

***History of the  
USS Henry W. Tucker - DDR 875***

**Section Two**

***1950 ~ 1954***



***Evacuation of Hungnam***

***Formosa Patrol***

***The Korean War***

***The Siege of Wonsan***

# HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



**TUCKER** and the other destroyers of DESDIV 52 began a training period together on 3 January, alternately a couple of days at sea in the San Diego operating area, then back to port. This period also included plane guard operations with **USS Badoeng Straits (CVE 116)**. In February, **TUCKER** spent two weeks in port in San Diego tied up to **USS Dixie (AD 14)** for boiler maintenance and various other repairs.

**25 March 1950 -- CDR George P. ROGERS, USN, relieved CDR Rex B. LITTLE, USN, and became TUCKER's fourth commanding officer.**

The training cycle was completed and on 5 April, **TUCKER** and her new captain got underway for Mare Island Naval Shipyard. Beginning their overhaul period, **TUCKER** and **DUNCAN** moored at the pier at Mare Island until 24 April, at which time they both entered dry dock #3 at the Naval Shipyard for their regular overhaul.

At this time in the shipyard, the MK-37 fire control system was upgraded by replacing the original MK-12 and MK-22 antennas with the new X-band MK-25 radar. Also, the sonar was modified to add a sensitivity setting to allow detection of nearby mines.

**This partial photo of TUCKER shows the new fire control radar antenna that was installed at Mare Island.**



The dry dock flooding began on 8 May. The flooding was stopped for a short time because **DUNCAN** sprung a leak. After an hour, **TUCKER** and **DUNCAN** were floated free and were moved with assistance from tugboats to the pier. The two ships remained at the pier; **TUCKER** was outboard of **DUNCAN** for the next 6 weeks while modifications continued. Sea trials for testing the propulsion system, calibrating radars, and compensating the magnetic compass began on 19 June, but the two ships remained at Mare Island. All sea trials were completed by 28 June.

## THE KOREAN WAR

On 25 June 1950, at 0400 in the morning, the North Korean People's Army, with seven infantry divisions and one armored brigade on the line, and with two more infantry divisions in reserve, struck south across the 38th parallel. In Korea it was Sunday, a seemingly favored day for starting modern wars.

In Washington, half a world away and half a day behind in time, it was the middle of a summer Saturday. President Harry Truman reacted by commanding General MacArthur **"To send the troops into Korea"** and declaring the **"Neutralization of the Straits of Formosa"**. The 7th Fleet was sent into the Straits under orders to prevent any attack by Communist China on the island, and also to prevent the Kuomintang forces to attack China. From that point on, Taiwan was placed under US military protection.

At the time of the Korean War outbreak, the 7th Fleet in the Far East (TASK FORCE 96) consisted of only one light cruiser, **USS Juneau (CLAA 119)**, and four destroyers comprising DESDIV 51. They were **USS Mansfield (DD 728)**, **USS DeHaven (DD 727)**, **USS Collett (DD 730)**, and **USS Lyman K. Swenson (DD 729)**. All other 7th Fleet members were in west coast ports or operating no farther west than Pearl Harbor.

Although early postwar policy had called for the maintenance of two aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific, the reductions in defense appropriations had made this impossible. For some time prior to January 1950 no carrier had

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operated continuously west of Pearl. Current procedure called for the rotation of single units on six-month tours of duty. In these circumstances Admiral Struble's Seventh Fleet Striking Force, Task Force 77 was made up of a carrier "group" containing one carrier, a support "group" containing one cruiser, and a screening group of eight destroyers. The duty carrier in the summer of 1950 was **USS Valley Forge (CV 45)**.

At San Diego there were two Essex-class aircraft carriers: **USS Boxer (CV 21)**, back from her tour in the Western Pacific, was waiting to enter a navy yard for repairs. **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)** had just arrived from the Atlantic Fleet and was preparing for an October departure for the Far East as relief for **VALLEY FORGE**.

Following the vote of the United Nations Security Council for military assistance to the Republic of Korea on 29 June, the British Admiralty placed Royal Navy units in Japanese waters at the disposition of General Douglas MacArthur, Commander Naval Forces Far East. The next day, the Australian government took similar action. In Canada three destroyers were ordered to prepare to sail. New Zealand promised the early dispatch of two frigates.

At that time, although in dry dock for overhaul, **TUCKER** was part of DESDIV 52 stationed in San Diego, and assigned to operate in California waters. Another destroyer division (DESDIV 51) was already into their tour of WESTPAC when hostilities in Korea started.

**TUCKER** was reassigned to DESRON 3, on 1 July to be part of DESDIV 32, and would be joining later with **USS Rupertus (DD 851)**, **USS Leonard F Mason (DD 852)**, and **USS Fechteler (DD 870)**.

**TUCKER** and **DUNCAN** got underway on 15 July. They steamed from Mare Island to San Diego, and began a training schedule with various other ships that were available.

At this time, **MASON** and **FECHTELER** were beginning their own overhaul periods at Mare Island.

Early in August, Ray Schmiedecke SN3 put together a small combo to play music on the fantail of **TUCKER** prior to showing the Sunday night movie. One Sunday evening **TUCKER** was moored to a buoy in San Diego, the combo was playing, and the music was overheard by Commodore DESDIV 32, who was aboard the DESDIV 32 flagship **RUPERTUS**.



The commodore summoned Ray Schmiedecke to **RUPERTUS** and asked him about the music. He explained that he had put together the combo and had only a few music arrangements, but he had more at home in San Francisco. After some more discussion, Ray was given "basket leave" to retrieve his arrangements from home and to return to **TUCKER**.

**TUCKER's Dance Combo** consisted of: **Beaupre, Drinkard, Schmiedecke, Pellitier, and Nason**. The sixth man has not been identified.

In Mid-August, **TUCKER** participated in ASW exercises with the submarine **USS Cusk (SSG 348)**. **CUSK** was an experimental ballistic missile submarine that had the distinction of being the first (and up to this time, the only) submarine to fire a missile at sea. During training exercises on 17 August, **TUCKER** and **USS Duncan (DDR 874)** were directed to steam 30 miles to the south to search for survivors from a downed plane. Survivors were not found. **TUCKER** then joined **USS Bataan (CVL 29)** for plane guard duty.

While performing plane guard duties with **BATAAN** on 5 September, a plane crashed into the water on the carrier's port side. **TUCKER** immediately changed course to head for the plane. All engines were stopped, and the motor whaleboat was lowered to rescue the pilot. At this moment a helicopter from **BATAAN** arrived and plucked the pilot from the water just as the rescue crew in the motor whaleboat was ready to do the same. The rescue team, empty-handed, returned to **TUCKER**.

Nine days later, another plane with three crewmen from **BATAAN** went down during night operations. **TUCKER** and other ships on plane guard duty formed a search line on either side of the carrier. **USS Craig (DD 885)** spotted a life raft and rescued two of the missing crewmen. The search continued for the third man, but he was never found.

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## THE INCHON LANDING NEAR SEOUL AND THE UN TROOPS MARCH NORTH

General MacArthur in a well-planned, bold stroke of genius invaded Korea on 15 September from the sea at Inchon. The North Koreans, already further south, were effectively cut off from their supply lines. Thus began a major rout of the North Korean invaders, and a steady movement of UN troops deep into North Korean territory. By 7 October, nearing the Chinese border, MacArthur boasted the troops would be home for Christmas.



During Plane guard duties with **USS Bataan (CVL 29)** in early October, **TUCKER** was 1000 yards astern of **BATAAN** when **BATAAN** lost steering control. She veered sharply to port, and **TUCKER** took evasive action to starboard. After about 20 minutes, the carrier regained steering control and **TUCKER** resumed to her plane guard station.

**President Truman, traveling aboard his plane "Independence", a modified DC-118 landed at Wake Island on 14 October 1950 to meet with General Douglas MacArthur.**

## PRESIDENT TRUMAN MEETS WITH GENERAL MACARTHUR

The President dispatched a message to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur on Monday, 9 October 1950, informing him that he urgently desired to meet with him on either Saturday, October 14th, or Monday, October 16th. The President suggested Honolulu as the place for the meeting. The President added that he realized the difficulty that faced General MacArthur with a new campaign starting, or in progress, and that if he felt his presence in Japan or Korea was of critical importance, he, the President, would consider meeting him on Saturday morning, October 14th at Wake Island. The president's travel itinerary took him to Hickham AFB in Hawaii, arriving on 13 October. Truman then continued to Wake Island, where he met MacArthur at the airstrip. The following account is from Harry Truman's written diary of the meeting:

***"We arrived at dawn. Gen MacArthur was at the airport with his shirt unbuttoned, wearing a greasy ham and eggs cap that evidently had been in use for twenty years. ... The general assured the presidency that the victory was won in Korea, Japan would sign a peace treaty, and the Chinese Communists would not attack...."***

Six weeks later, on 25 November, the Chinese did attack, and the Americans were driven back south again, this time leading to the evacuation of UN troops at the North Korean harbor at Hungnam in December.

**TUCKER** detached from the ASW drills with **BATAAN** on 12 October at 1422 in the San Clemente operating area and began carrying out orders to proceed to Bird Dog Station as part of Operation SETTER. **TUCKER's** station was to the west-southwest about 400 nautical miles. "Bird Dog Station" was a code name for a location directly below Truman's flight path, in which **TUCKER** could use her considerable radar and picket skills to track the progress of President Truman's return flight home from Wake Island. She arrived at her assigned station "SETTER" at 0530 on

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14 October. The following day at 1800, Truman's presidential aircraft, "Independence", a C-118 was tracked earlier, and was spotted passing overhead on its way back to the US. On 16 October, at 1900, **TUCKER** was released to return to San Diego.

By the first few days of November, most all new crew had been transferred aboard, all personnel leaves were completed, and all schools attended by **TUCKER** crew had been completed. **TUCKER** joined **USS Rupertus (DD 851)**, **USS Fechteler (DD 870)** and **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)** on 13 November on their way to Pearl Harbor. This was the first time the ships of DESDIV 32 were steaming together since **TUCKER** became a member back on the first of July.

### Destination: The Korean Conflict.

After arrival in Pearl on November 18, tryouts for the new **TUCKER** "Nine Piece Dance Band" were held on the **TUCKER** mess decks from those DESDIV 32 crewmen who were interested. Rehearsals by the band, whenever possible, were held on the mess decks. After a short stay in Pearl Harbor, the division again got underway to head west. The 4 ships fueled at Midway Island. At midnight Wednesday, the date was changed to Friday, 24 November to conform to the crossing of the International Date Line. Proceeding directly to Japan, they arrived in Yokosuka Harbor on 28 November. Due to high winds (In excess of 30 miles per hour), **TUCKER** and the others found a relatively safe place in the harbor to drop anchor. Even so, **TUCKER** had to get underway once to reposition and reset the anchor. After riding out the high winds for two days, **TUCKER** finally moored alongside **FECHTELER** in Yokosuka's inner harbor.

Upon arrival in Yokosuka, the Commodore aboard **RUPERTUS** put out the word that the only big band sound available anywhere in Japan was right here in Yokosuka aboard **TUCKER**. Word spread as far as 8th Army headquarters in Tokyo.

It wasn't long after arrival in Yokosuka that **TUCKER** found herself embroiled in the Korean conflict. For the next 2 years, **TUCKER** was twice called to duty in the Far East. She performed a variety of duties in support of the United Nations forces and gained the distinction of being the first radar picket destroyer to perform picket duties in combat since World War II.

**TUCKER** set the special sea detail to depart Yokosuka on 3 December 1950. In an attempt to unshackle the chain from the buoy, a man fell overboard. He was recovered by the motor whaleboat, but 15 fathoms of the port anchor chain had to be left behind. The chain section was returned to **TUCKER** only after her return to Yokosuka on 16 December.

**TUCKER** headed for Sasebo, Japan, escorting **USS Sicily (CVE 118)** an Escort Carrier **SICILY** and DESDIV 32 arrived in Sasebo 5 December 1950, and the next day and departed for Hungnam, Korea, still escorting **SICILY**.



