

USS NOA (DD 841)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
New York, New York

4 February 1964

Dear Families and Friends of NOA,

This is the first "Family Gram" I have prepared since relieving CDR SCHETTINO as Commanding Officer on 30 December, and I would like to say that I am very proud and honored to have been selected to lead our fine ship and crew.

Since many new members have been received in the crew in recent weeks, I believe it would be best to commence this first report with a little background and introduction to the ship for the benefit of our new friends. The NOA was named in honor of a Midshipman hero who was killed by Filipino insurgents in 1901. She is the second ship to bear the name, the first NOA having been sunk during the Normandy invasion in 1944. Probably the most interesting and widely publicized incident in the ship's history was the recovery of the Freedom Seven space craft piloted by Colonel John Glenn in February 1962.

NOA is commonly referred to in Navy terms as a "general purpose" destroyer, which, as the term implies, means that she is capable of performing a great many operational tasks. These include Anti-Submarine warfare, Anti-Air warfare, patrolling, picket duty and plane guard duties with aircraft carriers. You can see that the crew is required to know a great deal, but at the same time life on board is seldom dull and is always challenging. I'm sure that your husbands and sons in the crew will agree with me when I say that the destroyer sailor is the most versatile and best qualified sea going man in the Navy.

At present we are in our home port, Mayport, Florida, readying the ship for a deployment of about six months in the Mediterranean area. The pre-deployment period is usually the most hectic and busy time in connection with any overseas movement. It is particularly hard on our supply and repair personnel since all spares must be on board and all equipment must be in top working order before departure.

I have been very favorably impressed with the can-do spirit displayed by the crew thus far during this period. Since I know from experience that this attitude can not be fully attained without backing at home, I would like to thank each of you for the obvious presence of this backing.

Now a word about the future. NOA will depart Mayport on 8 February and arrive in the Mediterranean the latter part of the month. Once there we will become members of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and the schedule will be about equally divided between fleet operations and port visits. Ports of call have not yet been selected, but I am sure they will include some if not all of the better known ports in Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The ship expects to return to Mayport the last of July.

There will be many interesting and exciting things for your husbands and sons to see during deployment but no experience will replace the thrill of receiving a letter from home. If you could ever experience the excitement and anticipation with which "Mail Call" is greeted in a ship after a long period at sea, you would never forget it. In general, our mail service will be very good, sometimes as little as two days for air mail from the U.S. However, in spite of all the efforts put into fleet mail delivery, there will be times when the ship will not be heard from for considerable periods of time. Please don't despair but keep the letters coming. I doubt that you can imagine how much they are appreciated. The correct address is:

Name, Rate, Division  
USS NOA (DD 841)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
New York, New York 09501

In case an emergency arrives while the ship is deployed the following information will be helpful to you in deciding what action to take. If in your opinion the emergency is of a nature serious enough to require your son's or husband's presence, the first thing you should do is get in touch with the American Red Cross. They will forward, at no cost to you, a verified request for the presence of your serviceman at home. The initial contact with the Red Cross is very important, since the ship is unable to take action on an emergency leave request until Red Cross verification is obtained.

If you desire to communicate directly and as rapidly as possible with your husband or son, you can reach him by sending a telegram to the following address:

Name, Rate, Service Number  
USS NOA (DD 841)  
U.S. Naval Communications Office  
Washington, D. C.

An organization which can be of great help to you should the need arise is the Navy Relief Society. In Mayport they can be reached by calling CH 9-9071, extension 408.

In January it was my pleasure to advance the following named men to their respective ratings:

BARLING, M. M.	EM3	LUTZ, W. F.	IC2
CLAAR, D.J.	MM3	PROVASI, R.F.	MM3
EXLER, F. G.	EM3		

I extend the best of luck to the many candidates that will be taking advancement in rating exams early in February and hope that future Family Grams will contain long lists of advancements.

I would be pleased to hear from you personally at any time and would like to know what you are most interested in hearing about in the Family Gram. With best wishes during our separation.

Sincerely,



H. B. GIBBS

Commander, U.S. Navy  
Commanding Officer