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USS Lyman K. Swenson (DD 729)

- decommissioned -



USS LYMAN K. SWENSON was one of the ALLEN M. SUMNER - class destroyers and the first ship in the Navy to bear the name. She was decommissioned in February 1971 and in May 1974 was sold to the Taiwan to provide spare parts for other ships of her type.

General Characteristics: **Awarded:** 1942

Keel laid: September 11, 1943

Launched: February 12, 1944

Commissioned: May 2, 1944

Decommissioned: February 12, 1971

Builder: Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine

FRAM II Conversion Shipyard: Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, Calif.

FRAM II Conversion Period: June 1960 - January 1961

Propulsion system: four boilers, General Electric geared turbines; 60,000 SHP

Propellers: two

Length: 376.3 feet (114.7 meters)

Beam: 41 feet (12.5 meters)

Draft: 18.7 feet (5.7 meters)

Displacement: approx. 3,180 tons full load

Speed: 34 knots

Aircraft after FRAM II: two DASH drones

Armament after FRAM II: three 5-inch/38 caliber twin mounts, two Mk-10 Hedgehogs, Mk-32 ASW torpedo tubes (two triple mounts), two Mk-25 ASW torpedo tubes (removed prior to decommissioning)

Crew before FRAM II: 336

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Crew List:

This section contains the names of sailors who served aboard USS LYMAN K. SWENSON. It is no official listing but contains the names of sailors who submitted their information.

- Click [here](#) to view the list.

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- Click [here](#) to see which USS LYMAN K. SWENSON memorabilia are currently for sale on ebay.

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USS LYMAN K. SWENSON Cruise Books:

- [WestPac Cruise 1962](#) (USS LYMAN K. SWENSON chapter in the [USS BENNINGTON \(CVS 20\) WestPac Cruise Book 1962](#))
- [WestPac Cruise Book 1970](#)

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USS LYMAN K. SWENSON History:

USS LYMAN K. SWENSON was laid down 11 September 1943 by Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine; launched 12 February 1944; sponsored by Miss Cecelia A. Swenson, daughter of Captain Swenson; and commissioned at Boston Navy Yard 2 May 1944, Comdr. Francis T. Williamson in Command.

Commissioned after the battle for the Atlantic had been decided, LYMAN K. SWENSON completed a Bermuda-based shakedown cruise 25 June 1944 and prepared for duty in the Pacific. Departing Boston 31 July, the new destroyer transited the Panama Canal 8 August and arrived at Pearl Harbor the 30th. After intensive training and practice in ASW and AAW, she departed for the war zone 28 September, dropping anchor at Ulithi - her base for the next 6 months - on 13 October.

LYMAN K. SWENSON left Ulithi 21 October as part of DesRon 61, screening a replenishment group of 10 oilers. This group remained off the Philippines, refueling Admiral Halsey's carrier forces while the Japanese Navy suffered its crippling defeat at the Battle for Leyte Gulf, 24 to 26 October. The destroyer then joined TG 38.4 for carrier support duties. On 30 October, while supporting operations on Leyte, she saw her first hostile action. Carriers [FRANKLIN](#) (CV 13) and [BELLEAU WOOD](#) (CVL 24) received hits and the group retired to Ulithi for replenishment and repairs.

During much of November and December, LYMAN K. SWENSON screened various carrier groups engaged in the process of softening up the island of Luzon. Mid-December witnessed the rescue of four pilots and three enlisted men while on plane guard duty, and the horrors of a typhoon which generated waves 50 and 60 feet high. Though three destroyers capsized, LYMAN K. SWENSON emerged safely

and returned to Ulithi.

The new year dawned as she steamed with TG 38.1 on a 3,800-mile raid which spewed destruction on Formosa, Luzon, and on Japanese shipping along the Vietnamese and Chinese coasts. Okinawa also received attention from the carriers' planes before the return to Ulithi 26 January 1945. For the next 4 months aircraft and repair centers on Okinawa and the Japanese home island of Kyushu were the main targets for the strike group temporarily redesignated TG 58.1.

During the Okinawa campaign the Japanese again attacked with much of their remaining airpower. With air targets plentiful, LYMAN K. SWENSON splashed her first plane, a Francis, on 18 March, and destroyed her second on the 27th. This campaign also provided an opportunity for shore bombardment as she shelled Okino Daita Shima early in March, and Minami Daito Jima in April and again in June. With her sister ships, she then returned to San Pedro Bay, Leyte, to prepare for a mission which would continue until the surrender of Japan 71 days later.

Five carriers, three battleships, six cruisers and their destroyer screen steamed forth 1 July to practice screen reorientation and conduct anti-aircraft practice before proceeding northward to carry the war to the heart of the Japanese home islands. Air opposition remained minimal; and, after DesRon 61's antishipping sweep into Sagami Wan, Honshu, on the night of 22/23 July, enemy ships also proved difficult to locate. LYMAN K. SWENSON remained in enemy waters until after Japan's formal surrender on board battleship MISSOURI (BB 63), 2 September.

On 20 September came the welcome order to depart Tokyo Bay; and, after picking up additional passengers in Okinawa, LYMAN K. SWENSON proceeded back to the United States. She reached Seattle 15 October, and then settled down in dry dock at San Francisco on the 29th.

