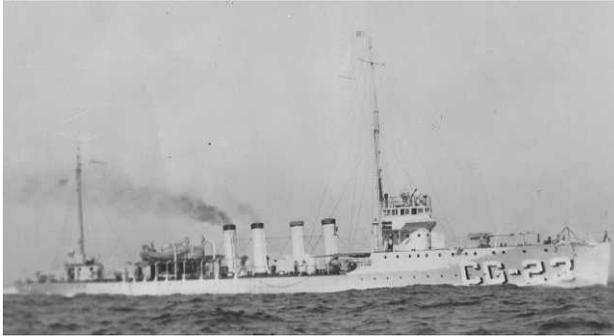




Tucker

CG-23



Born on 1 November 1747 in Marblehead, Mass., Samuel Tucker began his naval career in the spring of 1760 as a cabin boy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony warship, King George. He subsequently sought his fortune in the merchant service, rising to command of a ship in July 1774. Tucker was in England at the outbreak of the American War for Independence, but returned to Massachusetts in the autumn of 1775.

Upon his return to the colonies, Tucker was selected by General George Washington to command a small flotilla of armed schooners which he had purchased and fitted out to prey on the shipping which was bringing supplies from England to America to support British troops in the colonies. Tucker also served as commanding officer of the schooner Franklin.

In that schooner and later in schooner Hancock, Tucker swept the seas around Boston and off the Massachusetts coast, taking many prizes in the year 1776. His first, taken jointly with the schooner Lee, came on 29 February, when the two Continental ships cornered the 300-ton Henry and Esther, bound for Boston laden with wood from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

In April 1776, in Hancock, Tucker sighted two supply brigs making for Boston. Standing in to the harbor, very near to the protecting cannon of British warships anchored in the roadstead, he soon captured brigs Jane and William, out of Ireland. Tucker brazenly sailed up and took both from beneath the very noses of the British Navy, escaping with the two ships and their valuable cargoes of foodstuffs and other items needed by the Continental Army.

Because of his distinguished record, Tucker was given command of the new Continental Navy frigate Boston in March 1777. On 21 May, Boston and sister frigate Hancock set sail from Boston to raid the King's commerce on the high seas. Cruising in the North Atlantic, eight days out of their home port, the raiders captured a small brig laden with cordage and duck.

On 30 May, they sighted a convoy of troopships escorted by the 64-gun HMS Somerset, which soon set course to engage Manley's Hancock. Sizing up the situation in his experienced mariner's eye, Tucker bent on sail to go after the transports to wreak havoc among them. At that point, Somerset's commanding officer decided not to engage Hancock, since his primary mission was to protect the transports. Thus, Hancock escaped nearly certain devastation at the hands of the

64-gun Britisher. Tucker's timely action and good shiphandling were undoubtedly major factors in the Briton's decision.

On 7 June, Boston and Hancock engaged HMS Fox and made her a prize after a heated battle. One month later, on 7 and 8 July 1777, HMS Flora, HMS Rainbow, and HMS Victor attacked the three Continental ships and took Hancock and Fox. Only Boston escaped.

For the remainder of 1777, Tucker, in Boston, carried out commerce-raiding forays in the North Atlantic and off the northeast coasts before being selected for a special mission. On 13 February 1778, Capt. Samuel Tucker was rowed ashore to Braintree, Mass., where he soon sat down for a hasty and early meal with the family of John Adams. Soon, Adams, the newly appointed minister to France, and his son, John Quincy, were taken out to Boston and lodged on board as preparations for heading out to sea were completed.

Encountering heavy seas and wind halfway across the Atlantic, Boston nearly dismasted in a gale. On another occasion, three British warships gave chase to the solitary Continental frigate and its distinguished passenger. The unpleasant surroundings of a dank and dismal English prison were not relished by anyone, least of all Adams, who would have been considered a traitor to the crown. Avoiding contact with British ships as much as possible, Tucker was finally forced to fight.

Encountering a British privateer, Tucker maneuvered Boston to cross the enemy's "T." With devastating effect, Boston's guns thundered and sent shot down the length of the Britisher, and soon, the Briton struck her colors. Arriving safely at Bordeaux on 1 April, Adams would have stories to tell in future days about his eventful cruise with Samuel Tucker in Boston.

Cruising in European waters from the spring of 1778 until the fall of that year, Tucker took four more prizes before returning to Portsmouth, N.H., on 15 October. In 1779, two cruises in the North Atlantic netted nine prizes for Tucker and his mariners before orders sent Boston to Charleston, S.C., to help defend that port against the British onslaught.

