

20 March 1969
Off the Coast of
Viet Nam-At Sea

MUXPACGRAM NUMBER 3

Dear Folks, Friends, and Family,

We departed Yokosuka, Japan 20 February after a short stay of two days. We refueled in Subic Bay, Philippines 26 February, leaving for the "Gunline" in the afternoon.

We arrived on the Gunline off the Coast of Viet Nam and close to the mouth of the Saigon River in II Corps area. We had traveled 13,026 miles to reach the Gunline. Our stay in II Corps was short. We arrived in I Corps area, which is around the DMZ on 3 March. During the night the Battleship NEW JERSEY and MUX fired on targets ashore. Commodore Risk relieved the Commanding Officer of the USS NEW JERSEY as Gunline Commander on 4 March.

During our first tour on the Gunline it was my great pleasure to advance Richard Maydak, Gregory Mowery, Dante Nanni, John Snow, James Tanguay and John Vasco to the next higher rate. Kenneth Thompson was advanced to Third Class Petty Officer.

Lieutenants Clough, Danner, Dyches, Lindgren and LTJG Waltz were designated as Officer of the Deck Underway during fleet operations. This in itself is an important achievement and is the highest possible destroyer watch qualification. LTJG's Kerrigan and Weston were designated Officers of the Deck Underway (Independent Steaming) in recognition of their advanced training and qualifications.

The beard growing contest is currently underway. Judges will select the winners on 31 March. The names of winners in next familygram. The contestants are:

<u>VAN DYKE</u>	<u>FULL FACE</u>	<u>SCRAGGLIEST</u>	<u>HEAVIEST</u>
FTG3 KRZEFT	FN WIMBLE	LTJG PFOUTS	(based on hair per-
SHSN SNOW	SH2 BRICKNELL	BTCS MCDANIEL	sq. inch)
FA MARTINEZ	FTG1 FRANCIS	BT1 SHREVE	EM2 GREEN
MM1 CONLEY	FTG2 LINE	BT3 PENQUE	SH2 BRICKNELL
MMFN LEATHERMAN	FTG2 FINLEY	FN GROSS	BT2 LAPOLE
D. W. KNUTSON	FTGSN MYERS	SPE3 LULLOFF	MM1 CONLEY
	FTGSN TANGUAY	FTG2 SOLTAU	MMFN LAMARRE
<u>CHIN WISKERS</u>	MM1 CONLEY	FTGSN COOPERIDER	
MM1 CONLEY	MMFN LAMARRE	FTGSN HODDINNOT	<u>FU MANCHU</u>
	MMFN INGRAM	MM1 CONLEY	MM1 CONLEY
<u>MUSTACHE</u>	MM2 HIGGINS	MMFN GILTNER	J. D. SUTTON
MM1 CONLEY	MM3 SMITH		

MOST FITTING FOR FACE

MM1 CONLEY
EN3 MCEUEN
BTFM FINOCCHAIARO
FTG2 CAIL
PC3 THIELEN

MOST DISTINGUISHED

FTG2 CAIL
SHSN SNOW
BT3 SHONK
EN3 MCEUEN
FN GRAF
MM1 CONLEY

LONGEST (measured
hair by hair)

MM1 CONLEY

The following is a summary of some of our activities which have been reported to various press authorities - If you wish, these releases may be printed verbatim in your local newspapers:

1. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD944) in the South China Sea, 28 February - - at 1105 this morning the grim reality of war was impressed upon the three hundred officers and men who comprise the crew of this East Coast Norfolk based Long Rifle Destroyer. The forward 5"/54 gun mount commenced fire in support of U.S. Army forces fighting along side South Vietnamese units in II CTZ for the first shot in the second Vietnam tour of this ship.

This was the culmination of six months of intensive preparation by the Captain "Cat" Knutson and crew of the "Mighty MUX". Upon completion of overhaul in Norfolk Naval Shipyard the crew completed two months of intensive refresher training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. For one hundred and ninety new men this was their first time out to sea. Throughout her thirteen thousand mile, six week transit to Vietnam the men constantly trained in Gunfire procedures.

Throughout the afternoon the MULLINNIX, serving as Flagship for COM-DESRON 14, CAPT S. L. Rusk, USN, continued shooting high explosives into suspected enemy troop staging areas. Gunfire from the MULLINNIX destroyed eight enemy bunkers, four above ground structures and possibly damaging one. By the end of the day the early anxiety and tenseness had disappeared to be replaced by the confidence and smooth efficiency of a well-trained and spirited command.

2. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX in the South China Sea 3 March 1969 at 1:45 this afternoon this Destroyer Force Atlantic Fleet Destroyer serving as Flagship for Commodore S. L. Rusk, steamed within 2000 yards of the Battleship NEW JERSEY. During a fire mission of the Battleship's big guns, the Commodore was transferred aboard the only active Battleship in the world to attend briefings by Captain J. E. Snyder, Jr., Commanding Officer of the NEW JERSEY, whom he will relieve as Gunline Commander shortly. The MULLINNIX stood by off the DMZ to commence fire missions where the extra range of her powerful five inch, fifty-four caliber guns will be used to maximum advantage. The "Mighty MUX" just completed three days of firing in support of Operation Sheridan in CTZ II, where the crew received a Vietnam indoctrination in the now famous Navy Gunfire Support so valued by all land forces. At five o'clock this evening the rapid firing long barrels of the MULLINNIX joined with the sixteen inchers of the NEW JERSEY in providing call fire missions in defense of our U.S. and friendly forces. For half an hour this Norfolk based Destroyer fired her projectiles into an enemy staging area. The MUX has now joined the Big League and is ready to bat.

3. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam, March 6, 1969.

This is not the first time at Da Nang for Storekeeper Charles F. Skelton, of Santa Cruz, California. On 30 January 1968 he was awarded a letter of commendation for his extraordinary bravery in fighting oil fires, while under rocket attack, at the fuel tank farm in Da Nang, South Vietnam. Five months later, on 14 May 1968, he received a shrapnel wound while on temporary duty with the Third Marine Division at Dong Ha in connection with fuel services.

To night was a happier moment for Skelton. Aboard this Flagship supporting the First Marine Division in the Da Nang area, Petty Officer Skelton was presented the Purple Heart Medal by Captain S. L. Rusk, USN OF Mayport, Florida, the embarked Gunline Commander. Commodore Rusk said, "I would like to congratulate you on your superior performance and bravery last year. I know you will wear this medal with pride". Commander D.W. Knutson Commanding Officer of the Destroyer Flagship MULLINNIX, was also present

at the ceremony held in the Main Battery Plotting Room. He remarked of his pride in having a man of Skelton's bravery and courage as a shipmate.

Wearing his Purple Heart Medal, Skelton stepped up to the firing key controlling the firing of the ship's main battery and sent two high performance 5"/54 projectiles at the enemy positions ashore in the Da Nang area. He said, "I've been waiting for a long time to shoot something back and I finally got the chance."

4. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of Vietnam, 7 March 1969.

This afternoon, on the bridge of this Cruiser-Destroyer Force Atlantic Fleet Destroyer, Yeoman Cicil E. Foss, of Sheridan, Wyoming, signed the papers for his third reenlistment. Petty Officer Foss, who runs the Ship's Administrative Office, was sworn in by CDR. Don Knutson, Captain of the USS MULLINNIX. CDR. Knutson told his Battle Circuit talker, "We are fortunate to have you aboard and proud that you are staying."

Foss' career, starting in 1953, covers duty in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans as well as shore duty in Japan and Italy. He is an extremely well qualified Destroyerman having served four tours on Destroyers.

When asked what he thought of Navy life Foss replied, "I like it. I've been in this man's Navy for sixteen years and am looking forward to another four".

5. Aboard the Flagship USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam, 11 March 1969.

Yesterday the crew of the "Mighty MUX" celebrated her eleventh birthday in spirited style. Standing a few miles off shore, "Little Brother" MULLINNIX helped fill the vacuum in Naval Gunfire Support caused by the departure of "Big Brother" the Battleship NEW JERSEY. Furthermore, MULLINNIX fired her greatest daily total number of rounds to date in support of the U.S. and Republic of Vietnam Forces. Firing in support of the Third Marine Division, this Long-Rifle Destroyer salvoed many rounds of high explosives shells on North Vietnamese troops attempting to infiltrate south. In receiving an "excellant to outstanding target coverage" from the spotter on all ten of the fire missions she undertook, this Norfolk-based Destroyer, Flagship of S.L. Rusk, Commander Destroyer Squadron Fourteen, current Gunline Commander, destroyed enemy bunkers and structures, and helped to halt the enemy's infiltration in at least seven different areas.

On March 10, 1958 this CRUDESANT Destroyer was commissioned in honor of Henry Matson Mullinnix, one of America's most gifted "Air Admirals". In maintaining the standards of excellence shown by Admiral Mullinnix, CDR Don Knutson and his crew have demonstrated today what "Little Brother" can do when needed.

As the Naval Gunfire Support Team led by LCDR Bob Sample, USN, of Norfolk, was placing successive rapid fire salvoes in the middle of 50 infiltrating North Vietnamese troops, his CIC plotter RD2 Robert Brown of New Orleans, Louisiana, unknowingly expressed our objective: "We're in the ballpark, matter of fact, we're going to win this game. We just hit another home run and cleaned out all the bases."

6. Aboard USS MULLINNIX (DD944) in South China Sea, 14 March 1969.

"Huber's Hideaway" or "Hillborn's Hollow" are not on any standard Navy chart or road map. They are names of only a few of the areas of contested real estate in the Da Nang area that have been renamed by the crew of this CRUDESANT Destroyer which just arrived for her second Vietnam tour.

