



U. S. S. SOMERS (DD-947)

CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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My dear Mr. & Mrs. Engelhardt,

Many months have passed since I addressed my first letter to you talking about the nature of SOMERS' coming deployment to the Western Pacific Ocean and the reason for it. Now we are looking back on a deployment successfully completed and are eagerly anticipating our return to San Diego.

In July I wrote about our memorable visit to Australia and participation in the nineteenth anniversary celebration of the victory of U. S. and Australian forces in the Battle of the Coral Sea. At the time of that writing we were on duty with the Taiwan Patrol Force which maintains a constant watch between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. These patrol duties kept us operating for about 6 weeks in and out of Kaohsiung, the second largest city on Taiwan.

Following these duties, we visited Hong Kong for seven days. This small, but important, British Crown Colony bordering on Communist China, is one of the great seaports of the world and is always a high point in any Western Pacific deployment. Most of us went broke while taking advantage of the many fine shopping opportunities there.

Next came Subic Bay in the Philippines where we spent two weeks in a maintenance status followed by a week of underway training in anti-aircraft, surface, and shore bombardment exercises. We also spent several days working with two ships of the Philippine Navy during which time we exchanged officers and enlisted personnel in order to improve the value of the training received.

On August 18 SOMERS was dispatched by our Squadron Commander, Captain T. S. KING, in reply to a distress message received from the M.V. BASCO, a 168 ton vessel which had run aground on a rock shelf some 100 yards off Bongon Point, Mindoro Occidental, about 100 miles south of Manila. Forty-seven passengers, mostly women and children, were ferried to the beach from the stricken vessel in a rubber liferaft by an eight-man rescue team from SOMERS. For her efforts in the rescue operation, SOMERS received national and international press coverage. Perhaps you read about it in your local newspaper.

In late August we commenced operations in a fast carrier task group composed of Destroyer Division 51 and USS TIGUARDROGA (CVA 14). These operations were mixed with visits to Manila and Subic Bay and

terminated on 2 October when we departed the Philippines for Japan. At the moment, we are in Yokosuka, having arrived on 6 October and having, just this morning, weathered the passage of TYPHOON VIOLET. Only a few days remain before we sail eastward to San Diego with intermediate stops at Midway Island and Pearl Harbor, Oahu.

During the port visits mentioned above SOMERS' men have played active roles in furthering the President's People-to-People Program and have helped strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between our country and those we have visited. Examples of these efforts follow: Prior to our departure from San Diego, 388 large cartons of "Operation Handclasp" medical supplies were loaded on board. These supplies, donations from companies in the U.S. were delivered to the Naval authorities in Kaohsiung and were distributed to the Red Cross society of Nationalist China.

One day while we were in Kaohsiung it was learned that the supply of blood in the local blood bank had become exhausted; a missionary doctor had found it necessary, twice in the same day, to use his own blood to save his patients lives! Upon hearing of this need for blood, the men of SOMERS responded, swamping the blood bank with volunteers.

In conjunction with two other ships in our division, SOMERS conducted a voluntary campaign for contributions to buy orthopedic leg braces for the polio and tuberculosis afflicted children of the Christian Clinic of Ping Tung South, a city near Kaohsiung. Because of lack of funds this missionary-sponsored clinic was unable to provide leg braces for the children. SOMERS men contributed money to buy about 30 braces.

An emergency call for blood donors was made by the Zamboanga Chapter of the Philippine National Red Cross in the city of Olongapo during the evening of 22 August. Crew members of SOMERS responded to the call.

Two of SOMERS' entertainment groups, the Coachmen and the Emblems, were featured on the popular Manila TV show "Student Canteen" on 5 and 6 September. Both acts received very favorable response from the studio and TV audiences.

There were other occasions when our men responded to a call for assistance, or when our musical groups furnished entertainment for some event while we were guests in a foreign port. I am very proud of the men of SOMERS for their willingness to extend a helping hand and for their exemplary conduct while on liberty ashore. In whatever foreign port we show the flag, our sailors are our country's best ambassadors. I am sure that because of SOMERS' fine men the United States is in better regard in the minds of our Asian friends.

I am also pleased and proud of the professional performance of SOMERS' men. Because of their superb performance, competitive spirit, fine teamwork, and devotion to duty, SOMERS won "E" awards in every category for which they were given in Fiscal Year 1961. She was the only destroyer in the fleet to accomplish this clean sweep. As a result, the Chief of Naval Operations announced two days ago that SOMERS has won the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award for the second straight year. This award proclaims SOMERS as the best destroyer in the Pacific, a fitting climax to our cruise.

Since our departure from San Diego on 6 April, we have spent 101 days at sea, visited 14 different ports, and steamed more than 34,000 miles. We have worked hard, had some good times ashore, made friends for Uncle Sam, and missed our loved ones at home. Soon we shall be with them again and will be even more thankful that we have had the opportunity of helping to protect the way of life which we pray they will always be privileged to enjoy.

Sincerely,



WAYNE D. SURFACE
Commander, U. S. Navy
Commanding Officer