On 11 May 1780, Charleston surrendered, after a siege, and the warships in harbor were captured, along with most of their officers and men. Tucker was among the prisoners but would not remain so for long, as he received parole on 20 May and was exchanged for British Capt. Wardlaw, whom Tucker had captured when Boston took HMS Thorn in September 1779.

On 11 January 1781, Tucker assumed command of Thorn, now a privateer. After taking seven prizes, he was again captured in an engagement with HMS Hind off the mouth of the St. Lawrence River.

He and his crew were treated kindly and taken to Prince Edward Island. One day, having had permission to go to Halifax, Tucker escaped and made his way to Boston. In an era where chivalry in war was still very much alive, Tucker wrote a letter of apology to the British garrison commander for his escape. At his own request, Tucker was paroled.

When the war had ended and independence had been secured for the fledgling United States, Tucker received hearty thanks from Congress. During the years following the establishment of peace, the old mariner from Marblehead sailed packets from America to Bremen, Germany, until he retired to farming, in Maine, in 1792.

Yet, when the young United States once again went to war with Britain in the War of 1812, Samuel Tucker returned to active service, commanding a schooner which protected the coast of Maine from British privateers. In 1813, he captured the British privateer Crown in a short, sharp engagement, putting an end to the harassment of Maine coastal trade which had been posed by the Briton.

Changing his residence to Massachusetts, Tucker settled down once again to a life of farming. In 1823, he was awarded a small pension, retroactive to 1818.

After holding positions of public trust in his home state of Massachusetts and having lived a life of adventure on the high seas, Samuel Tucker died at the age of 86 in Bremen, Maine, on 10 March 1833.

Builder: Fore River Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, MA

Commissioned (USN): 11 Apr 1916

Acquired (CG): 25 Mar 1926

Commissioned (CG): 29 Sep 1926

Decommissioned: 5 Jun 1933

Displacement (tons) 1,205

Dimensions 310' x 29' 10" x 10' 4 1/2"

Machinery 2 direct-drive main turbines, 1 or 2 triple-expansion or turbine-cruising engines

16,000-17,500 shp, 29.5 knots.

Complement 6 officers, 82 men (CG, 1930)

Armament 3 x 4"/50, 1 x 1-pdr

Design and Service

A total of thirty-one Navy destroyers were lent to the Coast Guard for the enforcement of Prohibition. The vessels ranged from the prewar 742-ton "flivvers" to the postwar four-stack flush deckers like *Wood*. Adapting these vessels to service was thought to be less costly than building new ships. The wartime service and exceedingly poor condition of earlier destroyer classes often required nearly a year of reconditioning before they were seaworthy. The flush deckers, on the other hand, were in much better condition. Not having had wartime service, they were more quickly reconditioned for anti-bootlegging patrols.

These vessels were also by far the largest and most sophisticated vessels ever operated by the service. Trained personnel were nearly nonexistent. Congress authorized hundreds of new enlistees. It was these inexperienced men that generally made up the crews of these vessels. All were capable of over 25 knots, an advantage in the rum-chasing business, but they were easily outmaneuvered by smaller boats. As a result, the destroyers' mission was to picket the larger supply ships ("mother ships") and prevent them from off-loading their cargo onto smaller, speedier contact boats. *Wood* was stationed at New London, CT and was with the Cuban Expedition in 1933.

History:

The first *Tucker* (Destroyer No. 57) was laid down on 9 November 1914 at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, Mass.; launched on 4 May 1915; sponsored by Mrs. William Garty, the great, great, granddaughter of Capt. Samuel Tucker; and commissioned on 11 April 1916, Lt. (jg.) Frank Slingluff, Jr., in temporary command until Lt. Comdr. Benyaurd B. Wygant assumed command 13 days later.

Following commissioning, *Tucker* commenced trials off the east coast before reporting to Division 8, Destroyer Force, United States Atlantic Fleet. While World War I raged in Europe, *Tucker* and units of the Fleet conducted exercises and maneuvers in southern and Cuban waters into the spring of 1917.

Steaming independently in the West Indies, she received word of the United States' declaration of war on the Central Powers on 6 April 1917. Upon this notification of the commencement of hostilities, *Tucker* soon joined the Fleet at its anchorage in the York River before being ordered to proceed to the Boston Navy Yard, Mass., for fitting-out for war.

The immediate and pressing need for escort ships led to the deployment of American destroyers to Queens-town, Northern Ireland, commencing with the departure of six ships on 24 April under Comdr. J. K. Taussig. Later, *Tucker*, in company with *Rowan* (Destroyer No. 64), *Cassin* (Destroyer No. 43), *Ericsson* (Destroyer No. 56), *Winslow* (Destroyer No. 53), and *Jacob Jones* (Destroyer No. 61) set out from Boston on 7 May as the second contingent of United States ships designated to operate in conjunction with British surface forces patrolling off the Irish coast.

Arriving on 17 May, *Tucker* and her sister ships soon commenced wartime operations. On 12 June, she rescued 47 survivors from the stricken merchantman SS *Poluxena*; on 1 August, she saved 39 men from the torpedoed SS *Karina*. For the remainder of 1917 and into the late spring of 1918, *Tucker* operated out of Queenstown, hunting German submarines, escorting and convoying ships through the submarine-infested war zones, and providing assistance to ships in distress.

By the early summer of 1918, as American forces poured into the war on the Western Front and swelled in numbers on the continent of Europe, the need for escorts to convoy the ships that bore the men and materiel grew apace. Thus, American destroyers were progressively transferred to the eastern Atlantic to augment the escort forces already operating in that war zone.

In June 1918, *Tucker* joined the escorts working out of Brest, France. On 1 August, while steaming out to meet an inbound convoy, she received word that the group's escort, the French cruiser *Dupetit-Thouars*, had been torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. The American destroyer soon arrived on the scene and helped to save the survivors of the stricken French warship from the waters of the Bay of Biscay. *Tucker's* efforts, and those of the five other American destroyers who were also present, were rewarded by a commendation from the *Prefet Maritime*, on behalf of the French Ministry of Marine.

While taking part in the campaign to eradicate the German submarine menace preying upon Allied shipping, *Tucker* obtained her share of the submarine hunting the day after assisting in the rescue of *Dupetit-Thouars'* crew, on 8 August. Sighting a U-boat, *Tucker* sped to the attack, dropping depth bombs on the undersea enemy. The British Admiralty gave credit to *Tucker* for a "possibly sunk" as a result of the attack. As antisubmarine warfare was in its infancy, however, attempts to verify the "kill" proved to be inconclusive.

On 11 November 1918, the armistice was signed, and hostilities ceased along the war-torn Western Front. As American forces withdrew from Europe and headed home to the United States, *Tucker* carried passengers and mail between French and British ports. Departing from Brest for the last time on 16 December 1918, she headed for Boston, Mass., and a period of repairs in the navy yard.

In July 1919, she departed Boston and cruised along the coastlines of Massachusetts and Maine, engaged in recruiting duty. In October 1919, she was placed in reserve in Philadelphia, Pa., where she remained until placed out of commission on 16 May 1921. On 17 July 1920, *Tucker* was designated DD-57.

The prohibition of liquor, instituted by law on 17 January 1920, soon resulted in widespread and blatant smuggling of alcoholic beverages along the coastlines of the United States. The Treasury Department discovered that the Coast Guard simply did not have the ships to constitute a successful patrol. To cope with the problem, President Calvin Coolidge authorized the transfer, in 1924, of 20 old destroyers, then in reserve and out of commission, from the Navy to the Coast Guard.

On 25 March 1926, *Tucker* was activated and acquired by the Coast Guard, part of a second group of five to augment the original 20. Designated CG-23, she joined the "rum patrol" and chased rum runners, aiding in the attempt to enforce prohibition laws.

On 4 April 1933, the greatest disaster which aeronautics had experienced up to that time occurred off the New Jersey coast. The airship *Akron* (ZRS-4) crashed in a storm and carried 73 men to their deaths, including Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics. *Tucker* received word of the crash and sped to the scene. Upon arrival, she found that German motorship *Phoebus* had pulled four men from the sea—one of whom died shortly after being rescued. The survivors were transferred to *Tucker* and were disembarked at the New York Navy Yard.

After Congress had passed the 21st Amendment to the Constitution to end prohibition, *Tucker* was returned to the Navy on 30 June 1933. Her name was cancelled on 1 November 1933 to free the name *Tucker* for DD-374; and, thereafter, the old destroyer was known by her hull designation *DD-57*. For a time, *DD-57* served as a Sea Scout training ship, docked at Sandy Hook, N.J. Struck from the Navy list on 24 October 1936, *DD-57* was sold on 10 December 1936 and reduced to a hulk two days before Christmas 1936.