LYMAN K. SWENSON returned to the Far East as part of the 7th Fleet from 2 March 1946 to 4 February 1947. After performing patrol duties along the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese coasts, she steamed home to San Diego via Kwajalein, arriving 22 February. For the next 2 years she trained both her own crew and Naval reservists off the west coast.

In March 1950 she again turned westward. A member of DesRon 91, she worked with the carrier BOXER (CV 21) out of Okinawa until the outbreak of the Korean conflict brought immediate assignment to Korean waters. Reacting with the characteristic speed of seaborne power, her group launched the first carrier based strike against North Korea 3 July. Besides plane guard and patrol duties she also participated in shore bombardment and five support missions along the eastern coast.

Missions near Yongdok 22 to 26 July and against Chongjin in the far northeast corner of Korea 20 August were among the more successful ones. Yet, the high point of this first tour was the amphibious landing at Inchon. LYMAN K. SWENSON and five sister DD's entered Inchon Bay 2 days before the landings to silence shore batteries. During this bombardment the ship suffered two casualties from a near miss. The next day Lt. (jg.) David H. Swenson, nephew of the officer for whom the ship was named, was buried at sea. On D-Day, 15 September, she returned eagerly to cover the landing and punish the enemy. For their gallantry all six ships received the Navy Unit Commendation and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation.

On 23 October, LYMAN K. SWENSON retired to Sasebo, Japan, and then on to the United States, arriving San Diego 18 November. After 7 months at home, she again departed for Korea 18 June 1951. On this 8-month tour, and the succeeding one which began 15 September 1952, her main duties remained much the same as they had been during 1950. She took special pride in her ability to disrupt railroad and highway transportation and twice earned the praise of Vice Adm. H. M. Martin.

In the aftermath of the Korean Armistice, July 1953, LYMAN K. SWENSON continued to average one 6-month deployment annually in the western Pacific until 1960. To catch up with changing technology she entered the Mare Island Naval Shipyard 27 June 1960 for a FRAM II refit. Antisubmarine warfare capabilities received the greatest emphasis as she received a helicopter flight and hangar deck. Following underway training and exercises, she departed 6 January 1962 with DesDiv 92 for a prolonged stay in the Far East. Yokosuka, Japan, served as her new home port. Periods of patrol duty preceded and followed SEATO operation "Tulungan", the largest peacetime amphibious landing operation ever conducted in the western Pacific. During the next 2 years, the ship ranged widely over the Far East. After particularly extensive 7th Fleet exercise "Crazy Horse," she paid a 3-day good will visit to Bangkok, Thailand, and a 4-day visit to Saigon.

On 12 June 1964, LYMAN K. SWENSON departed Yokosuka for the United States, arriving San Diego 27 July via Australia. Once home, time passed quickly until January 1965 when she entered Puget Sound Navy Yard for overhaul. Following refresher training, she helped host four Japanese Self-Defense Force

destroyers in San Diego on a summer cruise.

With orders to proceed to the troubled coast of the Republic of Vietnam, LYMAN K. SWENSON departed San Diego 24 August 1965 and commenced fire support operations 4 October. In her first 2 weeks of action she expended as much ammunition as 2 months of comparable duty during the Korean conflict in 1950. Screen and plane guard duties for carriers [INDEPENDENCE](#) (CV 62) and [TICONDEROGA](#) (CV 14) normally followed such periods of fire support.

LYMAN K. SWENSON continued on station until departing for home in January 1966. She arrived in San Diego 26 February and participated in the annual midshipmen training cruise in June. For the remainder of 1966 LYMAN K. SWENSON operated out of her home port of San Diego on various ASW and gunnery exercises. From 26 January to 1 March 1967 she underwent predeployment repairs in Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

8 April saw the ship once again underway for the western Pacific. After a stop in Yokosuka, Japan, she operated in the northern Tonkin Gulf as a search and rescue unit from May through August. She escorted the carrier [CONSTELLATION](#) (CV 64) into September, then sailed once again for home. Arriving home 6 October 1967, after another successful deployment, the veteran destroyer served as an engineering school ship and was assigned availability to the Development and Training Command into 1968. She remained in the eastern Pacific through most of 1968, deploying to WestPac again late in the year, to serve there into 1969. LYMAN K. SWENSON deployed for her final Far Eastern tour in 1970 and was decommissioned in February 1971. In May 1974, she was sold to Taiwan to provide spare parts for other ships of her type.

LYMAN K. SWENSON received five battle stars for World War II service and six battle stars for Korean service.

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About the Ship's Name:

Lyman Knute Swenson, born in Pleasant Grove, Utah, 23 October 1892, graduated from the Naval Academy 2 June 1916. After service on board VERMONT (BB 20) and DENVER (C 14), he prepared for submarine duty. After serving on board D-1 during World War I, he was given command of H-6, 26 May 1919.

In 1921 he returned to surface ships, serving in ARKANSAS (BB 33) and NEW MEXICO (BB 40), before commanding ISABEL (PY 10) and then DesDiv 64. [JUNEAU](#) (CL 52) came under his command 18 December 1941 while still under construction. The newly promoted captain and the newly built light cruiser were both lost in the latter stage of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal 13 November 1942. Twice torpedoed during what historian S. E. Morison called the "wildest most desperate sea fight since Jutland," [JUNEAU](#) sank rapidly, taking under the captain and most of her crew, including the five Sullivan brothers. This battle prevented the Japanese from landing reinforcements on Guadalcanal.

For his "extraordinary heroism...daring and determination..." Captain Swenson was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

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