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San Francisco, California

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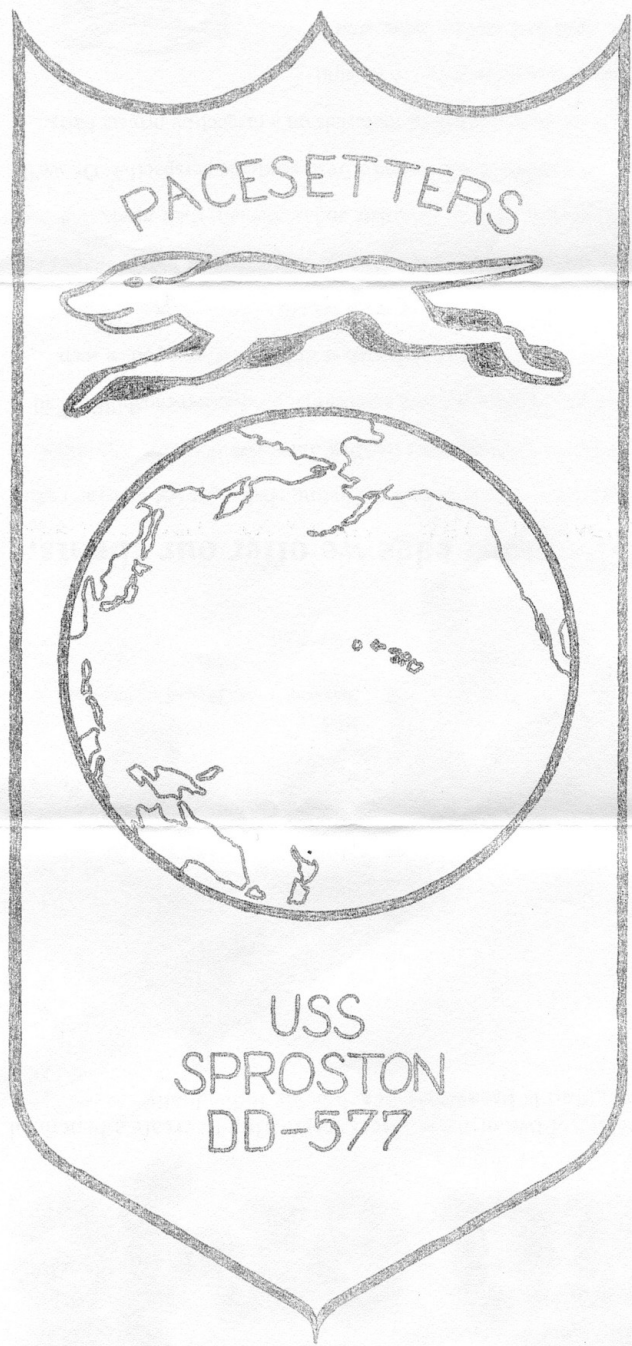
Mr. Harry S. McQuate
R.D. 1
Reinholds, Pa.

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
NAVY DEPARTMENT



USS SPROSTON (DD-577)
CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

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JULY 1965

USS SPROSTON (DD-577)
Care of Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

Dear Family and Friends of the SPROSTON:

This is the first in a series of "Family-grams" which will be sent to the families of all personnel attached to the USS SPROSTON (DD-577). These letters, which will normally be sent about every three months, are designed to keep you up-to-date on the news about the ship and her fine crew.

Let me start by reviewing the past few months. In March, we moved into the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for regular overhaul. Initially, this entailed about a month or so spent resting high and dry on keel-blocks in a drydock while several years' accumulation of barnacles was scraped off the bottom; the hull was then repainted. At this time, also, several "pukas" (Hawaiian for "holes") in the hull were patched. In May, we were refloated and moved alongside a pier to continue the overhaul. It might interest you that this ship - now well into her twenties - is undergoing a most extensive overhaul, inside and out, to the tune of about \$900,000! Much of the work that is getting done, however, is not due to Uncle Sam's beneficence. Your SPROSTON sailors are spending much more, in terms of man-hours, in work that they are doing themselves. The ship is almost entirely being repainted, inside and out. All vital machinery and equipment are being overhauled, most of it by ship's force. All the spare parts were moved off the ship, are being inventoried, shortages replaced, and will be unloaded again. The workload is staggering, and we still face many, many projects to complete as we go down the home stretch these final few weeks. We are scheduled to complete the overhaul in late July. We have been at sea several times recently to try out over overhauled engineering plant and our rejuvenated weapons system, and I'm happy to say that our sea trials have been quite successful.

