



THE DICTIONARY DEFINES SEAHORSES AS:  
THE MYTHICAL CREATURES WHICH TOW THE SEA-GOD'S CHARIOTS.

THE MYTH, IS REAL.

GRASP

USS GRASP ARS - 51



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS GRASP (ARS-51)  
FPO NEW YORK, N.Y. 09570-3220

16 SEP 1987

From the Captain.....

Dear USS GRASP Families,

With this, the last familygram of our 1987 Mediterranean deployment, may I express my appreciation for your sustained patience and support of GRASP and her crew. This continued support was instrumental in sustaining the positive and high morale of the crew of GRASP and significantly contributed to the operational standard of excellence established by the USS GRASP on her first overseas deployment. I know that each of you has taken pride in the contribution made by this crew in the continuation of peace in this area of the world.

The crew of GRASP, of whom I am extremely proud, have responded in a totally professional manner, with a "can do" attitude that has won compliments for these past months of hard work from commands throughout the Mediterranean. Whether it was the successful completion of an arduous operational commitment or our representation as ambassador's of goodwill during scheduled port visits, the crew of GRASP ensured that our demonstrated expertise as SIXTH FLEET's number one salvage asset remained as the hallmark of our reputation as professional sailors and salvors.

There are a few individuals that I would personally like to recognize for their individual contribution to the success of this deployment. First, a very special thank you to our command OMBUDSMAN, Mrs. Daphne Betterton and our family support group chairman, Mrs. Leah Carter. Their willingness to step forward and assume the vital and challenging positions as our official Navy Family Representatives is noteworthy and greatly appreciated. Your support of the GRASP family throughout this six month deployment has been truly outstanding.....and every crewmember aboard thanks you. The support and assistance received from the hardworking and dedicated staff of Commander Service Squadron EIGHT has provided USS GRASP with consistent, reliable, and timely support. From personnel manning issues to repair parts support, they were instrumental in GRASP successfully meeting each and every operational commitment.

October 8th looks like the big day for our return. We are planning for an arrival time of 1000, however, the exact time will depend largely on weather conditions. We will attempt to make the best possible speed on our transit home and will keep Commander Service Squadron EIGHT informed of our estimated arrival time. They will, in turn, keep Mrs. Daphne Betterton

updated as well. The USS EDENTON has been designated as the host ship for our return. I extend a personal invitation to all of you to join in on this very special homecoming event, I know it will be a time of great excitement and happiness for everyone.

In closing, I would like to once again acknowledge your dedicated support and assistance to the crew and family of USS GRASP. Your generous and warm responses to our previous familygrams confirms our belief that your thoughts and support have always been with us.

May the forthcoming holiday season bring our families together in a spirit of hope for continued peace and goodwill throughout the world. All the joy and happiness to you and your families is my wish upon our return.

Fair winds and following seas to each of you.....

Warm Regards,



J. H. GIBSON  
LCDR USN  
Commanding Officer

From the Executive Officer.....

As we approach the end of the deployment, as the tempo slows, there is finally time to recollect and review some of the many events that made this cruise what it was. For some it was the first taste of going to sea and seeing strange, new and faraway places. For others, it was just another in a seemingly endless cycle of overseas deployments necessary to keep the peace in an uncertain world. For some, the weeks flew by and for others the days dragged on and on. For all, it was a tremendous educational experience that had positive effects on all concerned. By the time we arrive in Little Creek we will have visited 14 ports and 7 countries, struggled with 5 languages and 6 currencies. In April, we set out with a ship on a new mission, did it all and did it well and are coming back better than when we left.

It was never easy. The liberty port visits could never completely compensate for the hard work and training this crew had to do to get the job done. But the hard work paid off everywhere we went.

It all came together when we saw the "thumbs up" from the Master of the USNS PAWCATUK after GRASP slid alongside the 600' supply ship, hooked up wire & hoses and received 23000 gallons of fuel at 12kts. Largely due to the superb performance by GRASP's Deck Department manning the receiving station he commented, "I could easily have believed this was your 100th UNREP instead of your first." Not just our first, but a Navy first for the ARS 50 Class ship.

