

1 November 1970

Dear Friends,

The month of October, 1970, is now behind us, and it is again time for our monthly newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform those of you at home what we are doing on Okinawa, and a little bit about the Coast Guard in general.

Gesashi boasts one of the largest loran stations in the world, with three Loran A rates and one Loran C rate. We are the slave station on all four rates, with Loran A masters at Miyako Jima, Iwo Jima, and Namaiki, Japan. On Loran C, Iwo Jima is the master, and has four slaves, located at Hokkaido, Japan, Gesashi, Okinawa, Marcus Island, and Yap Island. To insure that our Loran C stations are transmitting the proper data, we also have monitor stations at Fuchu, Japan, and Saipan Island. With the five Loran C transmitting stations we have a daytime coverage area which is considerably larger than the continental United States. For example, if we placed our northern-most station (Hokkaido) at Juneau, Alaska, our southern-most station (Yap) would fall around the Mexican border. With this Loran net or chain, as it is called, we provide precise electronic navigational assistance to all shipping and aviation in the area, with an accuracy of plus or minus one foot per nautical mile. As you can see, the art of navigation has changed quite a bit since its beginnings with the ancient Phoenicians.

During the month of October, we instituted a new watchstander position on a new communications type program that the Coast Guard has taken over, which brings our number of active watchstanders during a twenty four hour period up to 14. This means that, out of an available number of 32 watchstanders, almost half of the crew is standing watch each day. The increased workload has put a decided crimp in our impromptu athletic program, but as the new routine settles down, I am sure that we can come bouncing back.

Speaking about our athletic program, we have actually quite a bit of diversion between the different areas of recreation that we can draw from. For the swimmer, we have a beautiful sandy beach, and coral reefs that draw many skin diving enthusiasts. We also are beginning a recreational boating program that will be of assistance to the fishermen aboard the station. For outdoor sports, we have a combination basketball/tennis court that sees quite a bit of action. Next to that, there is a large field which we utilize for softball and football. To round out the outside program, we have volley ball and badminton courts. Inside, there are facilities for pool, ping pong, cards of many different varieties, English speaking television, movies supplied through the Navy Motion Picture Exchange, shuffleboard, and a small paperback library. As the song so aptly puts it, "We got volley ball and ping pong and a lot of dandy games. What ain't we got? We ain't got dames." The remainder of the spare time available to the crew is spent in hobbies such as photography, electronic experimentations, Coast Guard Institute courses, and a small portion devoted to going on liberty. In the last instance, we are luckier than some of the other loran stations, in that

liberty is available on the island. However, since the nearest liberty town is almost an hour's ride away, this privilege is not often utilized.

Personnel action for the month was low in transfers and high in promotions. SA Mike KATTEN arrived from Boot Camp for his first duty station in the Coast Guard, and HM3 Louis NIGRO arrived from Base New York to become our doctor. HM1 Richard SMITH is now on his way to Base New York and BMC Mack WHITEHEAD is on his way to Group Norfolk, Virginia. For promotions, Ted MONTGOMERY and Maurice BOWIE were both promoted from Seaman Apprentice to Seaman, Mike HART advanced to Engineman Third Class, and Mack WHITEHEAD went from provisional to permanent Chief Boatswain Mate.

Well, that about wraps it up for the month of October. Hopefully, November's letter will reach you earlier in the month than September's and this month's, but I won't make any rash promises.

Sincerely yours,

David H. LYON, LTJG, USCG
Commanding Officer