

USS REEVES (CG-24) FAMILYGRAM

25 May 1984

Dear Family and Friends of the USS REEVES,

Since I last wrote you in mid-April much has happened to the USS REEVES and her crew. Changes have been made both inside and out. A lot of hard work and preparation have paid off.

REFRESHER TRAINING IN SUBIC BAY, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

I mentioned in my last letter to you, as we steamed south toward Subic Bay to begin Refresher Training the temperature and humidity rose into the 90s. This was quite a change from the cool spring weather we left behind in Yokosuka. The entire purpose behind REFTRA was as the name states, refresher training. On the first day of REFTRA a small army of observers came aboard to determine if REEVES, fresh from an extensive overhaul, and her relatively inexperienced crew were ready to rejoin the proud ships of the Seventh Fleet. For the next three weeks our schedule was nearly as hot as the tropical climate and we were put through an extensive and rigorous training program. Our days started at 0400 with reveille and on more than one occasion stretched long into the night.

What did we do? Well, almost everything! The list included: precision anchoring, mooring to a buoy, helicopter operations to receive stores and to refuel the helo in midair, underway replenishment -including practice at emergency breakaways, both along side and astern refueling, rescuing a man overboard and even towing evolutions with another ship.

Our repair parties and rescue crews were tested in their ability to aid a distressed vessel and were on station in record time. Further, we held countless fire drills, flooding drills and engineering casualty control drills. Each test was met and the repair parties showed their ability to respond to multiple simultaneous casualties occurring throughout the ship. One drill required the entire crew to respond by taking hoses to fight a major fire simulated amidships. The crew performed with great enthusiasm. You may rest assured that your husbands have shown the ability to save their ship after severe damage has occurred.

A large part of REFTRA was evaluating REEVES ability to fight. Observers graded us on anti-submarine, anti-surface and anti-air warfare tactics and procedures. Many units of Seventh Fleet helped out in our training. Planes from the USS MIDWAY, as she returned from her Indian Ocean deployment, flew overhead and the submarine USS DARTER hid beneath the waves to attack us. The culmination of REFTRA was a 36 hour battle problem where anything and everything happened. The crew responded quickly and professionally to countless situations which came at all hours of the day and night. Your REEVES men can go from being asleep in their racks to ready to fight at their battle stations in only four minutes!

The crews' hard work paid off, for when the testing was over REEVES had passed every evolution. REFTRA was behind us and we were pronounced ready to rejoin the capable MIDWAY BATTLEGROUP. Several individual crew members were singled out for their exceptional performance and their names are worth noting here.

Ensign Todd M. Larson for his outstanding ability as the Engineering Officer of the Watch during casualty control drills. In fact, the entire Engineering Department was ranked as outstanding in this area.

Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Rowley A. Molina for his outstanding leadership and aggressiveness as the Officer of the Deck during General Quarters and again for his ability as the ship's Flight Deck Officer.

HT3 David D. Singer for his leadership and training of the helo crash and salvage crew.

PNSN Dennis E. Lally for his ability to oversee and relay information as a phonetalker during general quarters.

SN Brian D. Chord for his experience and knowledge as a lookout during general quarters.

All of the Quartermaster's in the Navigation Division were ranked as exceptional in their teamwork and ability.

There were many others noted for exceptional performance and I want to congratulate every crewmember and thank you their families for supporting them throughout REFTRA.

NOW FOR THE FUN!

With REFTRA behind us and a sunny weekend ahead of us, it was time for a two day picnic. There was a roasted pig, ice cold drinks and a lot of fun to be had by all. We had a relaxing weekend of swimming, sunbathing, waterskiing and sports. While I'm talking about sports, there was also time before getting underway for the REEVES' newly organized softball team, under coaches Ensign Todd Larson and BT1 Augustine Mendoza, to win the base single elimination tournament. The team has an excellent start. They've won their first three games and now have a trophy under their belts.