When Libyan fighters overflowed the small task force below in the Central Med, setting up a target tow for a torpedo test shot, the crew came to life, and performed like seasoned professionals. There's nothing like the sound of the first actual "man your battle stations" to see the results of the drills and training.

"Your efforts to ready Ex-IMPETUOSO for tow/sinking and subsequent tow range control and retrieval of both exercise rounds was a major contribution to an unqualified successful mark 48 SINKEX. GRASP has proven to be equal to any challenge. Commodore Holly".

Exactly 2 weeks earlier, the Navigation team was taking the ship through thick fog into a small, cluttered inland harbor in Taranto, while a Navy Food Service Inspection Team waited on the pier beside the Ex-IMPETUOSO for GRASP to moor. The entire night before a half dozen dedicated crewmembers gave everything they had to try to impress the most prestigious Food Service Inspection Team the Navy has. 6 hours later they left.....

"Your selection as a third place winner (in the 1987 Capt. Edward F. Ney Memorial Awards Program) is an indication of the pride and professionalism inherent in your operation. I am proud of your accomplishment and encourage you to continue to set the standard in Food Service. Admiral F. B. Kelso".

"The excellence in your shipboard food service operations- is no suprise to those who have enjoyed your fine cuisine. Congratulations to the USS GRASP gourmets. Commodore Holly".


Two weeks before, on a warm evening in Naples, Italy, excited onlookers reported to the ship "In the sea"! "In the sea"! in an attempt to report a man drowning by the pier. 30 minutes later after 4 GRASP crewmembers had rescued him, administered CPR and oxygen, the man was rushed to the hospital, scared but alive.

"Actions taken by GRASP crew to save the life of a male civilian was exemplary. Medals are made for this. Well done, Commodore Holly".

Without a doubt we were scheduled for more countries and ports than many ships see in a year and there was a reason for that. We consistantly showed the flag well. In every port this crew stood head and shoulders above those from other visiting ships due to their exceptional demeanor and presence. Friends were made in every port, among the ranks of our Navy counterparts in Israel, Italy, France and Spain, at the dive schools in Cartagena and Toulon, with local officials everywhere and of course with the many friends who hosted us wherever we stopped.

"This top notch level of performance is becoming a fixture with GRASP. Well done. VADM Moranville, COMSIXTHFLT.

As we head west, this group has every reason to be proud of their accomplishments here in the Med. The crew of GRASP has lived up to the promise of their ships motto, "Any ocean, Any time". I am very pleased and very proud to be part of it.

  
P. P. KAROLIDES  
LT USN  
Executive Officer

From the Operations Department.....

The cruise is winding down and everyone's anxious to return to Little Creek. Our Israel Holy Land visit was quite an experience for most. Many of us purchased jewelry at the reduced diamond exchange prices. Having a nuclear powered fast attack submarine alongside was a first for GRASP and the entire evolution was done very professionally and without incident.

Egypt wasn't as exciting as we envisioned since we only experienced it from several miles off shore at an anchorage. GRASP had the opportunity to underway replenish mid August with USS MERRIMACK and USNS SIRUIS. We're becoming real pros at a very uncommon task for this class of ship.

Palermo, Sicily was a pleasant stop for us. We said goodbye to SKC Schmidt there and welcomed aboard SKC Howland as his replacement.

We are thinking about Christmas and how we want to share the spirit this season. Daphne Betterton will be promulgating our thoughts to you all soon. We'll be home soon, get ready!!

The Quartermasters and Operations Specialist did very well recently on graded low visibility and precision anchorage exercises scoring 98% and 100% respectively. Well done to the Navigation team which also includes ET2 Dickel, ET3 Swanson and SK2 Quiambao. Randy and Kevin better be ready for their wives. We wish QM3 Snyder well on her Second Class advancement exam. QM2 Edwards is still learning that priorities are important - especially when Oreos are involved. OS2 Hewett has continued "drawing" on his sea experiences (stories) to teach the crew.