Nearing Hungnam, **USS Fechteler (DD 870)** was detached to proceed ahead and obtain channel and harbor charts and then rejoin the formation. **USS Rupertus (DD 851)** was detached to receive mail, and deliver it to the other ships of DESDIV 32. Upon returning, **RUPERTUS** made two passes (1 to port, and one to starboard) to highline the mail to **TUCKER**. Both passes were unsuccessful due to a large amount of ship traffic nearby. The mail would later be delivered in port. At 1645, **TUCKER** anchored in Sohonin Harbor in Hungnam Korea. SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat) was embarked in **USS Rochester (CA 124)**.

During the last few weeks of the year, the United Nations Forces were being pushed ever southward by the Chinese and North Korean soldiers, leaving various Marine and ROK units "stranded" to the north around the Chosin River area.

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## THE EVACUATION AT HUNGNAM

The United Nations peacekeeping forces were being pushed all the way to the Pusan perimeter of South Korea by the North Korean army after the Chinese entered the war in late November. Generally described as an "amphibious operation in reverse", the evacuation of Hungnam encompassed the safe withdrawal of the bulk of UN forces from the Chosin Reservoir area in northeastern North Korea. It was the largest sealift since the 1945 Okinawa operation. In barely two weeks, more than a hundred thousand military personnel, 17,500 vehicles and 350,000 measurement tons of cargo were pulled out. In comparison with the retreat in central and western Korea, little was left behind. Even broken-down vehicles were loaded and lifted out. Also departing North Korea through Hungnam were some 91,000 refugees, a large number, but not nearly as many as had gathered to leave.

The first major unit to leave was the First Marine Division, which arrived in Hungnam on 10-11 December after their successful fighting withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir area. The Marines were followed by Republic of Korea troops, the U.S. Army 7th Division and 3rd Division. The ROK First Corps was landed at Mukho, on the Korean east coast below the Thirty-eighth Parallel. U.S. forces were mainly taken to Pusan, where the influx initially overwhelmed that port's capacity.

The Chinese and North Korean troops were attempting to interfere with the withdrawal. The potential threat they represented necessitated a vigorous bombardment by aircraft, artillery ashore and ships' guns. Air cover was available from nearby Yonpo airfield until that was replaced on 14 December. For the final ten days of the operation. Navy and Marine carrier-borne planes handled the job.



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After spending the night of 6-7 December in Hungnam Harbor, just a few days prior to the United Nations evacuation of North Korea, **TUCKER** departed with DESDIV 32 and proceeded to Kobe, Japan, arriving there on 9 December 1950.

Meanwhile, Task force 90, under command from the flagship **USS Mount McKinley (AGC 7)**, consisted of two heavy cruisers, **USS Saint Paul (CA 73)**, and **USS Rochester (CA 124)**, a battleship, **USS Missouri (BB 63)**, and eight destroyers. They provided the naval gunfire. **MISSOURI** provided intensified gunfire with her sixteen-inch guns. Ammunition expenditure was lavish. Among the shells fired were nearly three thousand eight-inch and more than eighteen thousand five-inch rounds.

**TUCKER** departing Kobe Japan on 11 December 1950 escorted **USS Bataan (CVL 29)**, a light ASW helicopter carrier, to Sasebo Japan. They arrived in Sasebo, 13 December 1950. The next day, **TUCKER** departed Sasebo for Yokosuka, arriving 16 December. Getting underway again on 18 December, **TUCKER** participated in ASW exercises for 4 days. She then remained in Yokosuka until 2 January 1951.

The 8th army headquarters building in Tokyo was a Japanese auditorium (ground floor) with offices above. The army re-named the building for Ernie Pyle, the famous war correspondent who was killed on the Island of Ie Shima near Okinawa in 1945.

The DESDIV 32 dance band played at the Ernie Pyle Club 21 just before Christmas. Among those in attendance were General Douglas MacArthur, Commander United Nations Forces Korea, and Admiral Arleigh Burke, Commander Naval Forces, Far East.



The complete DESDIV 32 orchestra playing at the Club 21, which was on the first floor of the Ernie Pyle building in Tokyo

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During January, February, and March 1951, **TUCKER** operated with TASK GROUP 96.7 undergoing specialized ASW. HUK, gunnery, and plane guard training in the Yokosuka operating areas. Each week, **TUCKER** would generally operate at sea for about 5 days and then return to Yokosuka for the weekend. The weather was not very cooperative, making the seas rough for a good part of the 11 weeks of exercises.

The flagship of Task Group 96.7 was **USS Bairoko (CVE 115)**.

**BAIROKO** was one of many "retired" WWII ships that were quickly re-commissioned for Korean service. **BAIROKO** employed anti-submarine planes to guard against the possibility of Soviet intervention in the Korean conflict. On 5 March 1951, **TUCKER** and the other members of this task group completed refueling, and replenishing of ammo and stores at Yokosuka in preparation for continued HUK (Submarine Hunter Killer) training.

While in the Yokosuka operating area on 11 January, the winds picked up from 8 knots to 28 knots in a very short period. A glass window of **TUCKER's** pilothouse broke due to crashing waves. **USS Bairoko (CVE 115)** lost two life rafts overboard. Eight hours later, **TUCKER** left the formation to successfully recover the life rafts.



While on a break from operations in the Yokosuka operating area on 13 January, **TUCKER** was moored with **USS Fechteler (DD 870)**. Around 1900, the **TUCKER** deck watch spotted a red flare about 2000 yards away. The motor whaleboat was called away to rescue and bring into tow the **RUPERTUS** gig, which had lost power. Later, at about 2100, an intoxicated sailor from **FECHTELER** returned from liberty. He then jumped overboard. Three **TUCKER** sailors jumped in and rescued the man. He was then returned to **FECHTELER**. The stay in Yokosuka would last until 23 January.

During more ASW exercises with **USS Besugo (SS 321)** on 31 January, **TUCKER** gained a sonar contact. It was evaluated as a submarine. **TUCKER** immediately broke off formation to attack. Closing fast on the submarine, **TUCKER** had to break off because three whales decided to get in the way.

While steaming with **BAIROKO** on 15 February, the wind came up quickly and strong. Facing 60-knot winds, **TUCKER** experienced some 30-degree rolls. Water entered a port hatch and caused a fire in the forward engine room switchboard. Power was lost temporarily to all radio and radar gear. About an hour later, all power was restored. **RUPERTUS** reported a steering casualty, as the seas were getting worse. She came hard left, and narrowly missed colliding with **FECHTELER**, who took quick evasive action. **TUCKER** was ordered to maintain station near **RUPERTUS** for assistance. **TUCKER** depth charges began coming loose on the fantail. 5 of them were jettisoned. Soon **RUPERTUS** managed to repair the steering casualty. At 1600 the wind began to decrease, and **TUCKER** and **RUPERTUS** were ordered to return to Yokosuka. Two days later, the rest of Task Group 96.7 returned to Yokosuka.

LTJG Robert Anderson took this photo of the rough weather looking aft from the bridge.



Back at sea for more exercises, DESDIV 32 was in a concentric screen with **BAIROKO** when a plane crashed to the port side of **BAIROKO** while attempting to land. **FECHTELER** was in position and rescued the pilot, but he was badly injured. **FECHTELER** returned the pilot to Yokosuka for hospitalization.

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Twice in March, for a total of 4 days in Yokosuka, the battleship **USS Missouri (BB 63)** was also in Port. Other than being in the vicinity in December 1950 at Hungnam Harbor Korea, this was the only time **TUCKER** would cross paths with **MISSOURI**.

### THE SIEGE OF WONSAN

Starting 16 February 1951, the Siege of Wonsan, as it came to be known, began. It would last for 861 days, until the war was finally over. This was to become the longest siege of any port in Naval history. Wonsan is located on North Korea's East Coast, and due to interior rugged mountains, was a natural supply route to the south. This strategic area was continuously mined, re-mined, and protected by many guns located in the caves of the cliffs around the port. Most every destroyer operating on the Korean east coast during the war took at least one turn at this very dangerous close in- shore bombardment during this long siege.

Most all exercises were complete on 19 March, and DESDIV 322 and DESDIV 131 began making preparations for departure to Korean waters.

**TUCKER** and the Task Group got underway on 27 March 1951, including **USS Blue (DD 744)**, **USS Bradford (DD 545)** and **USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754)** but without **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)**. **MASON** was undergoing repairs and would join in later. **TUCKER** would not return to Yokosuka for a long time. The task Force took time for some more HUK exercises.

**TUCKER** took her turn at underway refueling on 1 April with the carrier **USS Bairoko (CVE 115)**. **TUCKER** came alongside **BAIROKO's** starboard side and commenced fueling. Suddenly, a coupling pin in **TUCKER's** steering mechanism broke causing loss of steering control. The rudder jammed to hard right. **TUCKER** broke sharply to starboard, which caused the lines including the fuel hose to part. After repairs were made, **TUCKER** again came alongside **BAIROKO** and completed taking on fuel.

The task force, ASW operations complete, worked their way southwest to the Van Diemen straits. This is the oft-traveled strait from Yokosuka toward Sasebo then into Korean waters to join the Task Force Carrier Group (F-77).

### TUCKER 1951 KOREAN SERVICE

The next 4 months in Korean waters would prove to be the most difficult, demanding, and dangerous of her many years of service to the Navy. Before this deployment to duty in Korea was over, **TUCKER** would reach port only 2 more times. She had just completed a 22-day deployment before a short upkeep in Sasebo. This was to be followed by a difficult 45-day deployment before **TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 was released to head back to Yokosuka.

**TUCKER**, came under the operational control of Commander 7th Fleet on 5 April 1951, and reported for duty with carrier Task Force 77, operating off the East Coast of Korea. On 6 April, **MASON** caught up with DESDIV 32 and joined **USS Boxer (CV 21)**, **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)** and many other ships steaming as a unit in the area of Wonsan, off the Korean Coast.

This task force, operating as a unit of the United Nations Naval Forces, provided the forces ashore with continuous tactical air support, and protected the strategic air operations with invaluable assistance in her overall mission. Coincident with this task, **TUCKER** provided, as a unit of the screen, surface and undersea protection for the carriers and heavy support ships, along with the many other duties of destroyers in a fast carrier task force.

**NOTE: All through the Korean War, Task Force 77 operated darkened ship at night. During flight operations, the plane guard destroyer astern of the carrier would turn on the red truck (masthead) light only.**

Only four days later, on 9 April 1951, the task force, with **TUCKER** in company, with **Philippine Sea** departed the East Coast of Korea and proceeded southwest to patrol the Straits of Formosa. Arriving on 12 April, this relatively short operation was for the purpose of providing a show of force in the area, and to bolster Taiwanese morale. **PHILIPPINE SEA** launched aircraft for a show of force, and also provided aircraft towed sleeves for gunnery practice by all ships present. This was meant to be a spectacular show for all Chinese and Taiwanese who were able to observe.

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### GENERAL MACARTHUR RELIEVED FROM KOREAN COMMAND

On 11 April 1951, President Truman recalled General Douglas MacArthur, and replaced him with General Matthew B. Ridgeway.

The task force departed the Taiwan straits area to proceed northeast on 15 April. **TUCKER** steamed independently to Sasebo, arriving 18 April for logistics and upkeep. She had been at sea for three weeks. **TUCKER** tied up alongside the Destroyer Tender **USS Prairie (AD 15)** for boiler #3 repair. After an upkeep period from 18 April until 8 May 1951, **TUCKER** came under the operational control of Commander Blockading Force. For almost the next 3 months, her tasks consisted of many and varied duties. The primary job was blockade of both coasts of Korea, consisting of patrolling the sea lanes searching for enemy shipping movements, bombarding the coastal supply routes, and providing carrier screening protection for the carriers **USS Boxer (CV 21)**, and **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)** operating along the East Coast of Korea.

While on plane guard with **BOXER** on 12 May, one of the personnel on the bridge spotted what appeared to be a mine passing close to the port beam. **TUCKER** broke off to investigate. It turned out to be only a cardboard box. Only 7 hours later, a belly tank from a previously downed aircraft floated by. Again, **TUCKER** broke off formation and sank the belly tank with small arms fire.

On several occasions **TUCKER** was detached from carrier duty to take advantage of her specialized radar and IFF gear to provide reconnaissance and to monitor air and sea traffic. This picket duty was to provide intelligence and early warning for the rest of the task force. Due to this remote duty, **TUCKER** managed to refuel at sea, but would somehow miss several of the underway stores replenishments. Fresh food supplies became very low, as this assignment, continuously at sea for a total of 42 days, wore on. Toward the end of this deployment, **TUCKER** crew was reduced to eating beans and powdered eggs most days.

