

1 February 1971

Dear Friends,

I would again like to bring you, the families and friends of the men stationed on the Coast Guard Loran Station at Gesashi, Okinawa, up to date on what has been happening here. This time the summary will be even more condensed than usual as it will cover the months of December 1970 and January 1971. Somehow, I did not start the New Year out just exactly right.

First, I must apologize for not writing last month. It was not due to a lack of material, nor to a lack of time to write, but somehow a combination of both. Time here on the station seems to have a way of flying quickly past at an exceedingly slow pace. Things that happened yesterday seem so long ago, yet it seems like only yesterday so and so was still here. Probably even more difficult to understand than to explain, and I can't find the proper words for explanation.

Winter has been upon us for the past two months and will probably last for another month. Although the thermometer never drops below the high forties, we have an almost continual 20 to 35 knot wind which lowers the chill factor by at least another 20 to 25 degrees. In sheltered areas, the sun's warmth is quite apparent, but a jacket is a must just for short walks between the buildings on the station. Though we have not received any here, snow has been reported about 100 miles north of Okinawa.

We had an incident in December which shows how the armed forces of the United States work together. Our Coast Guard Hospital Corpsman, HM3 Lou NIGRO, was requested to assist two Navy corpsmen in taking care of an injured Army man who had suffered a recurrence of an old injury while camping on a Marine base with a Boy Scout troop. We called the Air Force Air Rescue Coordinator who in turn sent a Marine helicopter which transferred the man to an Army hospital. From last report, the man is doing fine.

Our big activity for December was a Christmas party which we put on for the children of Gesashi. The mess deck was transformed into a Christmas wonderland, complete with streamers, tinsel, and a Christmas tree. We had games outside, and then went inside for the usual ice cream and candy, complete with Santa Claus, CS1 Lee BRADSHAW, handing out presents. About 65 to 70 children ranging in age from 3 to about 15 showed up, and it certainly appeared as if they all had a very enjoyable time. The party seemed to make the spirit of Christmas even more meaningful to us, and it was one of the high spots in my tour of duty here on Okinawa.

The first part of January was spent in preparation for an inspection by the new district commander, RADM PRINS. It was his first visit to this station and he brought with him several department heads from the district office, along with the commander of the Marianas Section, CAPT THOMPSON, and our Far East Section commander, CAPT RANDLE. With the eight inspecting officers, the station received a pretty thorough going over. In parting, RADM PRINS stated, "This is the best looking Loran station I have seen in my Coast Guard career." CAPT STEWART, chief of electronics engineering in the

district, and a man with extensive experience in Loran, added that we had the best electronics department he has ever seen. I am very proud of the crew for the effort that they have put into our station, and they have every reason to be extremely proud of their contributions.

Promotions seemed to be the fad for December. As a result of the Servicewide exams given in September, three of the crew were promoted from Petty Officer third class to Petty Officer second class. They were SK2 Dennis BALLARD, ET2 Danny PERPUSE, and RM2 David McNIVEN. ET3 Don ADAMS was promoted from SNET to ET3 after finishing a 6 month time in grade period. And, believe it or not, even I was promoted, from Lieutenant Junior Grade to full Lieutenant. Guess we all get lucky at times.

Personnel turnovers were rather slow, even for a two month period. SK3 Ronnie COKER left for Group New Orleans, being replaced by SK2 Dennis BALLARD, pride of the Eleventh Coast Guard District office in Long Beach. CS1 Lee BRADSHAW received a late Christmas present by being sent to his first choice for a duty assignment - the recruiting office in Cleveland, Ohio. His replacement, CS1 Wilkie KING, came to us from the USCGC CHILULA out of Morehead City, N. C. DC1 Mason GRAHAM left us rather suddenly, being transferred to the US Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida, for treatment of infectious hepatitis. By now, he is well on his way to recovery, and his replacement, DC1 David AMAYA, has arrived from Base Portsmouth, Virginia. ET2 Danny PERPUSE is on his way to Base Yerba Buena Island, and ET3 Bill LAKIN is going to Station Bodega Bay, Calif. At our Light Attendant Station in Naha, EM3 Paul BLANCHARD left for Group Boston, to be replaced by EM3 Mike HARDY, who came from the USCGC BOUTWELL out of Boston. The last transfer was a swap between the Loran station at Iwo Jima and us, with EN3 Monte OWNBEY going there and EN3 Lindsey HARRIS coming here.

The new excitement on the station is the two wheeled method of motivation called the motorcycle. In one short month, our ranks have swelled from two cycles to seven. Although we may not possess any Brandos or young Fondas, the owners are quite happy with their beasts of burden. Afternoons and weekends are now spent exploring farm roads and paths, and discovering just how beautiful the area around our station really is. From the experience which he is gathering here FN Buddy EATON should have no trouble opening a cycle repair shop if he ever needs a job, and from the rugged training on local roads, the Baja Motocross should offer little challenge to our drivers.

Well, that about wraps up the high points for the past two months here on the station. Hopefully I will get next month's letter into the mail sooner than I have with this one. Until then

Sincerely yours,

David H. LYON, LT, USCG  
Commanding Officer