



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MULLINNIX (DD-944)

FPO MIAMI 34092

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8 May 1983

Dear MULLINNIX Families;

This will be my final letter of this deployment and should hopefully reach you several days before our scheduled return to Charleston. As our homecoming date of 20 May draws near, anticipation of being reunited with loved ones and friends is building throughout the ship. Should medical history prove correct, on approximately 18 May a majority of the MULLINNIX crew will start displaying active signs of that common but unexplained disease known as "Channel Fever". Although never fatal, the symptoms can be quite bizarre, and almost all hands will become affected by inability to sleep, a strange desire for endless movies to make time pass more rapidly and boundless enthusiasm for any discussion which involves home. Fortunately the disease runs its course and disappears when the word is passed "Moored, Shift Colors." I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to participate in our arrival, and even though I will not be able to greet each of you personally, I would like to thank you all for the support which you've provided during the last six months.

On 12 March MULLINNIX and AINSWORTH departed Male' Atoll and steamed in company towards rendezvous with the USS AMERICA Battle Group. These ships had also been enjoying liberty in such ports as Columbo and Trincomalee, Sri Lanka and Karachi, Pakistan. Rendezvous with the Battle Group occurred on 13 March, and the remainder of the month was spent doing routine operations together in the Indian Ocean and North Arabian Sea.

Of particular note during this period was the fact that MULLINNIX successfully completed two difficult damage control exercises involving defense against nuclear, chemical and biological agents. These exercises were observed by personnel from other ships and required extensive all hands knowledge regarding personal protective measures if exposed to any of these agents. Scores of 91% and 95% were achieved and permitted us to qualify for the damage control excellence award. Much credit for this accomplishment goes to Ensign James Houk, HT1 Daryl Egnor and HT1 Randall Woods.

Additionally during the month, the Battle Group conducted combined operations with four French warships engaged in an around-the-world cruise. During the exercises MULLINNIX had an opportunity to exchange personnel with one of the French destroyers and compare differences between our navies. As it turned out, the exchange was somewhat unfair in that LCDR Dwight Dew, LT Neil McPheeters, SKC Donald McDowell and OSC Kenneth Crabb were treated to a lunch of lobster, Filet Mignon and three different wines, while our guests dined on Chicken Ala King and three different flavors of "bug juice" (Kool-Aid). Lack of wine notwithstanding, our French guests enjoyed themselves and departed with a better appreciation of the U.S. Navy. March concluded with two days at anchor off Masirah Island in company with elements of the Battle Group. This period was used for receiving stores, spare parts, mail and conducting routine maintenance. The weather cooperated nicely, and all hands were able to participate in swim call off the side of the ship. This is a custom which is very seldom practiced anymore due to operating schedules and lack of time. Everyone who participated seemed to enjoy themselves and appreciated the opportunity.

Easter Sunday was celebrated 3 April with a non-denominational sunrise service conducted by Chaplain Paul McLaughlin. LT McLaughlin is a Catholic priest and has been embarked in MULLINNIX since 7 January. He is exceptionally well liked by all hands and has been a tremendous help in counseling and providing for the spiritual needs of the crew. The day was also brightened by distribution of 315 candy-filled plastic Easter eggs. These

eggs were provided by the ladies of the MULLINNIX Wives Club, and their efforts were certainly appreciated. Two of the eggs contained \$5.00 bills which were claimed by BM3 Ezekiel Gadson and ET1 Gregory Keith.

On 5 April MULLINNIX, along with USS AMERICA (CV 66), USS SAVANNAH (AOR 4), USS SANTA BARBARA (AE 28), USNS HASSAYAMPA (TAO 145), USNS SPICA (TAFS 9), USS DALE (CG 19), USS AINSWORTH (FF 1090) and USS MCINERNEY (FFG 8) entered Mombasa, Kenya for a 6 day port visit. Along with the excitement of mooring in a strange port, the day offered another rare occasion by bringing the first rain that we had experienced in 51 days. Mombasa proved to be an exceptionally good liberty experience, and a large number of the crew took advantage of the one, two or three day safari trips through Kenya's National Game Parks. In addition to lions, cheetahs, rhinos, elephants, cape buffalo, zebra and giraffes many crewmembers had a chance to see some of Kenya's various tribes such as the Masaai. Many rolls of film were expended and all MULLINNIX "hunters" returned with a new appreciation of just how good life in the United States really is. Mombasa also proved to be an excellent stop for souvenirs, and almost everyone now has a personal collection of African curios sufficient to decorate a good size den. Spears, African Masks, brightly patterned cloth and various animal carvings seem to predominate. Just prior to departing Mombasa, Chaplain McLaughlin transferred to MCINERNEY and Chaplain Harold Harris returned to MULLINNIX for the remainder of deployment. Chaplain Harris departed Charleston with us and had been "circuit riding" on other ships. The Battle Group departed Mombasa on 11 April and conducted a major replenishment evolution prior to commencing extended operations in the Indian Ocean.

Following our departure from Mombasa, and with the equator again in sight, six additional shipmates were "gently" guided through the mysteries of King Neptune's domain to become qualified as Trusty Shellbacks. Personnel initiated during this ceremony included LTJG Steven Parker, SN Ronald Hendershot, SR Todd Henderson, SA Jeffrey Echols, SR Victor Eldridge and SR William Gosner. Of course, LTJG Parker received "special attention" because he had missed his first opportunity to become a Shellback by serving as a member of the advance party ashore making arrangements for our port visit to the Republic of the Maldives. Saturday, 16 April turned out to be a particularly good day for MULLINNIX as numerous bags of mail that had been following us around finally arrived on board. While the majority of the crew was catching up with conditions on the home front, our Communications Center was busy receiving a long awaited message concerning results of the Senior and Master Chief Selection Board. Late in the afternoon congratulations were offered to our two newest Senior Chiefs, BTCS Thomas Moxley and EMCS Richard Thacker.

Although rapidly drawing to a close, the month of April continued to provide moments of excitement while steaming across seemingly endless miles of empty ocean. LTJG Darrel Purdy, LTJG Don Pisacano and LTJG Al Terkhorn all successfully qualified as Surface Warfare Officers and were recognized for this significant career achievement. At the same time ET2 Samuel Yohe qualified as an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist and was awarded the crossed cutlass distinguishing device. Thursday, 21 April dawned with MULLINNIX looking extremely shipshape for our official "Battle Group Photograph". Prior to taking the picture, some extremely complicated maneuvers were performed which drew seven ships into a very tight formation at intervals of 200 yards apart. For a surface ship, this is the equivalent of accomplishing the same type of close formation that is demonstrated by the Navy's Blue Angels. At precisely the right moment, with the photo helicopter directly overhead, all ships accelerated to 20 knots (about 25 mph) and executed a starburst maneuver as diamond formations of aircraft flew overhead. It should make a dramatic photograph of

MULLINNIX being escorted by the Battle Group, and hopefully sufficient copies can be obtained to show the folks at home.

On 28 April message traffic was received which promoted Ensigns Walt East, Rick Emry and Jack Gallagher to Lieutenant (Junior Grade). Following a frocking ceremony for these three officers, the coveted "Bull" Ensign bars were bestowed on Ensign Mike Pereira as our "Senior" Ensign. April concluded with a combined operation with three British ships; HMS AVENGER (F 185), HMS AMBUSCADE (F 172) and RFA PLUMLEAF. This operation proved mutually beneficial to the navies of both countries, although somewhat marred by a collision between AMBUSCADE and USS DALE (CG 19). Fortunately no personnel injuries occurred and both ships were able to continue after on-scene repairs.

1 May found MULLINNIX, in company with the Battle Group, passing through Bab Al Mandeb and entering the Red Sea enroute to the Suez Canal and Mediterranean Sea. We also decided to inaugurate the month by holding the "First Annual Red Sea Amateur Boxing Championship" on the fantail. Competition was fierce in all weight classes and each bout appeared evenly matched as fighters entered the ring for three 2 minute rounds. All bouts were refereed by LTJG Don Pisacano, MULLINNIX athletic officer; and ring judges were LTJG Steve Parker, BMC James Jones and BMSN Jeffrey Rollins. Fighters and their weight classes were:

FEATHERWEIGHT CLASS:

PNSN "TAKE NO MESS" MESSER vs STG3 "WOTASH" WOTASEK

LIGHTWEIGHT CLASS:

