

11 December 1969  
At Norfolk, Virginia

FAMILYGRAM NO. 11

Dear "MUX" Family,

After our return from Vietnam 3 September and a leave period the MUX was again underway to sea in company with the aircraft carrier USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) for operations off the coast of Florida. Our main task was to serve as rescue destroyer in case of downed pilots. For many this was a real change of pace, that of plane guarding for an aircraft carrier, from the more familiar duties of a naval gunfire support ship off the coast of Vietnam. During the course of our operations down south we visited Mayport, Florida for two days and many were able to visit Jacksonville and Jax Beach. Our brief sunny Florida visit wasn't exactly sunny. It rained and the seas were rough the majority of the time. The jest about the ship among the steaming bridge watch sections was who would have the greatest number of degrees of "roll" of the ship. There were logged to be 38, 42 and the greatest was 49 degrees roll on 31 October. We returned to Norfolk on 7 November. Many of our new shipmates were happy to see and walk on land again.

On 21 November, USS MULLINNIX (DD-944) was honored once again for our contribution to the security and peace in Southeast Asia, and in particular the free choice of our allies in South Vietnam. The Secretary of the Navy awarded the Navy Unit Commendation to MULLINNIX for contribution and outstanding gunfire support of friendly forces ashore in the Republic of Vietnam. All hands on board during the ships deployment including COMDESRON 14 and his embarked staff are authorized to wear the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon. In a full dress ceremony, our present Squadron Commander, COMDESRON 2, Captain C. E. Hunter presented the SECNAV Commendation to the Captain, Officers and crew of the "Mighty Top Gun MUX". Upon completion of the presentation I ordered the ship's Executive Officer, LCDR Jack D. Sutton to run up the pennant to the fore-truck of the starboard mast which signifies the award of the Navy Unit Commendation.

We are all a proud ship and crew and I am personally proud of all hands performance during our WESTPAC deployment. The Citation is re-printed below.

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending

USS MULLINNIX (DD-944)

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For exceptionally meritorious service from 18 February to 31 July 1969 while assigned to the United States SEVENTH Fleet during combat operations against enemy aggressor forces in Southeast Asia. As a member of Task Unit 70.8.9, USS MULLINNIX provided outstanding accurate

gunfire in support of in-country ground forces. After spending long hours at battle stations, the crew was called upon almost daily to spend additional hours at all-hands evolutions, such as rearming and replenishment. Despite the demanding efforts required, the crew members maintained cheerful attitudes and high esprit decorps. MULLINNIX drew praise from Marine Corps units and naval gunfire support teams for her accurate gunfire and her determination to provide the best possible support. Due to the superb teamwork, professional competence, and unflagging dedication of her officers and men, MULLINNIX succeeded in meeting all naval gunfire support commitments, thereby reflecting great credit upon herself and the United States Naval Service.

All personnel attached to and serving on board USS MULLINNIX (DD-944) during the above-designated period, or any part thereof, are hereby authorized to wear the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon.

/s/  
Secretary of the Navy  
Acting

Many guests and families came on board for Thanksgiving Day. This day of thanksgiving commenced by the Pilgrims continues to this day. Our thoughts were of home and families as we gave thanksgiving on board, though many of us were able to go home. For the MUXMEN aboard, a wonderful dinner, notwithstanding, was served. It was a "Most" outstanding dinner. Our thanks to Chief Commissaryman Tobe of New York City, New York and his excellent crew in the crew's mess hall; consisting of CS1 Anzalone of New York City, CS2 Richardson of Anna, Illinois, CS2 Roberts of Middleton, Tennessee, CS3 Gallegos of Salida, Colorado, CS3 Monroe of Columbus, Ohio and CS3 Haray of El Paso, Texas.

On 28 November Boilerman First Class Bennie Hill, a MUX Long-Timer, left the ship after serving on board for 4 years, 9 months and 18 days. He hails from Pulaski, Virginia. He was escorted to the Quarterdeck by Chief Radarman Hillborn who carried his orders and Yeoman First Class Foss who carried his seabag. The only two men who have served on MUX longer than Bennie. On the Quarterdeck the Executive Officer presented him a framed picture of the MUX with a personal message written thereon from me. I was unable to be present. He was piped ashore and he passed through an honor guard of men from his division. He was a good, strong sailor; we will miss him.

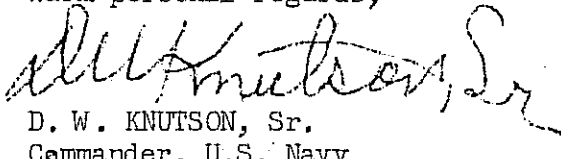
As December dawns upon us, our thoughts turn to home and the Christmas season. Not all of us can be home for Christmas, but a liberal leave policy has been arranged whereby about 40% of the crew will be home on Christmas and the rest on New Years Day.

On 6 December the gala Christmas Season was kicked off with the MUX Annual Christmas Ball. We wished that all of you could have been with us. It turned out to be an exceptional affair and really tuned in and turned on our Christmas spirit, even though we are yet to have any snow - just some rain and cold weather.

Often times the relatives and dependents of our MUX Family move and change their address, and very often "Your Sailor" forgets to correct his records accordingly. A sheet called "Record of Emergency Data" is kept in his service record which lists emergency data including the names and addresses of next of kin, dependents, parents, etc. In order for the Navy to discharge it's responsibility to a man's next of kin or dependents in case of serious illness or death, this information must be kept current and correct. I am enclosing a sheet for your use. It requires no postage. Just fold and staple it as indicated and drop it in the mail in case you change addresses.

In closing I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Prosperious New Year. Let each of us consider our wonderful country, families, and friends during this wonderful season with blessings, prayer, and warm friendship.

Warm personal regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. W. Knutson, Sr." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

D. W. KNUTSON, Sr.  
Commander, U.S. Navy  
Commanding, "The Mighty MUX"