



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MULLINNIX (DD-944)

FPO MIAMI 34092

IN REPLY REFER TO:

26 January 1983

Dear MULLINNIX Families,

It has been one month since my last letter regarding activities on board MULLINNIX. The preceeding month has involved long hours of hard work, interspersed with nine very short days of well deserved relaxation and liberty in Naples, Italy and Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

Twenty-four December through 31 December 1982 was spent at sea in the vicinity of Beirut, Lebanon. During that time various members of the crew were able to participate in several guided sightseeing and shopping tours ashore. The variety of souvenirs that people purchased proved to be amazing, however, I feel it safe to say that Arab head cloths were by far the most popular. For several days it appeared as if inhabitants of a Bedouin Village had suddenly arrived on board. Christmas provided a period of quiet relaxation for most of the crew and the day was brightened considerably with delivery of mail from home. We did manage to procure artificial Christmas trees for the Wardroom and Crew's mess thanks to efforts by Chaplain Harold Harris and LT Dwight Dew our Chief Engineer. Candy canes provided by the Hanarry West Woman's Club Lilburn, GA were used to decorate both trees, although I'm afraid that the Wardroom tree somewhat resembled one like Charlie Brown usually brings home. MSC Joe Basham and the MULLINNIX cooks again managed to top off the day with Roast Baron of Beef, various popular side dishes and hot rolls named in honor of our Disbursing Officer, Ensign Mike Pereira. A copy of the Christmas menu is being enclosed with this letter to prove that no one is starving out here.

On 31 December, MULLINNIX was relieved on station by USS CAPODANNO (FF 1093) and headed west to join the Carrier Battle Group southwest of Crete. Bad weather was predicted and materialized much more rapidly than expected. New Years Day found us working our way through very heavy seas with average wave heights of 20 to 30 feet, winds of 50 knots and occasional sea swells of 30 feet. Since seas were coming from the beam, and rolls of 35-40 degrees were not uncommon, we were forced to change course into wind and sea and work our way north toward the lee of Crete. This tactic proved successful and eventually enabled us to proceed west again for rendezvous with USS NIMITZ (CVN 68), USS MISSISSIPPI (CGN 40), and USS ARKANSAS (CGN 41). As usual, ship and crew performed extremely well and no weather damage occurred, although many on board relearned the lesson that being secured for sea has inherent benefits.

Following rendezvous, MULLINNIX participated in operations in the central Med off the coast of Libya in support of national policy regarding use of international waters. On conclusion of these operations, we then transitted the Straits of Messina in company with NIMITZ and ARKANSAS, arriving in Naples, Italy on 4 January after 43 continuous days at sea. Naples provided a much needed rest, and most crewmembers took advantage of guided tours to Rome, Pompeii and Mt. Vesuvius. Many of those traveling to Rome had the unique opportunity to be present at a Papal Audience with Pope John Paul, while others were treated to a tour of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City. Everyone took advantage of shopping opportunities in Naples and Rome to such an extent that MULLINNIX now has every nook and cranny filled with gifts and mementoes for friends and loved ones at home.

Our visit to Naples ended all too soon and on 10 January MULLINNIX got underway in company with NIMITZ, ARKANSAS and MISSISSIPPI for operations enroute to Palma de Mallorca, which is located in the Balearic Islands off the coast of Spain. We arrived in Palma on 12 January and, as in Naples, were fortunate enough to be assigned a berth in the harbor while the remaining ships anchored to seaward. Palma proved to be an ideal liberty port, since it combines a large cosmopolitan city with centuries of history. It is a major

tourist attraction and the Spanish leather industry has numerous factories located nearby. Disco dancing is exceptionally popular in Palma and gave many of our younger bachelors an opportunity to "do their thing" with tourists from Britain, Germany and several Scandinavian countries. Other attractions were: one of the few remaining round castles in Europe and the main cathedral with its 600 pound solid silver candelabra and the largest stained glass rose window in the world. Tours included several cavern systems and a Medieval Banquet where food was served by people in 12th century costume, while diners watched knights in armor engaged in jousting matches.

With a certain amount of reluctance, MULLINNIX got back to work on 17 January and proceeded to sea for further operations with NIMITZ, ARKANSAS and MISSISSIPPI. This included additional operations off the coast of Libya, followed by detachment to proceed independently back to the vicinity of Beirut, Lebanon where we are currently anchored off shore for a maintenance availability with USS PUGET SOUND (AD 38). This availability will last through 29 January and provides our first real opportunity to permanently repair equipment where parts or expertise were not already on board. Following completion of this availability, MULLINNIX will be underway for Port Said, Egypt and transit the Suez Canal on 31 January. Future operations will include at-sea periods in the Red Sea, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Port calls are currently scheduled for Male in the Maldives southeast of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) from 7 to 12 March and Mombasa, Kenya from 6 to 11 April. Our port visit to Mombasa will require MULLINNIX to cross the equator, thereby making all members of the crew "shellbacks". Operations in the Indian Ocean are expected to last until 30 April, when we are scheduled to re-enter the Mediterranean and prepare for our return transit to Charleston. Scheduled arrival in Charleston remains 20 May 1983.

As usual, the MULLINNIX crew continues to distinguish themselves personally and professionally. Lieutenant Dwight Dew received notification in late December 1982 of his selection for spot promotion to LCDR based on his superb performance as Chief Engineer. Additionally, GMCS Sidney Moore successfully completed Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist qualification and became the third member of the CPO mess to qualify on this deployment. SN Randell Kelly and SN M. John Landers were both promoted to ET3 in late January 1983, retroactive to November 1982.

Other accomplishments worthy of note include reenlistment of BM1 Melvin Hewitt and continued recognition for BM3 Ricky Brazeal and his underway replenishment crew for sustained superior performance. This crew consists of SN Ernest Salonen, OS3 Thomas Johnson, OSSN Ronnie Drummond, OSSN Glenn Watkins, ET3 Timothy Murphy and ET2 Thomas Rennick and currently holds the Mediterranean Sea record for time in conducting a safe emergency breakaway drill. Chaplain Harold Harris transferred to USS GLOVER (FF 1098) prior to departure from Beirut and Chaplain Paul McLaughlin arrived on board from USS MCINERNEY (FFG 8) prior to departure from Naples. Mr. Dan Daniels, our Program for Afloat College Education (PACE) instructor recently concluded his first term of instruction and the following personnel successfully completed courses as indicated.

SPANISH I

STG2 Patrick Gooden
OS3 Thomas Johnson
STG2 Chris Koen
LTJG Stephen Parker
IC3 Joel Scatliffe
EMFN Larry Trembly
ET2 Samuel Yohe

BUSINESS MATH

STG2 Chris Koen
GMG2 David Larson
IC2 Gary Plott
BM2 Leonard Silver
FTG1 David Byford
STG2 Thomas Godzik
SMSN John Heisler
SKC Donald McDowell

COLLEGE ALGEBRA

HT1 Darryl Egnor
MMFN Edward Burrows

Mr. Daniels has been embarked on MULLINNIX since our departure from Charleston and is currently offering second term courses in French, Spanish, Business Math and Economics. These courses are open to any member of the crew who possesses the requisite background level education to participate. Cost of instruction is paid by the Navy, while textbooks are purchased by the students.

In closing I would like to express the hope that your New Year has gotten off to a good start with prospects for continued success. May God bless you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. H. Schmidt", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. H. SCHMIDT
Commanding Officer