

U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754)
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SHIP'S HISTORY

One of many ships built during World War II, USS Frank E. Evans is a 2200 ton short-hull destroyer stemming from fast, light, heavily gunned ships conceived in the 19th century as "Torpedo Boat Destroyers". Her keel was laid in April 1944 at the Bethlehem Steel Company Yard, Staten Island, New York. As she slid down the ways on 3 October of the same year she was christened by Mrs. Frank Edgar Evans, widow of the destroyers namesake.

Brigadier General Frank E. Evans, USMC, was born in Franklin, Pennsylvania. He served in the Marines first as an Infantryman in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. After the war he entered Princeton University. On graduation from Princeton, he accepted a commission as a Second Lieutenant in 1900. During World War I, he served in France with the Sixth Regiment of Marines as Regimental Adjutant, Commander of Camp Bonicart and as Operational Officer in the Toulouse sector, where he participated in the Alsuo Marine defensive.

In recognition of his services in France, General Evans, an often decorated fighting man, was awarded the Navy Cross and Meritorious Service Citation for his action against the enemy at Belleau Woods.

His post war service included duty in Haiti where he commanded the Constabulary Detachment and was Chief of the Gendarmerie d'Haiti. Retiring from active service 1 December 1940, General Evans made his home in Honolulu where he died at the Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital on 25 November 1941.

His destroyer's namesake was accepted by the Navy at the commissioning ceremonies, 3 February 1945, and was turned over to her first Commanding Officer, Commander Harry Smith, USN. She took her shake-down cruise and original training in the Cuba, Bermuda area and served briefly in the Atlantic fleet. In April she left for the West Coast and steamed to Pearl Harbor. From there she reported to Commander third Fleet and spent the remainder of June on escort duty from Ulithi to Okinawa.

Frank E. Evans was then assigned fighter director ship in a radar picket station southwest of Okinawa. On July 30th, she rescued an Army 2nd Lieutenant who had parachuted from his disabled plane. For the remainder of the war she remained on patrol duty in the Okinawa area.

During this period Frank E. Evans earned one Battle Star on the Asiatic-Pacific area Service Medal for participating in the assault and occupation of Okinawa Gunto between 24 and 30 June 1945. She also received the Navy Occupation Service Medal and China Service Medal for performing post-war duty in the China-Korean area. For the latter Medal, she steamed to Manchuria to secure the release of U.S. Naval prisoners of war reported to be in the area. She then proceeded to Tinson Korea where she supported the landing of occupational forces. Upon completion of her Western Pacific duties, Frank E. Evans returned to the States, underwent a pre-decommissioning overhaul, and on July 7, 1947 was placed out of commission in reserve U.S. Pacific Fleet, a member of the "mothball fleet." On May 14, 1949, Evans was recommissioned. After a brief 6 month period, The ship was again decommissioned on December 14th.

Less than 3 months after the outbreak of the Korean war, USS Frank E. Evans and her sister ship began to return to the fleet. After more than three years of better than no activity, the Navy's commission pennant was again broken at Frank E. Evans mast on 16 September 1950. Because of the national emergency, 95% her crew were new to the Navy. Following the commissioning the destroyer with her crew went through a strenuous period of training and on 2 January 1951 left for combat duty with the Seventh Fleet.

On, 16 February 1951, the longest sustained Naval bombardment in history had its start when the United Nations ships laid off the shore of Wosan and razed that large Eastern seaport. Frank E. Evans as part of the 50 ship armada, actively participated in eleven duels with enemy shore batteries.

In June, during a counterbattery action, Frank E. Evans was hit, with minor damage to the superstructure and minor injuries to 4 of the crew.

During the early months of our Naval blockade, Evans left the safety of Task Force 77 and started a cruise along the enemy coast. This operation brought her the nickname "The Gray Ghost" and "Lucky Evans." She steamed into enemy held Wosan harbor on the East coast in company with a cruiser and three other destroyers. To inaugurate a day and night siege bombardment that was lifted only at the time of the Korean Armistice.

On the fifth day of the siege enemy shore batteries took Frank E. Evans under fire from three sides for nearly ninth minutes before Evans's five Inch guns silenced the communist artillery. This encounter was the first of thirteen running duels with the communist shore batteries.

In addition to the Wosan action DD754 was one of the ships which initiated and participated in the continuous siege and bombardment of Songju. With two other United Nation destroyers, Evans steamed into the enemy port of Sungjo to limit the use its harbor and supply center.

