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From: Commanding Officer, USS MULLINNIX (DD944)
To: Commander Cruiser Destroyer Force Atlantic (Attn: Code 003)

Subj: WESTPAC Feature Input

Ref: (A) COMCRUDESANT 190038Z December 1972

Encl: (1) "Riders on the Storm"

1. In accordance with reference a enclosure (1) is submitted as input for the January-February Cruiser-Destroyers story.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. G. Bell".

M. G. BELL, LCDR, USN
Acting Commanding Officer

"Riders on the Storm"

On the 8th of April, 1972 with Naval operations intensifying off the coast of Vietnam , the call was put out to four CRUDESANT ships to deploy for extended operations to the Western Pacific. One of these units was the Norfolk based destroyer USS MULLINNIX (DD-944). For three days the officers and crew of the MULLINNIX prepared the "Mighty Mux" for her third deployment to Vietnam in six years. It was a arduous three days not only for the men but also for their families as they too prepared for MULLINNIX's departure for unknown period of time. But the zest and spirit of the response that was shown by the crew and families was to become the trademark of the "MUX" during her six month deployment.

And so, on April 12th with COMDESRON THIRTY-SIX embarked , MULLINNIX departed Norfolk enroute to the Panama Canal and eventually the Gulf of Tonkin. On their one month transit MULLINNIX in company with USS SARFIELD and USS GLENNON prepared in all respects for their anticipated role off the coast of Vietnam, Naval Gunfire Support. It wasn't an easy cruise with brief port stops in Pearl Harbor, Guam, Midway, and Subic Bay before the three ships parted their ways and began their first line period off the coast of Vietnam. During the transit the crew began to hear a sound they would hear 14,472 times in the coming months as the gunnersmates prepared "MUX's" three 5"/54 mounts for their future role in Naval Gunfire Support operations.

"MUX" and her crew didn't have to wait long for their first fire mission, for only 20 minutes after reporting off the coast of Vietnam MULLINNIX was firing the first of the 171 Gunfire Support Missions she would fire in her eighty-eight days of combat action. During this first 30 day gunline period

MULLINNIX provided 7,821 rounds of Naval Gunfire Support in support of South Vietnamese operations and in particular Operation Thanh-Song 6-72. MULLINNIX in company with the cruiser Newport News provided heavy Naval Gunfire Support in support of this coordinated amphibious invasion.

After this first line period the tired crew found itself in Subic Bay, not so much for liberty, but rather to make the necessary repairs to Engineering, Gunnery, and Operation spaces in preparation for the second of the three gunline periods.

The second gunline period was relatively quiet compared to the first with COMDESRON THIRTY-SIX, the Gunline Commander embarked in MULLINNIX. But still MULLINNIX performed her assigned role providing 5,633 rounds of Naval Gunfire Support during the 34 missions she fired in the area south of the DMZ. The daily routine for the crew extended beyond the rigors of gunfire support. Underway replenishment for fuel, food, and firepower became an everyday occurrence. But for the "MUX" even an underway replenishment displayed the spirit of the ship and her crew. Every replenishment ship knew when an overize flag with two red hearts on a white background with "Virginia is for Lovers" went up the yardarm and the topside speakers rang out with "Riders on the Storm" that the "MUX" had completed another underway replenishment. With the end of this replenishment and her magazines full the "Mighty Mux" was back "on the line" ready to fire.

This second gunline period led to "MUX's" first liberty port Sasebo, Japan where for eight days the crew enjoyed the beautiful countryside and hospitalible Japanese people. For some it meant a reunion and vacation with their wives. For Ensign Mac Nibbs and his wife Ensign Diane Nibbs, who were married two days prior to his departure, it meant the honeymoon

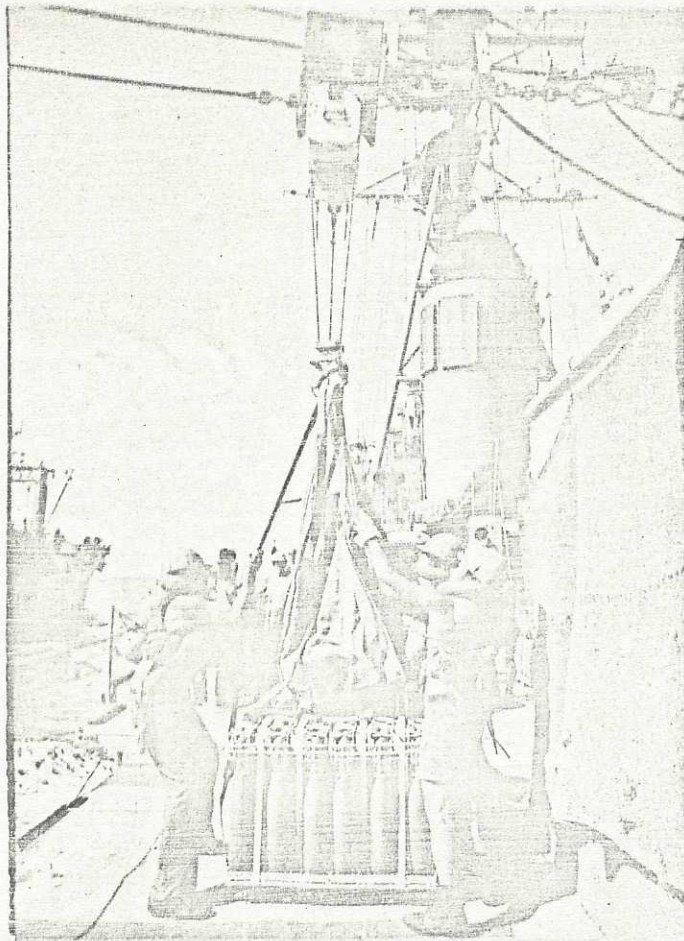
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as Commander James CANNON of Virginia Beach said farewell to the crew he had led through two gunline periods. ^{He} was relieved by Commander Alex VIESSMANN of Norfolk.

