

USS KASKASKIA (AO-27)
Fleet Post Office
New York, New York

Dear KASKASKIA Family:

This, our January KASKASKIAGRAM, comes to you from Cannes, France, a beautiful resort city on the French Riviera, only a few miles from Nice and Monaco...but more about that later. In this issue we will tell you about the operations of KASKASKIA... where we've been and what we've been doing: What is This Thing Called... The United States SIXTH Fleet... a few facts about the great organization: Our Meet the Department Department wherein the officers and men of KASKASKIA are introduced to you: In the KASKASKIA Officers Her Congratulations Department, you'll read some of the accomplishments of the "world's finest crew" and finally: The skipper's personal message to you, our family.

OPERATIONS:

During the month of December, KASKASKIA received a well deserved rest from her heavy operating schedule to prepare for her Mediterranean deployment. The month started off with a "bang"! Our Commodore, Captain Miles REFO, III, Commander Service Squadron TWO and his staff gave KASKASKIA her annual Administrative/Material Inspection during the first week of December. We received an overall grade of excellent. Even though Commodore REFO found KASKASKIA to be in excellent shape, her in-port time was a hectically busy period, as all hands made the final preparations for her deployment.

The machinery, rigging, and even electronic gadgets were given a thorough inspection; tired parts were pulled out and replaced, and spare parts were bought, begged and borrowed to put her in top operating condition.

Tons of supplies were brought aboard, potatoes, steaks, and eggs for the crew's daily fare; hardware and tools for the operation of the machinery and rigging, cigarettes, rope, jackets, hammers, paint, and on and on in a seemingly endless stream. Millions of gallons of fuel oil were pumped aboard, enough to make her ride ten feet lower in the water.

There were instructions, orders, regulations and manuals to be read and digested, and many reports to be mailed off. Captain Ward addressed several groups and made use of the press, television, and radio to gain support for our deep interest in the Foster Parents Plan, the President's People to People Program, and Project Handclasp. This support included books, clothing, food and money collected by the students of the Southside Jr. High School of Jacksonville, Florida; and medical supplies from the Naval Hospital at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida. These articles will be distributed to those in need in the areas we plan to visit.

Along with the hard work there was time for rest and relaxation. Many of the crew took leave during December. On the nights of the twenty second and twenty third, the ship had a party with good entertainment provided by the internationally famous trio, the "Three Hats" with good food, and good comradeship. A good time was had by all. On Christmas Eve, the duty section spent the evening tracking a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer on the radar. They reported that it made numerous stops.

The new year was duly welcomed and the final week of our hectic port period arrived. At 0759 on 6 January 1965, all lines were brought aboard, and KASKASKIA was underway for her 1965 Mediterranean deployment with the friendly but powerful SIXTH Fleet.

The weatherman granted us fair winds and following seas on our first day underway, which was appreciated by all. In fact, the Captain said it was the smoothest trip he has ever made at anytime in the Atlantic with the exception of three rough days, 8, 9, and 10th of January.

Since there were many newcomers among us, the relative bearings were soon greased, the mail buoy watch was set, and fathom upon fathom of water line was issued from the bosun locker. All hands have since met "Charlie Noble", our galley smokestack, but we have yet to capture a sea bat.

We immediately began to exercise our battle efficiency muscles which had grown flabby from lack of use. We found our weaknesses to be many, but through diligent training, we were in fighting trim by the time we reported for duty in the Mediterranean.

Mustaches are sprouting like mushrooms in the damp, dark woods for competition in June. Many had anticipated growing beards, but, to our disappointment, beards are frowned upon in the SIXTH Fleet. The Captain says that he doesn't count in this contest unless it's for the oldest, as he has had a mustache for twenty three years.