**TUCKER**, on 17 May, while operating off the southern portion of the Korean coast, steamed into Sasebo harbor for refueling. She was underway again in only three hours on her way, this time to Wonsan Harbor Korea.

**TUCKER** maneuvered through the mine-swept channel, anchoring at short stay inside Wonsan Harbor. **TUCKER** began shelling railroad bridges, highway intersections, and suspected enemy installations. This bombardment continued for 5 hours. This operation marked the first time **TUCKER** fired her guns at an enemy of the United States.

After clearing the harbor, **TUCKER** stopped in order to receive on-board six Korean passengers and their small boat.

**South Korean Marines awaiting their departure via sampans from TUCKER for intelligence gathering and raiding duties near Chongjin.**

**Note the wooden boat on deck in the background. It will transport the South Korean Marines to shore.**



During this time in the harbor, **TUCKER** fired more than one hundred rounds from her 5" batteries upon rail and road supply routes, gun emplacements, and personnel.

**TUCKER** then proceeded north to Songjin to disembark the Koreans in the middle of the night. Just before the light of day on 20 May, **TUCKER** began shore bombardment of selected targets in Songjin harbor. This continued all day. In the evening, **TUCKER** made rendezvous with the ammunition replenishment ship **USS Titania (AKA 13)**. **TUCKER** took on 200 more rounds of 5/38 shells and 100 AA projectiles. She also sent the motor whaleboat to the British Frigate **Black Swan (F 57)**, and received messenger mail and the new operational plan.

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**TUCKER** in company with **USS Stickell (DD 888)** began patrolling the coastline of the far north region of the Korean coast. For the next 10 days, **TUCKER** would steam along the coast between Songjin and Chongjin firing at targets of opportunity, while at night picking up raiding parties of South Korean Marines and re-depositing them in yet another location for a new mission.

One evening, **TUCKER** spotted a mine floating nearby, and began firing at it with small arms, the 20mm guns and even the 40mm guns. The object sank but did not explode.

Another duty for **TUCKER** was to steam to strategic areas and fire star shells at night to illuminate nighttime enemy movements. Nighttime launches from carriers were still a new phenomenon, and not all pilots were certified to perform carrier takeoffs and landings at night. Those few flights that did were called "Heckler" missions. They were typically not jets, and their purpose was to disrupt night troop and supply movements. **TUCKER** assisted wherever possible by illuminating selected areas with star shells.

**TUCKER** received orders to steam to the west coast of Korea on 24 May to rendezvous with task force 95.11 near Inchon. **TUCKER** dropped off the Korean Marines aboard **USS Stickel (DD 888)**. She refueled with **USS Navisota (AO 106)** and headed for Inchon. Arriving in the Inchon area on 28 May, **TUCKER** met up with **RUPERTUS FECHTELER**, and the escort carrier **USS Bataan (CVL 29)**. The next day, **TUCKER** steamed independently northeast to perform picket duty. After the area was deemed clear of hostile activity, the remainder of task force 95.11 joined up with **TUCKER** to continue "Bugatti" patrol.

**Bugatti patrol in the Yellow Sea was a code word for monitoring North Korean, Chinese, and Russian air traffic, radar, communications, and surface movements. Most of these were nighttime activities. TUCKER was well suited to this duty as it was very similar to being on a radar picket mission.**

**TUCKER** was released from this duty on 7 June and steamed independently back to the main task force near Wonsan for the next day and a half, arriving on 9 June. On 12 June, **TUCKER** was steaming with 15 ships in formation with two carriers, about 60 miles to sea east of Wonsan. The carriers were **USS Princeton (CV 37)** and **USS Bon Homme Richard (CV 31)**. Other ships in the screen were **USS Helena (CA 75)** as station guide, and **USS New Jersey (BB 62)**.

An eleven ship concentric screen was formed by **USS Bradford (DD 545)**, **USS Blue (DD 744)**, **USS Alfred A. Cunningham (DD 752)**, **USS Walke (DD 723)**, **USS Henry W. Tucker (DDR 875)**, **USS O'Brien (DD 725)**, **USS Buck (DD 761)**, **USS Harry E. Hubbard (DD 748)**, **USS John W. Thomason (DD 760)**, **USS Brown (DD 546)**, **USS Lofberg (DD 759)**, with **USS John A. Bole (DD 755)** steaming outside the screen with engine trouble. The 11 ships would alter their speed and course to exchange positions in the concentric circle approximately every 75 minutes throughout the night. Daylight was approaching, and **BON HOMME RICHARD** was preparing to launch aircraft.

At 0718 **TUCKER** again changed positions, and this time **WALKE** took over the position occupied by **TUCKER**. At 0743, **USS Walke (DD 723)** struck a free floating mine on her port side aft. All ships went to General Quarters. **HELENA**, **BOLE** and **HUBBARD** broke off formation to assist **WALKE**. Several of the ships began reporting possible sonar contacts. At 0930, **BRADFORD** evaluated a sonar contact as a submarine, and dropped depth charges. **TUCKER** visually sighted something in the water, and investigated. It was only a lifejacket.



**Damage to WALKE can partially be seen here. Everything topside near the fantail is blackened. The hull was severely bulged inward from underside. This photo was taken as WALKE approached Sasebo on 14 June.**

At 0935, **WALKE** reported 9 dead, 10 injured, and 15 missing. (The final toll became 26 dead and 40 injured.) **OBRIEN** reported sighting two more floating mines at 0945. **WALKE** was able to limp along under her own power, and was escorted by **BOLE** until met by a fleet tug, which towed **WALKE** to Sasebo.

The following day, **TUCKER** and several other ships began a search of the area to locate any more mines. None were found. **TUCKER** returned to carrier screen duties.

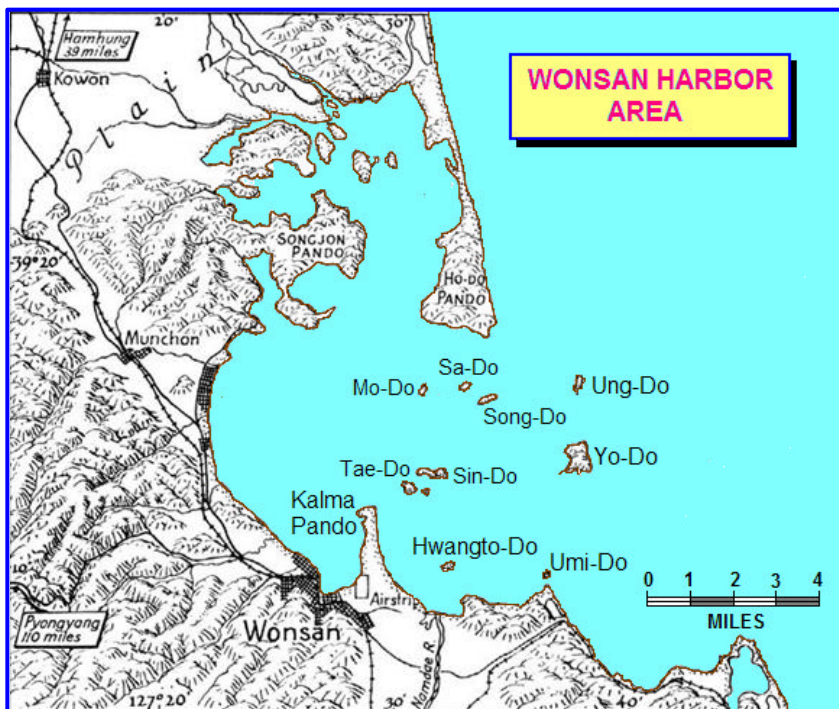
## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

**TUCKER** was released from task force 77 on 19 June to proceed independently to Sasebo Japan. No sooner had **TUCKER** tied up to **USS Bryce Canyon (AD 36)**, where she received an emergency order to get underway to assist **USS Stormes (DD 780)**. A fire had broken out in **STORMES** forward fire room, which was reported, uncontrollable. Before **TUCKER** could get underway for assistance, **STORMES** reported having the fire under control.

**TUCKER** had just completed 42 days at sea. Repairs to the SP radar antenna were done and liberty was a welcome treat for the crew, and because of the hardships endured without adequate fresh food, welcomed the opportunity to have whatever they wanted while on liberty in Sasebo.

After leaving Sasebo on 27 June, **TUCKER** took another turn participating in the Siege of Wonsan.

There were several Rules of Thumb that were generally accepted over time by the destroyers that worked Wonsan. One was that if you go close to the corners of the swept areas, especially those close in shore, your chances of being fired on were increased, because these positions had been zeroed in. Second, if two or more ships were operating in the area close together, the probability of receiving enemy fire was greater. Third, The Communists usually fired late in the afternoon when the sun was in position to make Navy ships excellent targets and make it difficult to locate the offending battery. Somebody even coined a phrase for this, the "Wonsan Cocktail Hour".



As the Siege of Wonsan went on, American air and sea power methodically began demolishing virtually everything in North Korea having any military significance whatsoever. Here supply warehouses at the east-coast port of Wonsan are bombed in July 1951.

Wednesday, 27 June, found **USS Blue (DD 744)**, **USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754)** and **USS Waller (DD 466)** in Wonsan's inner harbor. That afternoon the North Koreans displayed their displeasure when a gun position on Kalma Gak Peninsula opened fire on **WALLER**. General Quarters was sounded and all ships maneuvered evasively and began return fire. Opposing guns were silenced after a short duel during which each ship was straddled once by unfriendly shells. **EVANS** escaped hits or shrapnel this time, but two weeks earlier had taken much superficial shrapnel damage while in Wonsan harbor. Only a scant few minutes had elapsed when General Quarters again summoned the three ships to repulse enemy fire.



This was going to be a busy day for the warships as the North Koreans continued to beg for action. They got their answer by blazing guns on all ships. The warships in the inner harbor received heavy enemy fire but no damage was inflicted on the friendly forces. It was not until late that night that counter-battery fire died away.

Very early the next morning, **USS Henry W. Tucker (DDR 875)**, **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)**, and **USS New Jersey (BB 62)** formed task unit 70.17 and headed for Wonsan Harbor, to continue the siege. The three ships steamed into the inner bay to conduct more firing missions. The screen commander was **TUCKER**'s captain, CDR

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

George P. Rogers. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman was embarked in **NEW JERSEY**. At 0515 **TUCKER** took the lead 100 yards ahead of **NEW JERSEY** as they entered Wonsan Harbor. **USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754)** joined in 100 yards ahead of **TUCKER** as the ships entered the swept channel.



Just after 0800, **TUCKER** secured the starboard engine for a minor repair, and maneuvered via the port engine into a designated firing position. From this position, **TUCKER** fired 9 rounds from mount 53 at coordinates given by spotters. **TUCKER** then maneuvered to a new designated location, which at 0830 **TUCKER** set the port anchor, all engines stopped. **TUCKER** fired 17 more rounds at designated targets. At 0853, a splash was observed topside, about 2500 yards astern. General Quarters was sounded and 4 or 5 more splashes occurred, this time, much closer to **TUCKER**. Smoke puffs were observed on the island of Sin-Do. Because the near misses had quickly dispersed the men from the deck, the anchor detail hatch on deck was opened from the inside. This allowed a crewman to release the pelican hook securing the anchor chain, thereby allowing the anchor to be hoisted. At 0858, **TUCKER** began evasive maneuvers on one engine, while returning fire. 18 more 5-inch rounds were fired at the suspected locations on Sin-Do

**This photo shows TUCKER returning fire. Note the tip of the peninsula Hodo-Pando seen in the background.**

There was a hang-fire in mount 52, but it was cleared safely. **NEW JERSEY** began firing her 16-inch guns in the same direction. **TUCKER** sailors topside could hear the eerie whistle of the one-ton projectiles from **NEW JERSEY** passing overhead. **TUCKER** fired another 60 rounds at targets on Hodo-Pando.

Six more enemy shells came even closer to **TUCKER**. This enemy fire, with several misses was getting more accurate. All at once, shrapnel injured two men, located in one of **TUCKER's** 40mm gun tubs. (Mount 44) The two men wounded were Archie A. (Bud) Kerby, SA, who received a wound to the upper arm and SN Walter C. Grossman, who had his hat tucked in his belt, and a shrapnel piece put a hole through his hat and shirt. He suffered lacerations to his side, but he was not badly injured. At 0910, **TUCKER**, after firing 20 more rounds, was safely out of range, and checked fire.



