

Letter written by the Public Affairs Officer and signed by the Commanding Officer
Charles P. Tesh, CDR - 1966 WESTPAC Cruise

USS KING (DLG-10)
FPO San Francisco 96601

Dear KINGS'S KIN,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of our activities since leaving San Diego in late May. As has been the normal operations of the KING of the FRIGATES, this period has been one of much hard work and little play. As we steam on station today and before we arrive in port again, we will have spent ninety-eight days at sea with but twelve days in port. The majority of our inport time was enjoyed during our transit to WESPAC.

From 1 to 5 June, we mixed business with pleasure during our visit to Pearl Harbor. There we underwent our Operational Readiness Inspection, in which we received a grade of Excellent. During our liberty time all hands took advantage of the pleasant weather and the unique sight-seeing opportunities of famed Waikiki and other less famous but equally beautiful remote shore areas. Included was a tour of the Island of Oahu by thirty members of the crew.

On 6 June, we bade farewell to Diamond Head and set sail for Yokosuka, Japan. We participated in a missile shoot against the last REGULUS missile in the U. S. Navy Arsenal, off the beautiful island of KAUAI in the Hawaiian Islands. The KINGSMEN came through with a typical Outstanding performance, scoring a direct hit on that REGULUS target and sending it down in flames. The subsequent nine day transit over 5,700 miles of fair weather and calm seas passed uneventfully and we steamed into Yokosuka Harbor on 14 June. For many of the crew, this was their first glimpse of the Orient, and it proved to be an enjoyable experience. During our short stay, a night tour of Tokyo, the world's largest city, proved an enlightening side light of our cruise.

On 17 June, we left Mt. Fuji behind and sailed for Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, arriving there on 22 June for three days of upkeep and recreation. There we readied the ship for the final leg of the transit to our station off the coast of Viet Nam. While at Subic, Captain M. M. GANTAR and his staff moved aboard and we became flagship of DESTROYER SQUADRON FIFTEEN. We departed Subic on 26 June and conducted gunnery exercises on the way to DaNang, where we underwent intensive briefings and exercises to prepare us for our assignment as a Search and Rescue Unit.

As you have undoubtedly read in the newspapers, 1 July was an eventful day for the KINGSMEN. This was the day of the attack by North Vietnamese PT boats. All of our hard work and intensive training proved well worthwhile as the entire ship responded in true KING tradition. We picked up several survivors of the sunken PT boats but only after putting swimmers in the water to subdue them.

The rest of our first tour on station passed comparatively peacefully as far as enemy action is concerned but we were bent busy with the rescue of five downed pilots, including one rescued from deep within North Vietnamese territory over land north of Haiphong. After 35 continuous strenuous days at sea, we were all eagerly anticipating our trip to Hong Kong on 3 August when the ship's schedule was modified. Our unique NTDS capabilities necessitated the change because we are one of only two ships in WESPAC available for the new assignment in which we are presently employed. Since undertaking this new assignment the KING has rescued three downed pilots - two Air Force and one Navy.

We are now scheduled to go to Hong Kong in mid-September, so looking at the bright side, there will be more money available to spend in that shopping wonderland, therefore, I urge each of you to keep your shopping lists up-to-date.

Another recent schedule change has tentatively extended our deployment approximately five weeks, until other MTDS ships are available in WESTPAC. KING should now return to San Diego shortly before Christmas and hopefully well armed with holiday presents.

I would like to let each of you know that your husband, son, or sweetheart has been doing an especially fine job, despite the many long hours and hard work since our departure, in keeping the ship running and operationally ready. All this has been accomplished in the presence of less than pleasant heat and in the absence of leisure periods for rest and relaxation. Their performance has lived up to the high KING standards and has been a source of great pleasure to me.

Warm regards
Charles P. King