

USS HEPBURN (DE-1055)  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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Ser 315

From: Commanding Officer, USS HEPBURN (DE 1055)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations

6 AUG 1972

Subj: Command History for the period 1 January to 31 December  
1971

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 series

Encl: (1) Command History for 1 January to 31 December 1971

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is  
forwarded.

  
J. W. SELLERS

Copy to:  
COMCRUDESPAC (w encl (1))  
COMCRUDESFLOT THREE (w encl (1))  
COMDESRON TWENTY-NINE (w encl (1))

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**USS HEPBURN (DE-1055)**  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

Command History

1 January - 31 December 1971

The new year 1971 dawned quickly with an underway date of 5 January for WESTPAC, HEPBURN's first deployment. In spite of extensive and heavy snowstorms east from the plains to the Atlantic coast, all hands were on board as HEPBURN set sail for her initial assignment with the Seventh Fleet. Heading for Subic Bay, R.P., there were short stops in Pearl Harbor (11 - 13 January), Midway (16 January) and Guam (23 January). HEPBURN had just three short days in Subic Bay (27 - 29 January) to prepare for operations on the gunline off the coast of Vietnam.

On January 31, HEPBURN became the first of the KNOX class, single screw, single 5"/54 gun mount destroyer escorts to take part in combat operations in the Vietnam conflict. Her gun supported the 1st Australian Task Force and the 1st Air Cavalry through 6 February. For the week following, the assignment was to conduct surveillance of a task force of Soviet ships on their way north through the South China Sea.

February 14 found HEPBURN making her first port call in Japan, starting a week's stay in Sasebo. Following that and a week's operations in the Sea of Japan, three weeks were spent in the ports of Sasebo and Yokosuka, Japan. Serving with the USS GRIDLEY (DLG 21) and USS TOWERS (DDG 9), HEPBURN spent March 21 - April 2 on PARPRO Picket Station in the Sea of Japan. Five days in Subic Bay followed before starting an assignment on the Northern Search and Rescue Station in the Gulf of Tonkin. During the latter period HEPBURN had the distinction of being the first ship of the DE 1052 class to embark a UH-2 helicopter detachment.

On 29 April, CDR Stuart D. Landersman, USN, HEPBURN's first skipper, was relieved as Commanding Officer by CDR John W. Sellers, USN, while at sea in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Duties on "NSAR" ended 4 May, and on the 5th, HEPBURN started a six day visit to the port of Hong Kong.

Four weeks as plane guard and escort with the USS RANGER (CVA 61) commenced 13 May and included eight days in Subic Bay (20 - 28 May), six in Yokosuka (1 - 6 June) and a non-stop transit of the Pacific Ocean "goin home."

HEPBURN outchopped June 9, left the USS RANGER near San Francisco 16 June, and arrived in Long Beach to a gala homecoming and a month of leave on June 18. During her first WESTPAC deployment, HEPBURN had 109 days at sea of 164 from her home

port, while establishing the DE 1052 class as a front runner in the modern Navy, a willing replacement for the older, retiring DD's.

On July 3, HEPBURN quietly celebrated her second birthday. On July 23, she hosted the television program "Serendipity," a children's program which was aired on television once in late 1971 and again in early 1972. Two days as ASW School Ship, and an upkeep period preceded plane guarding for the USS CORAL SEA (CVA 43) August 1 - 10.

Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-NINE embarked 11 August. An upkeep period lasted to September 29, when HEPBURN took part in UPTIDE 3A, (29 September - 8 October). COMDESRON TWENTY-NINE disembarked 30 September.

More upkeep time lasted to November 8, when ten days of exercises and plane guarding for the USS HANCOCK (CVA 19) commenced.

December quietly ended the calendar year, save for the flourish of placing second in the U.S. Pacific Fleet Ship Store Christmas display contest.

The holiday season ended a year of "firsts" for HEPBURN and the DE 1052 class.