to researching the sun. Instruments attached to the balloon were now a 12-inch telescope with a special light-sensitive pointing system and a closed-circuit television camera that was guided by scientists on the ground. This was the first balloon-borne telescope. It took more than 400 photos of sunspots, the best photos of the sun at that time. More than 300 shipboard launchings took place between 1949 and 1959.

USS ULVER M. MOORE (DE-442) was placed out of commission, in reserve on October 10th 1958 in Astoria, Oregon. She remained inactive until struck from the Navy list on 1 December 1965. She was authorized for destruction as a target vessel on 18 April 1966 and sunk off San Nicolas Isle, off the coast of California, on 13 July 1966 by aircraft from USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) and by surface gun fire. ULVERT M. MOORE was awarded five battle stars for her WWII service and three for Korea.

If you are looking for even more information destroyer escorts, or you want to hear the Oral Histories I've used today in their entirety, head to our website at www.ussslater.org It is one of the most complete sources of Destroyer Escort information in existence and contains links to other DE-related websites.

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