

USS CORPURAL (SS346)
Fleet Post Office
New York, New York 09501

11 April 1967

Dear Mr + Mrs Anderson,

March was a month for travel and culture. We started in Cagliari, Sardinia, and in turn visited Valletta, Malta; Iraklion, Crete; Athens, Greece and were back in Naples, Italy, on the last day of March. All these places, as well as the water through which we cruised, are steeped in intrigue, ancient history and modern pollution.

Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, has a population of about 110,000 people and is located in the center of the southern coast. The ancient town occupies a long narrow sill running north and south and on each side are lagoons. The upper town still retains part of its fortifications including two great towers erected in 1305 A.D. It was interesting to note that the towers were built by the Pisans. One couldn't help but wonder how they got the contracts to build them after the bad reputation they had for building towers in Pisa.

We moved from Cagliari on the surface southeast along the Coast of Tunisia through the Strait of Sicily to Valletta, Malta. In 1942, King George VI awarded the George Cross to the island fortress of Malta--its people and defenders. Malta was in the front line from the very first day of the war in the Mediterranean. For months she stood alone, braving the might of Hitler's Luftwaffe and the Regia Aeronautica. Wounded and starving--an outpost of freedom, Malta refused to be brought to her knees.

We were in Malta for ten days and enjoyed our first prolonged period of spring weather. The Sixth Fleet tender was in Malta and provided shops and facilities for much needed repairs to the ship. We moored at the Old Navy Dockyard where the drydocks and overhaul facilities of the Royal Navy remain but are now used for commercial shipping. The movement of large tankers and cargo ships of the Indian Ocean/Arabia/Suez/Mediterranean route about the harbor from sunrise to sunset was an interesting spectacle. One could see the colors of most any nation--Liberia, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Great Britain, Mali or Turkey.

The trip from Malta, through the Andikithera Strait along the north shore of Crete into the land of Zorba, was most picturesque. The first look at the Aegean Sea and the Kritikon Pelagos was a prelude to the mystique and beauty of the remains of ancient history and Greek Mythology that was to come. The people of Crete are extremely proud and independent. The highlight of Iraklion was the visit to the ship by His Eminence, The Archbishop of Crete, a most remarkable man, tall in stature, a giant of the Greek Orthodox Church and quite clearly the most powerful man of Crete. He spoke a prayer for the safety of the ship and crew and presented a large medallion of Saint Titus.

From Iraklion we sailed northward to Athens. To describe Athens would be impossible. It is all one would expect it to be and more. The mixture of Greek history and mythology, to walk among the temples and remaining

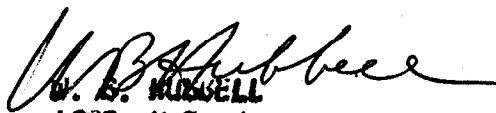
columns is not unlike being in church. The Temple of Zeus is in downtown Athens, just a few blocks south of a 20 foot statue of President Truman. Although the Temple of Zeus is in Athens, we knew that it was just his summer place for he lived atop Mount Ibis that towers into the clouds above Iraklion as was told by the Archbishop of Crete.

From Athens we continued our voyage along the path of Ulysses, past Peloponnesus westward across the Ionian to the Straits of Messina. As we approached in the early evening we could see majestic Mount Etna, a volcano that rises ten thousand feet out of the sea and is still active, belching fire and smoke into a dark starlit sky. A halo around the moon and clear skies to the southwest of us told that the wind in the Strait would be gentle. Flat seas, moving northward, served notice of strong rips and whirlpools that would result from this water meeting the water moving down the west coast of Italy. As we drove into the strong currents and countercurrents, one could appreciate the problem encountered by Ulysses. Although, now Scylla is just the name of a little town on the right hand, the adjacent whirlpool, known as Charibides in the legend, is quite real. For those of you who may not remember the incident of being caught between Scylla and Charibides, this is the place the idiom was born, "between the devil and the deep blue sea."

For your planning, we expect to return to New London on May 2nd. After April 27th, you can be advised of the specific arrival time and date by dialing 4494616. For those of you who live away from New London, the area code is 203. With fair weather we may arrive sooner. We will be in upkeep for four weeks, passing most of this time in the floating drydock for routine work on the hull. A one-day cruise to sea for all of you on Saturday, May 27th is planned. While the details of such a trip (including the final approval) are yet to be completed, and cannot be completed until we are back in New London, I mention it now for your long-range planning. Saturday was selected because more of you would not be hampered by having to miss a day of work or school, in order to come with us. Generally, we would like to have you come aboard early in the morning and so we can get underway from the Submarine Base and sail down the Thames to Long Island sound. There we will submerge, snorkel and conduct various evolutions in order that you will have some idea of what we do at sea. We'll have lunch and return to the base before sunset.

I hope this trip has gone well for all of you. Our being able to allot pay has been a blessing, for we've not been forced in to the position of having to buy money orders to send money home on payday. Finding a place to buy and mail money orders is difficult or impossible in many Mediterranean ports and this has been a real problem for many years while away on long trips. If you had expected your husband to bring back large (in volume) gifts, then you will be disappointed, for there is no stowage space aboard for other than a few small items. As you probably know, our primary mission is that of being always ready for any emergency or hostility and being ready includes keeping the ship's repair parts, food stuff and clothing up to full allowance. Further, there must be room to move about, make repairs, etc. Thus, if any individual brings a large box aboard to haul around, it only increases our critical lack-of-space problems and reduces our combat readiness. In short, CORPORAL is a warship.

This will be my last letter this trip. Please write or call me if there is anything you don't understand or if there is some problem that I might help solve. I am enclosing some items that we provide (except the map) to special visitors aboard in the various ports (translated into the appropriate language). Since you are the ones that we would most like to have visit us, I am sending them to you.


W. S. RUSSELL
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Commanding Officer