



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MULLINNIX (DD-944)

FPO MIAMI 34092

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MULLINNIX FAMILYGRAM

23 December 1982

Dear MULLINNIX Families,

With the Christmas Season now upon us, I am taking this opportunity to write and bring you up to date on our operations since MULLINNIX departed Charleston on 22 November 1982.

Our departure was blessed with exceptionally calm and clear weather, making the transition to at-sea watchstanding procedures a smooth evolution. As we left bouy "2C" behind and proceeded outward bound we discovered just how lucky we were since the Norfolk, Mayport and Newport elements of our transit group were severely hampered by high seas and heavy fog conditions along the east coast.

Following three days at sea, where we encountered ground swells of 8 to 10 feet and variable shifting winds, MULLINNIX rendezvoused with USS FARRAGUT (DDG-37), USS KALAMAZOO (AOR-6), USS SURIBACHI (AE-21), USS CAPODANNO (FF-1093), USS CONNOLE (FF-1056), USS EDWARD MCDONNELL (FF-1043) AND USS MCINERNEY (FFG-8) south of Bermuda and continued our transit to the Mediterranean.

The days spent in transit were filled with numerous around the clock drills to enhance our already high level of training and make us even more familiar with operations in the Mediterranean. On 25 November we celebrated Thanksgiving underway and the day was made memorable by a morning fuel replenishment alongside KALAMAZOO followed by an extremely delicious meal of Roast Turkey, Baked Ham, traditional side dishes and fresh baked pumpkin pie. I am including a copy of our Thanksgiving menu with this letter to provide some idea of the outstanding job that MSC Joe Basham, MS1 Rudy Ventenilla, MS1 Salvador "Sam" Coquia, MS1 Salvador Brihonera and MS1 Doug Freel did in supervising preparation of this outstanding holiday feast. Of course this meal, as with any meal on MULLINNIX, would not have been possible without the direct efforts of all our cooks. MS2 Bradley Keister, MS2 Willie Rowland, MS3 Jerry Foxx, MS2 Tony Brown, MSSN Doug Hauger, MS3 William Cleveland, MSSA Timothy Pierce and MSSN Brian Smith are equally responsible for providing the wide variety of tasty and well prepared food that we enjoy daily.

Except for several days of somewhat uncomfortable weather, the remainder of our transit across the Atlantic was relatively uneventful and MULLINNIX passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on 2 December. Landfall after 10 days at sea generated quite a bit of enthusiasm and almost the entire crew managed to get at least one picture of "The Rock" as we steamed by. As MULLINNIX entered the Straits, most of the ships in company were detached for port visits throughout the Mediterranean, while we continued on with USS CAPODANNO enroute to the coast of Lebanon. During this period we received a long awaited message concerning results of the most recent advancement exams. MULLINNIX personnel did exceptionally well on this exam and the following personnel are selectees for advancement:

IM3 Tim Alexander
TMO3 Dexter Askew
BT2 Chuck Boldrey
ET3 Dave Brown
BT3 James Chase
HT2 Dave Cox
BM3 Dino Ghilardi

MR2 Dave Anderson
EN3 Bruce Baugh
TMO2 Tony Bonner
BT3 Jim Burke
SK3 Bob Collins
M53 Jerry Foxx
STG2 Pat Gooden

OS3 Tom Johnson
BT2 Don Maki
MM1 Mitch Mitoraj
MM3 Mike Quinn
FTG1 Jim Rigby
MM1 Jerry Schoephoerster
STG2 John Shea
PN3 Vic Smallwood
HT2 Marty Williams
TMO2 Harvey Stone

TMO3 Hudie Lowe
RM3 Leo McKenzie
BM3 Shane Nalley
ET2 Mark Rennick
IC3 Joel Scatliffe
HT3 Paul Shaffer
QM2 Bruce Sherman
SH2 Mike Trice
SK3 Nate Young
STG3 Al Trembly

Following transit through the Straits of Sicily and south of Crete and Cyprus MULLINNIX, still in company with CAPODANNO, arrived off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon on 8 December and assumed duties as a member of Task Force 61. The mission of this force, which consists primarily of amphibious ships, is to provide support for multi-national peacekeeping forces currently ashore in Beirut. The multi-national force's role is vital in helping to preserve peace as the Lebanese attempt to recover following departure of PLO forces from the Beirut area. The situation ashore has been stable since our arrival, and personnel from all ships present are being offered an opportunity to participate in guided daytime sightseeing and shopping tours ashore. Night liberty ashore has not been authorized and will undoubtedly not be in the foreseeable future.

Since most sailors love to establish a sense of ownership over ocean areas that they patrol, the area where MULLINNIX is currently positioned has been nick-named "Bagel Station". This nick name was applied by men from ships preceeding MULLINNIX so it is not original to us, but is perhaps somewhat descriptive of international pressures which led to U.S. presence in this area. Life on "Bagel Station" is slow moving at best and the routine is only broken by periodic helicopter and boat transfers of personnel, spare parts and mail between ships.

Mail delivery on "Bagel Station" is much slower than originally expected and mail is currently taking 2 weeks to arrive from the States. If you ever doubted the power contained in a single letter or package, you would need only watch the crowd that collects to help unload a boat with mail or observe the congestion around the ship's post office while mail is being sorted. Care packages from home containing baked goods, candy and other snacks seem to be particularly popular, and there is much trading back and forth of fudge, brownies and cookies along with fond memories of where and how they were baked and the people who baked them. Your letters and packages are the balm that eases the ache of being away from home and I encourage each and every one of you to continue your efforts in this area.

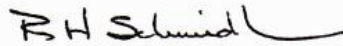
As you have probably learned from letters that you have received, MULLINNIX's schedule has been somewhat confused; primarily due to our assignment in support of the multi-national force in Beirut. Currently we anticipate staying on "Bagel Station" through the remainder of this year. MULLINNIX is scheduled to make a 5 day stop in Naples, Italy and a 3 day trip to Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands, Spain during January. Following these brief stops we anticipate entering the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal and should complete the on-station portion of our deployment in that area of the world. Because of schedule flexibility and diplomatic clearance requirements, any port calls beyond January have yet to be determined. As more information becomes available I will keep you informed via the next newsletter. MULLINNIX is currently scheduled to return to Charleston on 20 May 1983.

No family-gram would be complete without mention of those personnel who have gained recognition for their efforts and personal achievements. It should be noted that those

personnel previously mentioned as being selectees for advancement, and eligible in all other respects, were administratively frocked to their new rate and paygrade on 18 December. Additionally, BTC Thomas Moxley and STGC James King successfully completed Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist qualifications, LTJG Neil McPheeters was frocked to Lieutenant and Ensign Jack Gallagher achieved designation as a qualified Officer of the Deck Underway. Further BM3 Ricky Brazeal and his underway replenishment rig crew turned in the best time of any deployed ship during an emergency breakaway drill. Each of these people are deserving of praise and congratulations because they are the "Better" portion of the ship's motto "Older But Better". We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Mrs. Mary Kriedlekamp and the ladies of the Hanarry West Woman's Club of Lilburn, GA who graciously agreed to sponsor MULLINNIX as a Christmas Season project. Their gift of 800 candy canes and a stocking to put them in is much appreciated by all hands.

In closing let me wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years. May God bless you all.

Sincerely


R. H. SCHMIDT
Commanding Officer