

USS HEPBURN (DE-1055)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS HEPBURN (DE 1055)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy
Yard, Washington, D.C. 20390

Subj: Command History for the Period 1 January to 31 December
1972 (OPNAV Report 5750-1)

Ref: (a) COMCRUDESPACINST 5000.3E, Article A3117
(b) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Command History, 1 January - 31 December 1972
(2) Significant Messages Received
(3) List of Commanding Officers to date

1. Enclosures (1), (2) and (3) are forwarded in accordance
with references (a) and (b).



W. C. MANES

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Reg 054 (3-3)

USS HEPBURN (DE-1055)
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Command History

1 January - 31 December 1972

As the year 1972 began, HEPBURN was inport at Long Beach, California, and under the operational control of the Commander, FIRST Fleet.

HEPBURN spent the month of January in upkeep in port except for one underway period between 24 and 28 January during which she participated in one of the "TIDEGUAGE" series of Anti-Submarine Warfare exercises. Another inport period in February ended on the 22nd, when HEPBURN was underway for independent training exercises in the Southern California operating areas. During this period, she served one day as school ship for the Anti-Submarine Warfare School in San Diego and qualified the naval gunfire support team on the range at San Clemente Island. The ship then returned to port in Long Beach the evening of the 25th of February.

HEPBURN was underway again on the 29th of February and visited the port of Avalon, on Catalina Island, for a five-hour "liberty." The ship then proceeded to the Fleet Operational Range Accuracy Check Site on San Clemente Island, to calibrate her gyro and radars. During these checks, a problem developed with the main steam throttle which required an immediate return to port the same day, March 1st. The following day, the HEPBURN began an upkeep period for repairs to the throttle and correction of less urgent material problems. On March 20th, the HEPBURN was moved to Todd Shipyard, San Pedro, by tugs and entered dry dock, on April 3rd. The ship left drydock on April 11th and began sea trials on April 12th. Although these trials were satisfactory, another problem developed as the ship was returning to port. Bearing babbitt was found in the lube oil strainers, resulting in main thrust bearing damage which required immediate repairs in order that HEPBURN could participate in COMPTUEX 10A-72, between 19 April and 27 April. This joint Canadian - U.S. exercise was conducted in several phases including an amphibious landing, anti-air missile firing, and anti-submarine warfare exercises. HEPBURN was principally involved in convoy exercises in deep water southwest of San Diego which provided an opportunity to test most of the features of her SQS-26 sonar system. On completion of this exercise, HEPBURN proceeded to the Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, and took aboard a full load of ammunition on April 28th.

The remainder of April and the first half of May were

Enclosure (1)

spent inport at Long Beach amid rumors of an imminent and anticipated early deployment to the Western Pacific. A normal deployment had been scheduled to commence June 29th. Firm instructions to prepare for deployment were finally received on the evening of Friday, 12 May, and last-minute preparations were made over the next few days.

On the morning of 17 May, HEPBURN was underway to join Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE commanded by Rear Admiral C. J. SEIBERLICH embarked in USS TICONDEROGA (CVS-14). The screen commander for ASW Group THREE was Captain J. M. NEELEY, Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-THREE, embarked in the USS ROBISON (DDG-12). The other units of the group included USS ENGLAND (DLG-22) and USS MARVIN E. SHIELDS (DE-1086).

During the transit to the Western Pacific, ASWGRU THREE paused overnight in Pearl Harbor on May 23rd, shifted to the operational control of Commander, SEVENTH Fleet on May 30th, and spent several hours refueling in Guam on the first of June. On the 5th of June, the group arrived in Subic Bay, R.P., and Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-THREE embarked in HEPBURN. Three days later the task group departed to conduct ASW operations in the South China Sea. The group then returned to Subic Bay on July 3rd for a brief upkeep period.

While inport Subic Bay, HEPBURN was detached on July 5th from ASWGRU THREE and assigned to Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group SEVENTH Fleet. On July 7th, COMDESRON TWENTY-THREE shifted his pennant ashore. After leaving Subic Bay on the 8th of July, HEPBURN joined the ships in the vicinity of the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone and provided gunfire support to South Vietnamese forces. She arrived in her assigned area on the 9th of July and over the next nine days fired approximately 536 rounds of 5"/54 ammunition in support of troops ashore. Gun damage assessment during this period was not usually available, but those reports which were received included 20 structures destroyed and two secondary explosions.

On the 17th of July, the HEPBURN was detached from her gunfire support duties and assigned to the "South TALOS" station in the Gulf of Tonkin, relieving USS JOSEPH HEWES (DE-1078). During her assignment there, HEPBURN assisted in the rescue of a Navy pilot whose plane had been shot down over North Vietnam, by refueling under emergency conditions the helicopter which eventually performed the recovery.

While HEPBURN continued her Search and Rescue duties, on August 7th, 1972, Commander William C. MANES, USN, relieved Commander John W. SELLERS, USN, as Commanding Officer in a brief ceremony held on board.

