

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS COLLETT (DD-730)
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

Yokosuka, Japan
15 December 1966

Dear Friend of COLLETT,

As the new Commanding Officer of USS COLLETT it is with great pleasure that I address this joint "Family-gram" and holiday greeting to our families and friends. I take this means to acquaint you with the ship and our activities since your support and understanding contribute significantly to our sense of well being and purpose.

Command at sea is always a particularly challenging assignment and I am grateful to have been ordered to serve in a fine destroyer with an excellent reputation and manned by such a spirited and dedicated crew. I feel particularly honored to have been selected to relieve such a professional and respected naval officer as my predecessor in command, Commander R. R. DAVISON, USN.

I arrived on board at sea from a small "Swift Boat" on 3 November and early on 8 November, while in the South China Sea, I relieved Commander DAVISON as Commanding Officer. A few hours later, he was highlined to the ammunition ship USS MOUNT KATMAI, on the first lap of his journey back to the United States and his new assignment with the Operational Test and Evaluation Force, Pacific Projects, at the Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego.

COLLETT recently completed 58 continuous days at sea, during which she steamed 7,415 miles in the Western Pacific, operating at a fast pace in support of United States objectives in South East Asia. The crew carried out a variety of interesting missions utilizing the full capabilities of their proud fighting ship. The jobs were interesting and even sometimes exciting, but never easy. Unfortunately, many of the details of the ship's operations are classified and cannot be disclosed in this "Family-gram". I hope the "Stars and Stripes" and the news media back home may give you an inkling of what we are up to. Current directives indicate that all hands on board earned the Vietnam Service Medal during COLLETT's most recent operations.

The tempo of operations was eased during the period 19-23 November by a port visit to Hong Kong. For most of COLLETT's crew, this visit provided their first opportunity to enjoy the sights and scenes of the Crown Colony. Rest assured, all hands took full advantage of these opportunities, including the chance to do Christmas

shopping at "duty free" prices. Thanksgiving Day, 24 November, provided an opportunity for rest and recuperation both from recent operations and from the Hong Kong visit. "Holiday Routine" was short lived, however, as the ship refueled late that night from the oiler USS PONCHATOUOLA in very choppy sea conditions. The next few days found COLLETT steaming into heavy seas and high winds, wearying to both ship and crew, and all hands breathed a sigh of genuine relief upon returning to the ship's new home port of Yokosuka, Japan on 30 November for a period of leave and upkeep.

For the statistically inclined, as of 30 November 1966, COLLETT had been 204 days out of her former home port of Long Beach, California. 130 of these days were spent at sea and 74 were spent in port . . . 64% at sea (one day lost due to crossing the International Date Line). During this same 204 days, COLLETT refueled and provisioned from other ships while underway 35 times while burning 2,408,549 gallons of fuel oil and consuming 3,436,454 gallons of water to travel 33,548 nautical miles (36,903 statute land miles). Since leaving Long Beach we have consumed 28,300 lbs. of potatoes and 2,470 gallons of milk while serving 166,200 individual meals. The ship's store sold 26,600 candy bars and 142,380 packages of cigarettes during the same period, barely denting the total payroll of \$414,217!

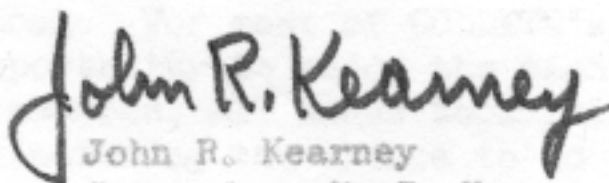
While away from homeport on extended cruises as is the normal pattern in the Western Pacific these days, mail from home takes on new meaning and importance. As is the case with many crew members of COLLETT, my wife and three small daughters are still in California. I am looking forward with great anticipation to their joining me in Yokosuka in late May. All of us on board miss our families and friends and eagerly welcome any news from home - letters help! In writing to us, be sure to use our correct address and we will receive letters by the fastest possible means. The correct address is:

(NAME AND RATE)
" " Division
USS COLLETT (DD-730)
FPO, San Francisco 96601

Please note that the state (California) is not necessary in the address. For those who write to us from our home port of Yokosuka, it will speed delivery if you add "INTER-AREA" in the lower left-hand corner of your envelopes.

With warm regards and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all the Families and Friends of COLLETT, I am

Sincerely,


John R. Kearney
Commander, U. S. Navy
Commanding