

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
USS MULLINIX (DD-944)  
APO, New York 09501

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Mr. & Mrs. Coburn C. Metcalf  
811 Continental Blvd.  
Toledo, Ohio

20 April 1969  
At Subic Bay, R.P.

MUXPACGRAM NUMBER 4

Dear Folks, Friends, and Family,

The date line is Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines and I must apologize for not having written sooner, but we MUX'ERS have had an extremely heavy schedule - 24 full hours every day and each of those hours means hard work for all, loading black oil, beans, and bullets along with firing in support of the Army, Marines, and Republic of Vietnam on the gunline off the coast of South Vietnam. Of interest we burned more than 800,000 gallons of fuel oil, while on the gunline. A high point of one underway replenishment on 15 March was the on-loading by helo of 8 tons of provisions in just 19 minutes. Since leaving Norfolk, Virginia and arrival in Subic Bay we have steamed more than 20,000 miles.

Prior to departing Subic, 7 members of our MUX family are being transferred. They are headed home to take up pursuits in civilian life and rejoin their families. Each and everyone of them will be missed by us, their shipmates and buddies. But as they leave we wish them God speed, fair winds and following seas to: LTJG A. J. WALTZ of Norfolk, Virginia, LT G. A. CLOUGH of Norfolk, Virginia, EM2 H. D. CARMEN of Pt. Pleasant, New Jersey, EM2 J. R. FREEMAN, of Houston, Texas, MM2 R. F. GREANEY, of Springfield, Mass., SN D. L. ELTON, of Sacramento, Calif., BT2 M. S. HAMILTON, of Norfolk, Virginia. We will continue sending the MUXPACGRAM to our alumnae.

The History of King Neptune. In ancient Rome all natural and unnatural elements were given to the control of a super-being called a god. The king of all gods was Jupiter, making his home Mt. Olympus in Greece. His brother Pluto became God to the Underworld and lived in Hades. The third brother lived in the sea and ruled over all the waters and creatures in his realm. His staff was a trident and his chargers were dolphins and sea horses. This was Neptune. His wife, Salacia, was Goddess of Salt Water

Storms, whirlpools, wierd sights, and strange forms of life were all attributed to the god of the Sea. The superstitious mariners prayed and gave offerings to Neptune for deliverance from the mysteries of the oceans. From these ancient times through the Dark Ages and until the days of Columbus, de Gama, and Magellan the world was thought to be flat. This meant that at a particular line the unknown was encountered and a drop into space might be awaiting. Ceremonies were held upon crossing certain lines or places which tested the endurance of seamen on their first cruise. The Vikings, then the Angles, Saxons, and Normans made use of these rough tests.

The equator was one of the lines of mystery and fear in the world and now has come to denote the boundry of Neptune's modern realm. Upon the first crossing of the equator, honor, and obeisance have to be made to Neptunus Rex. The "pollywogs", or initiates, are subjected to various tests and tortures to determine their eligibility to enter Neptune's Domain. Having proved their eligibility, the initiates become "Shellbacks" and are then capable of communicating the secrets of the deep to any others who wish to cross the center parallel.

On 12 April we crossed the Equator and those fearless mariners called "Shellbacks" initiated us "Pollywogs" into the mysterious ancient order of the deep. Among those that met their fate before the Royal Court of King Neptune, Ruler of the Raging Main was Commodore Rusk, COMDESRON 14 and myself, CO of the MUX. The paddles were fast, and the spirit was high. After 24 years, I too am a deep-water sailor, a "Shellback".

14 April was a happy day for the fifty men listed below of the MUX who were advanced to the next higher rate. Of those originally recommended, over 70% were advanced.

R. ALUKONIS	N. DINGER	D. JONES	T. METCALF
E. AMUNDSON	K. DISHMAN	D. KEETER	J. MONAGLE
L. BACHLE	M. FARINELLA	P. LAMARRE	J. MYERS
A. BLANTON	W. FELBER	B. LARGE	E. NAMANNY
A. CLYBURN	C. PINOCCHIARO	R. LEATHERMAN	E. NASIATKA
T. COUSIN	R. GANN	K. LEWIS	D. PENQUE
L. DAUGHERTY	W. GILTNER	M. LULLOFF	P. ROSS
E. DAULTON	D. HOUG	G. MARTIN	J. RUSSELL
J. DEAN	R. INGRAM	D. MCCARREN	P. SCHLITT
E. DESSEREAU	J. JOHNSON	L. MCNEIL	L. SIMMONS
L. ROSS	C. CONLEY	R. BEAN	D. TIMPANO

Our press releases are attached for your information and retention.