On August 9th, HEPBURN was relieved of her search and rescue duties by USS MARVIN SHIELDS (DE-1066) and began a transit to Sasebo, Japan, for upkeep. While enroute, she conducted a brief patrol of the Taiwan Straits under operational control of Commander Patrol Force, SEVENTH Fleet. The ship arrived in Sasebo on the morning of August 13th and commenced a tender availability with USS HECTOR (AR-7). Following this upkeep period, HEPBURN was underway on the 21st of August for "Middle SAR Station" in the Gulf of Tonkin, again conducting a patrol of the Taiwan Straits enroute. In a four day period on SAR Station the ship encountered approximately ten tons of baled rice floating in the Gulf of Tonkin. The supplies were evidently intended for North Vietnam but had been dispersed by a recent typhoon. All of the supplies were destroyed by the ships gunfire. After only five days on station, HEPBURN was relieved on September 1st by USS BADGER (DE-1064) and detached to join USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) as rescue destroyer. This assignment continued until the 10th of September, at which time HEPBURN was relieved by USS DENNIS J. BUCKLEY (DD-808) and detached in order to return to Middle SAR Station. On September 17th, HEPBURN was again relieved on SAR Station by USS HAROLD E. HOLT (DE-1074) and detached this time to proceed to Subic Bay for upkeep.

Following upkeep between the 19th and 28th of September, HEPBURN departed Subic Bay in company with USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) bound for the Gulf of Tonkin. On the following day however, HEPBURN was relieved by USS MARVIN E. SHIELDS (DE-1066) and directed to proceed to the Coast of Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam, in the vicinity of Quang Ngai City. In that area the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces were exerting heavy pressure on the coastal districts of Mo Duc and Duc Pho and on the towns of the same name. Naval gunfire was the principal defensive weapon available to the South Vietnamese units ashore which consisted principally of the Fourth Regiment, 2nd ARVN Division. Three U. S. Navy destroyers were typically assigned to that vicinity. As the senior of the ships in that station which included USS HENRY W. TUCKER (DD-875) and USS HOLLISTER (DD-788), HEPBURN was responsible for coordinating the provision of support to the units ashore. Over the next seven days, HEPBURN fired a variety of gunfire missions in the area. For example, during the night of 30 September - 1 October 1972, the ship fired on Viet Cong staging areas seven and a half miles northeast of Quang Ngai City in support of the 4th Regiment. In the early morning of the 1st of October, HEPBURN attacked troops concentration areas nine miles southeast of Quang Ngai City and then shifted to Viet Cong staging areas seven and a half miles northeast of Quang Ngai. As the day wore on HEPBURN fired on a troop concentration nine miles southeast of Quang

Ngai and in the late afternoon shelled a suspected Viet Cong compound twelve and a half miles southeast of Quang Ngai. Approximately 540 rounds were fired over this period and gun damage assessment included four enemy killed in action, two structures destroyed and four others damaged, and two secondary explosions. On the 1st of October, HEPBURN led the other two ships of the group to the south to refuel and avoid typhoon Lorna.

On October 5th, HEPBURN was detached to join USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) in the Gulf of Tonkin as mutual support ship. HEPBURN operated in this assignment until October 12th, at which time she left the Gulf of Tonkin in company with USS MIDWAY for Subic Bay. HEPBURN arrived in Subic Bay on the 14th and remained in port until October 22nd when she departed for Hong Kong, B.C.C. After arriving in Hong Kong in the morning of the 24th, HEPBURN assumed duties as Senior Officer Present Afloat (Administrative) Hong Kong relieving USS WASHTENAW COUNTY (LST-1166). HEPBURN served as SOPA ADMIN until the 1st of November, at which time she was relieved by USS MOUNT HOOD (AE-29).

On November 2nd, HEPBURN was again underway for the Gulf of Tonkin. Her destination this time was "North SAR Station." Having relieved USS HENRY B. WILSON (DDG-7) on November 4th, HEPBURN continued in this assignment as mutual support ship for USS JOUETT (DLG-23) until the 12th of November when she was detached to join USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) for duty as rescue destroyer. On November 20th she was relieved by USS WILTSIE (DE-716) and began a transit to Subic Bay where she arrived in the afternoon of the 23rd.

After only two days in port, HEPBURN was underway again for Yokosuka, Japan, to rejoin those destroyers with which she had first journeyed to the Western Pacific - ROBISON, ENGLAND, and MARVIN E. SHIELDS. She arrived in Yokosuka on the 29th of November, and the four ships departed Yokosuka for the transit home on the first of December.

During this transit, HEPBURN made a four hour fuel stop at Midway Island on the 4th of December, shifted to the operational control of Commander, FIRST Fleet on the 6th of December, and again stopped, only for fuel, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on the 9th of December.

On the 15th of December, 1972, HEPBURN arrived in her home port of Long Beach after a deployment which had lasted just two days short of seven months. At this time, she began a post-deployment "stand-down" period which continued to the last day of the year 1972, but which was somewhat

tempered by preparations for an upcoming underway material inspection by the Sub-board of Inspection and Survey from San Diego, which was scheduled to commence five weeks later.

Shortly after the close of the year the results of the battle efficiency competition for the period ending 31 October 1972 were announced by the Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. HEPBURN was awarded E's in the areas of Operations and Anti-Submarine Warfare in recognition of her accomplishments in those areas.