

USS MULLINNIX (DD-944)
FPO, NEW YORK 09501

20 May 1969
At Sea, Off The Coast
Of South Vietnam

MUXPACGRAM NUMBER 5

Dear Folks, Friends and Family,

Good afternoon. I must back-track somewhat to bring all of us up to date together.

On 5 April we completed our first tour of 36 days on the gunline off the coast of South Vietnam. South by southwest was our course down the coast of South Vietnam through the Singapore Straits, past the ancient city of Singapore, on the morning of 8 April and through the Malacca Straits, with the island of Sumatra on the left and the peninsula of Malaya on the right. We arrived at Belawan, Indonesia on 9 April, a trip of 1380 miles for a two day visit requested by the State Department. It was a welcome relief for us all, and the first dry land in forty-seven days. The people were extremely friendly and interested in us and the ship. Curious crowds jammed the pier throughout the day just watching the ship and its personnel. (See Part I of the attachments for messages received.)

Enroute from Belawan to Subic Bay, R.P. we jogged further south in order that we might cross the Equator and clear the ship of those lubberly creatures called "Pollywogs" - a man that has not crossed the Equator previously. The Honorable "Shellbacks" - a man that has already crossed the Equator, did in fact De-Pollywog the ship on 12 April. MUXPACGRAM #4 gave you a history of the ceremony connected with crossing the line.

We have added 10 new members to our MUX Family. I would like to say a special hello to the families and wives of ENS BATES of Norfolk, Virginia, LTJG PRIDDY of Richmond, Virginia, SA HENDRIX of Gainesville, Georgia, SA HERNANDEZ of Laurelton, N.Y., SA JONES of Winston Salem, N.C., SA MELTESEN of Mauston, Wisconsin, SA MURPHY of Pittsburg, Pa., SA NAYLOR of Pontiac, Michigan, SA OLIVAS of Guntersville, Alabama, SA PIWELL of Canton, Mass., SA RITACCA of Kenosha, Wisconsin, SA SMITH of Bossier City, La., and SA TINGLE of Morrow, Georgia. They are well on their way to become full fledged MULLINNIX MEN.

We did, by the way, judge our beard contestants on 7 April. The winners were:

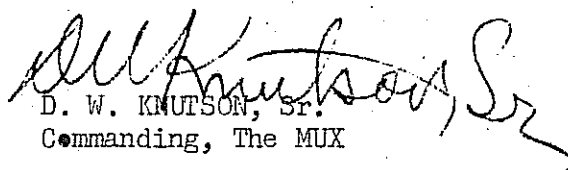
| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Van Dyke | SHSN SNOW |
| Most Distinguished | FTG2 CAIL |
| Full Face | SH2 BRICKNELL |
| Longest | MM1 CONLEY |
| Most Fitting For Face | EN3 McEUEEN |
| Heaviest | RD1 CASTLE |
| Scragliest | ET3 PENQUE |

Their pictures will appear in our Cruise Book.

The real fact of combat is always with us. Often times our gun-fire station is in the Harbor of Danang. Life goes on in Danang even tho combat is near, as MUX's five inch guns blaze away at Viet Cong positions in the mountains that circle the city. The lights of Danang reflect in the waters of the harbor, as star shells drift slowly down illuminating the dark countryside and mountains in back of Danang, in order to illuminate enemy troops and positions. Often many star shells are in the sky at one time. The red machine gun tracers arcing through the night complete the panorama of the combat around us.

Our press releases on Belawan and recent activities are attached.

With warm personal regards,


D. W. KNUTSON, Sr.
Commanding, The MUX

P.S. As you read these messages and press releases, I want all of you (fathers, mothers, wives, sisters, brothers, sweethearts and friends) to realize that your sailor in this ship is part fighter, part technician, part diplomat, and ALL MAN, whatever his age. He proves it every day, in every way.

Attachments:

1. Belawan, Indonesia messages. (May not be reproduced without authority of Commanding Officer, USS MULLINIX.)
2. Press releases. (May be released verbatim to your local newspapers.)

Part 1 of the attachments are for the congratulatory messages received for our visit to Belawan, Indonesia. Each man did a splendid job:

PART 1

A. From: COMDESRON FOURTEEN
To: COMSEVENTHFLT

Belawan Visit

1. First USN Combatant visit to Belawan, Indonesia, according to local officials and 40/4 members of press, completed with resounding success.
2. Extensive sked planned, plus additional events after arrival, were carried out by ship in outstanding manner, orig and MULLINIX warmly received by government officials, military, public and American community.
3. Excellent people-to-people program accomplished attested by letters of acknowledgement and thanks.
4. Outstanding liaison and assistance rendered by American Council Medan, Alusna and Aalusna contributed immeasurably to success of visit.
5. Reported that at least nine newspapers plus radio covered visit with favorable articles and broadcasts.

