

# MULLINIX FAMILYGRAM

USS MULLINIX DD-944 FPO NEW YORK 09501



Familygram Number 2

29 May 1970

Dear Mullinnix Families,

Much has happened since I last wrote to you prior to our departure from the States, and I feel that each Mullinnix family would be interested to hear about our activities during the past five weeks.

I think that our departure from Norfolk will be long remembered not only as the start of an eventful six months in the Mediterranean, but also as a very realistic exercise in low visibility navigation. With visibility reduced to twenty-five yards in many places, every man, from the lookouts on the forecandle to the throttlemaster in the engine room, played his part in enabling the ship to pass safely through a fog enveloped Hampton Roads and to anchor off Little Creek Amphibious Base, until the visibility improved. We were forced to remain at anchor until mid-day on 1 May when the fog at last dissipated and we were finally on our way.

For the remainder of our trip across the Atlantic, we were indeed fortunate to have almost perfect weather, and apart from a brief spell when we ran into the remnants of a northeast gale as we approached the Straits of Gibraltar, the sea was calm for the transit.

As we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar early on the morning of 10 May, many of us had our first view of "The Rock". Despite the absence of the "Prudential" sign, I don't think that the many who saw it failed to be impressed!

We anchored in Pollensa Bay, Majorca at 0600 on 12 May. Majorca was a fine setting for our turnover with USS STRONG, surrounded on three sides by high mountains and just as many of us had imagined Majorca would be. But our stop was brief and by 1300 we were underway again on our own this time, and headed for Athens and our first liberty port of the cruise.

Arriving in Athens on 15 May amidst bright sunlight, we joined the aircraft carrier USS FORRESTAL and four of her escorts in Phaleron Bay with a fine view of the Parthenon atop the Acropolis which dominates the city of Athens. One cannot hope to go and see everything in Athens in just three days, but many took advantage of conducted tours of the Acropolis, of eating out at rooftop restaurants in the old quarter called Placa, and making the most of the time available.

Joining up with USS O'HARE, we sailed from Athens on 18 May for four days in the Black Sea, sailing through the Greek islands and arriving off the southern entrance to the Dardanelles at first light on the morning of 19 May. The four hour transit of the Dardanelles which took us through picturesque farming country gave all an opportunity of photographing everything from Genoese forts, centuries old, to minarets standing out clearly in the early morning sunlight, as we approached to within a quarter of a mile of the shore on occasions. Having passed through the Dardanelles, we crossed the Sea of Marmara and arrived off Istanbul at 1600 the same day and commenced the northbound transit of the Bosphorus which is much narrower than the Dardanelles, less than a half mile in places. We sailed through Istanbul, with Europe to our left and Asia to our right, arriving in the Black Sea just before sunset.

The next few days were spent steaming in the Black Sea, and although we were never closer than forty miles to land, we did catch glimpses of the snow-capped Caucasus mountains in the evening sunlight at a range of about seventy miles as we approached the eastpoint of our track. We passed through the Bosphorus again on 23 May, and after a night passage through the Sea of Marmara, commenced the southbound transit of the Dardanelles at first light on 24 May.

Passing down through the Greek islands once more, we arrived at Soudha Bay in the northwestern part of the Island of Crete to refuel on the morning of 25 May. Here once again the scenery was magnificent with fine views of the mountains rising to 8000 feet ten miles away. We sailed on completion of fueling, passing through the Straits of Messina between Sicily and Italy on the evening of 26 May, and later than night passed within three miles of the Island of Stromboli, the first time many of us had seen an active volcano which was accomodating enough to manage a small eruption as we passed giving us a glimpse of molten lava being shot into the air to fall and roll down the almost conical slopes of the mountain.

Passing through the Straits of Bonifacio between Corsica and Sardinia the next day, we joined other ships of the SIXTH Fleet for exercises off the coast of Sardinia before sailing for Beaulieu where we anchored on the evening of 28 May. Within easy reach of Nice and Monte Carlo, we are ideally situated for tours of the Riviera and many have taken the opportunity of some excellent day long tours of the surrounding countryside, to say nothing of trips to the beach to take advantage of the famed Mediterranean sun.

We have had a busy month, steamed a little short of eight thousand miles since leaving Norfolk and spent almost eighty-five per cent of the time underway. Everyone has responded well to the increased work load, the ship improves in appearance daily. I was particularly impressed by the smart turnout by all at a recent personnel inspection.

Congratulations to MMC Eyrum and SK3 Newby whom I recently had the pleasure of presenting with the Navy Achievement Medal for services in Vietnam, and to the following who have recently been advanced in rate:

W. N. PRICE from SN to EM3  
R. ALUKONIS from EM3 to EM2

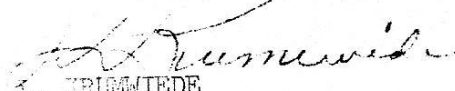
P. O. CAIL from FTG2 to FTG1  
T. DIAZ from SN to BM3  
J. H. ERWIN from RD2 to RD1  
C. FINOCCHARIO from BT3 to BT2  
L. MCNEIL from BT3 to BT2  
W. J. SYKES from MMFN to MM3  
R. S. TINGLE from SN to RM3  
P. VERDERESE from SN to SM3  
R. C. WILDEY from SM3 to SM2  
N. A. RIEZO from SN to QM3  
H. T. DUNRETT from GMG3 to GMG2  
D. A. JOHNS from RD3 to RD2  
R. L. KUEBLER from RD3 to RD2

We say goodbye to SN E. R. JONES and SA S. P. SCHMIEDER and wish them luck, and welcome on board EM3 E. F. BRADLEY, SD1 R. E. SAPLAN, SA T. W. MONTE, SA G. T. GARNETT, SA W. H. GANIER Jr., and SA A. H. THIEBAULT and hope that they will enjoy their time aboard the "Mighty MUX".

Due to our long periods at sea, mail has been sporadic during the past five weeks, both outgoing and incoming but, as I mentioned in my previous letter to you, keep those letters coming for they are important to us.

We have only just started and there are bound to be many long hours of work ahead, but I am sure that MULLINNIX is and will be a fine tribute to not only the United States but also to those who serve her.

Warm regards,

  
J. L. KRUMWIEDE  
Commander, U.S. Navy  
Commanding, USS MULLINNIX

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