

On 2 February 1961 the USS MULLINNIX (DD-944), flagship of Destroyer Squadron THIRTY TWO, departed her homeport, Norfolk, Virginia for a seven month deployment in the Mediterranean with the U.S. Sixth Fleet. These operations were such that peaceful and progressive relations were furthered with countries bordering the sea. European and Middle Eastern areas were stabilized by the sea based defensive forces, and we were ready to assist these neighbor nations in distress or to retaliate in defense of the United States. Shore visits as well as underway periods for MULLINNIX were utilized in support of these objectives. Diverse visits by the ship to major ports in France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey assisted the President's "People to People" Program, as well as providing time for relaxation in preparation for the extensive at-sea periods. While underway, MULLINNIX participated in all phases of air defense, anti-submarine, gunnery, amphibious and replenishment operations, as well as innumerable drills and competitive exercises in communications, engineering and damage control. Repeated participation in these activities led to increased operational readiness and better individual performances by the ship and her crew. While deployed to the Sixth Fleet, MULLINNIX won excellence awards from Commander Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet for outstanding performance in communications, operations, gunnery, and anti-submarine warfare.

The Atlantic transit was made with six of the eight ships in Destroyer Squadron THIRTY TWO in company with other Norfolk based ships. After a nine day crossing, which included various operations and type training, the European continent was sighted on 11 February. MULLINNIX proceeded to Rota, Spain for a brief refueling stop. She then threaded her way through the highly congested Straits of Gibraltar and two days later joined an Attack Carrier Striking Group which lay at anchor in Pollensa Bay at the northwest corner of the Spanish Island of Mallorca. A day of conferences with the ships who had been with the Sixth Fleet for the previous six months followed, and on 14 February MULLINNIX began her tour in the Mediterranean Forces.

After warmup operations, MULLINNIX proceeded to her first port of call, Naples, Italy, arriving there on 24 February. This was the second time the ship had been there, with the previous visit made on MULLINNIX's last Mediterranean tour during 1959-60. The ship got underway on 2 March once again, and proceeded through the Straits of Bonafacio to her next port, Cannes, France. During the period 2-6 March she was host to four German officers. On 6 March MULLINNIX arrived in Cannes, where she lay at anchor until 10 March.

The next underway period was a long one, during which time the ship made its first "swing" to the Eastern Mediterranean. She proceeded north through the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, where she and the USS HAWKINS (DDR-873) broke away from the Carrier Striking Group, thence through the Bosphorus and up into the Black Sea. On 25 March she arrived in the little Turkish port of Ereğli, for the third visit that the Sixth Fleet has ever paid to that city. MULLINNIX stayed overnight there, and then steamed westward to Samsun, Turkey, arriving on 27 March. On the morning of 28 March she got underway from Samsun and headed back toward the Bosphorus, transiting on the morning of 30 March, and arriving in Istanbul at about 0800. The ship was in Istanbul until Easter Sunday, 2 April, when she left that old Turkish city and proceeded southward to rejoin the Carrier Task Group.

A brief daytime visit to Athens followed the next day, after which MULLINNIX participated in more operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. These operations terminated on 10 April at Malta. Excellent relations were established with units of the British Fleet which were reported there. A bowling tournament and exchange dinner with HMS SCOFFIN highlighted the visit. On 14 April MULLINNIX was underway again for fleet operations, and on 17 April embarked four Spanish officers at Palma, Mallorca, including Captain Gonzalo Diaz Garcia, Senior Submarine Officer, Spanish Navy. A demonstration firing of the Mark 32 torpedo was held for these officers on 18 April. On 19 April MULLINNIX arrived at Barcelona, Spain. In this port two ship's parties were held, with several local guests in attendance.

25 April found MULLINNIX proceeding to sea once again for operations in the Western Mediterranean. Up until this time she had been part of the USS SHANGRI LA (CVA-38) Carrier Striking Group. However, the SHANGRI LA was detached from duty in the Sixth Fleet at this time, and MULLINNIX joined the USS ROOSEVELT (CVA-42) to become part of her group along with the USS LITTLE ROCK (CLG-4) and several other Sixth Fleet destroyers. On 3 May MULLINNIX arrived in Taormina, Sicily for a three day visit, where she was the only Sixth Fleet ship present at that port. She then commenced her second "swing" to the Eastern Med, terminating in a visit to Athens, Greece on 15 May.

On 22 May she was underway once again, proceeding back to the Western Mediterranean. This at-sea period ended with a visit to Cannes, France, the second visit of the cruise. Vaudeville was relived on the torpedo deck during the afternoon of 5 June, when George Jessel, taking time out from his French Riviera vacation, boarded the ship and presented a 45 minute show of music and comedy to the assembled ship's company. The Cannes visit ended on 9 June and was followed by an extensive at-sea period until 26 June when MULLINNIX arrived at Gaeta, Italy. Prior to this, on 22 June MULLINNIX had embarked 15 Midshipmen at Augusta Bay, Sicily for MEDMIDCRUISE 1-61. The Gaeta visit ended on 1 July, but not before warm relations had been established with the Italians living there.

MULLINNIX was underway again on 1 July heading for her second visit to Naples. She arrived there that afternoon. The MULLINNIX softball team preceded the ship there by two days, where they were participating in the Naples Invitational Softball Tournament. MULLINNIX was a natural for the Naples Invitational, which brought together the top teams in all of Europe for a five day double elimination tournament. She came to the Naples Invitational sporting an 18-0 record which she had been piling up during the cruise with wins over both afloat and ashore teams. MULLINNIX did not win the tournament, but she did manage to topple the LITTLE ROCK nine and the Orley Air Force Base team. Even at the conclusion of the cruise, MULLINNIX had still not been beaten by any Sixth Fleet team. Another major event occurred in Naples on 3 July when Commander William H. Shaw relieved Commander John C. Hill, II, to become the third skipper of the MULLINNIX since her commissioning on 7 March 1958.

The ship was underway on 5 July again for operations until 10 July, when she went alongside the USS SHEMANDOAH (AD-26) at La Spezia, Italy for her first tender availability in the Mediterranean. The availability ended on 22 July, when MULLINNIX got underway to participate in a fleet wide NATO

exercise with units of the Italian Navy. She debarked the MEDMIDCRU 1-61 midshipmen, and embarked 15 new midships from the Naval Academy, University of Wisconsin, Yale University and Cornell University. The NATO exercise ended on 28 July, and on 29 July the ship arrived in her final port of call, St. Jean, France. Nine days were spent in this port preparing for the final Sixth Fleet operating period. MULLINIX was underway again on 7 August from St. Jean, and operated at sea until 14 August. Finally the turnover ceremony came at Golfo di Palmas, Sardinia on 15 and 16 August. Once relieved by the USS DEPCENT (DD-941), MULLINIX concluded six months of services to the Sixth Fleet, passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and sped through a 10 day Atlantic crossing to be welcomed home on 28 August.

On this deployment, 208 days in length, MULLINIX steamed a total of 48,300 nautical miles and burned approximately 3,220,000 gallons of fuel oil. All of her supplies were obtained during at-sea replenishments from Sixth Fleet Service Force ships, except for one fuéling stop at Rota, Spain, and occasional fresh provisions purchased ashore. The ship refueled at sea about 42 times, and completely replenished six times. While at sea, about 195 persons were highlined to or from MULLINIX, and a total of 624 meals have been served since 2 February.

  
WILLIAM H. SHAW