For a month EVANS ranged the coastline conducting naval gunfire missions at the Bombline in front line support of United Nations forces ashore. During this period, she coordinated day and night bombardment missions for allied planes, Interdicted communist supply lines and many sampans and junks. Besides her devastating gunfire against the enemy, she aided in the rescue of six United Nations pilots off the coast of Korea.

On 24 august 1951, FRANK E. EVANS sailed homeward. She arrived in San Diego after steaming 52,000 miles in carrying the war to the enemy shores. EVANS brought back with her a fighting nickname, a reputation for luck that was largely hard-earned excellence and a new collection of Battle Ribbons to add to her World War II awards.

During the Korean conflict, the destroyer earned the Korean Service Medal with three engagement stars for participating in the first U.N. counter-offensive, Combat China Spring Offensive and the U.N. summer-fall offensive.

In May 1952 FRANK E. EVANS returned to the East coast of Korea. In late summer she embarked Commander United Nations Blockade and Escort Forces for a trip to Korea. She then returned to the enemy coastline and again became the avenging "Gray Ghost" in the eyes of the communist, who sighted her in rapid succession along the Bombline and off the Manchurian border. During a twenty-six day period, she conducted off-shore patrols and continuos bombardment of enemy strongholds at Hungnam, Tanchon, Songju, Yongden, Conjin, Wosan, Kojo and the front lines them-selves. In October, 754 headed home again.

EVANS third trip to Korea in 1953 was less eventful for she steamed along coast only once before the armistice was signed. The ship continued patrols but her in-port periods were longer and the far East more enjoyable. EVANS returned to Long Beach in time for Christmas.

After the end of hostilities in Korea, FRANK E. EVANS participated in annual deployments to the western Pacific. Departing the U.S. early in 1954, she returned to the Far East. Notoriety surrounded EVANS when a series of articles, written by Homer Bigart, Pulitzer Prize Correspondent, featured FRANK E. EVANS. Mr. Bigart was aboard the EVANS during its Taiwan patrol duties. It was on this patrol that EVANS came to the aid of a Chinese personnel transport ship in distress.

During her sixth tour to the Far East in 1956, EVANS crossed the equator and all the Pollywogs were initiated into the Solemn Order of the Deep. That time she was on her way to Australia a trip which enabled her crew to witness the Olympic games. In May 1957, she returned to her home port of Long Beach. After a yard overhaul and an extensive training period, FRANK E. EVANS was again for the Western Pacific. Among the operations EVANS was to impart in, were special weapons demonstrations held near the Philippines. Dignitaries from 14 SE Asian Nations observed naval units firing the newest missile types and conducting air and anti-submarine exercises.

Deploying for her ninth Western Pacific Cruise in March 1959, the "Gray Ghost" served as a screen and rescue destroyer for the carrier USS Shangri-La for five months. She participated in the midshipman's summer cruise during June, July and early August 1959 and exercise SADDLE-UP. A large scale SEATO-Sponsored amphibious assault exercise on Northern Borneo with the British, Australian, and New Zealand units. She returned to Long Beach on 28 August 1959 having steamed 40,000 miles.

In May 1960, EVANS again sailed for a seven month Western Pacific Cruise with Destroyer Division 132 and USS HORNET as a HUNTER-KILLER(HUK) Group, whose mission was to hunt and kill submarines. This group, HUK, conducted anti-submarine warfare exercises and six weeks of advanced ASW training out of Pearl Harbor before continuing West to the Far East. During this trip EVANS visited Kobe, Suzuki, Lochi, and Yokosuzanin Japan; Okinawa, Subic Bay and Hong Kong. She also revived her lucky reputation and received nation wide publication for rescuing 5 Okinawans who had been stranded at sea for 10 days without food and water. EVANS returned to Long Beach in mid December.

In October 1961 after 7 months in Long Beach Naval Shipyard EVANS was completely overhauled under the Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization (FRAM) program. The primary changes were the addition of the helicopter hanger and flight deck to accept the drone helo which is

designed for use against enemy submarines. The latest in anti-submarine weapons and detection equipment was also installed.

In June 1962 FRANK E. EVANS departed Long Beach on its eleventh deployment to the Western Pacific. She again sailed as part of the DESDIV 132. In Hawaii, the ship went through extensive ORE (Operational Readiness Evaluation) before joining the Seventh Fleet, along with USS HORNET and DESDIV 251 as the ready HUK Group heading for West PAC: The men of the EVANS enjoyed 7 months at home with their families while the ship operated in the Long Beach area and spent time in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for repairs and installation of new equipment.

On April 19th, the ship was transferred from DESDIV 132 (Black Cat with 13) to DESDIV 321, the famous Little Beavers. Two months later on 10 June the EVANS again demonstrated an effective combination of leadership, participation and morale by becoming the first destroyer to win the coveted NEY Memorial Award for the best general mess afloat.

On 2 July the "Fighter" departed for MIDPAC in company with the USS HORNET (CVS-12) and DESDIV 231 where extensive ASW exercises were successfully held.

Following their return to Long Beach, Variable Depth Sonar (VDS) was installed aboard EVANS. In time she rejoined the USS HORNET, HUK Group for another Westpac Deployment commencing in mid October 1963. Again the HUK Group participated in the Operational Readiness Evaluation prior to reporting to COMNAVSEVFLT for duty.

1964 EVANS was again in her home port of Long Beach. In July, August, and September, the ship went through regular overhaul period receiving many improvements in the electronic installation as well as rejuvenating tired machinery and other equipment. January and Early Feb. 1965 the ship joined the USS BENNINGTON and units of DESDIV 31 as the first Fleet Ready HUK Group.

In late April, EVANS and ASW Group Five arrived in Yokosuka. During the next several months, while under the command of COMNAVSEVFLT, FRANK E. EVANS participated in several allied exercises. During May, the ship was a participant in operation SEAHORSE, in company with Australian and Thai naval units. The exercise ended in the Gulf of Siam and the city of Bangkok Thailand with ASW Group Five the guests of the Crowned Princess of Thailand. In June, "Fighter" was part of U.S.-Japanese ASW exercise in the Sea of Japan. During the month of July, FRANK E EVANS

conducted surveillance operations in the South China Sea in support of United States commitments in South Viet Nam. As a result of this support, the ship was awarded the Viet Nam Service Medal.

For the rest of her deployment in Westpac, FRANK E. EVANS was assigned duty on the Taiwan patrol in the company of the USS WALKE DD723. During this patrol EVANS visited the ports of Kaohsiung and Chi Lung.

On October 7, 1965 FRANK E. EVANS returned to her home port of Long Beach after having visited a total of eleven ports in the Orient and seven long hot months in Westpac.

In January 1966, the ship, still a member of ASW Group Five, now with USS Kearsarge (CVS 33), commenced training exercises off the coast of Southern California in preparation for her next deployment to Westpac and duty in the South China Sea.

On June 9th the FRANK E. EVANS and ASW Group Five departed Long Beach for the Westpac via Hawaii and the Operational Readiness Evaluation.

Upon completion of her ORE, EVANS proceeded to the Sea of Japan where she participated in operation Cross Tee III, a joint operation involving Japanese Self Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Navy, U.S. Seventh Fleet.

FRANK E. EVANS then proceeded for the Gulf of Tonkin, where as part of Task Force 77, she carried out naval gunfire missions, picket and rescue destroyer duties as well as other phases of U.S. Seventh Fleet operations. It was during this tour that she made an early morning recovery of two downed pilots in the Tonkin Gulf.

EVANS was soon detached from Task Force 77 and proceeded to Taiwan for patrol duties. Again it was "lucky" EVANS that came upon a sinking Chinese fishing boat and saved its nine crew members.'

After a short upkeep period EVANS proceeded back to Task Force 77 for more operations in Tonkin Gulf. At this time, EVANS was assigned to the gun line for more gunfire support, for five days 754 provided all-day, all-night harassment and interdiction for III Marine Amphibious Force on the beach. Assigned both routine and emergency missions, EVANS'S guns gave outstanding support destroying many enemy concentrations with pin-

point firing. She then visited Hong Kong for a short period of relaxation and then headed homeward via Yokosuka, Japan. On 20 December, a tired but spirited crew returned to Long Beach in time to spend the holidays with family and friends.

This was retyped 9-95, by Alan H. Arnold ENC retired from the ships history given to the crew 1-67. Any one with an updated history up till and including when the EVANS was sunk, please contact me either by letter, phone or at one of the reunions so that I may up date this for everyone.

Thank You
Alan H. Arnold