Coast Guard Operational Highlights:

25 Mar 1926 Transferred from US Navy at Philadelphia Navy Yard.

22 May 1926 Ordered to New London.

24 Sep 1926 Arrived at permanent duty station at New London.

29 Sep 1926 Commissioned at New London.

2 Oct 1926 Ordered as Flagship, Division 4, Destroyer Force.

15 Oct 1926 Became Flagship, Division 4, Destroyer Force.

24 Oct 1927 Authorized transfer to Division One, Destroyer Force.

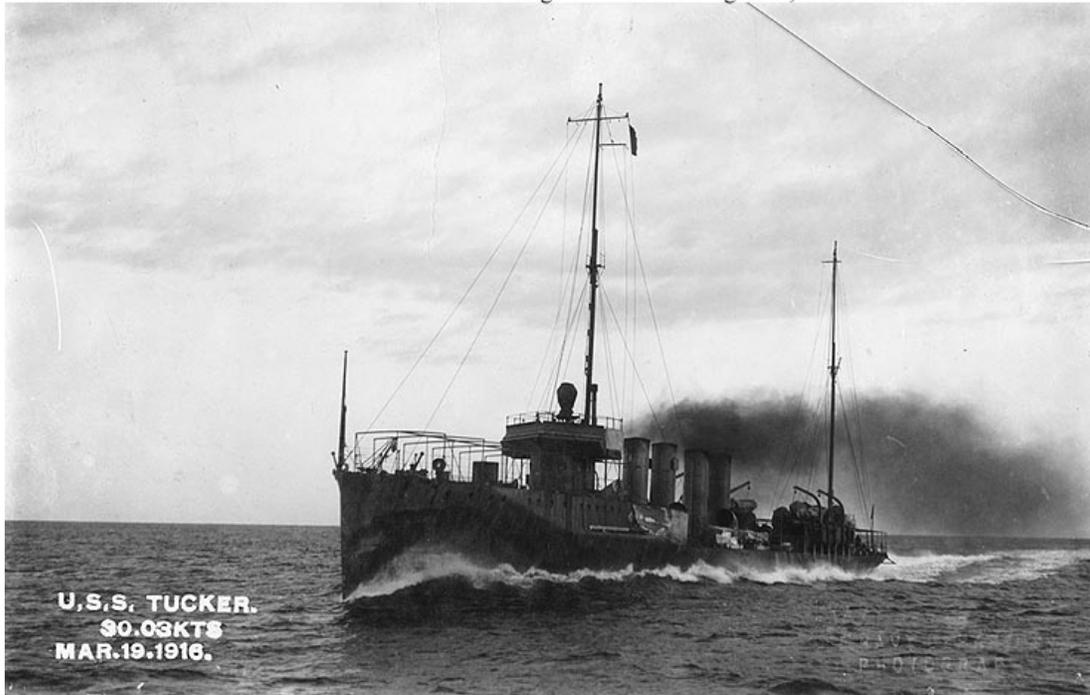
31 Mar 1928 Ordered back to New London.

26 May 1933 Arrived at Philadelphia Navy Yard.

5 Jun 1933 Decommissioned at Philadelphia Navy Yard.

30 Jun 1933 Returned to US Navy at Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Photo # NH 49805 USS Tucker making 30.03 knots during trials, 19 March 1916