With their rest in Sasebo ended, "MUX" had to ride out a real storm, Typhoon Betsy, enroute to her new area of operations near Qui Nhon, South Vietnam. This, her last gunline period, MULLINNIX provided sole support for South Vietnamese operations in this vital area. Although "the long rifle" of the Seventh Fleet only fired 1,018 rounds, this accurate and timely gunfire support was lauded by the spotters and ground troops alike.

On September 21st "Mighty MUX" fired her last round at the coast of Vietnam and headed through yet another tropical storm enroute to Hong Kong. The "crossroads" of the Orient provided the crew with memories that will not easily be forgotten but most important the stop meant the "MUX" was "Homeward Bound".

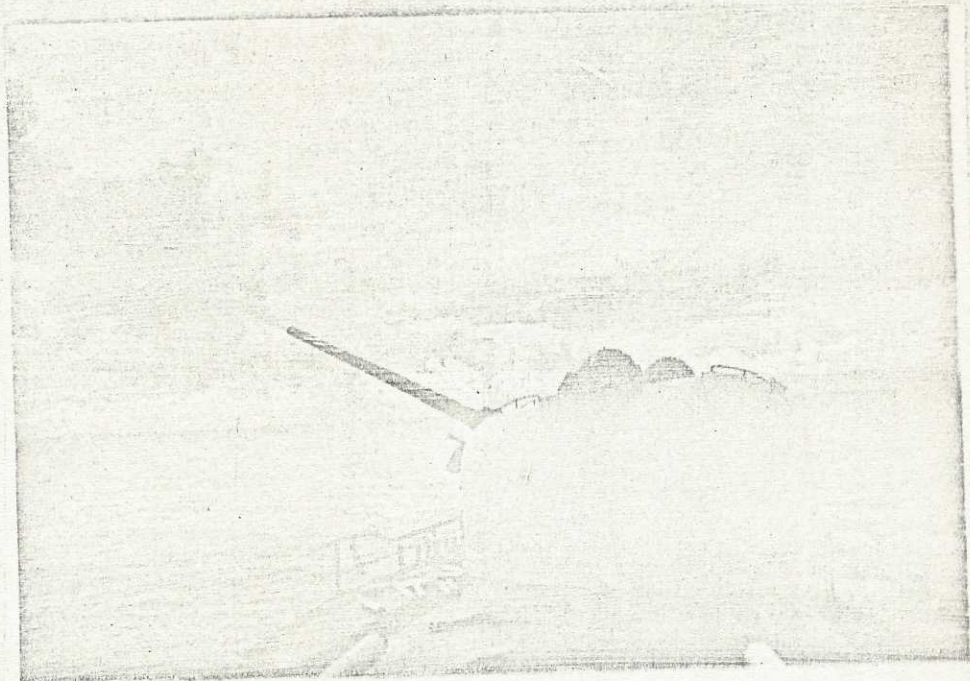
After stops in Yokosuka, Japan; Midway; Pearl Harbor; San Diego; Manzanillo, Mexico, MULLINNIX, with her new skipper and having earned the praise of all those who had been involved with her, returned to Norfolk, Virginia flying her "Virginia is for Lovers" flag and sounding a song that had become not only the ship's theme song, but also the trademark for the officers and crew of DD-944 for indeed they had been "Riders on the Storm".



A typical rearming as BM3 Gilbert GARRETT,
BM3 Bob CREECH, and SN Bob SMITH bring thirty-
six rounds of 5 inch ammunition onboard



FTG3 Jerry BAKER and MM3 Joe CLAWSON help load one of the 14,472 rounds MULLINNIX fired during 88 days of combat action off of Vietnam.



MULLINNIX, in the traditional role of a Destroyer,
firing Gunfire Support off the coast of Vietnam.