



U. S. S. SOMERS (DDG-34)
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601

IN REPLY REFER TO:
8 April 1974

Dear Family and Friends of SUPERSOMERSMEN:

As we conclude eight weeks of intensive operations in the Indian Ocean and begin the first leg of the long transit home, I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on SOMERS' activities and to again note that throughout this phase of the deployment the performance of SOMERSMEN has been consistently superb.

Since departing Singapore on 26 February, SOMERS has been engaged in comprehensive and prolonged integrated task group training ranging from tactical maneuvers executed by flag-boat to the perfection of advanced anti-air warfare techniques. In addition, SOMERS' engineers successfully completed a fifteen knot economy trial, the produce of long hours of maintenance which has resulted in increased fuel and water conservation during plant operation.

SOMERS departed Singapore on the morning of 26 February after a two week upkeep period at Sembawang Shipyard. Our stay had been highlighted by the selection of First Class Signalman James CHAPLIN as SUPERSOMERSMAN of the Year. Petty Officer CHAPLIN was presented with a perpetual trophy for his professional performance, leadership and dedication to duty throughout 1973. Also receiving recognition at the awards ceremony held on SOMERS' Tartar Deck were First Class Operations Specialist Carl M. BOWMAR and Third Class Electronics Technician Douglas COPE who were presented Good Conduct Medals, and Second Class Boiler Technician Gary ROTT, Third Class Ship's Serviceman Bruce JOHNSON and Third Class Storekeeper Ronald KRINER who were advanced in rate. Seaman Charles GOUDY was selected as SUPERSOMERSMAN for January.

Transiting northward through the straits of Malacca, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, SOMERS entered Indian Ocean waters on the morning of 27 February. There, SOMERS rendezvoused with Carrier Task Group 77.7, under the command of Rear Admiral Donald C. DAVIS, and comprised of USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63), USS KIRK (DE 1087) and USS BRONSTEIN (DE 1037). Continuing westward, the task group staged a mock missile battle with the USS BAINBRIDGE (DLGN 25) task group, prior to relieving that unit as the United States' Indian Ocean Squadron. Captain Robert C. CONOLLY II, USN, Commander Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-THREE shifted his flag to SOMERS and embarked his staff for a second consecutive Indian Ocean operational period, this time as Carrier Screen Commander.

Training and exercises commenced immediately with the focus on anti-air warfare. First Class Operations Specialist Carl M. BOWMAR and Lieutenant (junior grade) John FOERST extended their qualifications as air intercept controllers, providing radar vectors to pilots of KITTY HAWK's fighter aircraft that simulated hostile air contacts. The order of the day was training, in all phases of Naval Operations, and yet in the midst of the busy schedule there was time for one of the most memorable moments of the cruise on the afternoon of 11 March when SOMERS departed the task group to render assistance to the small merchant vessel CURRO and her crew which had been adrift for three days in the Northern Arabian Sea on a journey from Karachi, Pakistan to Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates. SOMERS took the crippled vessel in tow, provided water and stores for her Arab crew of six and, during the evening of the eleventh, manufactured repair parts for her propeller shaft. The job was supervised by Chief Machinist Mate Donald PRIER and Second Class Engineman Joel BUDKE. The following morning, Chief Sonar Technician John TRIARCHIS and Damage Control Assistant Ensign Vincent D. La CAVA donned SCUBA tanks to refit the damaged propeller shaft. Repairs complete, the CURRO departed under her own power supplied with provisions and navigational information.

Rejoining the task group, SOMERS found that the pace had not slackened, and participated in a major two-day anti-air warfare exercise while steaming south for an appointment with Davey Jones, His Majesty King Neptune and his court of trusty, loyal Shellbacks who have welcomed mariners from all nations into their domain at the moment of crossing the Equator since the earliest of times. SOMERS was given the order to heave to on the morning of 19 February by King Neptune himself, (Chief Boatswain's Mate Wilburn BARNETT), and Davey Jones (First Class Sonar Technician Eugene HIGGINS) supervised the proper initiation of all "Pollywogs" of whom I, having never crossed the Equator in all my years of Naval Service, was one. Some two hundred shipmates, the Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Richard WYTENBACH among them, shared the same fate and spent the better part of the day pinned down by firehoses on the bow, or paying homage to King Neptune in a manner I'll let your SOMERSMAN personally recount at a later time. The day was climaxed by a barbeque and hamburger cook-out on the ASROC deck late in the afternoon, a far cry from Third Class Commissaryman Robert CORIO's "Pollywog Breakfast".

