

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

At Sea
With the SEVENTH Fleet
9 December 1967

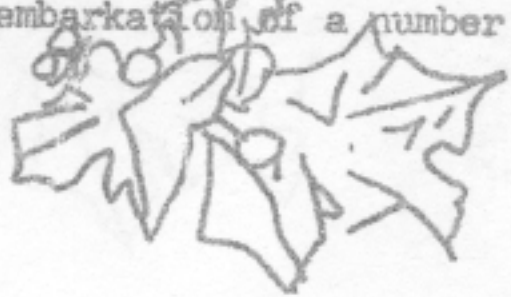
Dear Friend of COLLETT,

Almost a year has elapsed since I wrote my first "Family-gram" to you on 15 December 1966, shortly after taking command of the destroyer COLLETT. These letters are called "Family-grams" because their purpose is to keep the families of COLLETT crew members informed concerning the activities of this ship, as well as matters affecting the careers, health and welfare of the men who serve aboard her. I had hoped to draft a "Family-gram" about every six months, but I find the months have slipped by faster than I ever imagined they could. My only excuse is that the many interesting and varied jobs a destroyer is called upon to perform with the SEVENTH Fleet out here in the Western Pacific make the Captain's time pass as fast as his crew's - - - even though the Captain doesn't stand watches!

As of 15 December 1967 COLLETT will have steamed approximately 69,907 nautical miles over the Western Pacific in the year since my last "Family-gram" to you. During these twelve months the ship refueled and provisioned from other ships while underway 103 times, while burning about 4,408,089 gallons of fuel oil and consuming 4,568,842 gallons of water. COLLETT and her crew spent 59% of the year underway - - - 215 days at sea and 150 in port.

The details of many of COLLETT's operations are classified and cannot be included in this "Family-gram," although you may have read about the ship's activities in your local newspapers. Suffice it to say that all hands presently on board have earned the Vietnam Service Medal at one time or another while serving on COLLETT.

Some of the unclassified highlights of the past twelve months were as follows: The 200th landing of a Drop Anti-Submarine Helicopter ("Dash") on board on 17 January, the first anniversary of the ship's entry into the DASH program, an event suitably celebrated by a cake-cutting ceremony on the flight deck . . . The unsuccessful operational test of the Executive Officer's famous "Mary Poppin's" rescue recovery device on 28 January . . . Presentation of well deserved medals and citations to individual officers and enlisted men on 10 April and 27 October (Navy Day) . . . The initiation of COLLETT's only "barrel-chested swashbuckler" as Chief Petty Officer on 16 April . . . The embarkation of a number of prominent reporters and TV commentators



to cover COLLETT's 24-26 April operations. . . The greatest oil spill in COLLETT's history on 28 April (by an oiler which shall remain nameless). A pleasant five day visit to Hong Kong in early July, the ship's second trip to the Crown Colony during its current WESTPAC tour. . . And a most enjoyable visit to the Japanese hot springs resort city of Beppu 4-6 November.

One of the many noteworthy achievements of COLLETT during the year was the attainment of the second highest combined reenlistment rate for any ship in Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet - - - nearly three times the overall reenlistment rate for all ships within the force! The ship and its crew received a personal commendation from the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet for this "outstanding achievement in the field of enlisted retention." Another typically proud performance by COLLETT personnel occurred late on the last night of the ship's visit to Beppu, when eleven crew members volunteered blood to a critically hemorrhaging employee of the National Beppu Hospital. Although the patient succumbed after some initial improvement, the humanitarian expression of goodwill and friendship was greatly appreciated by the patient's family and all the citizens of Beppu and Oita Prefecture.

Busy as the men of COLLETT were during the past twelve months, somehow or other they found time for self-improvement and advancement. 121 crew members passed the advancement in rate exams during the year. This was a total of 75% of the men who took the various exams for the different rates. Prospects for advancement in the Navy are greater now than at any other time. In your next letter to your Navy man, why not ask him if he is studying for February's advancement exams?

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year to the Families and Friends of COLLETT, I remain

Sincerely,

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

Commanding Officer, USS COLLETT (DD-73)

