

USS HUGH PURVIS (DD-709)
FLEET POST, OFFICE
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Dear Friends and Families of the USS HUGH PURVIS,

At the beginning of this new year of 1963 I wish to avail myself of the opportunity of taking some time to tell you briefly of the activities and the wanderings of HUGH PURVIS and her crew during the year of 1962.

While the hours and days of 1962 were long and in some cases tedious, we have lived through such a diversity of activities that I am sure each man has been very interested in at least one phase of operations and in most cases even more. Naturally a schedule like ours requires a great amount of time away from our home port. Many of you are intimately aware of this and it is to you in particular I wish to write this letter, and hope that in a small way you may be able to relive some of our experiences; the successes and failures - the pleasant times along with those that were routine. Where but in the Navy could a young man participate in the recovery of an astronaut; play host to guests of the Navy Department at the America's Cup races; rise to a sudden call and race to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during the Cuban Crisis; spend four months in a shipyard instead of four weeks as was originally scheduled; and in between all these things be an active participant in the development, testing and evaluating of some of the Navy's very newest defensive measures and weapons particularly designed for the Destroyer? These are just some of the moments of 1962, and I shall attempt to depict some of them in more detail, but as you can see, the demands placed on our men were varied, requiring the best of intelligence, hard work, military behavior, personal smartness and courtesy. I can say with little fear of contradiction that, in each and every case, our men of PURVIS have stood up to the task before them and performed in the best traditions of the Navy. I've been very proud to have commanded this ship during the past year.

Our first real assignment came early in 1962 when we were assigned to Task Force 140, along with some 18 other ship, to act as the recovery force for LT COL John GLENN in the Project Mercury triple orbit shot of "FRIENDSHIP 7". For several weeks prior to the scheduled date of the launching of the astronaut, we drilled in the several types of recovery methods and on the day after New Years day, PURVIS left Newport and steamed to her recovery station southwest of the Azores. As you may remember the shot was delayed for many days due to several technical delays, but mostly due to inclement weather. We patrolled for six weeks and were lucky enough to have three days in Bermuda. As you may remember the laurels went, to USS NOA for the recovery. I know that all hands would have been very proud to have had the chance to pick up COL GLEN ourselves, on that historic occasion.

The ship returned to Newport on the 22nd of February for a much needed upkeep period, For the next month or so we engaged in Development Operations in the Newport area and on the 12th of April entered the Boston Naval Shipyard, to receive the final installation of deck and electronic equipment to be used with the DASH (Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopter) which we are in the process of

testing today. We also received a new type of sonar. Well, four months later, after many delays, and problems in installation we finally left the yard to return to Newport. After a brief stay at home we were traveling south to Key West, Florida. Our job in Key West was to test and evaluate a new type of Anti-Submarine Warfare equipment.

The evaluation went very well and the ship was heartily congratulated by Commander Key West Test and Evaluation Detachment for doing a fine job. Special credit must be given to the Sonarmen and CIC personnel who spent many hours in their job. The interesting sideline to the project, was the sighting of several Russian Freighters bound for Cuba. We sailed close by several, noticing heavy equipment and boxes on the deck.

In early September we departed Key West enroute to Newport where we were to arrive the day prior the beginning of the America's Cup Races. I think, judging from the remarks and letters from many of our guests, we made a very favorable impression. The two weeks of the races were very pleasant and I believe that all of the crew enjoyed the spectacle and excitement of sports history in the making.

Finally after two weeks of Development Operations, on the week of October 22nd, we were given our first opportunity to have some time alongside the piers in Newport, for well deserved rest and repairs, but I think you all know what happened on October 22nd. President KENNEDY made his speech announcing the quarantine of Cuba. That speech was on a Monday and on Thursday we got our call, at 9:30 exactly, notifying us that we were to leave that afternoon. Captain DACEY, Commander Destroyer Development Group Two, and, incidentally our boss, accompanied by his staff boarded PURVIS and at 6:30 P.M. we sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On the way down we ran through the beginning of a hurricane. It wasn't bad, but for two days we were blanketed by heavy rains and driving winds. This was not a new experience for us as, earlier in the year, we were caught in Hurricane ALMA, though at the time we were only notified that it was a tropical disturbance. On Monday the 29th of October at 6:30 A.M. we slipped quietly into Guantanamo Bay, though we were challenged by three U.S. Warships which were already on station. The officers and crew were at a high pitch when we arrived. Strenuous training in all types of general drills, gunfire support, boarding and search, were carried on during the trip to Cuba and during the couple of weeks there. Later when we became aware that the main threat had passed, life in PURVIS settled down to a wary routine. We were always ready and, though fortunately were never called on to act, I know that we could have held our own. One thing of particular note was that though this ship had been steaming steadily for almost four months with but a few days idle, we were able to keep all of our equipment in good working order. A special well done must go to the Engineering Department for this achievement, though all members of the crew, sensing the importance of the mission, did their best and it was a very good showing. On the 19th of November we left Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to head North and begin the operational test of DASH, the remote controlled helicopter, which had been the focus of our attention up to the present and will be for the next few months. The first phase of the evaluation is being conducted in Norfolk, Virginia. The DASH is an important development for the Navy and particularly for destroyers and it is our job to give this helicopter the first real operational workout aboard ship.

This letter has been long and, perhaps laborious, however it has been my attempt been my attempt to bring you up to date. I can in no way express the pride I feel in all hands for making our achievements possible. As I have said, I feel singularly fortunate in having been entrusted command of such fine ship and no one knows better than I that any ship is only the outward manifestation of the skill and determination of the crew who man her. They are the ones who make her reputation, and what ever credit she receives for our several accomplishments belong to those whom love; your husbands, your sons, your brothers, your sweethearts. God bless them all in this new year and in the years to come.

Sincerely yours,

SIGNED BY:

J. C. LINVILLE

(Microsoft Word automatically reformatted this document from the original, which was scanned in and processed by optical character recognition software. The original wording was left intact. EES)