

USS CORPORAL (SS 346)
Fleet Post Office
New York, New York 09501

At Sea
16 December 1969

Dear Families and Friends of CORPORAL,

Things are going well with CORPORAL as we complete the first month of our deployment.

Our crossing was relatively uneventful despite rough seas for the majority of time. However, heavy seas are not a stranger to CORPORAL and we arrived Lisbon, Portugal on Wednesday, 26 November as scheduled. We spent until Saturday getting acquainted with that interesting city and learning how to pay for things in escudos. The Portuguese were warm and hospitable to us and I feel my men made a good impression on them.

We departed Lisbon on 29 November and spent Sunday off the coast of Spain diving and surfacing to qualify our newly reported men on diving stations and gave CORPORAL a thorough check out before arriving Rota.

We arrived Rota during darkness on Monday and were moored alongside the pier at sunrise. The early arrival was planned in order to provide sufficient time to complete "voyage repairs", those repairs that are always necessary after a lengthy trip. The majority of the repairs consisted of welding services for which we have only a limited capability. That our voyage repairs were so few can only be as a result of the thorough preparation made by the men before we departed New London. Thus our two day stay in Rota was primarily a working port visit to prepare for our entry into the Mediterranean and joining the SIXTH Fleet.

Departing Rota in the morning of December 3rd, we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar that afternoon and all were impressed at the ruggedness of the Rock of Gibraltar.

We arrived Toulon, France on Sunday, 7 December after two more days of heavy seas. The French submariners in Toulon showed us the ultimate in hospitality, friendliness and generosity and our three day visit was most enjoyable. The men became proficient (to a point) in using francs. Our host submarine DORIS invited a number of the men to lunch and there was a great deal of touring each other's submarine.

We departed Toulon on December 10th and are currently participating in a French/U.S. exercise involving aircraft carriers, surface ships aircraft and submarines. The seas have calmed and yesterday the surface was like a mirror, which, of course, is not good for us as it is difficult to keep from being seen by the "enemy forces". To assist us in the exercise we embarked a French submarine officer and he has

been most helpful, especially in translating the French language messages we receive. In exchange we provided the French submarine DORIS with LTJG Harold Tarbox for the duration of the exercise.

CORPORAL has a new Chief-of-the-Boat (COB), Senior Chief Petty Officer Lorenzo Michaud. Our former COB, Chief Petty Officer Bill Ervin received orders to Norfolk as a career counsellor and was awarded a letter of commendation for his outstanding services to CORPORAL over the past two years when he departed on 3 December.

Our ship's "doctor", Hospitalman First Class Thomas BISCOE proudly passed out cigars in Lisbon when he learned via a trans-Atlantic phone call that he was the father of an 8 pound, 13 ounce baby girl.

Ensign Philip Recht was promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade) on 23 November and appears to enjoy being referred to as Lieutenant instead of Ensign.

Torpedoman First Class Ronnie Mohr is doing a land office business in his barber shop (or "men's hair styling salon" as some refer to it).

Yeoman Third Class William Fletcher was advanced to Second Class Petty Officer on 16 December.

A number of men are making rings from coins under the tutelage of Chief Quartermaster Wesley Shelton. Chief Shelton even brought a gold plating kit along and he has produced some excellent looking jewelry.

Petty Officers Thomas Brown and David Starr departed on leave while we were in Toulon. They will rejoin the ship next week after touring Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

In closing, may I wish you a Happy Holiday Season. Our thoughts are always with you.

Respectfully,



J. P. SHEETS
Commander, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer