

# Decatur's Commanding Officers

## DD-936 1958 - 1959 CDR John J. Skahill



John Joseph Skahill was born in Natick, Massachusetts, December 13, 1919, the son of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Skahill, now residing in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Commander Skahill attended the Wellesley Public Schools and Bridgewater State Teacher's College, from which he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Education.

Following graduation from College, Commander Skahill entered the Reserve V – Midshipman Program at Annapolis and was commissioned Ensign E-VG in May 1942. He next joined the U.S.S. Morris (DD-417), and while attached to that destroyer as Engineer Officer, participated in the South Pacific and Aleutian Campaigns. Commander Skahill's designation was changed in 1943 to DE-VG and in 1944 he became Executive Officer of U.S.S. Russell (DD-414) and participated in the Phillipine and Okinawa Campaigns. In 1946 he was transferred to the United States Navy. In June of 1947 he joined the Staff of Commander Destroyer Squadron FOUR as Squadron Material Officer. In July of 1949 he became Executive Officer of U.S.S. Gearing (DD-710). In September 1950 he was ordered to Columbia University in New York City and became Head of the Navigation Department and Assistant Professor of Naval Science. In July 1952 he assumed command of U.S.S. Taberner (DE-418) and in November 1954 he was ordered to the Staff of Commander Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet as Assistant Readiness and Training Officer for Engineering and Damage Control. In October 1956 he was ordered to Quincy, Massachusetts as Prospective Commanding Officer of U.S.S. Decatur (DD-936), and assumed command after the ship was placed in commission on 7 December 1956.

Commander Skahill is married to the former Marjorie Rita Wright of East Braintree, Massachusetts and they have three children.

*Excerpted From: U.S.S. Decatur (DD-936) Mediterranean Cruise February to July 1958 Book*

*Note: We lost CDR Skahill in a plane crash in 1962.*

*"I especially remember about him was his ship handling. Approaching an oiler or especially a carrier he would make the approach at high speed and do a quick reverse to slow the Decatur to refueling speed right on the button. It was classic showboating."  
Dave Evans, DD-936*



*Change of Command Ceremonies transitioning to CDR Seymour Dombroff*