We are going to be leaving here soon to go back to sea again. We will be rested then, and ready to do our job over here. Your men have done a splendid job thus far; I'm sure they will continue in the same spirit.

Very Sincerely,

*Don Knutson*  
Don Knutson  
Commanding, The MUX

*We are all able bodied  
deep water sailors now  
doing our duty!!!*

1. Aboard USS MULLINIX (D944) off the coast of Vietnam, 16 MAR 69  
Despite the continuing pressure of Vietnam, Sunday for the crew of the USS MULLINIX is still a day of worship and rest. This is the one day of the week that "Holiday Routine" is followed by all off-watch personnel.

Starting with thirty extra minutes of sleep before reveille is piped, "Holiday Rooty Tooty", as it is called by the crew, allows everyone to catch up on their rest. A clean-up of the passageways and compartments throughout the ship is followed by Protestant Lay Services held on the crew's mess deck.

These services are held on board by the Protestant Lay Leader. Through the singing of hymns, the reading of the scriptures and inspirational thoughts, followed by a period of meditation, assistance rendered by LTJG Steve Smith, USNR, is to help meet the spiritual needs of the men aboard.

The Catholic Lay Services, presents God's teaching on Christian response to social, cultural, and economic issues and leads the men to reflect on their personal responsibility as Christians.

In the afternoon the crew disperses throughout the ship. Some, filled with thoughts of their loved ones back home, go on deck to rest and sunbathe as well as a quiet time for letterwriting. For others, there is the choice of bingo on the mess decks, always popular with the crew, or spirited inter-divisional tether volley ball games on the torpedo deck. Later in the afternoon, popcorn and movies are available also. Trap shooting is available to all interested marksmen on the fantail.

This Sunday was the last day to enter the ship's beard growing contest. On March 31, an impartial panel of judges, comprised of CAPT S. L. RUSK, USN, of Mayport, Florida, the Vietnam Gunline Commander; the Captain, Don KNUTSON, of Norfolk, Virginia, Master Chief THOMPSON, of Norfolk, Virginia, and two others, will award prizes for the best beard in each of the categories. These categories include the "Van Dyche", "Full Face", "Heaviest per sq. inch", "Scraggiest", and several others. Leading the way early in the contest is First Class Machinist Mate CONLEY of Box 24 Mousie, Kentucky, president of the First Classmen's Mess and qualified to stand the top engineering watch, has thrown himself into the fray enthusiastically by entering all ten of the categories. He is an odds-on favorite to win at last three, the "Full Face", "Heaviest per sq. inch", and "Handsome Harry".

The three hundred men and officers of the MULLINIX value and look forward to a day of rest and, for many, spiritual study.

They will be, however, ready again early on Monday morning to turn to with the same spirit, efficiency and vigor which has become their trademark and representative of their motto, "First and Fastest".

2. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD-944) off the coast of South Vietnam  
18 March 1969.

Well stranger, before I show you the "Louisville Lady" I reckon you'll want to know how we came to love her. It was back around Christmas time in Norfolk when she came aboard. She was late, you know, like any Big City Lady, but we had four of our best men waiting to take charge and care for her.

I'll tell you sir, that lady was a real Princess. No pea was allowed under her mattress. Right from the start she demanded constant attention from Chief SADOWSKI of Norfolk, Va. and his men; 1st Class Sam JOHNSON, of Cleveland, Ohio, Second Class Jim STOIS of Norfolk, and Third Class Robert MOORE of Norfolk.

She was no landlubber though. She had been to sea before and took our departure from Norfolk right in stride. Each day, you'd see her back there strutt'en around so as to dip her lovely shape. That there was one Lady who wasn't going to let any grass grow under her feet.

But I'll tell you mister, she was a tempermental lass. If you turned your back on her, forgot to exercise her just one day, she'd quit working. Howsoever, Old Chief SADOWSKI, he knew how to handle her - just give her a lotta tender, loving care.

It was off the coast of Vietnam that we on the MULLINNIX fully learned her talents. I'll tell you sir, we were powerfully busy during those first three weeks, but no one worked harder or flashed more spirit than our fighting "Louisville Lady". A real hellcat she was, and continues to be.