We wish you the best Mrs. Kirkland, with the soon-to-come "rug rat". We're sending LT Kirkland home early. He is wearing out the stateroom tile using the space as a maternity waiting room. Don't forget the cigars for the crew, LT Kirkland. Good luck with your husband, Mrs. O'Brien. We hope you don't mind the toupee and the white jacket.

The ET gang has been excelling recently through all evolutions. ET1 Faddock has become ace number one Operations painter. The other ET's are trying to figure out how to keep him permanently on the O4 level. Will the future Mrs. Swanson please see us soon? We have some words of advice for you to keep him in line. Have a happy wedding! Ah yes, then there is ET2 Dickel wanting to go to California for some reason. If he's patient, perhaps his request will come to pass.

The Communications club of the GRASP has really been busy the last couple of months with many different aspects of communicating. RMSN Lewis has done more than outstanding in the field of Class "E" messages. He has raised the morale, not to mention the dollar value of the commercial traffic funds, of the crew to an extent that if anyone thinks no one cares, talk to RMSN Lewis the fastest Class "E" clerk in the Med. RMSN Smith is continuing his dedication to the communications shack and keeping up the PMS on those antenna's so that there is no question of our ability to communicate with the world. Both RMSN Lewis and RMSN Smith are wished the best of luck on their advancement exam. RMSN McKinney is being kept locked up in radio to show him that a true Radioman is unsure of what daylight is. It is a toss up between RMSN Smith and RMSN McKinney on who has the best "in style" of clothing for liberty! RM3 McRae has been keeping an ever watchful eye on RM1 Lombard so much that RM1 Lombard passed the PMS schedule along with other paper work over to him. RM1 Lombard wishes to extend a hello to his three children and can't wait until he starts that early morning routine with them again. RM1 Lombard thought the Med cruise was interesting; now he can continue with his school work with his three kids. For the information of the Lombard Family, RM1 Lombard "finally" qualified in Basic Damage Control this past month. SM1 Carter is still the handiest man about OC division. If he was not ever sure of having a home or a place to stay while at sea, rest assured in radio he is always welcome. The communications club must say goodbye to LT Kirkland as he moves ahead to the world below; in his being sent to Engineering department he surely will be missed by all. We wish him nothing but the best in his endeavors in that fascinating world below where he won't have to worry about how cold it is in radio. We welcome our new communications officer LTJG Sale as she starts her climb from Supply Officer. We look forward to having her for our Operations Department Head and she has a good strong foot in the door already starting with the communications division.

W. P. KIRKLAND, III

  
Operations Officer

Greetings from the Engineer Department.....

We are on our way home and it's great. The guys and gals have been really working hard in preps for homecoming. Of course they still find time to expand their knowledge in all other areas. We've had social events galore, qualifications beyond belief, and personnel changes that will go down in GRASP history.

First, let's say congrats to EN1 Bastian and EN3 Maki for their qualification as Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialists. And then there is EN1 Bastian again for his duties as assistant fuel and water king. Then there is HT1 "Vern" Betterton and LT Webb who finally got everyone in place for the final oral board for qualifications as Engineering Officer of the Watch. The latest big break through is the establishment of Duty Engineering Officer and the following snipes have gained that qual: EN1(DV)(SW) Bastian, EN1(DV) Wolfe, HT1(I'm an EOOW) Betterton and EN2(What's all these quals) Gittens. So all your family members can understand your Engineers, I would like to take this time to define some of our common phrases.

OPPE - it stands for Operational Propulsion Plant Examination, but it usually means longer hours, tired spouses and the family suffers just as much as the sailor. For the professional men and women onboard USS GRASP, OPPE is looked at as an opportunity to show the world just how great we are. We are ready, willing and able. The GRASP sailors are going to return home, not to worry about this exam again for 2 years. Look for the brooms in the mast of the ship on 8 October, they will show a clean sweep.