**LTJG Robert Anderson is pointing to a hole in the bulkhead caused by shrapnel.**

Shrapnel also did damage to the superstructure, the TBS radio antenna, and the SP radar antenna. **TUCKER** had miraculously escaped with no more hits from enemy fire.

Kerby received medical attention on the wardroom mess table, and then at 1003, Kerby was transported for further medical attention to the cruiser **USS Toledo (CA 133)** via motor whaleboat.

At the time of this transfer, **TOLEDO** was firing her 8-inch guns at designated targets in Wonsan Harbor. **TUCKER's** motor whaleboat had to approach **TOLEDO** while her 8-inch guns were blazing. This was another scary moment for the men in the motor whaleboat, but they made the transfer safely.

Finally, **TUCKER's** motor whaleboat was secured at 1018. After clearing the harbor, **MASON, NEW JERSEY**, and **TUCKER** formed a bent line screen, and returned to the task force. **TUCKER** had fired a total of 150 rounds

of 5"/38 shells before she left the Wonsan Harbor area.

## SECTION 2 - 12

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Archie A. (Bud) Kerby, SA later was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds received.

**TUCKER** rejoined TF77, the fast carrier task force for duty as a screening vessel, and remained with TF77 until relieved on 21 July 1951.

Parts for repair of the damaged SP radar antenna were high-lined aboard from **USS Duncan (DD 874)** on 11 July. The crew made the necessary repairs. A week later, **TUCKER** detached from Task Force 77, along with **USS New Jersey (BB 62)** and steamed once again toward the Korean coast. A Personnel Landing Craft (LCVP) came alongside **TUCKER** to transfer a rescued pilot from **BON HOMME RICHARD** for further transfer later.

**TUCKER** and **NEW JERSEY** then entered into the swept inner harbor of Wonsan. The cruiser **USS Helena (CA 75)**, already in the harbor, **TUCKER** and **NEW JERSEY** began their "War Dance" for evading return fire and began firing on targets located on HoDo Pando. Locating targets and then firing on them continued for about four hours. By 2100 hours, **TUCKER** had re-joined the carrier formation and the next day transferred the rescued pilot back to **BON HOMME RICHARD**. Finally, on 21 July, **TUCKER** was released to return to Yokosuka,

She remained in Yokosuka only 2 days, and then it was "homeward bound" **TUCKER** received congratulations on a job well done from COMSEVENTHFLEET.

**TUCKER** then proceeded with DESDIV 32 to return to San Diego, California. She crossed the international Date Line and enjoyed 2 Mondays dated 30 July, but the ships bypassed Midway Island on their way to Pearl Harbor. Upon arrival in Pearl, **TUCKER** took on 300 pounds of fresh watermelon along with other stores and fuel. She departed Pearl Harbor only 3 days later, and arrived home in San Diego, on 8 August 1951.

**7 September 1951-- CDR D. L. G. KING III, USN, relieved CDR G. P. ROGERS, and became TUCKER's fifth commanding officer.**

In early September, **TUCKER** was to move from the pier to moor to a buoy. The ship backed too close to the buoy, thereby damaging a screw. After a short dry dock period to repair the screw, **TUCKER** began her training cycle. On 10 September 1951, **TUCKER** as a unit of DESDIV 32 commenced an intensive period of underway training in the west coast operating areas into the New Year.

# HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



**TUCKER** got underway from Long Beach on 23 February 1952 and sailed in company with **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)** and **USS Rupertus (DD 851)**, as a member of DESDIV 32. Again **TUCKER** would re turn to operations in the Far East, her second tour of duty in support of the Korean War. Entering Pearl Harbor on 29 February, after eight days in Pearl Harbor, including one day out for operations, **TUCKER** got underway for their next stop, Midway Island. She arrived there for a fuel stop, It was only 6 to 8 hours, but there was enough time for swimming, a few beers, and to see the gooney birds. On that same day, **TUCKER** was on her way to Yokosuka. Passing through some heavy seas, **TUCKER** arrived in Yokosuka on 18 March. She tied up next to the Tender, **USS Hamul (AD 20)**.

**TUCKER** departed Yokosuka on 22 March to join Task Force 77 operating off the east coast of Korea. Once out to sea, **TUCKER** encountered more bad weather, this time more severe than before. As the sea began to gradually subside, the crew worked hard to repair damage, and to take on fuel from the oiler. She arrived in support of carrier operations on 26 March. Her first duty was plane guard for **USS Valley Forge (CV 45)**. **TUCKER** would provide duties such as controlling fleet ASW aircraft operations around TF 77, ready to pick up pilots whose aircraft may crash while landing or taking off, transferring personnel between heavy vessels, and searching for enemy submarines.

In the early morning of 30 March, **TUCKER** was directed to proceed to Wonsan Harbor to pick up a pilot whose fighter aircraft had been shot down by Communist anti-aircraft batteries. The pilot, ENS H. E. Sterret was picked up from the water uninjured. **TUCKER** returned him to the Task Force further out to sea, where he was transferred by Helo to the **VALLEY FORGE**.

The evening of 3 April, **TUCKER** and the heavy cruiser **USS Rochester (CA 124)** formed a task element and departed for a gun strike mission along the Northeast coast of Korea. Targets were enemy gun positions, staging areas, and docking facilities at one of North Korea's principal coastal cities, Chongjin, located only 120 miles south of the Russian Naval Base of Vladivostok Siberia. Both ships bombarded the targets, but with foggy conditions, the spotting aircraft never arrived and it was hard to determine if the targets were hit. This shore bombardment occurred until the morning of 5 April. Upon completion of this mission, both vessels returned to the main task force.

This chart of Chongjin North Korea shows the close proximity to Russia and China. The Russian Navy Base at Vladivostok is less than 120 miles away.



**USS Fechteler (DD 870)** hit something submerged on 8 April, maybe a large log, and had to limp back to Sasebo because of a damaged screw. Earlier, on 23 March, **USS Rupertus (DD 851)** had run aground in the Shimonoseki Straits, nothing serious, but she returned to Yokosuka for repairs to the sonar dome. That left **TUCKER** and **MASON** with the task force.

In the early morning of 10 April, an aircraft being launched from **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)** crashed and exploded violently near **TUCKER**. The ship was at a high rate of speed, and swerved to the scene and assisted in the pilot's rescue. Teamwork displayed by both **TUCKER** and the carrier's helicopter resulted in a quick recovery of the pilot. This swift recovery brought the pilot back to the medical staff of the carrier for examination of injuries. The pilot was flying again after a three-day rest. It is of interest to note that **TUCKER** received a well done from the Commander Task Force 77 for her alertness and rapidity of action in this rescue. The bridge personnel spotted the crash, radar men reported it, and the engineers gave the ship additional power to arrive on the scene in time to save the flyer from the burning wreckage.

Late on 11 April, **TUCKER** again departed the task force, this time on a single ship gun strike mission north of the Korean port of Hungnam. The target was a communist rail route along which the enemy moved large quantities of supplies to the front line troops. Firing on this target was carried out in restricted and mined waters and to be effective required steaming in close to the shore under the eyes of known enemy gun positions. The mission was completed some two days later, and this particular section of rail was denied the communists during the period.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Upon her departure from the area, Task Force 77 planes took over the job of keeping the supply route unusable for the enemy.

**TUCKER** rejoined the Task Force on 13 April in time for the Easter Sunday air strike on the North Korean port of Chongjin. More than 600 aircraft hit targets in a period of only a few hours. Again, this massive strike was in the shadow of the Russian base in Vladivostok.

Two days later on 15 April **TUCKER** again detached from the task force and proceeded to Wonsan Harbor to rendezvous again with **USS Rochester (CA 124)**. The Commander United Nations Blockading Forces, Rear Admiral Dwyer was embarked in **ROCHESTER**. The two ships formed a task element, and they steamed their way south on an inspection tour of the eastern coastal front lines, coastal island defenses, and blockade effectiveness. Upon completion of the mission, the two ships continued south and headed for Sasebo. They arrived in Sasebo where RADM Dwyer returned to his flagship **USS Iowa (BB 61)**. **IOWA** had been in port in Sasebo for maintenance for the previous couple of weeks. Only staying in Sasebo long enough to refuel, **TUCKER** and **IOWA** steamed to Yokosuka. Arriving in Yokosuka on 17 April, **TUCKER** was now in need of her own upkeep period and rejoined her DESDIV 32 mates there.

Upon completion of this upkeep on 1 May, **TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 got underway, and joined the **USS**



**Bairoko (CVE 115)**, DESDIV 51, and two fleet submarines. Two weeks of ASW training ensued in the operating areas near Yokosuka. COMCARDIV17 was embarked in **BAIROKO** and in tactical command of the force. Each day after completion of exercises, **TUCKER** would lie at anchor for the night at Atami. Atami is located just outside Tokyo bay, and not far from Yokosuka.

*This photo taken from TUCKER is USS Gurke (DD 783) and one of the submarines at anchor at Atami.*

This was a realistic and intense ASW training period that terminated on 9 May 1952 when training was completed. That day, **TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 arrived in Buckner Bay for refueling.

**TUCKER** and DESDIV 32 reported for duty to Commander Blockading Force on 10 May 1952 in the Formosa Straits area. She was assigned to 8 days of patrol, and performed this duty without any unusual incidents. Patrol consisted of steaming about 13 miles off the coast of Mainland China in a 26-mile loop. American planes, also patrolling, would pass overhead regularly. Communication between **TUCKER** and the aircraft was at a minimum, with a liberal use of "code" words. Ships of numerous foreign nations enroute to various ports were encountered. On 11 May, while in the straits, **TUCKER** went alongside **USS Fletcher (DDE 445)** for transfer of light freight items. This included the welcomed Mail Bags.

Upon completing Formosa Patrol of eight days, **TUCKER** was relieved on station by **USS Ozbourne (DD 846)**, refueled in Kaohsiung, and made a visit to Hong Kong for some R&R.

The short stay in Kaohsiung was very hot and humid. The temperature remained in the high 90s, with a



humidity of close to 100%.

**TUCKER** crewmen looked forward to a three-day stay in Hong Kong, where shopping for bargains was anticipated.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



After entering Hong Kong harbor on 17 May, **TUCKER** was confronted by literally thousands of merchants in bumboats or junks trying to get on board to sell their wares. They were all vying for position to come aboard **TUCKER**.

**The push and shove of merchant vessels, all trying to come aboard at once, required the use of fire hoses to try to control the chaos.**



**For the duration of the Hong Kong stay, those merchants fortunate enough to secure a place on deck, did a brisk business.**

After two liberty days and three nights, **TUCKER** got underway once more on 19 May.

**TUCKER** returned to Formosa patrol, but was almost immediately relieved by another destroyer division, DESDIV 92, to return to Task Force 77 on the East coast of Korea.

Arriving in the early evening of 28 May off Korea's east coast, **TUCKER** and the heavy cruiser **USS Saint Paul (CA 73)** formed a task group and steamed toward the North Korean coast for an 8 day gun strike mission.

**TUCKER** set anchor off Yang Do Island off the North Korean port of Songjin on 29 May 1952 and delivered 200 gallons (4 drums) of aviation gasoline to the South Korean garrison billeted on the island. The garrison had a helicopter that had run out of fuel. Upon completion of this delivery by small boat, **TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL** proceeded south along the coast.

**This photo of SAINT PAUL is dated 23 May 1952 in Chongjin Harbor. Note the absence of the helicopter. It is possibly away spotting targets for SAINT PAUL.**

For the next eight days, **TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL** participated in rescue operations of downed pilots yet uncaptured by the enemy, and various shore bombardment operations. All day May 30, and May 31 they steamed around aimlessly waiting for the pilot rescue to take place. The rescue mission was delayed because of bad weather.

**TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL** on 31 May 1952, utilizing helicopter spotting, heavily bombarded supply routes between Simpo and Songjin. At one point, **TUCKER** made sixteen direct hits on a rail bridge while firing only twenty rounds.



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

That night was spent delivering fire on more targets of known enemy activity. While this was going on, the helicopter from **SAINT PAUL** finally made the rescue of the downed pilots.

**TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL** steamed south to the coastal terminus of the front line on 1 June. There, they relieved **USS Iowa (BB 61)**, and her escort destroyer **USS Gurke (DD 783)** of friendly troop fire support duties. The two ships immediately began to deliver call fire support missions on enemy gun positions, bunkers, and enemy troop positions.

In the afternoon of 2 June 1952, the task element steamed seaward of Hodo Pando peninsula. This peninsula juts southward, creating the inner harbor of Wonsan. Both **TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL** fired on enemy installations there for four hours.

After each firing mission, **TUCKER** was required to file a damage assessment report. As with many missions, the targets were not always visible where an accurate damage report could be made. On one such mission, the report had to be submitted, and a story was "concocted" that there was an enemy tank situated in the mouth of a cave in such a way that it could fire on ships in the harbor. The report said "**TUCKER** gunners made a direct hit on the cave entrance, thereby destroying the tank." This story made it into the official records of the Korean War.

On the night of 2 June, GQ was sounded, awakening all who were sleeping. A fire was reported in the aft gun mount. Quickly investigating what could have been a very serious event, it turned out there was no fire, but an electrical box in the mount was overheated and smoking. Investigating officers and men had also discovered a live round that had not been properly stowed after the last firing run. A little discipline was meted out and a review of proper procedures for ammo handling became necessary.



Support fire for front line forces along the coast continued on 3 June and 4 June. On 4 June, **USS Juneau (CLAA 119)** and **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)** relieved **TUCKER** and **SAINT PAUL**. **TUCKER** headed north to rejoin Task Force 77, while **SAINT PAUL** headed south via the Shimoneski straits to Yokosuka.

**Sometimes being at sea can be more than just water, horizon and sky. This photo was taken in June of 1952.**

**TUCKER** and **USS Iowa (BB 61)** became a task element on 7 June and made another tour along the coastline, arriving in the Hungnam area on 8 June.

The two ships commenced a daylong bombardment. The next day, troop-landing operations on various islands in the harbor took place while heavy fire upon shore batteries continued. The bombardment was successful in preventing hostile fire upon the troop landing party operations.



**This photo of the battleship USS Iowa (BB 61) was taken in 1952, firing her guns at targets on the east coast of North Korea.**

The afternoon of 9 June was devoted to pilot rescue work. While **TUCKER** provided cover fire, one downed flyer was picked up by rescue helicopter at Wonsan, and another a mile and a half south of the enemy held island of Myang Do. Both pilots were returned safely their carriers. **TUCKER** and **IOWA** continued bombardment in the Hungnam-Simpoo area.

**TUCKER** and **IOWA** turned their attention to the Hungnam-Simpoo area on 10 June and inflicted heavy damage on several industrial targets.

The task element was ordered to Yokosuka on 11 June. They steamed through the scenic Tsugaru Straits that separate the

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokaido, the **TUCKER** crew looked forward to a well-earned rest. They had been at sea for 45 days.

**TUCKER**, arriving in Yokosuka on 13 June, assumed the duty of "Ready Destroyer". This meant **TUCKER** would be ready to sail again on short notice if required to do so. Her time in port was broken only by practicing air recovery operations for three days with the **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)**. **TUCKER** returned to Yokosuka on 17 June.

At the first light of 21 June, she steamed out of Yokosuka bay escorting the carrier **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)**, and USS **Bon Homme Richard (CV 31)**. On the way north to Korean waters, **TUCKER** was plane guard for **PHILIPPINE SEA** while she qualified her new pilots for carrier operations. They arrived on 23 June, and combined operations with carriers **USS Princeton (CV 37)** and **USS Boxer (CV 21)**. Escorting the four carriers was a total of twelve destroyers.

### THE ATTACK ON THE BIG SUIHO DAM, 24 JUNE 1952

Until now, the power plants on the Yalu River were considered "Out of Bounds". Straddling the border of North Korea and Manchuria, the facilities, if bombed, were thought by many to give China a reason to enter the war on a much larger scale. Anti-aircraft gun emplacements were located on both sides of the river, and flying into Chinese air space was to be carefully avoided.

24 June was the beginning of the four carriers carrying out the largest air strike of the entire Korean War. US Air Force planes added to the destructive force. This strike included the complete destruction of the North Korean electrical power complex. North Korea to this day has a serious shortage of electrical power, because the dams and power plants were never rebuilt.

Numerous cruisers and destroyers in coincidence with the air strikes began massive shore bombardment in strategic areas of the coast. In case retaliation by China or Russia might happen, **TUCKER** was ordered over a hundred miles north. **TUCKER** was located at the blockade limit near the Russian border to act as picket destroyer for the task force until the air strikes were over. Duty consisted of watching the skies for MIGs, and the seas for submarines that might become a threat to the task force. **TUCKER** also provided with her IFF gear, a navigational beacon for the attacking and returning aircraft.

### This was the first time a destroyer was used in radar picket capacity in actual combat since World War II.

Upon completion of the strikes on 27 June, **TUCKER** returned to the Task Force. The assistance rendered by **TUCKER** while on this detached picket duty, was highly praised by Commander Task Force 77. **TUCKER** was then released along with the remainder of DESDIV 32 to Sasebo for upkeep.



Forces, Korea.

**TUCKER**, along with the other destroyers of DESDIV 32, is displaying colors "dress ship" in Sasebo for "Holiday Routine" of the fourth of July.

Her upkeep period completed on 8 July, **TUCKER** got underway once more toward Korea. She joined **USS Iowa (BB 61)** at Pusan on the southern end of South Korea. They steamed together, under the direction of Admiral J. J. Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet, to the west coast port of Inchon.

Arriving on 10 July, in the South Korean harbor at Inchon, **TUCKER** and the battleship **IOWA** met with **HMS Belfast (C 35)**. The three ships anchored about 5 miles from land. This was the scene of a conference between Admiral Clark, General Mark Clark, Commander in Chief of United Nations Forces Far East, and Rear Admiral Scott Moncrief, Commander British Naval

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

**TUCKER** is coming alongside the battleship **IOWA**.

Upon completion of the conference, Rear Admiral Moncrief embarked aboard the British Cruiser **HMS Belfast (C 35)**, along with **IOWA**, and **TUCKER** formed a task element of TASK FORCE 95, the blockading force. They proceeded north to the North Korean port of Chinnam'po. The Capitol city of North Korea, Pyongyang is inland up the Taedong River about 50 miles upriver from Chinnam'po. The harbor there is muddy and shallow in most areas. Making it worse is the incredible height of the tides. (As much as 19 feet difference between high and low tide) **TUCKER** and Iowa anchored about 5 miles out.



This map shows the relative location of Chinnam'po on the west coast to Pyongyang, the Capitol city of North Korea. Note the navigable river to Korea Bay of the northern Yellow Sea.

In Chinnam'po Harbor, **IOWA** began a gun strike. The 16" guns of **IOWA** hit targets situated twenty miles inland from the coast. **TUCKER** moved closer to the coast to provide surveillance and did not fire, as the targets were too far away for her guns. **IOWA**'s 16-inch shells passed overhead **TUCKER** and made the characteristic whoosh heard by the topside crew. This strike was coordinated with a heavy air strike from **PRINCETON** and **BON HOMME RICHARD** on the Pyongyang area.

Upon completion of the gun strike, **TUCKER** and **IOWA** departed from **HMS BELFAST**, and steamed south toward Sasebo. **TUCKER** only stayed in Sasebo long enough to refuel, replenish, and take aboard the Commodore DESDIV 32. The Commodore stayed aboard for about seven days, and then embarked in another of the DESDIV destroyers in an effort to get to know all who were in his command.

British Cruiser **HMS Belfast (C 35)** firing her 6" guns off the west coast of North Korea, July 1952.

She sailed to again join Task Force 77 on the east coast on 12 July, arriving there on 14 July. **TUCKER** again took up her duties as carrier screen. This time she operated with **USS Bon Homme Richard (CV 31)**.



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

A gun strike mission was carried on with **USS Juneau (CLAA 119)** on 25 July. This strike was in the vicinity of the North Korean port of Simpo on the 40th parallel. **TUCKER** maneuvered to within 2 miles of the beach, and set anchor. The target was a railroad bridge. Sporadic gunfire continued until midnight, in an attempt to harass North Korean night crews from attempting to repair the bridge. By noon the next day, **TUCKER** had returned to the Task Force.

**USS Boxer (CV 21)** departed Yokosuka on 1 August escorted by **USS Sproston (DDE 577)**, **USS Stembel (DD 644)**, and **USS Jenkins (DDE 447)**. They were returning to the Sea of Japan off the coast of Korea. Enroute, they were joined by **USS Walker (DDE 517)**, and **USS Taylor (DDE 468)**. On 4 August, they rendezvoused with Task Force 77. **JENKINS**, **WALKER**, and **SPROSTON** then were re-assigned to shore bombardment task elements, and steamed away to their new duties.

These photos of the **BOXER** fire, were taken from **TUCKER**. Her whaleboats were also put into the water, but all 63 men overboard were picked up by others.

**TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 were operating nearby on 6 August with the **USS Essex (CV 9)**. At a little after 0600, just after eight launches of aircraft from **BOXER**, a fire broke out on the hangar



deck due to the explosion of an aircraft fuel tank. In a matter of seconds, the hangar deck was a raging inferno, including fragmentation from high explosives, 50 caliber rounds, more fuel tanks, 20mm ammunition, and one 500-pound bomb. A total of 63 **BOXER** crewmen were trapped, and forced overboard from their location nearby the elevators.

Some floater nets and a great many life jackets were thrown overboard to aid the men in the water.

**BOXER** quickly turned to starboard, to allow wind conditions to aid the crew in fighting the fire.

The duty lookout crews of **USS Stembel (DD 644)** and **USS Ozbourn (DD 846)** were alerted to the fire immediately. Both ships spotted the flotsam, and were in position to arrive quickly

to the aid of those in the water. **STEMBEL's** motor whaleboats recovered 26 sailors, while 8 more were fished out onto **STEMBEL's** fantail. **OZBOURN** managed to recover 18 more with her motor whaleboat. Another 10 were plucked from the water by helicopters from **BOXER**, **USS Essex (CV 9)**, and **USS Bremerton (CA 130)**.

The **BOXER** crew finally extinguished the fire after a heroic five-hour battle. The death toll was 9, including 2 hospital corpsmen, the division doctor, and three Marines that were killed instantly by the initial blast. All 63 sailors overboard were recovered and transferred back to **BOXER**.

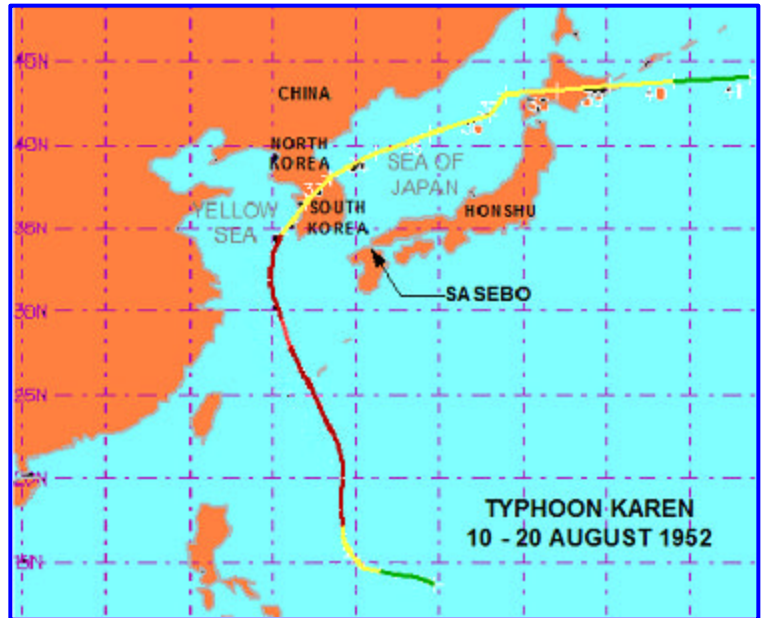
**TUCKER** returned to Sasebo on 7 August for a short upkeep period. Arriving in port, those on deck were startled to see that **USS John R. Pierce (DD 753)**, passed by and tied up to the Tender with **TUCKER**. **PIERCE** on a shore bombardment assignment south of Songjin on 5 August, had taken about twenty hits from 3 inch, 75mm, and 40 mm shore batteries. There were two gaping holes in her stacks, one in the bow, and numerous hits on the bridge. She was under fire for quite a while and had a total of eight casualties, five wounded minimally and three fairly serious.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

At Midnight, 16 August, **TUCKER** got underway unexpectedly from Sasebo to avoid typhoon Karen coming toward the area. Four officers and twenty men missed the ship, and had to be taken to the Task Force via the oiler **USS Cimarron (AO 22)**.

