

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

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Dear Mr + Mrs Eager,

Since last writing, we have visited Toulon, France, and have become veterans of Sixth Fleet operations. Toulon is the leading naval arsenal of France and is situated on the Mediterranean coast 410 miles southeast of Paris and 30 miles southeast of Marseille. It was first built as a naval station by the Romans, however, most of the facilities have been replaced or renovated since that time. It was a vital stronghold during the reign of Henry IV and some of the forts and castles remain. It was in Toulon Harbor that the French scuttled their fleet at anchor to prevent its falling into Nazi hands. The majority of the population is connected in some way with the French Navy and commercial shipbuilding. Other major industries include cork factories, grape culture, vineyards and bottle factories.

We were in Toulon 2-7 February. The following underway period from 7-17 February included many challenging, interesting and varied exercises with Sixth Fleet carriers, cruisers and destroyers. Early one morning we received mail from the destroyer LIND. The seas were too angry for putting a small boat into the water hence bags of mail were passed to us using a high-line (line and pulleys like the clothes line behind a fourth floor flat in Queens). During the transfer evolution, the two ships proceeded along on parallel courses, quite close together. The LIND band seranaded us with three electric guitars and rendered such local favorites as Melancholy Baby, Wipe Out and Yellow Submarine. We were unable to provide reciprocal entertainment because our comb and paper artist could not play his instrument in the rain.

We entered the port of Livorno, Italy, during evening twilight of 17 February. While there, we experienced several violent windstorms of short duration similar to the "Santa Anna's" off Seal Beach. The inner harbor was a snug one, protected by man-made sea walls and we were sheltered from these blows. However, for the many yachts, schooners, catamarans and bumboats moving about, in and out of the harbor, the squalls were quite hazardous.

Livorno, an industrial city with few tourist traps, is different from most of the Italian Riviera ports. It is an ancient maritime city, formerly a part of the powerful Republic of Pisa and located in the province of Tuscany, 200 miles north of Rome. Pisa, with its awe inspiring Leaning Tower and Cathedral, both erected in the eleventh century, is inland from Livorno about ten miles. Only a few years ago (about 700), Pisa was a major seaport. Now

it is completely landlocked due to deposits of silt and sand dumped there by the Arno River in a manner similar to that of our own delta-building Mississippi. The Arno, incidentally, is the river that flooded Florence last December. The English name for Livorno is Leghorn and thus it was no surprise to find an abundance of cheese and chickens. Our reefers were two-blocked with those tasty products when we put out to sea.


Several United States and NATO military installations are located in the vicinity of Livorno. At Camp Darby there is a small army logistics base and headquarters for the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS). We were invited to use the Exchange and other facilities there to replenish personal needs.

We slipped out of Livorno early in the Morning of 23 February under a full moon and in a light fog. We proceeded down the Italian coast on the surface, past Elba (Napoleon's part time residence) and into Naples to embark several observers from the Staff of Submarine Flotilla EIGHT. There, also, ten of our group set off on a brief but memorable tour of Rome. We moved out to sea under the lee of the Isle of Capri and conducted short and electrifying exercises with a flotilla of Italian frigates.

Overall, this phase of the deployment finds us settled down into somewhat of a routine. Everyone is in good health and performing quite well. We have been complimented frequently by visitors on board for the excellent appearance of our ship and crew. These compliments were earned as a result of a great deal of diligent and effective work by everyone. We were commended at the end of our first six weeks of work at sea and in port by our Task Group Commanding Rear Admiral John Bulkeley, whose flag ship is the cruiser COLUMBUS, with the privilege of early liberty. You have probably heard of Admiral Bulkeley. He is the PT Boat Bulkeley that wrote the book "They Were Expendable" and is also the same fighting Admiral that cut Castro's water off at Guantanamo. Aside from the pleasure of having our efforts recognized by an unbiased and critical observer, the reward of early liberty itself is significant indeed. The additional hours ashore enabled us to range further afield to visit the hinterlands, historical sites at greater distances from the port, to make ski trips in the Alps and to visit Rome, Florence and a host of other intriguing places. Without early liberty we are not able to venture very far from the waterfront and waterfront areas are amazingly alike the world over (not unlike the boring sameness of driving on a fast turnpike or eating a tasteless hamburger at a rest stop in Lebanon, Missouri, or Eli, Nevada).

We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, but the most difficult part of the trip (the learning phase) is over. Already going-home time has become more than just some obscure date in the distant future and the days have begun to drag. I hope that all of you will continue to write as frequently as you have, for mail is, by far, the single most important happiness factor for each of us. Mail call is the big event of the day, or week as the case may be.

Our next port will be Cagliari, Sardinia. Navy ships seldom put into that port, and we know little about it. However, we have frequently cruised along the Sardinian Coast, where one can see an abundance of rocks, weeds and goats. From sea it looks like the homeland of Zorba. That couldn't be though, because Zorba the Greek was from Crete, wasn't he? I suppose that in the movie he just looked Italian. I'll tell you what we discover there when I write next.


W. B. HUBBELL
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