KASKASKIA took part in an at sea operation. An appendectomy was performed on a sailor from one of our escorting destroyers, USS STRONG. During the evening watch on the eighth, USS STRONG broadcast that Seaman Jack R. Doane would need an Emergency appendectomy in the morning, and it was decided that the operation would be performed aboard KASKASKIA as she would provide a more stable platform in the rough seas. Chief Corpsman Charles R. Tidmore, BM2 James O. Mitchell, and HM3 Michael A. Pleskoff worked through the night breaking out and sterilizing various paraphanelia for the operation. The following morning, the patient and Dr. John H. Chikaris with HML Aubrey A. Cruise were highlined aboard KASKASKIA from the STRONG and Dr. John K. Cavanaugh and HML David L. Keeney were highlined from USS MANLEY. The operation was a complete

success. KASKASKIA offers her kudos to the doctors and to the corpsmen for and outstanding job "well done."

On the trip over we performed twenty five successful refuelings in all kinds of weather. With this under our belt we feel we're ready to take on any job that might be handed us in the Mediterranean.

We passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on the night of the sixteenth, sighting the rock at about nine. There was a full moon, and the slightest bit of haze, which lent a rather mysterious air to the view. We steamed through the strait with high, rugged, shadowy African mountains on our right hand and and European mountains on our left.

The day after we passed through the straits, we were joined by our sister ship, USS SABINE (AO-25), whom we relieved. We spent several hours taking on fuel from her to replace the two million gallons or so that we had pumped off on our way over. The next day we anchored at Cartegena, Spain, to swap papers, material and information that we would need in the Mediterranean, and bid farewell to SABINE until we see her again in Mayport next summer.

During our turn over with the SABINE in Cartegena, a group of KASKASKIA sailors headed by LCDR Weimerskirch visited the Asilo De Las Ramblas Orphanage in Cartegena. The sailors were met by the Mother Superior and given a short tour of the orphanage. They were received with much enthusiasm by the children, who were girls of all ages. The orphanage was presented with clothing and food supplies from Southside Junior High School of Jacksonville, Florida, and the men passed out sweet rolls to the children. Everyone took many pictures and left anxious to return during KASKASKIA's next visit to Cartegena. To assist in painting and repairing part of the orphanage. The SABINE crew had previously assisted in painting and repairing part of the orphanage, and we would like to continue.

After we left Cartagena, we joined USS SHASTA (AE-6) and conducted fueling and rearming operations on our way to Naples. Our final replenishment of the jaunt, during which we refueled USS SARATOGA and her escorts, lasted from 6:30 P.M. on the 20th until 0530 in the morning on the twenty first. Reveille was popped at 1230 that afternoon, so that all hands could enjoy some rest after a hard night's fueling.

The same day, we passed through the straits of Bonifacio. It was a beautiful and impressive sight, with the barren coasts of Corsica and Sardinia each within five miles of the ship.

Our stay in Naples was brief but busy. We shifted berths three times, once each day, and loaded aboard fuel and tons of freight to be delivered in Cannes. Busy as we were, we still found time to enjoy liberty in this colorful Italian port.

We departed Naples on the twenty sixth bound for Cannes, arriving at the French port on the twenty seventh. Cannes is a beautiful city which tastefully combines the ancient and the avant-garde. The Yacht basin is crammed with thousand-dollar-a-foot boats, and the adjacent beach, although deserted now, is one of the most popular on the Riviera. Cannes is considered to be the best liberty port in the Mediterranean.

While our anchor is solidly planted in the bottom of the harbor at Cannes and our wanderings have temporarily come to a halt, let us muse about the Italian way of life.

There are great differences of outlook, customs, and living conditions among the Italian peasants, who make up the largest part of the population. There is the mountain dweller, who must break rocks in order to plant a small field; the prosperous farmer of the irrigated valleys of Lombardy; the tenant farmer who receives only a modest income in money or produce; his richer counterpart in Tuscany and Emilia; the shepherd of Abruzzi, the Maremma section, and Sardinia, who shares the solitary and nomadic life of his flocks.

Beside this varied rural way of life, there is another, thousand-year-old urban civilization. We must remember that as late as 1860 Italy was still divided into seven small, independent units, some of which had two capitals. This explains the wealth of monuments, art collections, archives, and historical libraries found throughout Italy, and the great number of bishoprics (282), universities and other institutions of higher learning (about 40), academies, and educational centers.

In Italy there are few great factories for the mass production of uniform goods; in fact, even such machine-made products as automobiles and watches are often turned out by skilled artisans whose talent and ingenuity make up for the lack of technical organization. Celebrated the world over for their quality are Florentine jewelry, Venetian lace and embroidery, Murano (Venetian) glass, leather-work and gloves, faience ware, the wooden statuary of the Italian Alps, the marble sculpture of Florence, and the corals of the coastal towns near Naples.

The cities, laden with memories and monuments of antiquity, and still holding out against the encroachment of heavy industry, are perhaps the most obvious demonstration of the Italians strong attachment to tradition.

The Protestant Reformation hardly touched Italy, and nearly the entire population belongs, at least in a formal sense, to the Roman Catholic Church. Religious beliefs, whether or not they are accompanied by church attendance, have a solidifying influence on family life. Divorce is prohibited. The infrequency of homicide (15 cases per 1,000,000 inhabitants in 1939), suicide (69 per 1,000,000), and death from chronic or acute alcoholism (10 per 1,000,000) bear witness to self-discipline and moral balance.

The Italian character varies considerably from one part of the country to another. The Italian of the northwest is cold and reserved, accustomed by business dealings to concentration and prudence. The central Italian, particularly the Tuscan and the Umbrian, has a more open nature, and the southerner is highly imaginative and very much of an extrovert, witty and exuberant in words and gestures.

It would be an error, however, to conclude that the southerner is a superficial wastrel. The people of the Naples area, for example, have to their credit the accomplishment of having turned a wasteland into a garden, bringing all the water from underground, and succeeding with great effort in raising five or six crops of fruit and vegetables a year.

There are many ancient holiday celebrations in Italy. These create local rivalry or bring the people together in a community effort which usually ends with banquets of regional food and wine. In addition, sports are popular, and a large crowd turns out for soccer and boxing matches and for automobile and bicycle races.

World War II changed many habits and had its effect on the spirit of the Italian people. Against the individualist and conservative background we see new currents and aspirations toward a more democratic form of government.

What is this thing called The United States SIXTH Fleet

While in the Mediterranean, KASKASKIA will be a part of the United States SIXTH Fleet. (The fleet is a potent weapon in the NATO arsenal, providing a large portion of the tactical air power in Southern Europe and it is a powerful force. . . . Combat ready and always on station. . . . for the support of U.S. National policy.

As a military force, the fleet has two jobs: to fight. . . if necessary, and to deter. If it does the second job well, it will never be called on to do the first.

The fleet has a third job, however, and that is to be seen, and to create respect for and good will toward the United States. In a sense, the job is part of deterrence, for a deterrent, to be credible, must be seen, must be amply publicized, and must present an image to friend and foe alike, an image will gain respect).

Here are some facts about the SIXTH Fleet taken from United States
SIXTH Fleet Regulations:

"The offensive power of the SIXTH Fleet consists of a fast carrier task force, capable of delivering conventional or nuclear weapons, and an amphibious force with a Marine Battalion landing team embarked. These two forces are supported by Minecraft and a mobile logistic force. The function of the fleet is entirely friendly. Its exercises are designed for self education and for the perfection of working relationships with our allies in the NATO countries."

The SIXTH Fleet is a completely mobile, seagoing fleet without shore bases in the Mediterranean, assigned to this area to carry out the following missions:

To protect United States citizens, shipping and interests in the Mediterranean.

To meet out NATO commitments and to support the other armed forces of the United States and our allies, either bilaterally or within the framework of the NATO command structure.

To deter aggression against the western world by being prepared, as either a National or NATO force, to conduct offensive striking force operations with nuclear or conventional weapons.

To conduct national, bilateral, and NATO training exercises in order to enhance the fleets ability to carry out its wartime missions and to perfect procedures for joint, combined, and NATO operations.