**Typhoon Karen** passed Sasebo to the west, then made landfall south of Chinnampo on the west coast of Korea. The storm then crossed the Korean peninsula roughly along the front lines. It passed back out to sea, downgraded to a tropical storm at Wonsan on 20 August.

Late on 18 August, **TUCKER**, bucking a little heavy weather, arrived in east coast Korean waters to perform carrier duties. **CIMARRON** got underway from Sasebo toward Task Force 77 carrying the 24 stranded **TUCKER** crewmen on 19 August. Highline transfers between various supply ships finally reunited the full **TUCKER** crew.



**TUCKER** is taking on fuel and reuniting LTJG J. W. London and ENS D. C. Ferguson with **TUCKER** by highline.

**USS Boxer (CV 21)** returned to the task force on 23 August after ten days of fire repairs in Yokosuka. Even though **BOXER's** hangar deck had extensive damage, the temporary repairs were completed in a remarkably short time.

**TUCKER** came alongside **BOXER** to refuel on 25 August. The band on the carrier played music for **TUCKER** while refueling was taking place. Since **TUCKER's** deployment was nearing an end, **TUCKER's** Captain, CDR King, made a request. The band broke into "California Here We Come". The Admiral aboard **BOXER** even got a laugh about that.

**TUCKER** then steamed south to meet and escort **USS Juneau (CLAA 119)** who was coming north through the Shimonoseki Straits from Yokosuka.

**TUCKER** and **JUNEAU** began a nine-day tour south of Wonsan to bombard enemy supply lines on 27 August and gave South Korean troops support in that sector. The operations here are about the same as usual, where the two ships would steam around all day, **TUCKER** screening **JUNEAU** to seaward, then at about 2000 they would move in and both would fire all night at various designated targets.

Photo is of **TUCKER** and **JUNEAU** steaming together off the coast of Korea.



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Many active enemy gun positions were destroyed, along with bunkers. Nighttime supply networks were kept under fire in order to minimize the enemy's ability to supply troops.

**TUCKER** and **JUNEAU** were relieved from this gun strike mission by other Navy ships on 31 August, so they could steam quickly toward Wonsan Harbor. There, they teamed up with **USS Iowa (BB 61)** and her escort, **USS Rogers (DD 876)**.

Back on 12 August, The salvage ship **USS Grapple (ARS 7)** was hit below the waterline by an enemy shell while performing recovery of **USS Sarsi (ATF 111)**, a Navy Tug that had been sunk a few days earlier in the harbor. **GRAPPLE** was able to patch her hole, and continue operations, but three days later **GRAPPLE** was hit again, this time mistakenly by friendly fire. Two men were killed, and others were wounded. **TUCKER, JUNEAU, IOWA, and ROGERS** provided gunfire support while salvage operations continued in progress. The salvage operation was successful, and **GRAPPLE** was made seaworthy enough to make the journey to Sasebo for repairs. **TUCKER** and **JUNEAU** then returned to the front lines in the south for gunfire support of the front line troops.

**TUCKER** and **JUNEAU** were relieved of gunfire support duty on 3 September 1952. Relief was from **USS Helena (CA 75)** and her escort destroyer. **TUCKER** returned to carrier operations another 5 days.

On the morning of 8 September **TUCKER** refueled and took on replenishments from the supply ships and then was released along with the rest of DESDIV 32 to begin the voyage home. A couple of minutes later CDR King and the combat CIC team came up with "Jehovah, this is Clear-Cut, Bogie 090, 6700, over"

**NOTE: Jehovah was the radio call of the Commander Task Force 77 as was Clear-Cut the call of RUPERTUS, a bogie is a contact on the air search radar, 090 is due east and 6700 is the range in yards.)**

Then came back "Clear-Cut this is Jehovah, watch your bogie and report if closing" (report if it continues to get closer to the task force). Almost immediately there came back "Jehovah this is Clear-Cut, I didn't report a bogie" Then and only then came the words --

"Jehovah this is Madam-Queen" (call of **TUCKER**), I have been watching Clear-Cut's bogie at 090, 6,700 miles and evaluate it as the Sky Room of the Wilton Hotel, Long Beach. We Request permission to investigate."

With that there was a dead silence for at least two minutes; absolutely no one said a word, for one of the strictest of rules had been broken-- **improper voice transmission**. Then after a silence a portly voice (which was surely the admiral himself) came out with this on the radio circuit for all thirty ships to hear.

"Madam-Queen this is Jehovah. Concur your contact, proceed and investigate. Send amplifying report of action. Good luck, a job well done Madam-Queen, over" and it all ended with "This is Madam-Queen, roger out". This was a good chuckle for all, and above all a pat on the back by the admiral himself.

Upon completion of her duties off the Korean coast, **TUCKER** received another "well done" message from Commander Task Force 77 for her alertness and rapidity of action in pilot rescue work.

**TUCKER** arrived in Yokosuka on 10 September, and departed with **USS Leonard Mason (DD 852)** for home on 13 September. They arrived at Midway on 19 September for refueling. The stay in Pearl Harbor was for only two days, on 21 and 22 September.

**Photo is of the port side depth charge test.**

Nearing Long Beach, a structural test was made. A depth charge was dropped, one to port and one to starboard while **TUCKER** was at a low speed. The result of the test was damage to one of the rudder plates. The plates were repaired when **TUCKER** went to Mare Island in October.

**TUCKER** arrived in Long Beach on 27 September 1952.

During this deployment, The **TUCKER** officers and crew had begun collecting funds for a disabled child that was to be selected in the US to meet **TUCKER** at the pier.



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



Arrangements were made in advance, and the child, 12-year-old Richard Hunter was selected. The boy, with severe asthma, had one lung removed. The fund had grown to about \$3200. This money would be used for an oxygen tent, and equipment to be used at his home for rehabilitation. Also, a college fund was started.

**Having arrived in Long Beach, the crew held up Richard Hunter and friend for the photo.**

Richard Hunter was "piped" aboard, but would probably never be in military service. A scroll was presented which made him an honorary member of the **USS Henry W. Tucker (DDR 875)** with full shipboard privileges the rest of his life.

### SUMMARY -TUCKER 1952 KOREAN SERVICE

This completed **TUCKER's** second tour in support of the Korean War. All requested assignments were completed without fail. At no time during the Korean Assignments did **TUCKER** suffer material casualty or engineering failure that required other than her own crew to repair.

**TUCKER** spent a total of 124 days at sea in the Western Pacific on this tour, of a total of 172 days. This does not include Pacific transit time, but is calculated from the first Yokosuka departure to duty on 22 March, to Yokosuka arrival upon duty release 10 September.

**TUCKER** became the first destroyer to perform remote picket duty in support of air strikes since World War II. This duty was for a three day, four-carrier strike on the Northern areas of North Korea.

**TUCKER** participated in 12 separate gunfire support missions during this tour.



**TUCKER** entered Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo CA on 8 October 1952 to receive the latest DDR conversion, including all the latest developments in armament and radar gear.

**This photo, made from a color slide, shows the Presidio side of the Golden Gate Bridge as TUCKER has entered the waters of San Francisco Bay on the way to Mare Island.**

# HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



## PRESIDENT EISENHOWER IS INAUGURATED

Dwight David Eisenhower took office as the 34th President of the United States on 20 January 1953.

The yard period, started in October 1952, and continued until April 1953.

Life, as a **TUCKER** crewmember, became about as "civilian" as the Navy can be. Married crewmen were able to get their families moved to the base housing or to nearby Vallejo CA. Unmarried officers were billeted in BOQ, and the crew was assigned to barracks. Only a few bunks were available on the ship for the watch who had to stay aboard each night. The galley only had to prepare meals for the watch section (usually two officers and about ten crew). The Leave for the 1952 holiday season was an option of which many took advantage.

The 40mm guns were removed and in place of them, 3"/50 dual guns were added. This modification also entailed removal of the second mast and addition of the Mark 56 fire control system to control the new guns. The SP8 Height finding radar, which was located on the rear tripod mast was placed farther aft in the location where the rear 40mm guns used to be. The K-guns were removed, but the ASW Hedgehog launchers remained. The rear tripod mast was then removed. The original "bedspring" SC radar atop the forward mast was also replaced with the AN/SPS-6 air search radar.

The extent of the work was such that everyone moved into barracks on the base in order not to interfere with the workmen. In no time, the ship was torn up to accommodate these newest changes.



**15 January 1953-- CDR F. R. HOEPPNER, USN, relieved CDR D. L. G. KING III, and became *TUCKER's* sixth commanding officer.**

The change of Command ceremony was held on the dock alongside **TUCKER**, as there was much work being done aboard. All the crew on hand lined-up along one side and the ten officers there along the other. Speeches and formal activities took place between the two ranks, and then the outgoing **TUCKER** Captain, CDR King made a point of shaking every-ones hand and said a few well-chosen words.

CDR Hoepfner came to the **TUCKER** having previously been the Executive Officer of the **USS Duncan (DDR 874)**.

In April, the finishing touches were put on the ship, at which time an "open house" was held to acquaint spouses and families as well as the crew with recent changes.

LCDR Ralph DiCori, USN assumed his duties as Executive Officer of **TUCKER** on 10 April 1953.

The above picture from the 1953 cruise book shows the Golden Gate Bridge ahead as **TUCKER** was about to leave the familiar waters of Mare Island and San Francisco Bay.

**TUCKER** was ready on April 14 and left Mare Island for her shakedown cruise in preparation for another trip to WESTPAC. She sailed to San Diego for Underway Training Exercises (UTE).



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Much training had to be done in a short time. There was essentially a new crew; there were new weapons to practice with, and much new radar and other electronic gear to learn. Her new duties, centered primarily on the detection of enemy attack through extensive radar coverage, were to take her on seven more WESTPAC missions in the next 10 years.

**TUCKER** departed San Diego on 16 May 1953. Leaving CONUS behind, **TUCKER** sighted "Diamond Head" and arrived at Pearl Harbor on 21 May 1953. Passing the memorial for the Battleship Arizona on the way to West Lock. This was the ammunition depot and was her first stop where crewmembers loaded ammunition. Once this was accomplished, all thoughts were of liberty in Oahu.

**TUCKER** departed Pearl on 1 June 1953 enroute to Yokosuka, stopping for fuel at Midway Island. A short liberty allowed a little swimming or fishing from the pier, and there was a small party on the beach where a few cans of beer were enjoyed.

**Many pictures were taken of the "Gooney Birds" that had free run of Midway Island.**

After ten days in Yokosuka, **TUCKER** departed on 13 June 1953 to join Task Force 77. The pass through the Shimonoseki straits between the Japanese Islands of Honshu and Kyushu was scenic with mild weather. However, turning north into the Sea of Japan toward the Korean east coast, **TUCKER** found much cooler weather and rougher seas. Arriving on station, **TUCKER** became part of a large striking force. Four carriers, **USS Boxer (CV 21)**, **USS Princeton (CV 37)**, **USS Philippine Sea (CV 47)**, and **USS Lake Champlain (CVA 39)**, one cruiser, **USS Saint Paul (CA 73)**, the battleship **USS New Jersey (BB 62)**, and numerous destroyers were included. Planes from the carriers were launched at regular intervals and seemed to cover the sky coming and going on strikes over Korea. This was the last large 4-carrier offensive by the Navy, since the armistice was soon to be soon ratified.

During 14 days on station, **TUCKER** would sometimes be detached from carrier escort to search for downed pilots, or to provide radar picket duty for TF 77. At the end of two weeks of duty, **TUCKER** returned to Yokosuka on 1 July 1953.

**TUCKER** left Yokosuka on 12 July to participate in HUK (Submarine Hunter Killer) exercises. She was in company with **USS Point Cruz (CVE 119)**.

SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat) was RADM R. Goldthwaite embarked on **POINT CRUZ**.

The hours and days were filled with concentric circular screens, turn movements, rotating screen axis, corpen movements, bent line screens, and various simulation movements.