In order to allow all the crew members to participate personally in the mission of this ship, CDR Don Knutson, Captain of the USS MULLINNIX DD944

requested that each crew member give a spot of land or a target a name of his own choice.

A Naval Gunfire chart of the Da Nang area hangs on the crew's mess hall showing the newly named points. These names are then published in the ship's daily summary of gunfire missions completed by the MULLINIX for the Army, Marines, and the Republic of Vietnam customers for whom Naval Gunfire Support is provided. Not all named areas are shot at because some have no military value.

The proposed names reflect some of the crews thoughts about war, home, their loved ones, and their mission on the ship.

Seaman Carl Ambrose of Birmingham, Ala., explained why he named his territory "Ambrose Valley". He said, "It looks so green and peaceful there until those mortars and flares start up at night." Boatswain Mate Edwin D. Namanny of Blackhawk, South Dakota, named his area "Gun Runners Ridge", because that was where the enemy would come down after dark. He said, "When we start shooting they just drop their guns and keep on running." Seaman William Price, of St. Albans, West Virginia, was inspired to name his target "Dog Patch Hollow", "Because it reminded me of a mountain town I once knew." Third Class Boatswain Mate Thomas Cromer, of Cowpens, South Carolina, poetically described his "MUX Gulch" as, "A place where the V.C. crawl and the MULLINIX stands tall, means, where we shoot the V.C. Fall."

Women's names were used frequently. G.J. Thielen, of Dubuque, Iowa, chose "Laura's Lagoon" because, "A lagoon is a pretty place, so the name is fitting and reminded me of my wife.", First Class Cecil Foss, of Sheridan, Wyoming, found a "Myrna's Mountain" which he named, "In honor of my little sister."

The men's nicknames were found in many of the suggested names. G.S. Warrell, from Hurlock, Maryland, dubbed his choice "Squirrel Nest", because, "Since I'm called that now I wanted to name a place where another squirrel might be." Second Class Charles Lambrecht, from Red Cloud, Nebraska used his nickname in calling his target, "The Lamb Pit". Fireman Edward Nasiatka of Detroit, Michigan, wanting, "To leave a memento behind from my second tour over here," suggested "Nagasaki Mound" and B.A. Mayhue, Second Class Radioman from Wattsburg, Penn, came up with "Little Doe Deer's Place", because my nickname is Bambi and we're fighting for freedom. Bambi is a deer and he is free." B.J. Davis leading Petty Officer for the Electronics Technicians dubbed a target "Rudy Dazooties Hole in the Wall", since that is the nickname for the workshop.

The finality and grim reality of this war has left its mark on titles of several of the "Mighty MUX's" targets. Damage controlman K.D. Klamm, from Dyer, Indiana, chose "Klamm's Score", "To get even for what they have done to a couple of my buddies." While Fred J. Bruun, of Fifield, Wisconsin, called his target "Revenge Island", because, "I owe them one." "Helpless Childrens Hideaway" was the name given by Joseph Monagle of Philadelphia, Penn, "Because that is what I saw while I was ashore-kids being tormented because of Communist Oppression." Richard Burkhouse, from New Bethlehem, Penn, chose "Burkhouse Valley", saying, "My valley was peaceful and quiet when I was here in 1966. I have returned to find it in a state of disaster, but once we get through with them it will become Burkhouse's Pleasant Valley then."

Thoughts of home can be seen in other names, Yeoman O.J. Pemberton of Pollard, Arkansas, suggested "Cotton Fields", saying, "That's the place I'd most rather be. Maybe when this target is blown up it will end and we can all return." R.H. Smith, whiling from Hampton, Virginia, dubbed his area "Crabbers Hill" in honor of his home, "The Land of good living". First Class Ship Fitter A. L. Payne, of Gardner, Mass., dubbed his target

priority "No One", stating, "I'd like to see all priority ones blown up."

LT Bruce McDaniel of St. Petersburg, Florida suggested "Barbara's Garden", for a beautiful spot visible by binoculars because, "It looks like the garden of the greatest Navy mother in the world." Another of our targets, "Blue Moon Cafe", was named by Captain S.L. Rusk, USN, Gunline Commander embarked on the MULLINIX, "Because of the questionable character of our entertainers."

As the MULLINIX continues to take military targets under fire, new names are proposed. Not all are fired upon. One seaman was over heard to say, "As long as the commies create military targets in an otherwise peaceful land, we'll gun them down. There won't be any lack of names or projectiles for those targets."

I hope you enjoy hearing about your men through these press releases, We will continue to send them.

Thank you also for the interesting letters.

D. W. Knutson, Sr.
D. W. KNUTSON, Sr.
C.O. The Mighty MUX

Our motto

FIRST and FASTEST!

Your men make that motto true and applicable

DWK Sr