The overhaul takes up most of our time, as you can imagine, but not all. Let me catch you up on some other news.

First of all, the results of the February advancement in rating examinations showed that the SPROSTON's crew was one of the highest in percentage comparing the number who took tests and the number who passed them in the Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Those who were successful include: SULLIVAN, SM3 - BAKER, ETN3 - BILL, MM3 - SINKINSON, MM3 - BROOKS, BT3 - DEDIOS, SD1 - EVITTS, BT3 - FLATTEN, SM3 - FRANKLIN, BT3 - GEERING, BT3 - GROZANICK, FTG2 - GUTHRIE, TM2 - HOOK, IC2 - HOSTETTER, BT2 - KRENZ, BT3 - PRATT, STG2 - ROACH, IC1 - SINCLAIR, ETN2 - STARKOVICH, BT2 - SUCKY, RD2 - MYERS, MM2 - WIEDERHOEFT, GMC2.

Three of our officers were also recently promoted: LT POST, Operations Officer, LT GRUNWALD, Engineering Officer, and LTJG VEECK were successful in being selected for and promoted to their ranks.

The shipyard is also a time for schooling. I would venture to say that every member of our crew, officer and enlisted, has attended at least one school during the past few months. Some have travelled to the mainland, and some have attended schools nearby. The shipyard period has seen a considerable turn-over in the crew; we are trying to get everyone ready - at the same time the ship is physically getting face-lifting - to carry out such tasks as may be assigned when we complete our overhaul. Not only are we attending many shore-based schools, but training sessions are held on board day and night to further ready us for the fleet. Between time spent overhauling the ship and the hours spent training, our days are busy ones, you may believe!

I mentioned personnel turn-over. Let me illustrate. My Executive Officer, LCDR C. F. HORNE, was relieved by LCDR T. M. WHITE. The Weapons Officer, LTJG A. B. ORDWAY, has been replaced by LTJG S. FITCH. Three new officers, Ensigns P. K. WALLIRON, J. W. HITCHCOCK, and D. C. PRINTY, Jr., have come aboard; the first two will be in the Operations Department, and the other will shortly become ASW Officer. We have also greeted S. ALTER, YNC and D. J. MILLER, BTC, who have considerably bolstered our chief petty officer ranks. There are many others, too numerous to name, who have come aboard and who are now full-fledged crew members.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Your SPROSTON sailor is not dull. The SPROSTON has gotten together as fine a softball team as I have seen in many years. The team, coached by LTJG A. G. LADHAMS, includes the following members: ADAMS, RD3 - ALBERTSON, RDSN - BEDDICK, SN - JOHNSON, GMG2 - MALDONADO, YN3 - HARRIS, GMGSN - GIBSON, RM2 - MILINOWSKI, SN - RANGEL, QM3 - ALEXANDER, ST3 - WASHINGTON, SN - LEL, PC3 - DOBNER, GMG2. Aided by strong pitching of R. MALDONADO, YN3 and C. W. BURKHALTER, EM2, the team has compiled a tremendous 16-4 record. We look for them to take the Destroyer Flotilla FIVE league championship. Not to be outdone, the ship's officers have started an intramural softball league which includes M, B, OI divisions, the CPOs, the first and second class POs, and a composite team made up by Supply and ship's office personnel. Bear in mind that all sports activities are carried out in non-duty hours. Especially with regard to the ship's team, I am most gratified at the turn-out for ship's athletics.

In May and June, a Navy Relief drive was held; this fund drive was held to benefit the Navy Relief Society, an officially-sponsored organization which assists naval personnel in case of need. The SPROSTON crew did an outstanding job in behalf of the Navy Relief Society. A check in the amount of \$577.00 (does the number look familiar?) was contributed. One division, Fox division, made up by the fire controlmen, sonarmen, and torpedomen, gave over \$15.00 per man! LTJG G. W. WILSON, Fox Division Officer, and J. A. BLACK, STCS, are to be commended for their leadership in this matter. To recognize their efforts, the ship gave Fox division a full-fledged luau, including a spit-roasted Kailua pig, steaks, and delicious king crab legs.

Each month on the SPROSTON, department heads gather to confer official recognition on crew members from their departments who have performed in a superior fashion. These men are nominated for "Man of the Month."

Personnel are considered for this honor because of demonstrated leadership, effort, and in general performance of duty much above that of their ship-mates. During March, April, May and June, the following were nominated for "Man of the Month": GRAHAM, EM2 - BITLER, ETR2 - HORTON, STG2 - HILL, SK3 - FLETCHER, GMG2 - BITLER, ETR2 - DEMOND, SK3 - HOSTETTER, BT2 - CHRISTIAN, FTGSN - CARRIGAN, FN - ROACH, IC1 - CAMPBELL, RDSN - DEMOND, SK3 - PEARSON, FN - JAMES, FTG3 - ALBERTSON, RDSN. Of these men, the following were selected, one each month, for "Man of the Month" awards: GRAHAM, EM2 - FLETCHER, GMG2 - CHRISTIAN, FTGSN - PEARSON, FN. HORTON, STG2, in addition, was nominated by this command recently for Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Man of the Month award. I'm sure you join me in congratulating these sailors for their well-deserved honors.

In May, we held a most enjoyable twenty-second birthday ball, honoring the long life and past accomplishments of the SPROSTON and her crew, old and new. A sumptuous buffet dinner, a cake-cutting ceremony, dancing, and entertainment made the evening successful in all respects. Second Division, with 100% attendance, won the right to toast the ship with champagne.

The entertainment for the birthday ball was furnished, by the way, by our own successful combo, made up by FITZ, STG3 - BRIGGS, QM3 - SWICK, STGSN and IVIE, SN. This group has appeared in local service clubs, on a local TV station, and has been featured in a newspaper write-up. We are proud of these men who are employing their off-duty time so profitably!

In reviewing this Family-gram thus far, you will agree with me, I'm sure, that the life of your Navy-man is indeed a busy one. In the near future, when we move out of the shipyard and start operating again, the pace will quicken even more! After a few weeks of getting ready - training inport and at sea - we will enter a phase of operations known as "underway training." Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor, a group of experienced officers and enlisted men, will take us through six weeks of intensified training, designed to make up for the more than three months we have been "lying fallow." We'll be busy during these weeks, day and night - for those of you who live here in Hawaii, it'll mean early "veillee" and late "taps."

After underway training, we're scheduled to participate in local training operations in Hawaiian waters for the ensuing few months. I underlined the word "scheduled" for an important reason, one which you should be aware of. As you know, by reading newspapers and listening to news broadcasts, the so-called "cold" war in the Pacific is actually pretty red-hot these days. After the underway training period, the SPROSTON will again be a combat-ready ship in all respects. Although we are not slated to head toward the Western Pacific ("WestPac" as your sailor calls it) for duty with the SEVENTH Fleet until early next year, we could be called out at almost anytime with very little warning. I do not wish to be an alarmist, but we of the destroyer force must be ready to do our part at any time. And we will be ready. If by chance we are called, your SPROSTON man may not have the time, opportunity, and maybe not permission (for the sake of security) to notify you who are on the mainland in advance. If he doesn't, and if, one day without warning, you receive a letter written in mid-Pacific, realize that his failure to tell you ahead of time was probably beyond his control. I trust you will understand.


These Family-grams are written to better acquaint you with our ship (yours and mine), so I might tell you how we fit into the Navy. In the Pacific, all cruisers and destroyers are formed into the Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Those destroyers (and all other Navy ships) who are operating out of West Coast (including Hawaiian) ports are part of the U.S. FIRST Fleet. Within the FIRST Fleet, we are part of Destroyer Flotilla FIVE, consisting of all destroyer-type ships based at Pearl Harbor. Destroyer Flotilla FIVE is further segmented into Squadrons (8 destroyers) and Divisions (4 destroyers). We are part of Destroyer Squadron ELEVEN, and, under them, Destroyer Division ONE HUNDRED TWELVE. When we go to WestPac, we will become part of the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet, of which you hear so much these days. However, when we're out there, we will administratively (for reports and other "paper-work") still be a part of Destroyer Flotilla FIVE and Destroyer Squadron ELEVEN. Complicated, huh? We will probably sail west with the other three ships of our Division.

In each letter, I will attempt to explain various aspects of the ship's everyday life. Is there a subject that you'd like me to discuss? Write me and let me know.

I must conclude this first in the series of Family-grams. May I enlist your continued support of your Navy-man and of the SPROSTON? Just as the "home front" was of prime concern during the world wars, so it is of no less importance today. Your SPROSTON sailor is doing an important job - he needs and deserves your cheer and thoughtfulness.

Until the next letter -

Aloha!



R. L. HOFFMAN
Commander, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer
USS SPROSTON (DD-577)