Ships participating were DESDIV 301 which included **USS Gatling (DD 671)**, **USS Caperton (DD 650)**, **USS Dortch (DD 670)**, **USS Dashiell (DD 659)**, DESDIV 32 which included **USS Rupertus (DD 851)**, **USS Stemble (DD 644)**, **USS Leonard F. Mason (DD 852)**, the submarines **USS Queenfish (SS 393)**, **USS Tiru (SS 416)**, and the oiler **USS Manatee (AO 58)**.

After a week of HUK operations, **TUCKER** sailed to the port of Hakodate, located on the southern end of Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido. Hakodate was known for their fish canning factories, with endless rows of drying squid, and a few bubbling hot sulphur springs. The port "advertised" by nose, but to **TUCKER** sailors, "A port is a port." On 23 July 1953, after two days, it was time to go back to sea and to fresh air once again.

Steaming with **GATLING**, **DASHIELL**, and **DORTCH**, **TUCKER** arrived in Sasebo on 25 July 1953. This stay was for two weeks.



# HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

## THE KOREAN WAR ENDS

Although truce talks began in earnest in October 1952 at Panmunjom, it was not until 27 July 1953 that an armistice was finally signed. Major fighting, air raids, and naval shore bombardment continued up until a few minutes before midnight on that day. **TUCKER** was in port in Sasebo at the time of the cease fire armistice. The Korean War never really ended, only the fighting stopped.

The weather was very hot and humid, and anyplace with air conditioning that could be found by the sailors while on liberty did a brisk business. The **TUCKER** "welfare" fund financed by the sale of soft drinks aboard, had netted enough to finance a ship's party on the beach. 75 cases of beer and some food were provided. There were numerous contenders in heaving line contests, baseball, and football in spite of the heat. **TUCKER** remained in Sasebo until 6 September.

During her stay, many sailors took advantage of the close proximity of Nagasaki to visit this infamous city where only eight years previous, one of the two atom bombs was dropped. They found a rebuilt, modern and vibrant community. The Mitsubishi Shipyard was once again restoring the Japanese merchant fleet.

**At the "ground zero" point of the bomb, a large simple shrine had been erected along with a museum housing many grim mementos of the bomb's destructive power. This has been rebuilt and has grown over the years to become beautiful park and a big tourist attraction.**

**TUCKER** departed Sasebo on 8 August to re-join TF 77. Duties now consisted of patrolling the Korean coasts and the Straits of Formosa. With an eye on the sky, **TUCKER** took advantage of her specialized radar and listening equipment to perform radar picket duty. This routine was broken occasionally with ASW patrol exercises, and port visits.



In September, **TUCKER** visited Hong Kong. This was one of the most memorable visits of this Far East tour. As she entered the harbor, hundreds of small junks laden with merchants and merchandise surrounded the ship. As soon as **TUCKER** was moored at about 8:30 AM, the first merchant boarded to set up shop. In quick succession, others found locations on the main deck.

**Business on TUCKER had started. From the forecandle to the fantail, could be found clothiers, shoe repair shops, barbers, jewelers, furniture, luggage, leather goods, watches, artists, engravers, and even a Coca Cola stand.**

From a painting barge, Mary Soo and her crew of side painters began work. The side painting was free, as long as they could have the trash (treasures?) **TUCKER** had ready for disposal.

**TUCKER** stayed for 5 days in Hong Kong, then headed back for duty in the straits of Formosa, and the Korean coast with elements of TF 77. The remainder of this tour of duty was spent providing radar picket information alternated with returns to Yokosuka for upkeep, and R&R.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Finally, on 20 November, leaving Yokosuka for the last time on this tour, **TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 cleared Yokosuka harbor and began the journey home. The ships of DESDIV 32 combined with 3 of the four ships of CORTDESDIV 11. They formed an 8-ship task group TU 36.3.9 composed of the command post ship **USS Eldorado (AGC 11)**, DESDIV 32 and CORTDESDIV 11 (Carrier Escort Division 11). **TUCKER**, operating with the other ships participated in various exercises with the Task Force and independently while underway. They stopped for re-fueling at Midway Island on 26 November. Underway again, the task group arrived in Pearl Harbor on 29 November. After two days in Pearl Harbor, **TUCKER** and the rest of DESDIV 32 departed Pearl Harbor and left behind the remainder of the task group for their journey to Long Beach.

**TUCKER** arrived back to Long Beach on 8 December where families, sweethearts, and babies who had never seen daddy, were on hand to welcome the crew home.



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954



**TUCKER** was the flagship of RADM Thomas Burrowes during the PACTAEX exercises in February 1954. Six years previously, Thomas Burrowes, then a Captain was the Commander of the Naval forces of **OPERATION SANDSTONE** atomic tests in the Marshall Islands (Enewetok). During the Korean War (1951 and 1952), Thomas Burrowes had also served as the Captain of the battleship **USS Wisconsin (BB 64)**, and now was in charge of Navy Tactical Training.

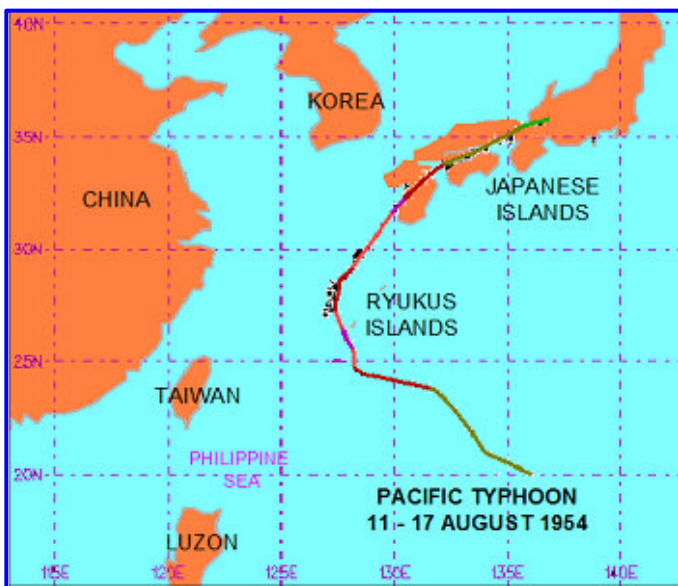
**29 March 1954-- CDR R. M. ROSS, USN, relieved CDR F. R. HOEPPNER, and became TUCKER's seventh commanding officer.**

In May and June of 1954, **TUCKER** kept busy with various training exercises in preparation for her Far East deployment.

### OPERATION "PASSAGE TO FREEDOM"

In May of 1954, the French Army in Vietnam lost the war for Vietnam independence. Ho Chi Minh, the Communist leader was soon to establish the new "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" in Hanoi. This created the communist Vietminh in control of the north and the French backed State of Vietnam in the south. A Geneva Accords agreement, established the division to be at the 17th parallel. This resulted in a 300 day mass exodus of Vietnamese from the north to the south. Over 1,000,000 vietnamese fled south, mostly by land. The United States Navy assisted with the evacuation with a hastily put together **Task Force 90** consisting of cargo ships, tank carriers, and other vessels, not to include warships. Thus, in the course of the next 10 months, the US Navy moved over 200,000 refugees by sea from Haiphong to Saigon.

**USS Henry W. Tucker (DDR 875)**, under the command of Commander Robert M. Ross, departed Long Beach, California on 6 July 1954 with DESDIV 32 en route to Yokosuka, Japan. **TUCKER** Arrived in Pearl Harbor on 12 July, and then made a fuel stop at Midway, beginning another WESTPAC tour.



**TUCKER** got underway on 8 August to rendezvous with Task Force 70.2 in the South China Sea. **TUCKER** attempted to skirt the first of several typhoons she would encounter during this deployment. Nevertheless, she encountered some heavy weather enroute to the South China Sea.

Halfway between Midway and Yokosuka the skills of the Division Medical Officer and **TUCKER's** Chief Hospitalman and Corpsman were suddenly put to the test. An emergency appendectomy became necessary and was performed in the wardroom of **TUCKER**, with a Third Class Disbursing Clerk acting as instrument handler. The complete success of the lengthy operation was evidenced by the man's speedy recovery and subsequent return to duty. Arriving in the Far East on 29 July 1954, **TUCKER** remained for 8 days availability in Yokosuka, alongside the repair ship **USS Jason (ARH 1)**.



# HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

For the next 13 days, **TUCKER** was busy with operations, including daily air operations, exercises at General Quarters, inter-ship exercises. and a visit near the Tachen Islands north of Taiwan.

## THE FIRST TAIWAN CRISIS

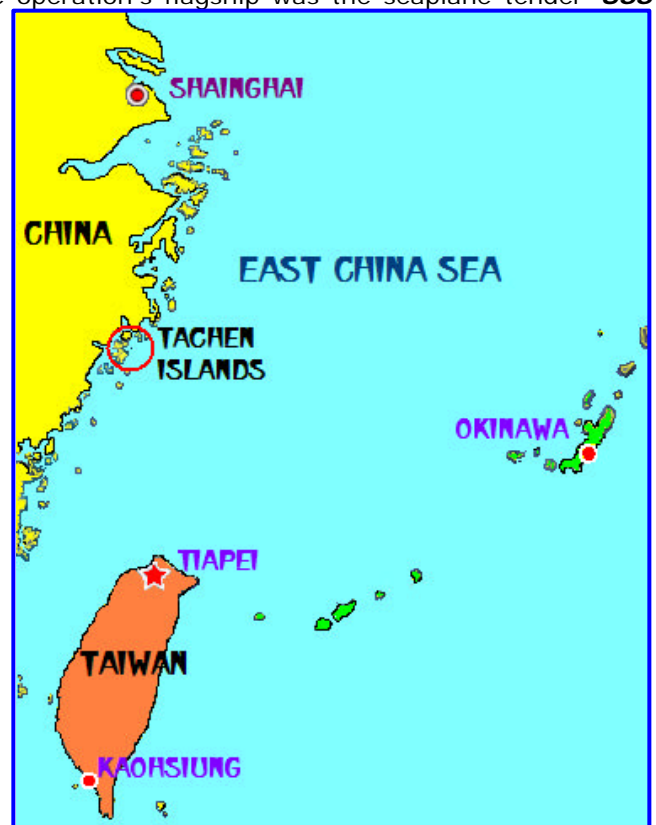
When Chaing Kai-shek fled mainland China to Taiwan in late 1949, the Nationalist Chinese maintained control of a number of small islands only a few miles off the coast of the mainland. One such group of islands was known as the Tachens. This island group is located about 200 miles north of Taiwan. Tired of the continuing harassment of sporadic gunfire upon the mainland and interruption of shipping, the government of Mao Tse-Tung began preparations to invade. President Eisenhower was determined to protect the islands but the Congress of the US was divided in their support.

**TUCKER** was steaming with task force 70.2 when they were ordered north. A military action by the Communist Chinese against the Tachen islands appeared imminent. The operation's flagship was the seaplane tender **USS Salisbury Sound (AV 13)**, commanded by Rear Admiral F.N. Kivette, Commander of the Formosa Patrol Force. The Eisenhower administration was prepared to defend the islands but decided instead to offer evacuation of all the soldiers and any civilians that wanted to leave the Tachens. The appearance of the task force only temporarily calmed the situation, but by the following February, the actual evacuations of civilians and Nationalist Chinese military was completed.

The map shows the location of the Tachen Island group about 200 miles north of Taiwan.

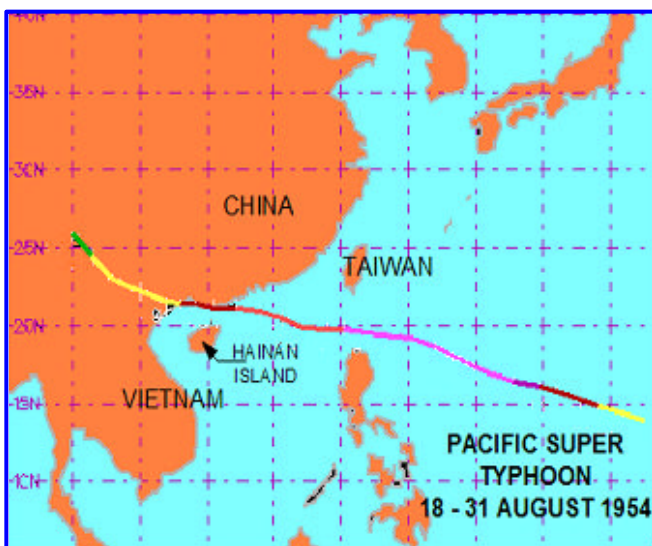
**TUCKER** and Task force 70.2 once again headed south to continue the readiness training in the Taiwan Strait and on to the South China Sea during this volatile period.

