

U.S.S. NOA (DD-841)
F. P. O. NEW YORK
09501

1 August 1966

Dear Families and Friends of NOA:

The visit to BEIRUT, LEBANON was most enjoyable and many in the crew of NOA would liked to have remained longer. BEIRUT is a large modern city with much to see and do, there is something of interest for everyone. The port area is a beehive of activity. It is filled with ships of all types, from many nations, loading and unloading every kind of cargo. The city itself is a madhouse, made up of modern and not so modern buildings, narrow streets, many people and far too many automobiles, each and every one with its horn being blown.

In BEIRUT the lockers, nooks and crannies of NOA began to be loaded with purchases made in any of one of the hundreds of shops. It seems as if every man returning aboard NOA from liberty was carrying one or more packages under his arm. Looks like there will be many surprises for each one of you upon our return. BEIRUT is a wonderful place for shopping. I'm sure you wives, mothers, and friends, would have the time of your life shopping in the Indian Shops, Oriental Shops and goodness knows what other kind of shops.

A tour was arranged to BAALBECK to view the famous ruins of that ancient city. Cameras recorded the sights so that many of you will be able to enjoy it on film. Many of the men went to the American Embassy Beach Club to swim and just relax in the sun. This club is supported by the Americans assigned to the Embassy and the use of its facilities was very much appreciated by NOA. The men were shuttled back and forth between the ship and beach in a bus very graciously provided by the Lebanese Army. The driver couldn't understand a word of English and our Arabic was as bad or good.

As enjoyable things do, our visit came to an end and we left BEIRUT and steamed towards PORT SAID and the SUEZ CANAL. We moored in PORT SAID early in the afternoon and made many preparations for going through the canal. The most interesting item in preparation was the installation of our head light, a large light weighing about a ton which is suspended from the bow and is used to light the way at night. About midnight, with our canal pilot aboard, the NOA got underway and led a convoy of over 24 ships into the canal.

Steaming through the canal is like driving down a highway straddling the double line; just stay in the middle. A little after dawn we entered LAKE TIMSAH, changed pilots, and continued on our way. It was also about this time that we started to see the surrounding countryside.

The AFRICAN side was green in spots where the land was irrigated by water from the NILE RIVER. The ASIAN side was brown sandy desert as far as the eye could see. On the AFRICAN side we began to see herds of goats, mules and, believe it or not, camels as well as the people living near the canal.

After passing through LAKE TIMSAH the NOA again entered the canal and steamed on to GREAT BITTER LAKE where we anchored along with the rest of the convoy and waited until the north bound convoy passed. This was the first time we had had a chance to see the ships in our convoy. They were of all types and from many nations. The majority were large tankers headed for the oil fields of ARABIA. After the north bound convoy had passed we again got underway, entered the canal and with each passing mile noticed that the temperature was going up and up and it wasn't long before we knew it was hot.

Emerging from the canal we dropped our pilot and the head light and soon we were moored alongside the USS CONY. Everyone on the CONY seemed to welcome our arrival - they were all wearing big round patches proclaiming themselves to be "NOA BOOSTERS." At sunset the NOA left the CONY and headed south through the GULF of SUEZ and then entered the RED SEA.

On the morning of 21 July the NOA entered PORT SUDAN, REPUBLIC of SUDAN. This is a busy port serving the entire REPUBLIC of SUDAN. Here again we saw ships from all over the world. PORT SUDAN has a beautiful harbor and fine facilities, but the city is not for tourists. The city is sun baked, barren and rather uninviting, although, because it is so different it is interesting and somewhat intriguing. The surrounding area is basically desert.

I'm afraid that at this point we relaxed more than we worked. With temperatures well above 100°F, the highest was 118°F, few of us felt like working. Nevertheless, the men in the crew engaged in games of horseshoes, touch football, volleyball, and a little bit of softball. They even played a fast game of basketball with a team from the SUDANESE NAVY. Regret to report that the NOA lost by the unbelievable score of 28 to 13. A few of the men did take a tour to the old city of SWAKIN, now a dead city, which PORT SUDAN replaced in 1905. SWAKIN has been almost uninhabited for 60 years and has an ARABIC appearance untouched by any western architecture. The buildings are gradually falling down but you can imagine some of their old beauty. Reportedly the best part of the tour was the ride to and from SWAKIN. It was a rough ride but the sight of Nomadic people with their goats, tents and camels was quite unusual. About 60 men also enjoyed glass bottom boat

trips to the coral reefs just off the coast. Its called a marine garden and the coral formations and other marine growths are truely beautiful; however, the reef is dying and will soon lose its beauty.

