

HEINZ PARK

USS MANSFIELD (DD-728)  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

10 November 1967

Dear MANSFIELD Family,

Since this is my first "FAMILYGRAM" since assuming command of the USS MANSFIELD (DD-728), I want to introduce myself to you. My name is Jack R. GRIFFIN and I am a native of Long Beach, California and a graduate of the University of Southern California. Prior to assuming command of MANSFIELD I served in various billets including Commanding Officer of USS COOK (APD-130), Executive Officer/Navigator of USS HAVERFIELD (DER-393), and Weapons Officer on the SEVENTH Fleet flagship, USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6). My wife, Kathleen and six children, Michael, Ross, Kelli, Deborah, and twins, Carl and Marianne, reside in Yokosuka.

MANSFIELD left Yokosuka the last of February and after a brief stop at Subic Bay, R.P., we headed for our assigned station as part of Southern Air Rescue Unit (SAR). This is an important assignment where our primary purpose was to pick-up downed pilots off the coast of Vietnam. We remained on station until mid-April when we returned to Yokosuka the 19th of April for upkeep and repairs.

Early in May we again headed south as we were assigned duty with a Naval Gunfire Support Unit to provide gunfire support to United States, Vietnamese and South Korean troops fighting in the Republic of Vietnam. This type of assignment is a very demanding one and every man responded to the challenge that was constantly ours. The ship not only provided direct gunfire support to allied fighting forces, but also provided harrassment and interdiction fire throughout the nights.

By this time we were ready for our next assignment, four days in Hong Kong for R&R (Rest and Recreation). This British Crown Colony is a beautiful spot to see and offers some of the finest food to be eaten anywhere.

While in Hong Kong, Lieutenant Commander Robert W. KESTELOOT reported to MANSFIELD and relieved Lieutenant Commander R. W. BLAES as Executive Officer. Lieutenant Commander BLAES reported to Staff, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor for duty. Our new Executive Officer comes to the MANSFIELD from Staff, Commander SEVENTH Fleet. He is married and has two children, Walter, seven and Amy, six, living in Japan with his wife, Videe.

On 2 June with our stomachs full and our wallets empty, we steamed out of Hong Kong and returned to the area of the shores of the Republic of Vietnam. Once again our assignment was providing gunfire support for allied troops.

On 24 June we arrived in Subic Bay for four days of upkeep for the ship and some rest for the crew.

On leaving Subic MANSFIELD was still called on to use her guns, but was sent to a different kind of operation. Our assigned mission was to interdict enemy shipping near the North Vietnamese coastline. This type of waterborne traffic continues to be one of the Communist's main supply routes for their war of infiltration into South Vietnam. The ship left this duty 15 July and arrived in Yokosuka on 19 July to begin her restricted availability (RAV). RAV is time spent in repairing and overhauling all major machines on the ship. It is also time to fix and paint up compartments and in general to bring the appearance of the ship up to the highest standards of readiness. During this time Chief TONEY was selected Chief of the Year Afloat. Following the RAV was the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) which determines the combat readiness of the ship. MANSFIELD's performance indicated readiness for combat.

With the RAV and ORI behind us, MANSFIELD left Yokosuka and returned to the area of operations she previously held and worked once again in the business of stopping the Communists water supply route. On 25 September, exactly eleven months after the MANSFIELD was first fired on by Communist's North Vietnamese shore batteries, she was fired on again. This time she sustained one hit which resulted in the death of one man and seriously wounding two others. The officers and crew responded in an outstanding manner during this attack, and were able to silence the enemy shore batteries.

On 1 October MANSFIELD returned to Yokosuka for repairs and upkeep.

With repairs complete and the ship in prime condition, we returned to action in the Northern I Corps near the DMZ, providing Naval gunfire support for the Third Marine Division and Allied forces. During this period MANSFIELD destroyed four and damaged ten Viet Cong structures, destroyed one and damaged four Waterborne Logistic Craft, and killed twelve North Vietnamese.

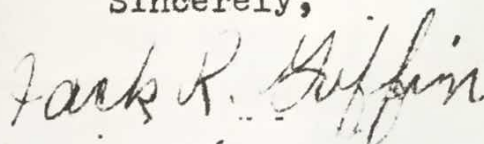
After two weeks on the "gunline", the crew enjoyed another five day R and R period in Hong Kong.

MANSFIELD departed Hong Kong and after successfully evading Typhoon EMMA returned to the Northern I Corps near the DMZ to resume naval gunfire support. On one "routine" mission the burning debris from two North Vietnamese artillery sites, located in the DMZ, paid tribute to the accurate naval gunfire from our powerful guns. MANSFIELD also delivered her 21,000th round of five inch projectiles against enemy forces in the Vietnamese conflict during this period. As this FAMILYGRAM is being written our guns are firing new missions.

As you know MANSFIELD is often given assignments which take her into "Harm's Way", I want to assure you that every precaution and method of protection is being used. Our crew is a well-trained and well-disciplined team which functions effectively. We are constantly seeking to perfect our teamwork because we know that the best defense is a trained, responsive and ready offense.

If at any time I can be of assistance to you concerning your sailor, please feel free to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack R. Griffin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jack R. GRIFFIN  
Commanding Officer