

**Dorothy Harrison delivers a presentation about the life of M.T. "Tuck" Sacher
and her service in the U.S. State Department
which began in 1954 and led to a stint in Vietnam from 1968 to 1973**

6[00:02] Another member of the Louisville unit of the Women's Overseas Service League who
7gave us an interview was M.T. Sacher (S-A-C-H-E R). Her nickname was Tuck and we never
8called her anything else than that. She had lived from 1953 to 1960 at 4520 North [Claremont
900:31] Street in Chicago, Illinois and, uh, she lived in Louisville, uh, at 1407 St. James Court.
10She is not now available to us, though she is not dead. Again, I must say that she gave us this
11interview knowing perfectly well that it would be, uh, put into some kind of written form and,
12um, that it would be presented to the public through a library. After the interview we had with
13Tuck was over, we put it into a written form, as we intended to, to convey it to the library and I
14read from that report.

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16Tuck joined the Department of State in 1954 and went to Vietnam in January of 1968. From '54,
17uh, to '58, she had served in, um, in Libya at Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Um, in, um, Vietnam,
18she was there on January of 1968. She served in Saigon and the Delta area – 13, covering 13
19provinces, the Delta area does. She served near Cambodia. And, um, she left Vietnam in July of
201973 for return to Washington. Uh, she was housed in government housing in Saigon and
21elsewhere. The apartments she had were, uh, either built or leased. They were western style in
22the cities. Barracks were used occasionally in the field. Apartments in Saigon were all over town.
23Some apartments were multistoried; others were 1 or 2 stories. They were air conditioned at
24work and at home. Uh, Americans took care of maintenance and Tuck had her own apartment;
25she did not have to share with anyone.

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27Tuck acted as an advisor for financing, with the main objective of gathering information. She
28was assigned to specific jobs in specific areas, whether sometimes she drove and sometimes she
29took a boat. It was safest to fly, since the roads were apt to be blown up. Attacks were made on
30vehicles and even on boats. Snipers were a hazard. Usually, she got a Vietnam government
31escort through or to towns where military installations were established. Boats, when she used
32them, stayed in the center of the canals. That was, of course, the safest. Tuck's colleagues were
33mostly men.

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35Tuck was first in the Chinese section of Cho Lon in Saigon. She said that the Chinese controlled
36the businesses there – the import and export business – and they were buyers. They bought off
37the Vietnamese. The Tet Offensive's bloodiest fighting took place in Cho Lon, particularly near
38the Y-shaped bridge because it controlled the river traffic into Saigon.

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40Tuck was living in Sai, Cho Lon in 1968, and often went to the rooftop to watch the dogfights,
41the air fights overhead. Tuck was working in a building right next to the hospital, which was
42included in the hospital compound. They would be escorted home by marines on especially
43dangerous days and would remain at home until things got quieter. The Chinese tried but
44couldn't take the hospital, which was filled with Vietnamese patients, not Americans. Eating was

1done from brown bag. She would, uh, sometimes go home, sometimes eat in the military club or
2at a restaurant. Tuck had a maid. She did, uh, shopping and the cleaning and the cooking and the
3laundry for \$3 to \$6 a month. After a while, the price for the maid went up. Guards were on, uh,
4um, buildings. The Vietnamese guards paid, were paid by the government, \$3 a month. By the
5end of, uh, Tuck's service, maid service was up to \$12 a month and, presumably, the Vietnamese
6guards were also paid more. Uh, sleep-in maids, uh, were for, for men, uh, often.

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8Tuck knew an American nurse in training at a nurse's training school on a boulevard that led to
9an old French cemetery in Saigon. She noted that, uh, that is, the American nurse noted that there
10were an unusual number of Chinese funerals wending their way into the cemetery. A Chinese
11funeral has many motorized trucks laden with food for the dead, colored, uh, paper, decorated
12miniature houses, chests, boats, and so forth. Marching bands, dragons, and so forth. The size of
13the funeral depends on the wealth of the family. Red and black is used in the decorations. Like,
14it's like a huge parade. Now the nurse began to worry over the many processions and finally
15reported to the American Embassy, who ignored her worry. This activity continued for about 6
16weeks to 2 months before January of 1968, when the Tet Offensive in Saigon was fueled from
17ammunition cached in the cemetery by the fake funeral corteges. The Chinese holed up in the
18cemetery and repeatedly attacked the hospital.

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20That was all that Tuck told us about her experiences in Vietnam. She, as I say, came home in
211973, after nearly 5 years there.

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