B. From: American Council Medan
To: RUNJET/AMEMBASY DJAKARTA 0748
AINFC RUMHC/SEC TATE WAINDC 0190
RUHHHQ/CINCEAC 009
RURYBRA/CINCPACFLT
RUMPSAA/USS MULLINIX
RUMPSBB/COMDESRON ONE FOUR

1. Visit here April 9-11 of USS MULLINIX (DD944) was successful beyond all expectations thanks to officers and men of that fine ship whose exemplary behavior, warm hospitality to thousands of visitors on board and willingness to sacrifice what might have been well-earned rest to devote themselves to full schedule of events and community relations projects earned them respect and admiration of people and officials in North Sumatra.
2. First impressions are lasting impressions and for this reason much depended on this visit, the first to Belawan in at least twenty years and only second to Indonesia since confrontation. As an American official I am grateful for the outstanding manner in which the USS MULLINIX carried out responsibilities, which will be of immeasurable value to me in doing my job here. As a fellow American I am deeply proud of the caliber of men our Navy produces.

C. From: Commander Task Group 70.8, (Admiral Rueden, USN)
To: RUYISRA/USS MULLINIX
COMDESRON FOURTEEN

Medan Visit

1. Amoton Medan 120510Z APR 1969
Ref. (A) was no surprise. It was simply just another great MUX performance. Well done to all hands embarked.

D. From: Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet
To: USS MULLINIX (DD944)
CCMDESRON FOURTEEN

USS MULLINIX visit to Belawan

1. I note ref (A) with special pleasure. Such an outstanding performance is the result not only of dynamic leadership and careful planning, but also of each individual's keen awareness of the importance such visits play in national policy.
2. I commend in highest terms each officer and Blue Jacket of MULLINIX. I am proud to have you as a unit of the Pacific Command. Well done. Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., U.S. Navy

E. From: Commander Seventh Fleet
To: CCMDESRON FOURTEEN
USS MULLINIX

Fort Visit

1. The very fine showing of Commander Destroyer Squadron Fourteen and MULLINIX during their recent Indonesian port visit was noted with pleasure. To the accolades of ref. (A), I add my "Well Done", and a sincere "Thank You" to all hands who worked so hard to make this important visit an unqualified success. VADM W. F. Bringle, USN.

PART II

Part II press releases of our crew.

- A. Aboard USS MULLINIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam 6 April 69.
There are no signs proclaiming "MUX City", population 291, elevation 0 when you cross the brow of this Seventh Fleet destroyer, but it would be entirely appropriate. Few realize that this self-supporting gunship is in fact, a city afloat. In many aspects the Captain, CDR Don Knutson, Norfolk, Va., sees it that way. He and his Executive Officer, LCDR Jack D. Sutton, USN, the second in command are responsible for the training of the entire ship's company, and the readiness of the "city" to accomplish assigned duties.
2. A tour of the city starts at her heart, the Main Propulsion and electric plant operated by LT Geoffrey Clough of Weston, Mass. Here the boiler turbine complex produces the power to keep the ship moving, lighted, and self sufficient. This propulsion plant also generates its own boiler and fresh water. 620,000 gallons of fresh water and 180,000 gallons of boiler water have been used in the city in the last gunline patrol. In producing this power, the Engineering plant has burned 1,538,103 gallons of Navy fuel oil, much of which was received from ten different replenishment ships at sea during a previous 37 day period.
3. If the Engineering plant represents the heart of this destroyer, then the Supply Officer, BTJG William Spadafora of Indiana, Indiana, provides the menu, and with gusto. Feeding this hungry crew is no mean feat. Since the middle of January the crew has consumed over 10,000 pounds of pork, beef, and chicken, and 1,000 pounds of shrimp and lobster, 7700 pounds of bread (of which 4,725 pounds were "ship-made", 2650 pounds of apples and oranges, topped off with 2300 pounds of cake and pies (of which 83 per cent was made

aboard ship) and 650 gallons of ice cream, made by the city creamery manager, "Candy Man" C. S. Oiler, of Columbus, Ohio.

4. Another sector of this floating city constitutes the brain center and its communications center, managed by LT John Christian Danner of Norfolk, Va. During the deployment, Radio Central sent out 1632 messages. The Raidomen received and routed throughout the ship 9,079 incoming messages for an average of 118 per day.