QMSN "AIN'T NO HURRY" HARRIS vs ENFN "MARVELOUS" MOORE

WELTERWEIGHT CLASS:

MSSN "MR BREAK & BAKE" HAUGER vs BMSN "KILLER KOLLMAN"
SA "GOOSE" GOSNER vs SR "ROGER THE RATTLER" STATLER
SMSN HERMAN "MONGOOSE" MOODY vs MM3 WESLEY HOUGHTON

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CLASS:

HTFN "COPENHAGEN KID" WILLIAMS vs MM3 "SUGAR BEAR" COLEMAN

HEAVYWEIGHT CLASS: **MAIN EVENT**

HT3 "FIDO" FEUTZ vs MM3 "TANK" MANN

Winners were "WOTASH" WOTASEK, "MARVELOUS" MOORE, "MR BREAK & BAKE" HAUGER, "GOOSE" GOSNER, "MONGOOSE" MOODY, "SUGAR BEAR" COLEMAN AND "FIDO" FEUTZ. Each winner received a steak dinner cooked to order.

On 2 May, CDR Thomas Smith, MULLINNIX Executive Officer successfully completed his qualifications for Command at Sea and on 3 May Captain Steven K. Chadwick, USN, Commander, Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-SIX and his staff embarked in MULLINNIX for transit through the Suez Canal. Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-SIX is homeported in Charleston and will be riding MULLINNIX during the periods 4-10 May and 18-20 May. Captain Chadwick and his staff will be embarked in MULLINNIX on our return to Charleston 20 May.

4 May proved to be an extremely hectic day for all hands, in that reveille was sounded at 0300 so we could commence transit of the Suez Canal. Following a 14 hour north bound run through Suez, we concluded the day at 1800 by completing our final underway

replenishment with USS SAVANNAH (AOR 4). This replenishment was conducted under extremely adverse environmental conditions, and following completion, MULLINNIX finally turned her bow toward the Straits of Gibraltar to commence the first leg of our 5,900 nautical mile journey home.

As this final deployment of MULLINNIX draws to a close, numerous personnel merit recognition for making our cruise a successful and memorable experience. Of particular note, however, is the fact that many people in the crew were recognized personally by Rear Admiral Peter C. Conrad, USN who commanded the carrier battle group which MULLINNIX served with. The fact that Rear Admiral Conrad took time to acknowledge the performance of these people indicates that their contributions were singularly noteworthy, and it is only fitting that their accomplishments should be mentioned here. Awarded Navy Achievement Medals for "sustained superior performance" were: LCDR Dwight Dew, BMC James Jones, PNC Stephen Graff, MMC Jon Newey, NC1 Douglas Jones, ET1 Gregory Keith, and OS2 Martin Medrano; while the following personnel were awarded Letters of Commendation for "superior accomplishment": ETC David Held, SK3 James Sylvester, ET2 Samuel Yohe, MS2 Willie Rowland, EM2 Gerald Zimmerman, GMG2 Kurt Malmberg, LTJG John Gallagher, OS3 Frank Carl, GMG1 Charles Jewett, FN Jeffrey Denny, LTJG Darrel Purdy, HM2 George Hawley, IC3 Yick Wong, MM2 John Loven, MMCS Larry Tenney, BM3 Arnold Briganti, OS3 John O'Connell, BTCS Thomas Moxley, BT1 Milton Alwell, EN1 William Keirn, QM1 William Jennings, HT1 Darryl Egnor, MR2 David Anderson and BM3 Ricky Brazeal. Each of these awards was presented prior to passage through the Straits of Gibraltar.

At this point it is time to close out the last MULLINNIX Family-Gram. We are nearing Rota, Spain for turnover and relief by USS JOHN RODGERS (DD 983). After arrival in Charleston, we will commence a 30 day extensive leave and upkeep period which will be followed by standown for decommissioning. Decommissioning ceremonies will be held in Charleston on 11 August 1983, and the ship will then be towed to the inactive ship facility in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for storage. As MULLINNIX concludes 25 years of honorable active service in defense of our country I would like to wish each of you the traditional "Fair Wind and Following Seas" and may the homecoming of your MULLINNIX crewmember be a joyous occasion. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


R. H. SCHMIDT