SELEX - it stands for Selected Exercise. We compete with other ships for various awards and medals. Again your proud Engineers completed 32 SELEXS in 3 days with an average score of 100%. It just goes to say, we're just not another pretty face. Since we have been in Toulon we have not slowed the pace. The duty sections have completed every possible inport SELEX and with the expected outstanding score.

The social events have mostly been limited to receptions, tree planting, walks in the forest, horseback riding, and snow skiing in September (really, there is snow here, just ask someone not from Engineering. Engineers wouldn't try to convince you that there is snow in the Med in September).

We all can't figure out what is the big connection between ENFN Marciniak and ENFN Lace, Cleveland and Halloween. If you ask them about leave, all they say is, "I don't care about Thanksgiving or Christmas, just give me Halloween". Why they want Halloween and then want to go to Cleveland is beyond all of us.



ENC Fair is now the Main Propulsion Assistant (MPA). He relieved ENC(SW) Orsak, 12 September and we said farewell to ENC(SW) Gus Orsak (I told you he would be home on the 13th, Debra). Let it be known, we will miss Chief Orsak, but we all know where he lives.

See you all in October. Wish us luck on OPPE.



B. E. WEBB  
LT USN  
Engineering Officer

Words from the First Lieutenant.....

As the Med Cruise winds down, all are ready to collect their new and renewed memories of the Mediterranean, it's treasures and sights. We have visited six countries and thirteen ports. We all have made new friends to write to and hope to visit again upon our return to the Med in 1989. Our eyes are now focused on our return to our families, wives and friends back at home.

The Deck Department hails SA Deford, SA Fricke and SR Chartrand, who are coming from Apprenticeship Training in Great Lakes, Illinois. We also welcome aboard BMC Davis who has taken over as Deck Division Officer. Chief Davis comes to us from NDSTC, Panama City, Florida. Also in Diving and Salvage, HM3 "Scott" Charlton, a Diving Med Tech fresh out of Dive School has arrived to replace the "Little Guy" and everyone's Sea Daddy, HMC Odle.

Since our last Familygram, the Deck Department has been very busy. HTC Adolphson, BM1 Buric, BM1 Greathouse, MM3 Stein, EN1 Wolfe and HT3 Walker embarked upon a ferry ride from Naples to Palermo to conduct a hull survey on the USS BOWEN and we supported diving operations while at anchor off the coast of Egypt. While in Palermo for a port visit, we conducted a harbor survey. The divers received a work out and removed the studs from the port rope guard and fitted a new one. While in Toulon, USS GRASP was called upon to successfully treat an Army Lieutenant Colonel that had been flown in from Izmar, Turkey. Two days of target towing also helped to fill in the schedule, and of course, many days of chasing "Mister Rust".

The visit to Israel was very interesting and enlightening. Tours were made to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee and Jordan. The tours to Jerusalem have given real substance to all the Biblical tales we have read. A few people even were able to tour the diamond museum and factory. Some crewmembers made their spouses, girl friends and boy friends very happy by purchasing the wares of the diamond wholesalers, but didn't make their wallets happy at all!

Toulon was a very busy and exciting port for all of Deck. EN2 Rioux, BM1 Greathouse, SN Holder, SA Deford, MMCM Sobadow and LT Orr went with other crewmembers to the small French village of Rouque Brune for an enjoyable tour of the town and an excellent lunch. Later we treated the City Council to an authentic Texas Barbeque. EN2 Rioux and BM1 Greathouse also helped clear burnt out forest land for replanting as part of a Sixth Fleet project to help restore a National Park to its former beauty. A tour was made to the French Deep Dive Center, who lead the world in deep dive technology. A tour and subsequent dive, on a wreck, was made with the French Navy Dive School. SN Hines, MM1 Rehl and BM1 "Knuckles" Buric enjoyed a trip to the Alps to attempt to ski.

Well done to SA Robinson, SA Blackwell and SN Holder for final qualification in Basic Damage Control. A special well done to SA Robinson who qualified in just 81 days. Through exceptional effort and dedication HMC(DV)(SW)(OOD)Odle qualified as Officer of the Deck underway.