5. This is also a city with purpose and missions. With her advanced communications system she serves as a flagship for a Destroyer Squadron Commander. Currently embarked is Captain Stephen L. Rusk, USN COMDEBROM FOURTEEN and alternate gunline Commander. Another is to maintain trained personnel and ready equipment to conduct anti-submarine warfare operations. The current mission is to provide timely and professional Naval Gunfire in support of the Free World Forces in the Republic of South Vietnam. To accomplish this job muscle and steel is provided by the Weapons Department, run by LT Dennis Dyches of Norfolk, Va. The MULLINIX took more than 700 targets under fire with her five inch gun battery in 37 days. She flexed her muscles in expending many thousands of high explosive projectiles. Placed end to end, the resulting 5" wide band of steel would stretch over nine miles. Further, each of these projectiles and powder cartridges had been handled by the crew members at least fifteen times from the time they left nine ammunition supply ships until loaded into the projectile powder hoists.

6. How successful the men of "MUX City" were in this mission can be seen in the ground damage assessment statistics reported by the shore based Marine spotter teams. Her accurate daytime fire destroyed or damaged more than 300 military structures, fortified bunkers, trenchline sites, ambush sites, and stopped more than 100 infiltrating enemy troop movements into the Republic of South Vietnam. During the nights, this Norfolk-based destroyer shelled more than 400 active troop staging areas and infiltration trails.

7. But most important, with its heart, head, energy and muscles, this city has a soul. A soul formed from the characters of every crew member, tempered now by the hardships of combat, and polished by the spirit and knowledge of each man; each of whom is individually an important citizen of this city.

8. The citizens of "MUX City" are resting now, after a long active patrol on the gunline. Beans, Bullets, and black oil will be loaded aboard again to capacity, and after routine repairs, the MULLINIX will be back on the gunline doing its job in support of Freedom and Democracy. That is truly her primary mission.

B. From: Commander Task Group 70.8
To: UES MULLINIX

Preparation for boiler for repair

1. Ref. (A) advised originator that the preparation of MR 2A Boiler by ship's force, prior to arrival in port for repair had resulted in a saving to the Navy of \$700 and 300 man hours.
2. This performance by MULLINIX is outstanding. The exemplary display of forthought, planning and execution that went into this project of self help attests to the quality of leadership and desire to excel which should be the hallmark of every destroyer in the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets.
3. A hearty Well Done to all for this fine, and typical, MUX performance.

C. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam 1 MAY 69.

1. Kested, refueled, and rearmed, the "Mighty MUX", serving as flagship for CAFE S. I. RUSK alternate Gunline Commander, has returned for her second patrol off the coast of South Vietnam. Fresh from repair facilities in the Western Pacific, CDR Don Knutson, USN, and his crew are ready and rarin' to do their job again as "Top Gun" on the line.

2. In striving to improve upon their professional performance in delivering timely and accurate Naval Gunfire Support to Free World Forces ashore, the spirit of the MULLINNIX is "we try to do better".

3. This Seventh Fleet destroyer lost no time in announcing her presence to the enemy. Throughout the late morning hours her 5"/54 calibre batteries pounded enemy positions eight miles north of Da Nang.

4. LTIG Paul Springman, USN, of Altoona, Penna., the leader to the Airborne Spotting Team speaking to the MULLINNIX over the radiotelephone stated "This pinpoint Gunfire Support accuracy is what we all like. The ground troops can really see the results of those projectiles bursting, and any help that the Naval Gunfire Support ships give these men is more than appreciated. The troops see booby traps tripped or destroyed by the gunfire or resulting secondary explosions and their morale is greatly raised. Each of those shots increases the chances of more of these boys getting home safely after this combat is completed, and that's great."

5. With a beginning like that, described above, the MUX and its crew have returned to give their best efforts in providing this crucial support of forces ashore in South Vietnam.

D. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam 3 MAY 69.

1. What is your son's mission? Well ma'am that's a tough question to answer. Let's look at the job your son has done aboard one destroyer - the USS MULLINNIX. Let's see how well these young men like Third Class Signalman Pat Sharland, of Ishpeming, Mich., Seaman Scotty Erice, of Dearborn, Mich., Seaman Gary Washington, of Washington, D.C., Boatswain's Mate Third Class Paul Ross, of Columbus, Ohio, Second Class Radioman Bruce Mayhue, from Wattsburg, Penns., and Ensign Thayer Broili, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, do their part as a sailor in a Man O' War.