Why, if it wasn't for her real Lady-Like, curvaceous features, we'd be calling her the "Louisville Slugger". Yes Sir, our proud, majestic and talented Lady is a rip-roaring 5"/54 Caliber semi-automatic gun weighting 118 Tons.

3. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD-944) off the coast of South Vietnam,  
20 Mar. 1969

Ever since the days of that legendary piledriver, John Henry, man has been fighting a seamlessly helpless battle against the efficiency of machines. Today this competition exists even aboard the Destroyer MULLINNIX. It takes the form of a friendly rivalry between our Mark47 Computer down in the main battery plotting room and one Robert BROWN, of New Orleans, Louisiana, the Naval Gunfire Support Plotter in the ships Combat Information Center.

Second Class Petty Officer BROWN is responsible for determining the ships navigational position. It is the computer's job to check vital in training our guns accurately on enemy targets, this rivalry serves an important function in Gunfire Support Procedures.

At first sight this competition may seem unfair. You cannot, however convince Radarman BROWN of this. For instance, when told that the "47 Computers Check" was in agreement with his five point navigational fix, brown candidly stated Quote, That computer sure is working good today unquote. First Class Electronics Technician Steven J. DAVIS, head of the MUX "Roller Skate Repair Shoppe", acting as impartial judge, concurred; awarding this round to BROWN. Old John Henry surely must be smiling today. Man has won anther round in the battle.

4. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam, 21 MAR 69.

Living up to her motto "First and Fastest", this CUSDESLANT Destroyer has, in the last twenty-four hours, taken numerous targets under fire from three different stations covering 90 miles of South Vietnam shoreline. In this display of flexible sea-power with concentrated firepower, the "Mighty MUX" poured many salvos into targets from just below the demilitarized zone to points South of Da Nang.

Throughout the late morning hours the MULLINNIX remained off the shore just south of the DMZ firing in support of the Third Marine Division. Throughout the night in Da Nang Harbor this long-rifled gunship provided suppression fire against suspected rocket sites northwest of Da Nang. With the break of dawn, this destroyer steamed out of the harbor and proceeded to a point 30 miles south of Da Nang. She then shot many salvos of high explosive projectiles for the Army of South Vietnam's Second Division into a fortified enemy positions destroying 9 bunkers, 10 concrete military structures and damaging 16 other similar structures.

For the Captain and crew of this "Fighting Ship", this was another day on the gunline. The MULLINNIX, now the experienced and spirited "First and Fastest" ship from the Atlantic Fleet is carrying its share of the military effort in support of the U.S. Army, U.S. Marines, and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

5. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam, 22 MAR 69.

Amidst a war thousands of miles from their home in Houston, Texas, Lance Corporal William FREEMAN of Alfa Co., second platoon, 1st Anti-tank Battalion, U.S.M.C. and his brother, Petty Officer Second Class James FREEMAN, stationed aboard this Atlantic Fleet Destroyer, met for two hours this morning in Da Nang.

"I called the NGLO for the 1st Marine Division and asked him to relay on to Corporal FREEMAN's company our request for help in setting up the reunion", stated Second Class Radarman James HANDLEY of Buffalo, New York. "Several hours later the spotter came up on the radio-telephone telling us that Bill FREEMAN would be at the fleet landing early the next morning to meet his brother".

Bill was waiting for me at the landing when I arrived there this morning", said James. "It was good to see him again. He then showed me around his base camp, pointing out the tank he drove. I told him when the MULLINNIX gets back to Da Nang I'd give him a tour of our ship - the Mighty MUX".

They had an opportunity to talk about many things, near and dear, and then each went back to work. The Marine to driving a tank, the sailor to driving a ship. Such was in impromptu reunion of the FREEMAN brothers in a port in South Vietnam.

6. Aboard USS MULLINNIX DD-944 off the coast of South Vietnam 24 March 1969, Flagship of Captain S.L. RUSK, USN Gunline Commander of the Gunline Support Forces, Vietnam.

For LCDR Jack SUTTON, USN, of Norfolk, Virginia, today was a day of watching and learning. LCDR SUTTON, who arrived aboard yesterday via a Navy highline transfer at sea, is assuming the position of Executive Officer aboard this Crudeslant destroyer. For the next several days he will be indoctrinating himself under the tutelage of LCDR Bob SAMPLE, USN, of Norfolk the present X.O., in the organization and policies established by the C.O. QDR Don KNUTSON of Norfolk, Va.

