

USS CONSERVER (ARS-39)
FPO San Francisco 96601

21 June 1974 - 30 September 1974

Dear Conserver Family,

In June of this year I assumed command of CONSERVER and since then have had the opportunity of working with your sons and husbands in an effort to make CONSERVER a ship in which we can all be proud to serve.

Our efforts during the months of July and August were focused on improving the general readiness of the ship particularly in the areas of hull preservation, equipment maintenance, and personnel training. During this two month period, we were able to use 194 off-ship school quotas which significantly increased the professional and military training capabilities of almost every man aboard. These efforts paid off as the ship successfully passed a three day Command Inspection conducted by Commander Service Group FIVE and his staff.

During the month of September, CONSERVER had an opportunity to train in her primary mission areas of diving and salvage. A three day salvage exercise was conducted in the Pearl Harbor area using the ex-USS BUTTERNUT (a decommissioned net tender) as a grounded vessel in need of assistance. Our divers made an underwater inspection of the hulk and patched some holes while the remainder of the crew prepared the salvage gear for use. In a very well coordinated and executed effort we were able to pull the ex-BUTTERNUT off the beach with a minimum of difficulty. The major obstacle was working in several afternoon rain showers which soaked a lot of clothing but failed to dampen our spirits.

This was followed by a week of training for the ship's divers conducted off the island of Maui near the old whaling town of Lahaina. The divers exercised their skills on and near an old sunken submarine located about a mile off shore. Using both the hard-hat diving rig and scuba gear our underwater "pro's" dove from first light until dark every day in waters that were blue and clear to a hundred feet in depth. An important part of their training included practice at underwater cutting and welding which is one of the key skills of the Navy salvage specialist.

While most of us were not able to enjoy the fascinations of deep sea diving, we were able to enjoy "swim call" every afternoon. All who joined in found the warm island waters a welcomed refresher after a hard days work. We also had an opportunity to try out the ship's 15 foot water ski-boat.

The engine needed some help from EN1 Joe APPLE but we managed to get a number of our expert and novice skiers involved in this exciting water sport, including EM2 Scott GOSSLER, RM2 William GABRIEL, LTJG Edward CULHANE, FN Ronald DULEY, IC1 Jimmie HOLLOWAY, MR2(DV) Barry SHOOLTZ, and MM3(DV) Roy SYKES.

The ship's "anglers" however, were not quite as successful. Four days of night fishing without a bite. ENC MANALO and SA FEIFAREK. We all admired their spirit and fortitude and know that the next time their fisherman's "luck" will be different.

Many of us were able to enjoy several evenings in Lahaina which retains much of it's small town atmosphere in spite of a large tourist trade. The most popular gathering spot for CONSERVER men was the Tree Top Inn, a remarkable pub built on the branches of a giant banyon tree. We were also able to experience first hand the flavor of an old Hawaiian whaler's port-o'call, contrasted with the glamorous new tourist spas, the tropical coastal areas and the vast pineapple plantations flourishing on the side of volcanic mountains. All in all an interesting and memorable port visit.

The ship's next assignment involved providing services for a group of civilian scientists and engineers who were testing a newly designed explosive deep water anchor. CONSERVER transited to water's nearly four miles deep off the coast of Molokai island where our civilian guests lowered their anchor on 20,000 feet of two inch diameter nylon line. When the anchor hit bottom an automatic explosive device was activated which propelled the anchor some 50 feet into the ocean floor. The test was very successful and will provide needed data for the future use of such anchors in anchoring underwater habitats and other military and civilian underwater projects. The 20,000 feet of nylon line weighed nearly 30 tons and required an all hands effort to recoil and restow the line at the completion of the test.

The next few months promise to be equally as challenging as we continue to train ourselves and maintain our ship for the 1975 Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment. We are looking forward to a two week assignment on the Pacific Missile Range followed by a port visit to Kauai and a six week period in one of Hawaii's ship repair facilities where we hope to continue to improve the ship's material condition. These will be the subject of a Christmas Family Gram that will continue to bring you up to date on CONSERVER activities.

During each quarter a number of events occur that are worthy of special mention. In the future these will be listed in a milestones section similar to the one below:

CONSERVER MILESTONES

1. PROMOTIONS. One of our ship's goals is to ensure that every man who demonstrates the desire and ability to get ahead has the opportunity to do so. Since July the following men have been promoted:

E-1 to E-2 FA D. WILSON, QMSA WHITE
E-2 to E-3 SN HIGGENBOTTOM, SN STROUD, EMFN CONE, and
EMFN DECKER
E-4 to E-5 SH2 TYRA
E-5 to E-6 IC1 HOLLOWAY, EN1 GANSKE
E-8 to E-9 CW03 AUSMUS (from permanent enlisted grade
of QMCS to QMCM)
LTJG to LT LT GRAUL

2. The ship's softball team has won nine straight games against other Service Group FIVE ships since July. All the team members have contributed to this fine record, but a special kudo goes to "Flash" TAHASH, whose magic right arm continues to mow the opposition down. The turnout for every game has been very encouraging and every effort is made to give all who come a chance to play. Team faithfuls are:

"Rick" TAHASH	"Paul" DECKER	"John Boy" HYLTON
"Rick" RIMER	"Little" WILSON	"Rick" KAIN
"John" BELTRAN	"Shoresteam" STORSTEEN	"Donald" KENNON
"Honker" HANKE	"Tom" HOPE	"Puka Shell" MATTESON
"Ski" METELSKI	"Ron" DULEY	"Tom" MOSCOSO
"Jim" HOLLOWAY	"Bill" GABRIEL	"Rash" POWELL
"Doc" HANSEN	"Paul" HORVAT	"Dizzie" WERY

LTJG Ned CULHANE, the ship's athletic officer, has scheduled all the games and provided refreshments suitable to the occasion.

3. CONSERVER was the first ship in Service Group FIVE to have 100% attendance at the Navy's Race Relations Seminars.

4. Our ship's Habitability Team under the direction of MRC(DV) THOENES has made an all-out assault on remodeling the Crew's Head, Crew's Lounge and Mess Decks area. We are all looking forward to great results from him and his team of experts: SKI(DV) HECHT, MR2(DV) SHOOLTZ, SN(DV) RIMER, QMSN LENIHAN, EMFN CONE, EM2 GOSSLER, and FN HARTWIG.

5. The combined efforts of our "gourmet" cooks and our Food Service Advisory Board composed of members of the crew have made CONSERVER (in our opinion) one of the best "FEEDERS" in the Fleet. They all deserve our vote of thanks:

FOOD SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD

Commissarymen/Stewards Mates

Other Members

SD1 BROAS
CS2 FAJARDO
CS3 CACAO
CSSN KAIN
SA FEIFAREK

LTJG CULHANE
SK1(DV) HECHT
SM2 SPIVEY
HT2 HORVAT
SK3 WIITALA
SN BENSON

6. The ship's volleyball team has participated in three lunchtime games and currently holds a one won, two lost record. New strategies are being developed to reverse this trend. Team members include: "Rick" TAHASH, "Dan" DAVIS, "Paul" DECKER, "Rick" RIMER, "Ned" CULHANE, "Dizzle" WERY, "Doc" HANSEN, "Rash" POWELL, and "Honker" HANKE.

7. On Sunday, the 20th of September a sunrise water-ski outing was held in the waters near Sand Island. The early risers included Captain WEEGAR, LTJG CULHANE, RM2 GABRIEL, EMFN TAHASH, SN STROUD. We cooked a breakfast of home fries and onions, bacon and eggs on an open charcoal fire. Time permitting and the body willing, we hope we can do a few repeats of this one.

8. Recent marriages include: Miss Kim L. CHASE of Eau Claire, Wisconsin and EMFA James J. McSHANE of Philadelphia, Pa. at Submarine Base Chapel, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 20 July 1974 and Miss Nancy L. STERLING of Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York and SA Steven P. CONKLIN of Bridgehampton, Long Island, New York at the District Courthouse of Hawaii at Honolulu, Hawaii on 9 August 1974.

9. Departures during this period include: PN1 E. R. JONES, FA J. A. MITCHELL, SR R. J. PATRON, FN P. H. STEFFENS, QM3 P. D. MULLER, EM1(DV) J. W. COLE, JR., FN H. D. SMITH, ENFA B. C. PRATT, III, SH2 D. L. TYRA, SDSN D. W. COLLOM, MM2(DV) S. R. ARSENAULT, EN1 J. L. APPLE, EN1 G. P. GANSKE, and EMC J. B. AVILA.

10. New arrivals include: ENFA T. E. HOPE, PN1 J. B. BLACK, ENFA W. J. WILSON, SD3 C. P. CACAO, ENFN B. D. STORSTEEN, QMSA R. D. WHITE, MMC(DV) W. A. ROHR, EN2 R. B. ADEFUIN, and HTFA J. P. SHEA.

11. We also wish to welcome aboard our new Executive Officer, LT John A. GAUSS, USN, who reports to the ship from 18 months service as Operations Officer in USS FLINT (AE-32).

12. We would all like to express our appreciation to the CONSERVER wives who donated their sewing skills to making 27 table clothes for the crew's mess. They have contributed an important improvement to our mess decks environment. Thanks Ladies.

13. Our thanks also to Mrs. Diane HOLSTEIN, wife of our new SKC "Gus" HOLSTEIN, who has volunteered to serve as the CONSERVER wives ombudsman. This is an important and time consuming task---particularly during deployments.

This quarterly newsgram is designed to help keep our loved ones at home informed about some of the activities of the ship and her crew. However, I know that it can in no way replace the personal letter from your loved ones. I encourage the writing of letters home and I ask you to keep up the good work in keeping your son or husband aware of things on the homefront.

Sincerely,



C. A. WEEGAR
Lieutenant Commander, U. S. Navy
Commanding Officer