

1 October 1970

Dear Friends,

As the month of September ends, it is time once again to take pen in hand (figuratively) and write to the families and friends of the men stationed at the Coast Guard Loran Station situated near the little village of Gesashi Okinawa. The purpose of this letter is to acquaint those at home with what is going on in this part of the world.

September has traditionally been the month of the long Labor Day Weekend, the first day of school, fall fashions, and the new T. V. schedule. Even though we are far from home, some of the traditions have followed us here. Our Labor Day Weekend was indeed long, as Typhoon FRAN kept the entire crew busy right here on the station, but I guess the compensation was that we were not affected by the back to school rush the next day. In keeping with today's modern or mod trend in grooming, the Coast Guard authorized the extension of sideburns half way down the ear instead of stopping them at the top of the ear. And on T. V., Chief Ironside has been replaced by Perry Mason and Dr. Richard Kimball has finally stopped running. Fall has arrived, with days somewhat cooler, and nights much cooler. The typhoon season is theoretically in its last throes, so if we are lucky, we will have weathered it with virtually no damage.

Operationally, for us, the month of September passed quite uneventfully. We hosted a District representative and a section representative for several days while they went through our electronics department quite extensively, going all the way from ordering of spare parts through actual watchstanding requirements and procedures. On Loran C, we would have been about 99.7% effective, except that the master station had some major difficulties resulting in the loss of about 900 \$%^\$#%^& (sorry, the typewriter seems to have a mind of its own) minutes, bringing the whole chain's effectiveness down to about 95%. In the words of a nineteenth century Chinese philosopher, "That ain't no way to run a railroad."

Perhaps a little history of the island of Okinawa, the "Keystone of the Pacific", would be of interest to you. It is believed that the first inhabitants migrated to the Ryukyu Islands from the south, later to be joined by Asians, Japanese, and Western cultures. Recorded history for the island began around 1314 A.D., with the forming of 3 distinct kingdoms on Okinawa. By 1372, Okinawa had fallen into the Chinese sphere of influence and soon afterwards the island was united under one kingdom. Japan utilized Okinawa as a trade buffer to preclude direct contact with other cultures until the coming of Commodore Perry to Japan in 1853. By this time, China had lost most of her power, and in 1872, Okinawa was annexed as a part of Japan. As a result of this annexation, one language (Japanese) was utilized, cultural and civic activities were updated, and the island began to look like a modern state. However, business, commercial, and political leadership was also taken over by the Japanese, and Okinawa became the "country cousin".

World War II put Okinawa on the map for America with one of the bloodiest battles of the war. It was the last attempt to save the Japanese homeland, starting on 1 April 1945, and lasting for 93 days, resulting in over 300,000 dead, and nearly all villages and towns decimated. The Allies had gathered the largest fleet of attack and support vessels to be seen in the Pacific theater which was aptly named by the Japanese as the "Iron Typhoon".

Since the war, Okinawa has been under the administration of the United States High Commissioner, with help from the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Island (USCAR - 1950) and the Government of the Ryukyu Island (GRI - 1952). In 1972, if all goes according to plan, Okinawa will be given back to Japan on an equal footing with the other islands of that country.

Personnel action for September was about average, with 3 new people arriving and 3 departing. ETCS Thomas WILLIAMS rotated early, going to the Loran C station at Dana, Indiana (see, they're not all out in the middle of nowhere), and was replaced by ETC Denton HYDER, from our district office in Honolulu. The Boobsey Twins, ET2 Dick AUBE and ET3 "Bergie" BERGERON, went back to the First District, Dick to Group Woods Hold and Bergie to Group Boston. And Governors Island in New York City sent us SNET Don ADAMS and SNEW Bill ANDERSON. Dana GRAY was promoted to ET3, and Kenny Jones made Seaman.

That about wraps up another month here on Okinawa. As every day goes past, it brings us one day closer to return to the states and you.

Sincerely yours,

David H. LYON, LTJG, USCG
Commanding Officer

P.S. As is obvious in this letter, typing is definitely not my strongest point.