

5 May 1970

Dear Friends,

As each new commanding officer of a unit begins to gather the reins of control, and guide his team, the crew has to adjust to the particular ideas that the new captain has, in order to work smoothly and accomplish the mission of the unit. Since 8 April 1970, when I relieved LT Richard W. WRIGHT, the crew has been going through this transition period, and they have fared well. One of my own peculiarities is that I would like to bring you, the friends and relatives of the crew, to a better understanding of what we are doing in Okinawa. To do this, I hope to write a newsletter once a month to keep you informed.

The island of Okinawa, approximately 65 miles long and 2 to 17 miles wide, is the home base for large Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine units. Gesashi, a town of about 200 inhabitants on the northeastern shore of the island, is the site of the Coast Guard's Loran A/C transmitting station. We have 2 officers and 34 enlisted men stationed here, and 2 enlisted men in charge of the Light Attendant Station at Naha. This gives the Coast Guard a total of 38 men assigned to Okinawa. Although our 38 men do not comprise a large percentage of the 53,500 total uniformed U. S. military servicemen on the island, we do provide a very necessary service to military and civilian mariners and aviators in the northwestern Pacific.

Our primary mission on Okinawa is to provide Loran A pulses on three rates, 2H5, 2H6, 2S7 and Loran C pulses on SS3-Y. On each of these 4 rates, we are the slave of the master-slave pair. Technically, LORAN, derived from the phrase Long Range Aid to Navigation, provides navigational fix data in the form of hyperbolic lines-of-position determined by the time differences between the reception of pulse signals from widely-separated shore transmitting stations. In another way of putting it, a radio pulse is sent out in all directions from the master. Upon receipt of this signal, the slave automatically puts in a time delay (simply a waiting period) and then transmits his own signal in all directions. The user (a ship at sea or a plane in the air) receives master's signal, followed by slave's signal, and measures the difference in time between receipt of the two signals. With this numerical time difference, the user goes to a chart which has been specially prepared showing lines that have been mathematically computed to show exactly where a particular time difference would occur in relation to the two stations. Using two or more of these paired stations will give the user lines of position crossing in one spot, thus fixing his position (telling him where he is).

The secondary mission of the Coast Guard in Okinawa is the maintenance of aids to navigation for piloting close to the shores of the island. This includes continual upkeep and repairs of buoys, day markers, fog signals, and minor lights. In this area, we receive assistance from Coast Guard buoy tenders when they are in the area, but are self-sufficient the rest of the time. The job keeps the two men assigned continually on the move around the island.

Departures and arrivals for the months of April were low, with only 2 men going and 2 coming. LT WRIGHT left the day that I relieved him, on his way to Headquarters in Washington, D. C. ENC Steve PALASSIS left on the following day for USCGC SIMLAX, out of Brunswick, Georgia. Late in the month, EM1 Dana RODRIGUEZ arrived from Coast Guard Station Houston, and ET3 Robert DUNCKHORST reported in from the loran station at Point Arguello, California.

Rear Admiral B. F. ENGEL, the Commander of the Fourteenth Coast Guard District, inspected the station on the 11th of April, and wrote in his inspection report, "Gesashi continues to be one of the best, if not the best, station in the 14th district ... Condition of the station reflects very creditably on all hands." This was the Admiral's last inspection of the station, as he will be transferred to the east coast and we will get a new district commander in July of this year.

If the idea of this newsletter catches on favorably, I will attempt to write again at the end of this month. Hopefully, I will be able to explain why our job in Okinawa is so important that it separates families for a full year.

Until later,

David H. Lyon, LTJG, USCG
Commanding Officer