Another typhoon, this time with winds in excess of 150 mph, spawned in the pacific and traveled west.



After 6 days of upkeep in Subic Bay, **TUCKER** rejoined the Task Force on 25 August for 6 more days of heavy-weather operations.

**TUCKER** as part of task group 70.2 assumed a bent line screen on **USS Philippine Sea (CVA 47)** with **USS Carpenter (DDE 825)**, **USS Radford (DD 446)**, **USS Fletcher (DD 445)** and **USS George K. McKenzie (DD 832)** in the South China Sea. Just after Midnight of August



26, "Man Overboard" was reported by **PHILIPPINE SEA**. **TUCKER** and **MACKENZIE** were dispatched to attempt to locate the man.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

A day later, the Task Group Commander sent the following message to Commander U.S. Naval Forces Philippine Islands. It read:

**NAVY NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WITH TASK GROUP 70PT2 IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AUGUST 26. SNATCHED FROM THE DARK WATERS OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA SHORTLY AFTER ONE AM LAST NIGHT, A U.S. SAILOR WAS RESCUED AN HOUR AFTER HIS SHIPMATES REPORTED HIM OVERBOARD. DESPITE HIGH WINDS AND HEAVY RAIN SQUALLS THE DESTROYER HENRY W. TUCKER LOCATED THE STRICKEN NAVY MAN SEVERAL MILES ASTERN OF TASK GROUP 70PT2.**

**EDWARD L. COMEAUX, SN USN, HUSBAND OF MRS BARBARA O. COMEAUX OF CROWLEY LOUISIANA AND SON OF MR ZIRS ULYSSE COMEAUX JR. MORSE LOUISIANA OWES HIS LIFE TO HIS EXPERT SWIMMING, A STRONG SET OF LUNGS AND THE FAST COORDINATED EFFORTS OF THE SHIPS OF THE TASK FORCE. THE CREW OF THE HENRY W. TUCKER HEARING COMEAUX SHOUTS FOR HELP OVER THE DARK WATERS. FIVE MINUTES LATER, LOOKOUTS SPOTTED HIM SWIMMING ABOUT UNAIDED.**

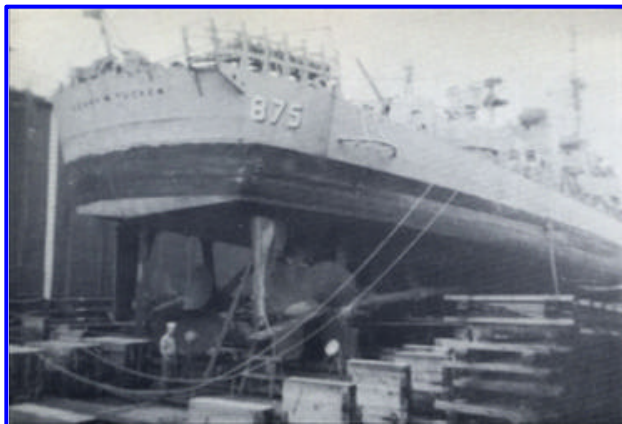
**TODAY, BACK ABOARD THE PHILIPPINE SEA, COMEAUX REMARKED THAT HIS STRONGEST EMOTION WAS THAT OF LONELINESS AS THE STERN OF THE SHIP PASSED HIM BY AND AS HE WATCHED THE LIGHTS OF THE TASK GROUP DRAW FARTHER AWAY.**

**HIS HOPES FOR SURVIVAL QUICKLY RETURNED, HOWEVER, WHEN HE SAW THE TUCKER AND ANOTHER DESTROYER APPROACHING. THEY HAD BEEN DISPATCHED BY THE TASK GROUP COMMANDER, REAR ADMIRAL, RICHARD W. RUBLE USN TO SEARCH THE AREA WHERE COMEAUX HAD GONE OVER THE SIDE.**

**A LIFEBOAT FROM THE TUCKER WAS LOWERED INTO THE OPEN SEA AND ITS CREW PULLED COMEAUX FROM THE WATER UNINJURED. THIS MORNING HE WAS RETURNED TO HIS SHIP BY HIGHLINE TRANSFER.**

This story later developed into a script for the COMCRUDESPAC weekly radio program.

The typhoon that was responsible for the rough seas in **TUCKER's** operating area made landfall on 26 August, just north of the Chinese island of Hainan. The carrier **USS Boxer (CVA 21)** joined the task force, now consisting of 3 carriers and 11 destroyers. On 31 August, **USS Fletcher (DD445)** and **TUCKER** escorted **BOXER** to Manilla. Because of 6 days of relentless heavy weather operations, **TUCKER** was again in need of repair. **TUCKER** then steamed directly to Subic Bay for 2 days in dry dock to affect hull repairs.

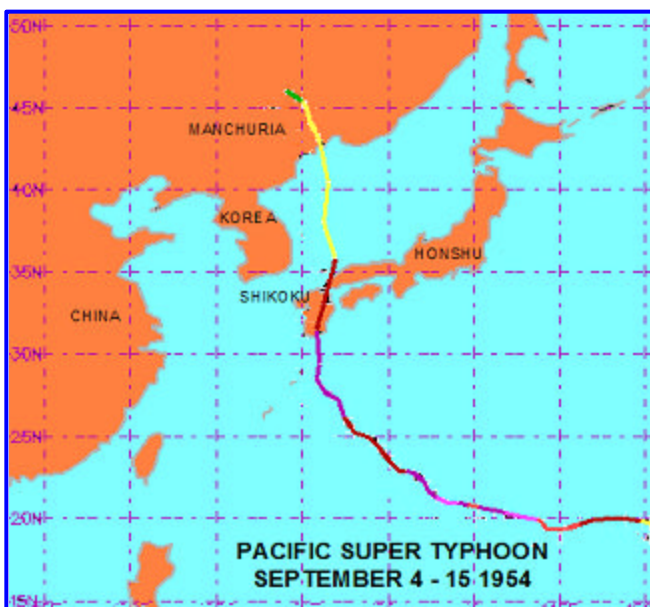


This Photo from the 1954/1955 Cruise Book is of **TUCKER** in dry-dock at Subic Bay.

**TUCKER** was then assigned to picket duty for the task force. Her station was west toward the Vietnamese coastline, about 20 miles away from the rest of the task force.

**TUCKER** departed Subic Bay with DESDIV 32, conducting type training while en route to Japan and a brief stop at Sasebo.

**TUCKER** left Sasebo and passed through the Shimonoseki Straits and the Inland Sea. In the straits, **TUCKER** came almost face to face with another typhoon on 12 September,



## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

This storm subsequently cost her another 11 days at the Ship Repair Facility, Yokosuka. This particular typhoon was one of Japan's deadliest, claiming 1761 deaths. This time **TUCKER** needed to repair hull cracks and sprung hatches.

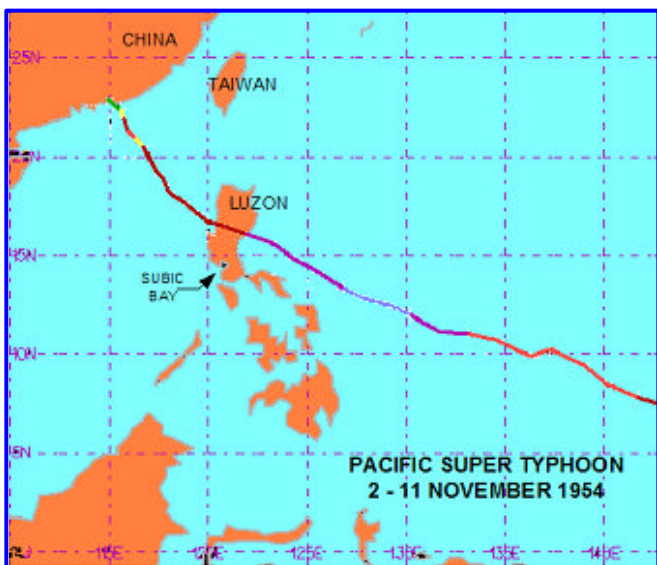
**TUCKER** left Yokosuka on 23 September and proceeded to Kaohsiung, Taiwan for more Formosa Straits patrol duty.

During the first 8 days on Formosa Patrol, the CINCPACFLT Combat Camera Group came aboard to film on-the-spot TV interviews of 50 personnel. **TUCKER** then returned to Kaohsiung. **TUCKER** then departed to nearby straits of Formosa waters where training exercises were conducted in cooperation with several Chinese Nationalist destroyers.

### HO CHI MINH ASSUMES MORE POWER IN NORTH VIETNAM

On October 10, Ho Chi Minh returned from exile in China and took the power given up by the French in North Vietnam. The recently signed Geneva accords gave recognition to the independent state and relinquished the colonial interests of France. This increased the tempo of refugee evacuations from the north to the south.

Upon completion of the training with the Nationalist Chinese Navy on 12 October, **TUCKER** arrived in Hong Kong and enjoyed three days of excellent liberty and recreation.



Leaving Hong Kong in the morning of 12 October, **TUCKER** returned to spend 5 more days on Formosa Patrol. During this time she neared Chinese Communist coastal waters in search of a downed Chinese Nationalist aircraft.

**TUCKER** then entered Subic Bay on 23 October for 9 days of availability alongside **USS Frontier (AD 25)**.

The first three weeks of November were spent with the Task Force in the South China Sea, interrupted only by a two-day upkeep period in Subic Bay. Various types of training, general quarters, air operations and typhoon evasion were conducted during this period.

**TUCKER** once more needed typhoon damages to be repaired. She spent 8 days at the end of November and early December in Subic Bay.

Captain Ross presented commendations to 9 men who were primarily responsible for a message received from the commanding officer of **USS Navasota (AO 106)** on 7 November praising **TUCKER's** speed and good seamanship during heavy weather refueling. The commendation read in part "The best I have ever seen".

Also, during the Task Force operations, **TUCKER's** radar men received a "well done" from the Screen Commander for having initially detected the greatest number of unidentified surface and air contacts at especially long ranges while on special plane guard duty in company with **USS Yorktown (CVA 10)**.

Getting underway from Subic Bay with members of DESDIV 32 and DESDIV 11 on 3 December, **TUCKER** steamed to Okinawa for a two-day briefing. Embarked in **TUCKER** was COMDESDIV 32, Captain Thomas D. McGrath. Embarked in USS Floyd B. Parks was COMDESRON 1. Then **TUCKER** and 6 other destroyers of DESDIV 32 and DESDIV 11 took part in a fleet exercise, both plane guard and ASW exercises with the carrier **USS Princeton (CVS 37)** between Okinawa and Tsushima. **TUCKER** continued with four more days of HUK operations. Suddenly on 15 December, while the task group was enroute from the operations area in the East China Sea to Yokosuka, a serious steering casualty forced **TUCKER** to divert to Sasebo for more repairs.

While in Sasebo, Commander Robert W. McElrath, former Executive Officer of **USS Los Angeles (CA 135)**, relieved Captain Thomas D. McGrath as Commodore DESDIV 32 in ceremonies on-board **TUCKER**.

**TUCKER** stayed in Sasebo for the Christmas season. The highlight was a party given by the crew for 15 Japanese orphans, all deaf and dumb. The festivities included Christmas dinner, movies, a tour of **TUCKER**, and a Christmas tree with individual presents of both clothing and toys for the needy children.

## HISTORY OF USS HENRY W. TUCKER 1950 - 1954

Additional holiday spirit was enjoyed as the various divisions within *TUCKER* vied for 48 hours liberty in a compartment decoration contest. All remaining non-holidays were spent making necessary repairs during availability alongside the repair ship *USS Jason (ARH 1)*.

Although four typhoons were of consequence that caused damage to *TUCKER* during this deployment, several other typhoons in the nearby areas during these months also required her to operate in choppy seas and heavy weather. This was not the busiest typhoon season in WESTPAC, but as luck would have it, *TUCKER* seemed to be often in the general area of the most of the big storms.

To continue the History of *USS Henry W. Tucker (DDR 875)*, select History years 1955-1959.