Chaplin Jim Morgan took several members of the crew to King's Phil-Am Orphanage in Olangapo for a picnic with the children there. I would like to give a special thanks to the men in the Supply Department for their work in making the event a delicious one. Those who attended were: DSC Timothy R. Holden, RPSA Richard L. Browner, BT2 Jesse A. Brown and STG2 Osvaldo Menegol.

On May 15th a celebration was held on REEVES' Enlisted Dining Facility to recall the ship's history on the 20th anniversary of her commissioning. We've come a long way in our proud service to the United States Navy and America. As part of the cake cutting ceremony EMCS Wendell R. Gawthorp and SA Randy Fontanez joined me as the oldest and youngest crew members onboard.

HONG KONG

We got underway on May 16th bound for one of the most exotic yet modern ports in Asia, Hong Kong. After the rigors of REFTRA, the two day passage was quiet, the weather warm, and the seas calm. While at sea more than one of our young lookouts reported a whale's spout or a jumping dolphin off the bow.

Moored to Queen's Pier, there was a joyful reunion for some of the crew as many wives joined us in Hong Kong. There were many enjoyable sightseeing tours: to Kowloon to shop, to the Portuguese territory of Macau, or even into mainland China. But most of all there was the shopping. I'm sure many bright and colorful Hong Kong dollars were exchanged for silks, gold, jewels and clothing. Almost as popular as shopping, many people enjoyed the

international food offered in the wide variety of restaurants available. Nowhere else in the world can you have a lunch of bangers and meat pie at the English Bull and Bear Pub and then later that night enjoy authentic Chinese delicacies in one of the floating restaurants in Aberdeen.

KAGOSHIMA

On May 22nd we steamed from Hong Kong on a three day transit to Kagoshima, the southern gateway to Japan. Located on the southeast tip of Kyushu Island. Kagoshima is renowned for its numerous hot springs, an active volcano and as the birthplace of one of Japan's most heroic Admirals, Heihachiro Togo. Historically Admiral Togo defeated the Russian Fleet in the Tsushima Straits during the Russo-Japanese War. He is praised by Japanese and Americans alike as a man of indomitable spirit, courage and virtue. It was the festival marking the 50th anniversary of Admiral Togo's death that brought us to Kagoshima. Long hours were spent by the men in First Division and others in preparing the ship for when we joined the British, French and Japanese at anchor in the beautiful bay. Water taxis brought a host of visitors to tour REEVES during our three day stay, including high ranking members of the Japanese Government. For many of the officers and crew the varied receptions and other official functions gave them their first taste of protocol and international diplomacy. The second night in port, REEVES' wardroom played host at one of these receptions as Commander and Chief of the American Pacific Fleet, Admiral Foley held a formal dinner where the guest list included: RADM MacKay, Commander Naval Forces Japan, RADM Takenouchi, JMSDF Commander First Airwing, Captain Collins of the Royal Navy, Captain in charge Hong Kong BCC, Captain Seillan of the French Navy, Attache to Japan, the Honorable Mr Kamada, Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture and other high ranking dignitaries. The hard work of the entire Supply Department again shown brightly and all were impressed with the ship's elegance.

Across the bay that night the volcano was quite active, leaving the city and the REEVES with a coating of black ash. As some of the crewmembers watched, lightning flashed atop the peak and a bright orange arc of lava shot forth, showering the mountainside. It was truly a memorable sight.

UNDERWAY TO CHINHAIE

On the 22nd of May we were underway for Chinhai in the Republic of Korea. At sea and again when we reached port the fire hoses were broken out as the crew worked to clean the ship of the heavy layer of black ash left from Kagoshima's volcano.

A hearty welcome aboard is extended to REEVES' new crew members and their families who have recently joined us: BTFA David E. Hyland, EWSA Christopher S. Mennel, GMMC Eli A. Sanchez, SMSA Lou Castillo, STG3 Rex D. McNutt, OS3 Loren S. Obrey, RM1 Hugh H. Bullard, RM2 John L. Wells and BM1 Douglas A. Dashnaw.

We will be in port in Chinhai until the second of June. I'll let you know of upcoming events in my next letter. Until then, thank-you again for your continued support. We look forward to our return to Yokosuka.


J.G. WEBER