Well, it is time to wrap up another Familygram to all our beloved spouses, friends and relatives who are anxiously awaiting our return. See ya'll soon.

Notes from Deck.....

Hi Pichadel from "Dave"


Wally Get Well Soon!

¿Como? Esta Wanda

Hi Pricilla from "Hal"

Hi Moms and Dad from John and Kelli

Hi Mom and Dad from Quilici



W. P. ORR

LT USN

First Lieutenant

Greetings from Supply.....

We have done a lot of work since our last familygram and we're looking forward to coming home.

The food Service Attendants for the last two months were:

SN HINES - July  
SN ROBINSON - August

The Supply Sailor of the months were:

MS2 FENDER - July  
MS3 HEITZER - August

In July, a special steak and seafood Newburg meal was prepared for the following birthdays:

MMCM(DV) SCHADOW	HT1 BETTERTON
EN1(DV) WOLFE	RM3 MCRAE
RMSN SMITH	SN BURCHAM

In August, the birthday meal was Steak and Shrimp Jambalaya for the following personnel:

BM1 WHITE	EN2(DV) RIOUX
BM3 RODRIGUEZSOTO	RMSN LEWIS
YN1 RAINWATER	RM1 LOMBARD
SKC SCHMIDT	

SKC Schmidt left in late August and was relieved by SKC Howland, who comes to us from SIMA, Gitmo Bay, Cuba. It took Chief Howland seventeen days to find the ship after leaving Norfolk. He landed in Rota, then flew to Naples and finally to Sigonella where he sat poolside at the Catania Sheraton Motel waiting for the GRASP to come to him. Also at the hotel was the rock group Spandau Ballet and 2000 screaming teenagers. Chief Howland was awarded a Navy Commendation Medal for his exemplary performance at his previous command.

The following figures reflect a portion of what it takes to run the Supply department during a six month cruise:

860	lbs bacon
1350	dz eggs
1760	gal milk
2040	lbs ground beef
1950	lbs potatoes
1555	lbs bread
760	lbs cottage cheese
1280	lbs lettuce
870	lbs tomatoes
1170	lbs apples

It takes 900 lbs of detergent and half a million gallons of water to wash 3120 loads of laundry totalling 62,400 lbs of clothes. 1940 orders for supplies and services were processed totalling over \$198,000.00.

MS1 Penca attended a culinary arts course at Johnson and Wales College in Providence, Rhode Island in August. While he was away, MS2 Fender gained a few gray hairs as he was introduced to the world of food service records.

GRASP was nominated for Ney Award competition again in fiscal year 1988. The first round inspection will be 22 October. Welcome home, GRASP.

SH2 Lewis achieved final qualifications in Basic Damage Control.

Four more steel beach picnics were held. The last one featured shiskebobs, much to the dismay of SH2 Lewis - all his clothes hangers were used for skewers!


We had two more replenishments including another "first ever" connected replenishment with SIRIUS.

#### SUPPLY DEPARTMENT CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

MS3 Heitzer - Rolex Presidential watch with 24K gold band  
MS3 Molloy - Volvo 760 GLE (LX) with leather interior.  
SN Gonzales - Honda Prelude (LX) and a set of atomic racing skis (G5) with marker MRR bindings (greedy)!  
FN Beavers - One month paid vacation on the French Rivera  
MS1 Penca - A 200' yacht  
MS2 Fener - Porshe 944  
SH2 Lewis - Rebuilt metalflake blue, 1964 Chevrolet Belair Convertible  
SKC Howland - Snow. And two more Storekeepers.  
SN Robinson - BMW  
LTJG Sale - 60 days leave  
SK2 Quiambao - Happiness in life - happiness in the family - forever  
SN Hines - 1957 Ferrari Testa Rosa  
HTFN King - 42' Bertram Sport Fisherman rigged out

We'll see you in a few weeks!

Very Respectfully,

  
S. B. Sale