Traveling north once more, SOMERS' Gunner's Mates and Fire Control Technicians under the supervision of Chief Fire Control Technician Mark WAGEMAKER and First Class Gunner's Mate James CROWE, demonstrated their proficiency by firing against a towed target, and then it was SOMERS' turn to provide services, towing the sled for gunnery practice by USS MISPELLION (AO 105) and USS KIRK (DE 1087). A practice torpedo attack followed several days later with SOMERS firing against an experimental target designed to simulate a submarine. The exercise was in-

tended to evaluate the target's performance, and after tracking the device for over five hours, Second Class Sonar Technicians Mike Zemaitis and John ENGLE were ready to give it a gold star.

SOMERS continued in her role as diplomat which started with the hosting of the Australian Frigate PARRAMATTA back in November, by serving as the official representative for the Government and the United States Navy during a four day port visit to Karachi, Pakistan. As senior Naval officer present, Commodore CONOLLY utilized his flagship, SOMERS, to host a luncheon and tours for several senior Pakistani Naval officers and the American Consul General, M. Gordon TIGER. SUPERSOMERSMEN extended their own brand of goodwill, participating in basketball games and a rugby match, notching victories in each endeavor. During the port visit, Third Class Ship's Serviceman Rudy TAMAYO opened his ship's store to American teachers and their families residing in Karachi for the purchase of items not readily available in Pakistan. SOMERSMEN found tremendous buys on wood carvings and brass available in the Mid-Eastern port city, and some even took advantage of perhaps their only opportunity to ever ride a camel.

Departing Karachi on the morning of 30 March, SOMERS rejoined the KITTY HAWK task group for the final period of Indian Ocean operations, the highlight of which was undoubtedly the visit of the Shah of Iran accompanied by Admiral Thomas MOORER, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to KITTY HAWK on 8 April as one of the scheduled events of the CENTO conference. SOMERSMEN; along with the officers and crew of other task group units, manned the rail in tropical whites as the Shah and Admiral MOORER trooped the line and reviewed the ships and men from one of KITTY HAWK's helicopters. The afternoon was capped by an air show staged by KITTY HAWK's air group featuring precision flying and live weapons demonstrations.

SOMERS bid farewell to Lieutenant Commander Richard H. WYTENBACH on April 6th who, after completing a 19 month tour of duty as Executive Officer, has been assigned to the Staff of Commander Naval Forces Marianas on the Island of Guam.

SOMERS extended a warm welcome aboard to Lieutenant Commander Jere G. MACKIN, who relieved LCDR WYTENBACH as Executive Officer.

Second Class Electricians Mate Leroy KISSLER was selected as SOMERSMAN of the month for February and was presented a ship's plaque at an awards ceremony held on 31 March at which time Second Class Gunner's Mate Technician Kenneth DELK received the Navy Good Conduct Medal and Third Class Storekeeper Wayne BROWN and Third Class Electricians Mate Erlando CABUGOS were advanced in rate.

SOMERS will be departing the Indian Ocean very shortly, and following a quick stop in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, for a brief upkeep period, will be leaving the Western Pacific for a long awaited reunion with family and friends in Pearl Harbor on either 11 or 13 May. At present, Destroyer Squadron 35's chaplain Lieutenant Larry SHARPE, CHC, USNR is scheduled to arrive in Pearl Harbor about 1 MAY, prior to SOMERS returning and should be available for assistance or information as to specific information about SOMERS berth assignment and arrival time. The Chaplain's office may be reached at X-32100, 25188. From off base, Pearl Harbor extensions can be reached by dialing the Navy prefix 43 and then the extension. Other phone numbers that might be useful are as follows:

Personal Services Center Building	93 X-26193,28240
Household Goods	423-1361
Navy Relief	423-1314
American Red Cross	X-27100

As SOMERS turns homeward, there is much to reflect upon operational achievements, the furthering of diplomatic relations, places visited and lasting friendships formed.

Over a period of six months together we have become a team capable of professionally accomplishing any mission assigned. My thanks go out to all of you for your unfailing support through the entire period of the deployment. For the SOMERSMEN and their families who will be detaching upon or shortly after, our arrival in Pearl Harbor, congratulations on a job well done; you have earned the title of SUPER.

For those reporting to this command, welcome aboard, we're glad to have you and anxious to meet you. There remains much to do in the months ahead.

Warmest regards,


H. L. PABST