The NOA turned our part of the pier in PORT SUDAN into a little bit of the United States and had an old fashioned cookout. The steaks were charcoal broiled by the cooks and stewards just as we liked them. After all is said about the heat, and the lack of things to do and see in PORT SUDAN, I believe that everyone enjoyed the visit, but we were glad to depart. Of course the period that was enjoyed the most in PORT SUDAN was just after the mail was passed out. Things were pretty quiet around the ship as each man found his favorite spot, opened, read and reread your letters. All of us look forward to receiving your letters and hearing about how things are at home.

On 24 July the NOA steamed out of PORT SUDAN and headed for the GULF OF ADEN and ADEN. Our visit to HODEIDA, YEMEN had been cancelled. We took 6 days to travel the short distance, making maximum use of the time to keep the NOA in good condition and to train in order to increase our readiness. Of interest is the fact that so far from home the NOA met a division of destroyers returning to the UNITED STATES after having completed a tour with the SEVENTH FLEET in VIETNAM. To them we extended our wishes for smooth sailing and a fast voyage home.

Our visit to ADEN was a short one, we replenished our fuel supply and then got underway and steamed through the GULF OF ADEN and back into the RED SEA enroute to MASSAWA, ERITREA (ETHIOPIA) for a 5 day visit. In MASSAWA we expect to receive and send mail on a daily basis, a most welcome change.

As many of you know the military services were granted a pay raise commencing on 1 July 1966. This pay raise averages 3.2% of base pay for all personnel in the services. On a monthly basis the pay raise is rather small in terms of dollars, but if invested in Savings Bonds by monthly allotments its amazing how fast your savings can grow. Some of the men have made out such allotments - when the need arises they will have a good nest egg.

Congratulations are in order for the following named men serving in NOA who have recently been promoted or will soon be promoted:

M. B. BROOKS to Chief Petty Officer (Boilerman)
G. C. CUTLER to Petty Officer Third Class (Signalman)

D. E. WEIMERT to Petty Officer Third Class (Sonar Technician)
S. M. MORAGA to Petty Officer Third Class (Steward)
J. P. TAYLOR to Petty Officer Third Class (Electronics Technician)
L. C. WHITE to Petty Officer Third Class (Shipfitter)
S. T. HOLDEN to Petty Officer Third Class (Electronics Technician)
R. W. HONAKER to Petty Officer Third Class (Machinist Mate)
D. S. SNELL to Petty Officer Third Class (Electronics Technician)
C. E. SMITH to Petty Officer Third Class (Gunners Mate)

A special word of congratulations to Chief Petty Officer BROOKS. Advancement to Chief Petty Officer is an achievement of which he can be justly proud. In being advanced Chief Brooks joins a long line of exceptional men who have served the United States with pride and devotion.

All departments in NOA are beginning to prepare a long range leave schedule covering the period 21 October 1966 to about mid-June 1967. During that period the NOA's operations will be almost the same as last year. In so far as possible I would like to see the men in the crew granted leave when they want it and for reasonable periods of time. This does have to be tempered with the operational needs of NOA. If there are certain times when you would like your husband or son to take leave won't you write and let him know so that his request may be placed on the long range leave schedule. Be assured that every effort is made to satisfy each and every request made by your husbands and sons.

By 1 September the NOA will publish the duty section list which will be effective upon our return to MAYPORT. This will enable all of you to make your plans for our return to home-port. Again the NOA duty section list will be on a six-section basis. It will continue on that basis so long as sufficient highly trained men are available in NOA to properly provide the necessary security.

With the passing of time the NOA's deployment is now about one third completed. The date of NOA's return to MAYPORT remains as 21 October and as you can see from my words above preparations are already being made for that day.

The officers and men of NOA extend their congratulations to Seaman Radioman and Mrs. Charles William Perry on the occasion of the birth of their first and second child, twins.

I appreciate the letters you have written showing interest in the NOA's operations and daily happenings. The NOA still has the finest crew of any ship in the Navy and certainly the men are most fortunate to have such lovely and devoted wives, loving parents and thoughtful friends.

And so as the hot sun slowly sinks into the blazing desert:

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. W. Doescher', with a stylized, flowing script.

W. W. DOESCHER
Commanding Officer
USS NOA (DD 841)