LCDR SAMPLE is to take command of the USS THOMAS J. GARY (DER-326). Bobbie SAMPLE joined the Navy in 1948 as a seaman recruit. Advancing through the rates, he attended Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I., and was commissioned an Ensign in 1958. Since then LCDR SAMPLE has served as Weapons Officer and Operations Officer in destroyers before coming to the MULLINNIX as X.O.

LCDR SUTTON, who just completed a tour as Weapons Officer aboard the USS BIDDLE (DLG-34) is not new to the gunline. He served in BIDDLE during her deployment to Vietnam last year. Looking forward to the challenge and responsibilities as Executive Officer, I'm looking forward eagerly to firing my first round as the "EXEC"

7. To the men of Headquarters Company, First Battalion, Twelfth-Marine Artillery Division, this east-coast destroyer, Flagship of Captain S.L. Rusk Commander of all naval gunfire support ships on the gunline, is called the MULLINNIX Hilton.

The nickname started when LTJG Roland BLOCKSON, of State College, PENN., a spotter for the 12th Marine Division, came aboard to observe this ships gunfire support procedures. After a day aboard the ship, he returned to his post ashore with LTJG Frank KERRIGAN, Of Nashville, TENN., and Radarman Second Class James HANDLEY, of Buffalo, N.Y., members of the mighty MUX'S gunfire support team.

"We went over about noon by Coast Guard Cutter to the mouth of the Quan Trieu Pkong River, where we transferred to a "Pusher", or small utility boat, which lended us a little ways up the river", explained HANDLEY. "We then walked about fifteen minutes before we got a ride from an "AMIPAC". From that we switched to a truck which brought us to the observation post, (O.P.), continued HANDLEY.

"We spent the night talking to the spotters and ducking bullets" added LTJG KERRIGAN.

As the two Navymen were about to return to the ship, an invitation was extended by the Manager, MULLINNIX Hilton to bring some Marines back with them for a taste of shipboard life, free, including all the eggs they could eat.

"We sent the invitation out over one of our radio telephone circuits", stated Bill CASTLE, of Norfolk, Virginia, a leading Petty Officer in Combat Information Center. "Immediately there were calls from all the O.P.'S to their Headquarters asking for a chance to come out. They wanted to cut cards to see who would come but I told them we had fresh eggs and milk enough for all of them".

The next day, private Paul DOEMULEY, of St. Louis, Missouri. Private David MILLER, of Chilton, Wisconsin, and Corporal Jack DAVIDSON, of Joplin, Missouri, came back with LTJG KERREICAN and HANDLEY. The three Marines had been in Vietnam since early November, spending this past month manning the forward O. P. 's along the demilitarized zone.

"Outstanding" said Private DOEMULEY, as the three waited to return ashore after a day afloat.

"We had not had a bath in thirty days". Added David MILLER. "We use an Old Grater for swimming when we begin to get too crusty".

The management of the "MULLINIX HILLION" is pleased to report that each of the three Happy Marines left by helicopter with a rifle under one arm and three dozen fresh eggs and three heads of lettuce under the other.

7. Aboard USS MULLINIX DD-944 off the coast of South Vietnam, 30 March 1969.

It is said that the Mighty MUX's 52/54 Caliber Gun Mounts are fully automatic. Don't, however, try to tell that to any of the magazine crew aboard this east coast Destroyer. This is the crew which feeds the shells and powder from the magazines, where the projectiles are stored, into the electro-mechanical ammunition hoists, which carry them to the Gun Mounts. The duty of a magazine loader is never glamorous, and at times is tremendously difficult, and always just plain hard dangerous work.

This morning was one of those testing times. For forty minutes this Norfolk-Based Destroyer utilized her devastating Fire-Power on enemy positions prior to the commencement of a search and clear mission by ground troops, ten miles west of danang. During this time the two after gun mounts each fired two forty round continuous salvos within ten minutes into a strong pocket of enemy resistance.

To keep up with this intensive output of High explosive projectiles the magazine crews were severely taxed. Headed by Boatswain Mates Kenneth Waddell, of Wilkesboro, North Carolina, and Cecil Miller, from Fayetteville, Ark., and Third Class Storekeepers Charles SKELTON II, of Santa Cruz, California, and David WALLICE of Holland, Mich., the two Magazine crews were able to keep the guns loaded. Their crews consisted of Seaman Donald HUGHES, of Warwick, R. I., Dante NANNI, of Medford, Mass., Lucas ELBO, Masinloc, Republic of Philippines, William Torres, Denver, Colo., Patrick VERDERESE, Lansing, Mich., Joseph Scalise, Frankfort, N.Y., Joseph JOHNSON, Lynchburg, Vir., Rod Rabideau, West Chazy, N. Y., Moeman O. J. HERBERTSON, Pollard, Ark., Joseph Monagle Jr., Philadelphia, Penna., and Stewart Bernardo NEFLAR, of Pasay, Republic of Philippines. When the troops of the seventh Marine Regiment swept through the area they found one cave entrance closed, two more damaged, three bunker complexes and Twenty fortified enemy positions destroyed, and two trail junctions wiped out by the accurate firing of the MULLINIX. It is in contributing to such effective and professional Naval Firepower that the magazine crews, The unheralded men below the decks, gain their satisfaction. One tired but proud projectile loader was overheard to say, "There oughta be an award for us. The MULLINIX is top gun on the line. Most of the time we just put out one or two rounds at a time, but today, when it was really needed, we just kept those guns a-firing. I know now how well we can support the troops ashore. They just have to ask for the Top Gun.



8. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam, 2 APR 69.

From observation posts overlooking the demilitarized zone, the Navy-Marine team at Gio Linh have been able to observe and, in conjunction with naval gunfire support ships, have demonstrated the efficiency and accomplishments of a tremendously successful team effort. The quick reaction and accuracy of the Navy's warships on the gunline teamed with Naval Gunfire spotters ashore and in the air have been a constant threat to the enemy here in the vicinity of the DMZ. The able and knowledgeable Marine teams ashore are an integral and vital part in the overall Navy mission in Vietnam.

This close coordination between the spotter teams ashore and the Navy Gunfire Support ships close off the coast provides fire support for ground units in the field, and in so doing, assists in providing for troop security, as well as boosting the morale of friendly troops. The enemy's freedom of movement and overt operations day or night are severely hampered by this excellent fast-shooting team.

As she ends her first patrol on the gunline the Mighty MUX extended her congratulations for "A job well done" to this fine team of spotters comprised of LTJG W.G. BECK, USN, of Ventura, California, Staff Sergeant L.C. CABERRA, USMC, Memphis, Tenn., and Corporals W.O. OTTO, USMC, Light-house Pt., Florida, D.W. LEWIS, USMC, Milford, Michigan, and C.G. MEDLIN USMC, of Diamond Bar, California.

In turn, LT J.J. SAI, USN, of Oakdale, California, talking by radio-telephone from his forward area command post, stated "The liaison officers as well as the Marines we support, a sense of well being, knowing that we can depend on our ships helping us out of tight situations." The spotters for the first Battalion, twelfth Marine Regiment added, "We wish to extend our gratitude and compliments to all the gunfire support ships including MULLINNIX for their timely, accurate, gunfire."

9. For presrel submitted for clearance and release.

"Aboard the Norfolk-based Destroyer, USS MULLINNIX in Da Nang Harbor, 4 APR 69.

Captain Stephen L. RUSK, USN, Commander Destroyer Squadron FOURTEEN, concluded thirty-two days as Gunline Commander by turning over the reins on 4 April to Captain L.D. CUMMINS, USN, Commander Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN. The brief turnover of command was held without formalities aboard MULLINNIX while she continued firing support for Marine forces in the vicinity of Da Nang.

Commander Destroyer Squadron FOURTEEN, homeported in Mayport, Florida and embarked in MULLINNIX, arrived on the Gunline 28 FEB and relieved Captain J.F. SWINER, Commanding Officer of the Battleship NEW JERSEY as the task unit commander.

Captain RUSK stated that, "The gunline ships play a most vital role in support of Free World Forces with hard hitting bombardment of enemy positions from the Mekong Delta to the DMZ. The total effectiveness of Naval Gunfire Support can only be realized through the team effort of all hands in the ships and the air and ground spotters in the field".

During his tour as Gunline Commander, Commodore RUSK has had a total of thirty ships from both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets under his tactical command, including the NEW JERSEY, heavy cruiser USS NEWPORT NEWS, and the Australian guided missile Destroyer, HMAS PERTH.

Captain RUSK commented "It has been one of the most rewarding assignments of my career and I look forward to rejoining a first line outfit."