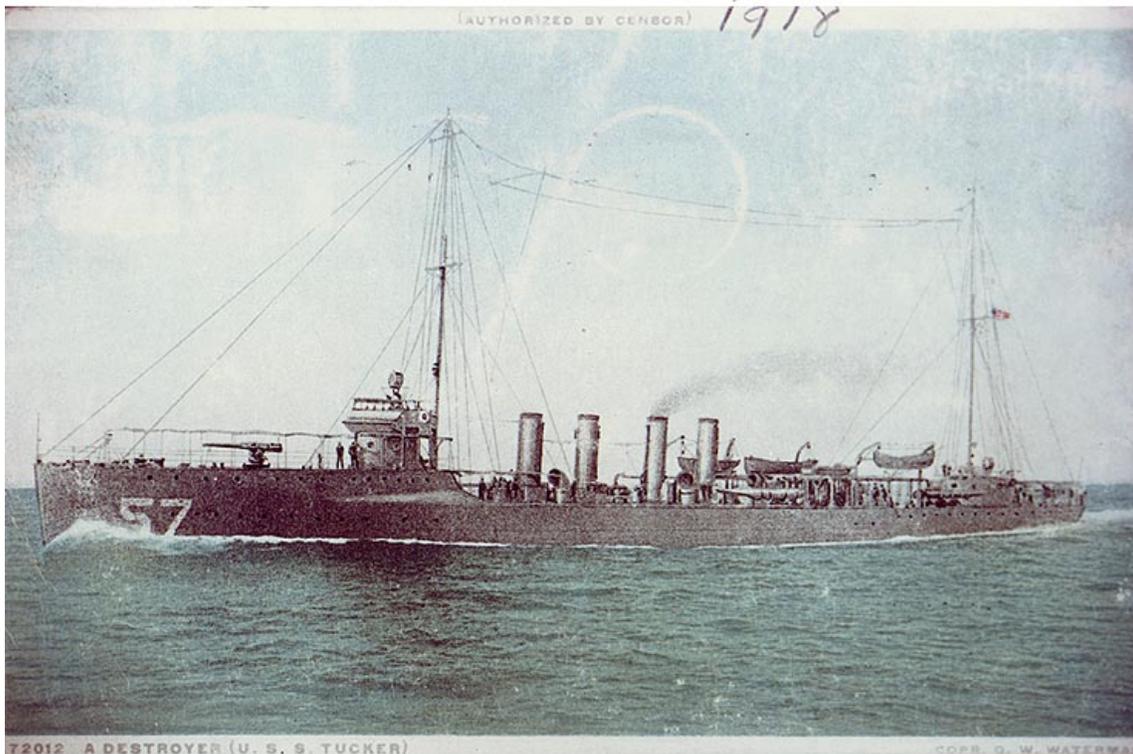


USS Tucker (Destroyer # 57)

Making 30.03 knots on trials, 19 March 1916.
Note the ice accumulated amidships.

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph.

Photo # NH 94962-KN Postcard of USS Tucker, circa 1916-1917



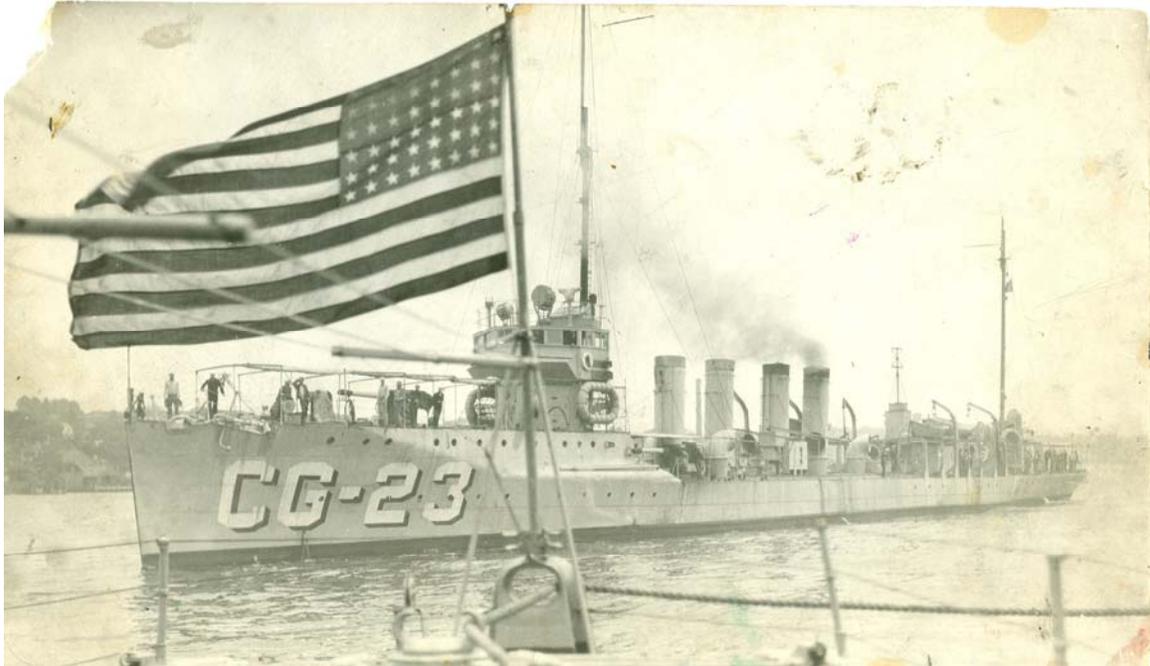
USS Tucker (Destroyer # 57)

Color-tinted photograph printed on a postal card, showing the destroyer underway in 1916 or 1917.

Photographed by O.W. Waterman, and published by the Detroit Publishing Company in 1917-1918. Note the World War I "Authorized by Censor" inscription printed at the top. The original postal card was postmarked at Lynn, Massachusetts, on 12 June 1918.

Courtesy of Commander Donald J. Robinson, USN (Retired), 1983.

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph.



Sources:

Cutter History Files, CG Historian's Office