2. The "Mighty MUX", as he and his shipmates call her, sailed halfway around the world to join her sister ships off the coast of South Vietnam. For over 30 days straight "Captain" Don Knutson and his crew provided gunfire support for the troops, South Vietnamese, Marine, and Army, ashore with that intensity and spirit called for in the defense of democracy and freedom. Between providing Naval Gunfire Support to the infantry and replenishing their own stocks of beans, bullets and black oil at sea from ships of the Navy's Service Force, they spent twenty hours a day working. It was through this dedication, that your son, and the sons of many other mothers, became part of a polished and professional Navy team.

3. But this is only one side of their job. After they successfully completed their first tour on the gunline they headed for a two day visit to the port of Belawan, Indonesia. Yes, father, here your son and his shipmates gave these people their first, and, as the saying goes, most lasting impression of not just American Sailors, but more importantly, of the American people. It was his, and his buddies, unselfishness in working with the orphans and school children of the area that won the hearts and friendship of the people of Belawan.

4. And now Ma'am, the MULLINNIX is back on the gunline ready for "call for fire" missions. So you see, your son is part fighter and part diplomat. Like the Navy as a whole, he is ready in peacetime to help our neighbors

and protect the freedom of the seas. But if war comes, he is also part of the strongest and fightingest Navy that sails anywhere, anytime on the seven seas.

E. Aboard the USS MULLINIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam 5 MAY 69.

1. There was exactly thirteen minutes until "Landing Hour" when the guns of the destroyer MULLINIX started spouting smoke, metal and flame, as she pounded the beach and helo landing zones with many salvos of high explosive projectiles from her three primary battery guns. Near the arc of whistling shells rode the Marines in naval landing craft. Off to the left, helicopters, carrying more Marines, flew in fast and low over the jungle terrain. As abruptly as they started, the guns of this supporting destroyer fell silent upon completion of the precisely timed area fire missions. The waves of Marines hit the beach from the sea and air right on time, and the assault had begun.
2. A scene from one of McArthur's Pacific campaigns? No, some of the sailors participating in today's action, such as Gunners Mates Douglas Keeter, Los Angeles, Calif.; Gary Stone, Mayport, Florida; James Stojs, Normalville, Penna.; Jackie Hogue, Midwest City, Okla.; Eric Steventon, Tucson, Arizona; Edward Straight, of Guthrie, Iowa; and the magazine crews made up in part by Seaman James Morgan, Nashville, Tenn.; William Erice, Charleston, W.Va.; Richard Imrie, Burlington, Wisc.; Ronnie Gann, Springfield, Mo.; Michael Kalashoff, Pittsburg, Penna.; and Rodney Rabideau, of West Chazy, N.Y., who manned those 5"/54 caliber batteries on this Norfolk-based destroyer were the sons of McArthur's warriors. However, the legacy of experience gained by their fathers in such places as Tarawa and Guadalcanal was not forgotten in the planning and carrying out of this operation, "Operation Daring Rebel". Each Marine and Sailor contributed in full measure to the success of this operation.
3. Combining the Naval Gunfire Support provided by the USS MULLINIX and the USS WHITE RIVER (LFR 536) with the amphibious Marine Forces of Task Group 76.4, "Operation Daring Rebel" was designed as a search and destroy sweep of "Barrier Island" about 15 miles south of Da Nang.
4. This operation combined naval airpower, ship's guns and landing craft to conduct, once again, a classic amphibious assault with grim efficiency, and smoothly functioning units.
5. "Land the landing force" today was yet another military operation in which the MUX and her crew have participated.

F. Aboard the USS MULLINIX (DD944), in Da Nang Harbor, South Vietnam
May 14, 1969.

1. To the crew of the MULLINIX, patrolling the coast between Da Nang and the Demilitarized Zone, the White Hull and Red Crosses of the Hospital Ship "SANCTUARY" has been a familiar sight. While the long rifles of the "Mighty MUX" pounded enemy positions ashore, Medevac helicopters ferried the wounded to this floating hospital. Twice the MULLINIX herself sent non combat injured to the SANCTUARY for care. Thusly, the respect and friendships grew.
2. On Tuesday, May 13, the MULLINIX had an opportunity to express its appreciation to the Nursing Staff aboard "SANCTUARY" both for their care of her own injured and also for the tremendous job done by those blue-clothed "Angels-of-Mercy" for all wounded. The occasion was the 61st birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps. In honor of their long history of self-sacrifice and service, CAPT S. L. Rusk, USN, embarked gunline commander, CDR Don Knutson, USN, Commanding Officer, and the crew of this East Coast Destroyer extended invitations to the nurses to visit the MULLINIX for a

briefing and indoctrination in NGEFS procedures.