To enhance the prestige of the United States and create good will toward the United States within the countries bordering the fleet's area of operations.

KASKASKIA is proud to be a part of this powerful weapon for the preservation of peace.

MEET THE SHIP'S DEPARTMENTS:

This portion of our KASKASKIAGRAM is designed to introduce to you, the officers and men who make up the several departments in the ship's organization of the KASKASKIA. We give first billing to the Admin Department simply because they are first alphabetically. Check this space in subsequent months for an introduction to Deck, Engineering, Operations, and Supply Departments.

The Administrative Department, under the direction of LCDR John R. Weimerskirch, the Executive Officer, is composed of four officers and six men. The primary responsibilities of the Executive Officer, which are carried out through the Administrative Department, are executing the orders of the Commanding Officer and coordinating and supervising the performance and administration of the command as a whole. Specifically included are matters pertaining to morale, discipline, training, welfare, work, exercise, safety, and the rights and privileges of individuals within the command.

The first group in the Administrative Department are the Ship's Office personnel who are supervised by the Ship's Secretary, ENS, H.C. JONES. The Yeoman and Personnelman who work in the office are responsible for the processing of incoming and outgoing correspondence, the forwarding of required reports and the maintenance of all service records.

These magnates of the paperworld are: L.L. Banner, PN2, leading petty officer of the Ship's Office, reported aboard in February 63 from San Diego, Calif. This is his second trip to the Mediterranean (and last). Banner has a wife and two children living in Atlantic Beach, Fla. Banner is also a rebel.

Roger W. Loar, YN3, USN reported aboard 21 November 1962 and his pursuit in the Ship's Office is to keep his finger on the tons of mail received by the ship annually and is also responsible for the maintenance of the officer's service jackets. This is Loar's second cruise to the Med. and he is enjoying it as much as his first. His pretty wife, Judi, now resides at Massillon, Ohio.

James R. Jeffries, PN3, hails from the state of Georgia. After reenlisting in September, 1963, he reported aboard the KASKASKIA for duty. Jeffries work consists of routing typing, filing, and helping maintain 200 enlisted service records. Jeffries is looking forward to his first trip to the Mediterranean.

Chuck Judge, PN3, a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota reported to the KASKASKIA in October, 1964 after serving on shore duty in Maryland. As a member of the Ship's Office (paper mill) Judge performs a variety of clerical duties. Reading, hunting, fishing and water skiing rank high in his outside interests.

Julian D. Royal, SN, reported aboard the KASKASKIA in October, 1964 from Phila. Pa., He lives in Orlando, Florida, with his mother and brother. Royal is considering the Navy as a career; we hope he decides to because we can always use good men.

LCDR John R. Weimerskirch has been Executive Officer aboard the KASKASKIA since September, 1963. Commissioned in 1952, he comes to the "KAS" after serving aboard the USS JACKDAY (AMS-21), USS JACKOMAR (MHC-20), USS THETIS BAY (LPH-6) and USS SOUTHERLAND (DDR-743).

Also he has served as Staff Engineer to Bureau of Naval Weapons Representatives, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and as SUBROC Production Manager with the Bureau of Naval Weapons. A graduate of St. John's University, he and wife Imy have four children.

Ensign Huey C. Jones serves in the Administrative Department as Ship's Secretary. Upon receiving his commission, he reported aboard the KASKASKIA in July, 1964. His primary billet is CIC officer. An avid sports fan, also enjoys reading and Western movies. Has a B.A. Degree from Millsaps College and is a bachelor.

LCDR Weimerskirch is assisted as Training Officer by LT(jg) A.R. Walter. The function of the Training Officer is to assist in formulating plans, coordinating and evaluating training in order to facilitate the educational and professional advancement of personnel of the ship.

The Chief Master At Arms, GMGC D.J. Ross and his staff assist the Executive Officer in enforcing regulations and maintaining good order and discipline aboard ship.

The Legal Officer, ENS. E.A. Kurz, who is also the Navigator, advises the Commanding Officer in all areas of discipline.

The Public Information Officer, LT(jg) W.L. Barnes, is responsible for conducting the public relation program of the ship. He is primarily responsible for preparing and supervising releases to media outlets.

KASKASKIA OFFERS HER CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Francis J. McKenzie, Richard E. Debadts, Hugh A. Neal, Virgil T. Short, Theodore G. Nemic, Frederic Trowbridge, Terrence L. Gacioch, Waymon C. Bratcher, Danny D. Bratcher, and Howard F. Bradshaw, all of whom received High School equivalent certificates through USAFI.

John A. Connolly, who was advanced to Signalmen second class, Charles F. Pope who was advanced to Fire Control Technician and Gerald M. Jordan advanced to third class Boatswain Mate.

Barnett R. Smith, Clarence E. Vinson, Ronnie F. King, Donald E. Grout, Roscoe D. Stitt, Augustus L. Wisman, Jr., and to their brides.

Fred and Sharron Vogel and baby daughter, Raymond and Ellen Briggs and son, and Samuel and Martha McCrary and baby son.

Happy birthday to the following, who had birthdays in December and January:

2 DEC
Jividen, Rancel
Paulk, Leon

3 DEC
Eichmann, Richard

5 DEC
Mitchell, James

8 DEC
Trzeciak, Jonathan

9 DEC
King, Ronnie

10 DEC
Story, Kelmer
Edwards, Woodrow

11 DEC
Maynor, Carl

12 DEC
Pullen, Claude

14 DEC
Hendrix, Dedric

16 DEC
Terrett, Dennis

20 JAN
Kelsey, Michael
Mclemore, Ben

21 JAN
Walkowiak, Kenneth

18 DEC
Wackerman, Joseph
Wilder, William

19 DEC
Dufour, Edmond
Webberson, Henry
Williams, George

20 DEC
Rehfus, Robert

21 DEC
Short, Virgil

22 DEC
Rocks, Larry

23 DEC
Weber, Ronnie

24 DEC
Chamberlain, Alfred
Novrosky, Richard
Orr, Manuel

25 DEC
Reeves, James

27 DEC
Neal, Hugh

23 JAN
Trosclair, Melvin

24 JAN
Mitchell, Bobby

28 DEC
Pena, Ricardo

31 DEC
Zaun, Raymond

2 JAN
Harman, Ralph

6 JAN
Gacioch, Terrence

8 JAN
Logan, Bobby

9 JAN
Colucci, Michael

10 JAN
Lagasse, Philip

15 JAN
Banner, Luther

16 JAN
Rankin, Ronald

17 JAN
Knisbell, Arthur

19 JAN
Johnson, Chester

29 JAN
Hamilton, George

CAPT sez:

I have reserved this section to add a few words from time to time.

First let me advise that your familygram scribe is LT(jg) Bill Barnes, who in addition to his many other duties takes time out each day to record the material that goes into this missile.

We are all doing quite well and we are taking advantage of every opportunity to make friends in the countries we visit.

Prior to our arrival in each port, I gather all hands before the mast and discuss the history of the port, its people and their customs as well as the many points of interest we can see. We also try to learn a little of their language in order to make friends in furtherance of the President's People-to-People Program.

By and large we enjoy a good reputation among these fine people and we are determined not to do anything to destroy the good image they now have of us and of our beloved United States of America so that we are always welcome back.

On the spiritual side, we read a prayer each evening underway. Both Protestant and Catholic Lay services are held on Sundays in the Wardroom and in the Crew's Mess. To keep things even the services alternate between the two spaces. ENS H.C. Jones conducts Protestant services and LCDR Weimerskirch conducts the Catholic services. A small electric organ is used to accompany the singing of hymns. It is not played very well but given time I'll improve.

I wish you all continued good health and happiness.

With warmest personal regards and may God bless.

Charles W. Ward

C. W. WARD
Captain, USN