3. After a two hour tour to familiarize themselves with the ship, five Navy Nurses, CDR Bernice E. Fenn, USN, of Santa Monica, Calif., LCDR Beverly J. Sparks, USN, Big Seer, Calif., LTJG's Ruth E. Murphy, Farmington, Mass., Anne E. Kuhn, Lakewood, Ohio, and Daine K. Sentinella, Atlanta, Ga., attended a cake cutting ceremony in the wardroom in honor of their 61st anniversary. In the tradition of the Navy Nurse Corps, LTJG Sentinella, the youngest in the party, cut the cake. As the nurses returned to their ship, the Commanding Officer sent the following message:

We, the Commodore, Captain and crew of the Mighty MULLINNIX, congratulate each of them (the nurses) on their devotion to duty, individual capability, and collective beauty, grace, and charm.

We are honored to render the traditional salute of respect to the ladies of the Nurse Corps. Happy birthday and God keep them safe.

4. The next evening, upon returning to Da Nang from patrol, the MULLINNIX received in reply this poem from the Chief of Nurses, SANCTUARY:

"THE MIGHTY NUX"

A slender gray shadow of steel and might,
Swiftly gliding around at night.
Roaring guns their message send,
To the enemy she's terror - to us a friend.
In the beauty of the morning moves the 944,
And we see the Mighty NUX once more.
We say there is no saltier Sailor man,
Than one who rides in a mighty tin can.

G. Aboard the USS MULLINNIX (DD944) off the coast of South Vietnam 16 MAY 69.

1. "Deep Water Sailor Drives 70,000. Horses". In Texas this statement would be held believable; in Massachusetts it would be viewed with conservative disbelief; on the "Mighty NUX" it is a routine fact.
2. The "Engineering Officer of the Watch" (EOOW) on this Seventh Fleet destroyer has under his control the running of the two main engines, which together generate a total of 70,000. horses (shaft horsepower) when propelling this 4200/6 ton ship at full power. Under the overall supervision of the Chief Engineer, LTJG William R. Efouts, of Pittsburg, Penna., these EOOW's stand a watch. It is their responsibility to supervise the operations of the Engineering Plant, drive the ship, distill water, and generate electricity for total ships requirements.
3. Chief Machinist Mate James Byrum, Glensboro, Kan., the EOOW in section I, explained the job done by his top watchstanders. "First Class Boilerman Donald Shreve, Moorefield, W. Va., is up in the No. 1 fireroom where he insures that the proper steam pressure needed to run our No. 1 Main Engine is maintained. Likewise, First Class Russell Leeper, Denver, Colo., keeps his No. 2 fireroom alert to all steam requirements of the No. 2 Main Engine. Down here in Main Control, the command post of the Engineering Plant, I'm assisted by Second Class Machinist Mate Peter Schlitt, Kingsford, Mich., in answering all engine throttle orders on the No. 1 or starboard, propeller shaft. Second Class Joseph Starkey, the Machinist Mate of the watch back in No. 2 engineroom, controls the throttle for the port shaft. These men, and the checkmen and throttlemen who work under them, are an efficient, hardworking team.

4. The other ECOW's, Chief Machinist Mate (selected) Coet Conley, Chesapeake, Va., Senior Chief Boilerman John McDaniels, Virginia Beach Virginia, and Chief Boilerman Arthur Ennis, Norfolk, Virginia, are just as proud of their men. They have good reason to be. These topwatch standers include Second Class Machinist Mates Jerry Dean, Dupont, Ind.; Robert Higgins, Hominy, Okla.; John Volansky, Wilkes-Barre, Penna.; Fletcher Smith, Virginia Beach, Va.; and Boilerman Wenzel Felber, Tomah, Wisc.; Stanley Euikko, Litchfield, Minn.; Herman Lapole, Catonsville, Md.; and Bennie Hill, Pulaski, Va.

5. In addition to running huge steam boilers and engines this closely knit Navy team is responsible for the four electrical generators, which produce 15,000 kilowatts of electricity per day, and the two evaporators, which distill 28,000/0 gallons of water per day for use by the ship.

6. The highly trained, spirited "Top Watch" crews above are indeed representative of the entire Engineer Department. They work hard to keep all the equipment properly preserved, and calibrated; the turbines and boilers correctly operating, and to maintain all supporting pumps, motors, and interior communications equipment.